

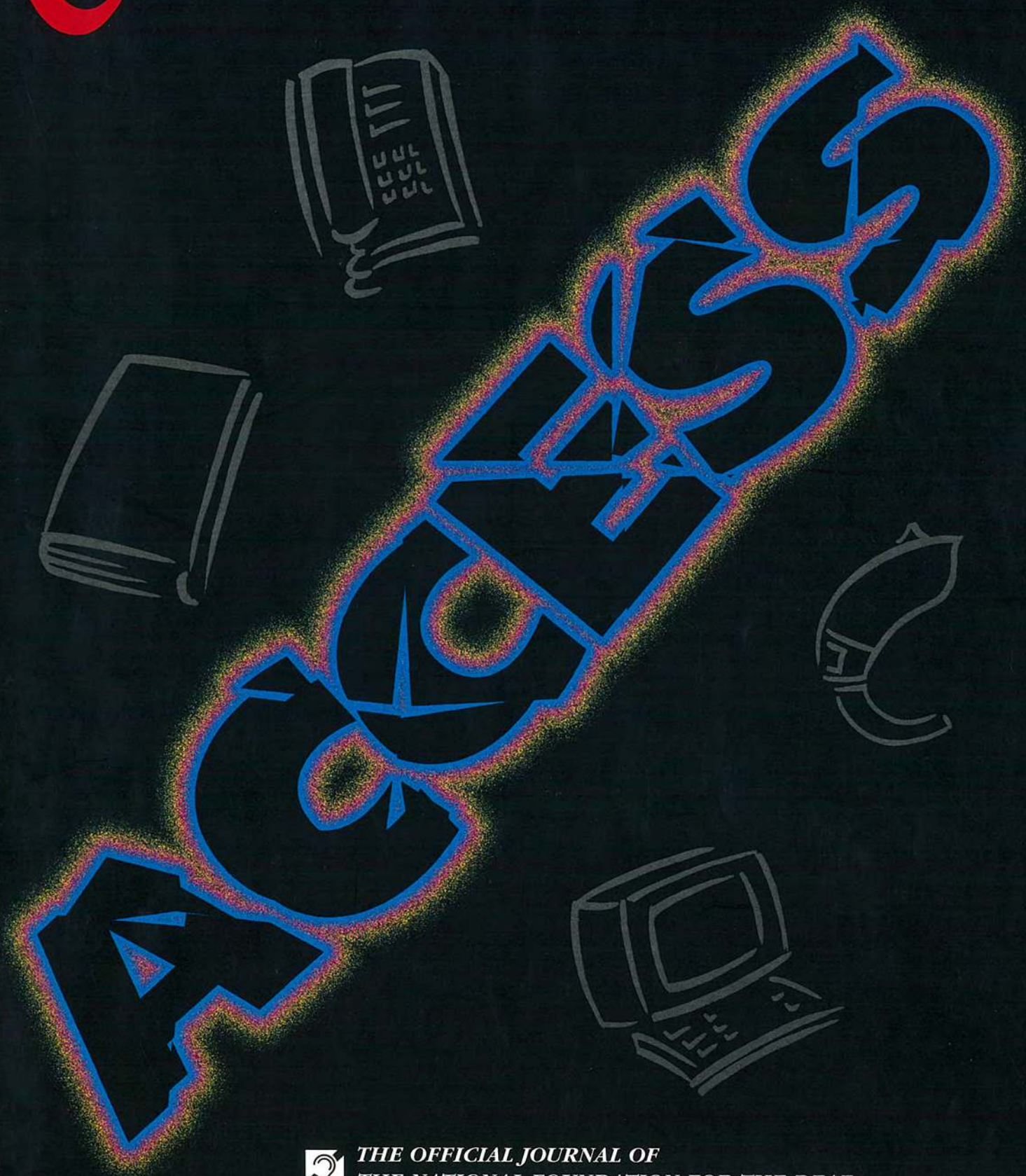
Communicate

THE VOICE OF 420,000 DEAF & HEARING IMPAIRED

Summer 1996/7

Volume 6 Number 2

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THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE DEAF

Photograph of Susan Broadhurst with the words
"Deafness or hearing impairment is not a visible
handicap - you can't tell to look at a person. My
husband says it would be easier, in a way, if we walked
around with Mickey Mouse ears on. It's an invisible
impairment."

See story page 16



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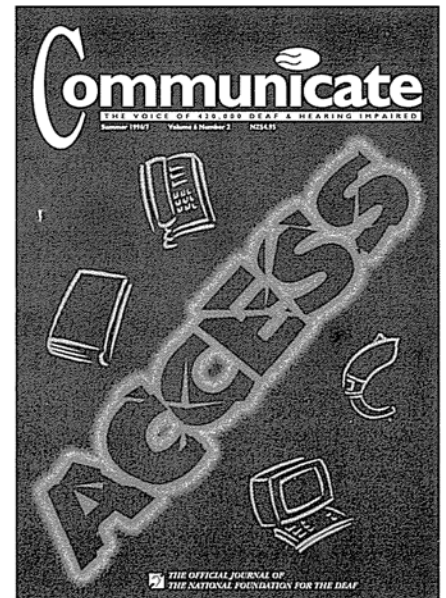
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published five times each year,
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Deaf Awareness Week (August)
and Spring (October).



The cover of the Communicate
Summer 96/97 issue was created by
Jonathan Guthrie to reflect the issues
facing the deaf and hearing impaired in
the area of access, to technology, life
and information.

Communicating Communicate

Communicate Magazine carries the banner of being "the voice of 420,000 deaf and hearing impaired". That's quite a claim. Perhaps it's better seen as an aim than a claim. It is valid insofar as there isn't any other voice for what amounts to an eighth of our population, and that makes Communicate a very important medium.

This issue is the second since GM Media took over the publication of Communicate and I assumed its editorship. The first issue felt our way forward, and I was pleased with the result. Now, as we look to a long term future developing Communicate, it is timely to ask what the magazine is all about.

For me, its most important function is advocacy. Communicate is read widely by politicians, civic and corporate leaders, educationalists, therapists, researchers and people in positions to make the decisions that affect the quality of life, and access to the resources for quality of life, that can make all the difference to the Deaf and the hearing impaired. Where else does this community speak in a medium that can be heard by the decision makers and those who form public opinion?

Second, Communicate exists to provide a medium of communication among the Deaf and hearing impaired themselves, and with those who, in research, industry, education and support, work with them. So we have articles of an academic nature, reports on research, information on products, articles about people and their achievements, articles about issues of concern. The advertising, so important to the economics of publication, is all part of this exchange of ideas and information. Here is where we discover what is available on the market and what is coming.

Third, The National Foundation for the Deaf is an association of five member groups. Here in Communicate, those member groups not only communicate with many of their own members but speak to each other and cross-fertilise the whole field of endeavour.

Out of all this, as editor what are my hopes for Communicate?

I hope the magazine will grow into the reality of being a voice for 420,000 people. I look forward to the day when a greater proportion of that number will know and respect Communicate as their voice in and to the wider New Zealand community: that this magazine commands their confidence as projecting their concerns and their claims.

I hope that Communicate comes to serve the whole Deaf and hearing impaired community as a vigorous, robust and effective forum for exchange of ideas, debate and information. Here will be heard many viewpoints, at times provoking strong reactions, always challenging, always calling us to push the envelope of possibilities.

One feature that I have instigated is the Interactive column. This is intentionally a provocative section and I hope that it will generate debate and that this debate will be carried on not only through the pages of Communicate but through the Web page that has been set up on the Internet.

I intend Communicate to be a constant source of encouragement and inspiration. Communicate will lift us a notch higher in our hopes and aspirations.

In the end, whatever hopes I or anyone else have for Communicate, it will only be as good as the support it gets from readers, contributors and the industry. As editor, my aim and determination is to make Communicate worthy of that support.

David Guthrie
Editor
Communicate Magazine



Comment

*Margaret Cooper
Chairperson,
The National Foundation for the Deaf*

Here we are at the end of another busy year and a year of change. We have had MMP elections, changes in government policy and changes within The National Foundation for the Deaf. John Lacy, Chief Executive Officer, left early in October. A farewell function was held to thank John for his work for The National Foundation for the Deaf.

The new Board took office in June and I accepted the position of Chairperson. Unlike the two preceding Chairpersons, I am neither Deaf nor hearing impaired. I am the parent of a deaf son, now an adult. I know the feelings and frustrations experienced by families, and watching Brendan grow up and become independent, have shared in many of his achievements, disappointments, feelings and frustrations of being Deaf in a hearing world. A world where ACCESS is denied, a world where Deaf people are undervalued and often discriminated against. The Board of The National Foundation for the Deaf and the Member Groups continue to work to remove barriers and enhance awareness and understanding on issues which are important to Deaf and hearing impaired people and their families.

Deaf Awareness Week gave us a great opportunity to promote the theme of NZ Sign Language and the use of Sign Language interpreters. This was aimed at highlighting the need for recognition of NZ Sign Language and the value of the interpreting service as a communication bridge which can give Deaf people equal access to services, employment and life opportunities that other people take for granted. Once again, our major sponsor, Telecom New Zealand, lent great support in developing and producing a poster and organising extensive radio and media coverage throughout the country.

In particular, two of their people, Sally Tye, Manager, Public and Community Relations, and Margaret Davies, Regional Public Relations Manager, North, deserve our special thanks for their assistance and sensitive understanding of the needs of Deaf and hearing impaired people. The National Foundation for the Deaf is fortunate to have the ongoing support of Telecom New Zealand. The promotion of the 0800 TO SIGN (0800 86 7446) number during Deaf Awareness Week was extremely successful. Many people used the service and the majority were people wanting to learn NZ Sign Language. Classes throughout the country are

already full to capacity. An urgent need now is a training programme for NZ Sign Language tutors. Interpreters are a scarce resource and in constant demand. Many more interpreters are needed to give Deaf people the communication access which is their right. Thanks also to NZ on Air, Teletext and the Caption Centre TVNZ who assisted in raising awareness during the week.

It has also been a year of challenge. A challenge to keep abreast of all the changes and a challenge to improve the well-being of all Deaf and hearing impaired people and their families in New Zealand. In our work, we have been greatly assisted by our major sponsor, Telecom New Zealand, and others including NZ on Air, Teletext, the Caption Centre, the Lottery Board, Oticon Foundation, Sir Roy Mc Kenzie and the JR Mc Kenzie Trust. Their contributions, along with those of other major corporations, supporters, friends and volunteers enable us to continue to meet our goals.

Very favourable comments have been received on the quality and content of "Communicate". Our thanks to our new editor and GM Media Ltd for the interest they have taken in promoting our image.

At this time of the year, I would like to say thank you to the Member Groups, Deaf Association of New Zealand, The Hearing Association, NZ Federation for Deaf Children, The Deafness Research Foundation and The NZ Deaf Sports Association. They work in many and varied ways individually and together to promote the issues which are so important for all Deaf and hearing impaired people. They can be proud of their achievements. The contribution of their representatives on the Board of the National Foundation for the Deaf is valued.

A very special thank you to the staff of The National Foundation for the Deaf who have met the challenge of change and work tirelessly for us all. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers, sponsors, supporters, members and friends a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Thank you for all your support.

Margaret Cooper
Chairperson
The National Foundation for the Deaf

Deaf people in society

*18th World Congress of
Rehabilitation International,
Aotea Centre, Auckland
- Keynote Address*

Doug Alker

"Deaf people in society" is by definition a vast topic. It is like saying "people in society". Deaf people are everywhere and doing everything. However, it has negative connotations. To start with, the word "deaf" elicits senses of jest and stigma.

The word "society" in relation to deaf people also has negative undertones. Although deaf people live in that society, they are not part of it. They are surrounded and kept "bubbled" by external environmental forces of negative attitudes and discrimination.

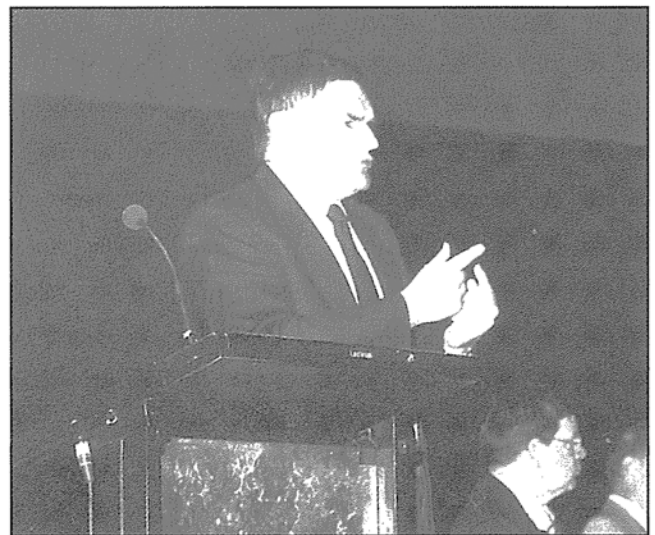
Deafness is not just not being able to hear. It is the experience of being disabled by it when you are involved in society. Deafness is about the reactions and attitudes of society. It is about facing prejudice due to negative societal attitudes to deafness. It is about being blocked out from involvement by physical barriers created by an environment which is based on sound. It is about communication - or not communicating in the environment created by society.

The Barrier

This communication barrier has considerable impact across the whole spectrum of a deaf person's life, education, employment, health, politics, transport and leisure.

Deaf people know what it is like:-

- as a child, not to understand the teacher at school and as a result getting classed as stupid or slow;
- for chances of employment to be less than those for their friends;



- to miss their train because they didn't hear the announcements;
- not to be able to converse with anyone at a bar or a party and people avoiding talking to them;
- not to be able to understand the doctor or what treatment they were being given;
- to stay in hotels knowing that they won't be able to hear the fire alarm;
- not to be able to get involved in local politics or community affairs;
- to be treated as imbeciles.

These few examples are part and parcel of a deaf person's daily experience.

It is all about access to information. If you do not have access, not only will you be at a disadvantage but in certain situations your rights to citizenship and full participation in society will be affected.

18th World Congress of Rehabilitation International

Margaret Cooper writes:

I was privileged, on behalf of The National Foundation for the Deaf, to attend the 18th World Congress of Rehabilitation International, held at the Aotea Centre, Auckland, in September.

Over 1500 people from 85 countries representing all major disability groups were among those attending, along with their whanau, government officials and service providers. The theme was, 'Equality Through Participation', and the aim was "to build environments which allow people with disabilities the same freedom of choice and action as the rest of the community."

Of major significance was the large number of Deaf people there and the focus on Deaf issues in the programme. Deaf people were not just there but were able to ACCESS the conference proceedings through NZ Sign Language interpreters and modern technology. Their presence, participation and communication needs made a positive impact on those attending.

As keynote speakers said,

"Disability is diversity", and,

"Diversity is welcome in the fabric of society."

This Congress was a unique opportunity to share information, to make contacts and to hear what is happening around the world. We all benefited from attending and those benefits will continue.

The Medical Model

The key issues here are attitudes and access. They create powerful barriers to deaf people's attempts to integrate as part of the society they live in. They arise primarily from the medical model of deafness, where deafness is seen as undesirable, a problem and something imperfect. The general reaction to it is to either make it 'normal' again or slot the person with the deafness into society somewhere. This medical and paternalistic model of deafness also allows certain people to act as gatekeepers determining who has rights and who has not.

As it is a basic human right not to be discriminated against, this situation needs to be changed. We need to move away from the medical model. We need to move from the paternalistic model; from charity to rights. There is a need for recognition of rights for deaf people, first and foremost as citizens and only second as recipients of social services. We should be defined in relation to our environment rather than our medical condition. We should be allowed access to full citizenship.

The Citizenship

Deaf people are citizens only in theory. In reality, for deaf people, access and citizenship is conditional. It is conditional on:- having access to information; on the attitudes and the grace of key elements in society; if we, the employers, the businesses or the state can, or are willing to, afford it.

Why should full citizenship for such a large segment of our society be conditional? Access and participation should be a right and not an optional extra or an accessory to be added when those elements of society feel like it.

The Challenge

For too long deaf people, have had to put up with this. We have been making statements about our rights. We have

D o u g A l k e r was the principal Keynote Speaker at the 18th World Congress of Rehabilitation International held in September 1996 at the Aotea Centre in Auckland. He was the first deaf person to be appointed to the post of Chief Executive Officer of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) in the United Kingdom. The RNID is the UK's largest service providing voluntary sector organisation. Doug was also Britain's first elected deaf trade union official during his 25 years in the chemical industry.

He is patron of the Council for the Advancement of Communication for the Deaf People and a governor of the City Literary Institute in London - an adult education centre with an active Centre for the Deaf.

Throughout his life he has been committed at both local and national levels to improve opportunities for deaf people and is known as an advocate who consistently pushes out the boundaries.

been making demands for access. We have been waiting for someone to do something. This is plainly not good enough. We need to act.

If deaf people are to achieve full access to citizenship, action needs to be taken to overcome the barriers to access which are created by the society we live in.

Although the argument has been made for legislation, there are strategies available to those who are prepared to do something to improve the situation for deaf people without waiting for legislation.

We should bear in mind the history of paternalism which deaf people have had to experience as a result of the medical model of deafness where others hold our hands, make decisions for us and generally hold us back. Now, we are in danger of continuing to remain at a disadvantage through the "new paternalism" which is based on the social model. We risk being at the mercy of a new and different breed of paternalists, controlling our access to rights.

Deaf people, therefore, need to take more control of the situation. We need to accept some responsibility to change the situation of deaf people.

The Responsibilities

While we are on the subject of responsibilities, we should bear in mind that any statement about the necessary conditions of citizenship, entitlement to equal respect, equality of access to information and so on, is closely linked to the concept of responsibility and duty. This means that deaf people, in pursuing their rights, must also accept their responsibilities to society, which includes responsibility to others. However, that is for another agenda. For the purpose of this discussion, deaf people need to take our share of the responsibility for removing the barriers in society.

More than anyone else, we know of the problems. We know the reasons for them. We know what solutions are required. We need to take the responsibility for working with the key elements in society to tackle the issues and to remove the barriers to our access to citizenship.

The Principles

On a practical level, there are four key principles without which any efforts to create change will have little success.

1. **Unity.** Based on the simple premise that one person alone or several people working against each other will not achieve the necessary changes, you need to have everyone pulling together in an united front.

2. **Public awareness and support.** Due to their lack of awareness of deafness and lack of pressure from deaf people, the public, the politicians and businesses have little idea of the issues around deaf people and consequently nothing gets done.

3. **Practical solutions.** Deaf people know best what is needed to remove the barriers to access. We should offer solutions which are both practical and not too expensive. For example, we could indicate the benefits to all of having visual as well as sound announcement at doctor's surgeries and health centres. Then, the process could begin and develop from there.

4. **Presence.** Deaf people need to be seen in society. By being there, we will make people aware of us and learn how to interact with us. Deaf people also need to get their voices heard in the decision making processes, both nationally and locally. One good example of this from the UK experience is by deaf people writing to their own Members of Parliament and lobbying on the Broadcasting Bill which resulted in an agreement by the Government to a 50% target for subtitled programmes and 5% target for sign language interpretation.

These four principles should underpin an action plan which is quite essential. It is a massive task. Little will be achieved by a blanket or ad hoc approach. It is far better to map out what needs to be done and then to develop an action plan to remove the barriers one step at a time.

In Conclusion

The point of this is that deaf people want to participate in society: we want full access to enable us to do so. But it is not enough to ask for equality of access. It is not enough to complain that equality does not exist. It is not enough to demand our rights.

We will only achieve full access if we are prepared to work at it. The timing is right. Most of society is willing to try to improve things but they need to be aware of deaf people's presence. They need to know of the problems. They need to be shown how to overcome them.

By working together in a constructive manner with each other and with other elements in society, we can achieve positive progress towards enabling deaf people to exercise their rights to full citizenship.



Deaf Authors

From the Deaf Web comes this list of works by Deaf authors. It is drawn from a list compiled by Melanie Norton in 1993: Copyright 1993 Rochester Institute of Technology. The full list can be found on the Internet at <http://deafworldweb.org/dww/>

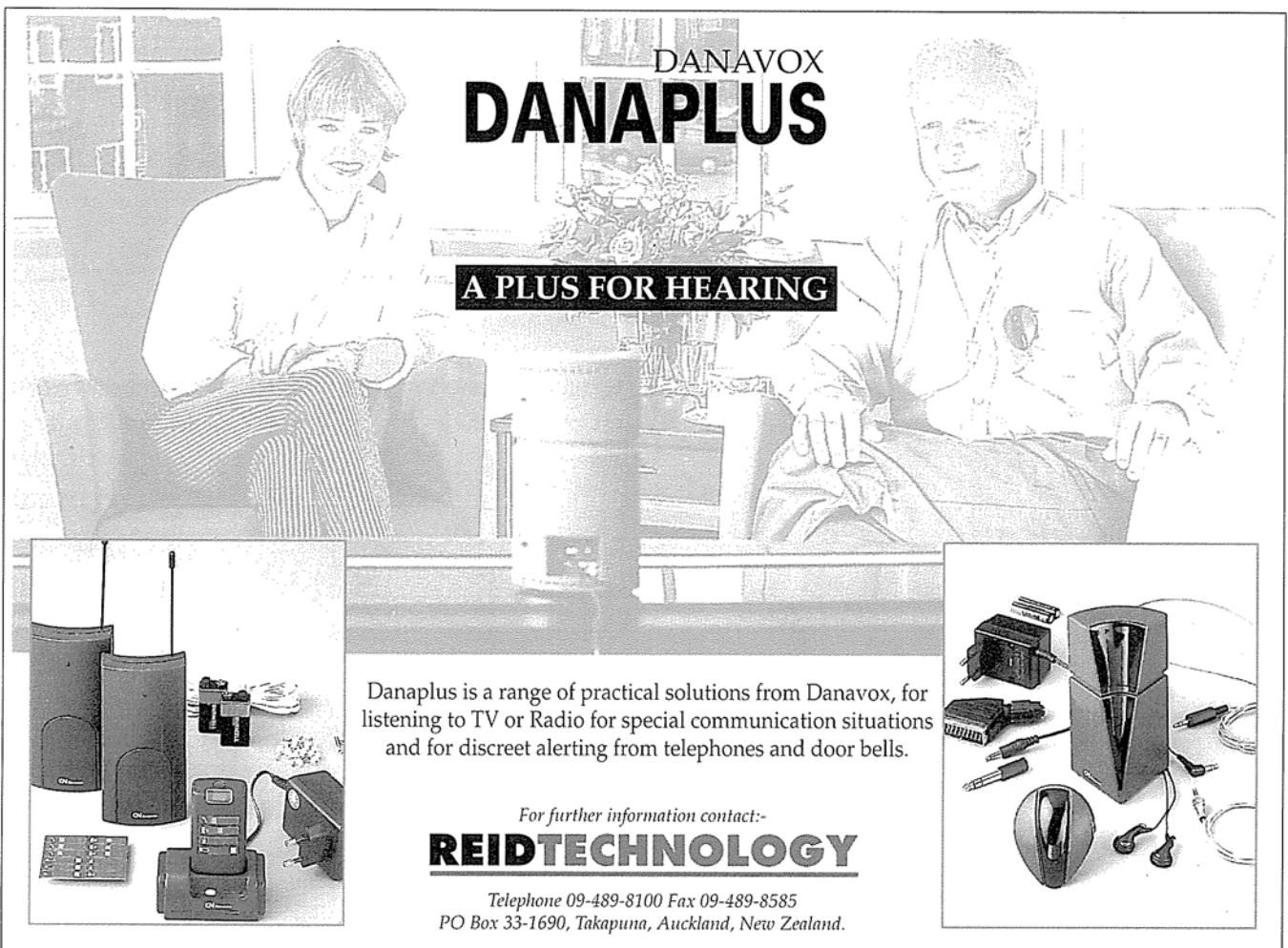
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Access for Deaf People to Employment through Changing Attitudes

Doug Alker

Like all disabled people, deaf people face barriers limiting access to employment. In the UK, for example, 20% of employable deaf people are unemployed, compared with the national average of 10%. 45% of deaf people in employment are employed in manual trades: the national average is 30%.

The three significant factors that cause this poor situation for deaf people in employment are:

- inferior education, where deaf people do not acquire the skills and qualifications necessary to compete in the labour market;
- generally negative attitudes to deafness; and,
- barriers to communication.

This leads to deaf people being discriminated against in employment. Even when there is no discrimination, deaf people are disadvantaged in employment due to the extra costs needed to enable them to participate as anyone else. They struggle on an uneven playing field. They also face the glass cocoon effect which hinders or prevents their progress.

“is there any evidence that education, as opposed to legislation, does work? History shows otherwise.”

The key needs of deaf people in employment, therefore, are:

1. the removal of discrimination,
2. the creation of a level playing field, and
3. the enablment of access.

The removal of discrimination

In the prevention of discrimination, legislation is essential. Many politicians use the argument that anti-discrimination legislation is not necessary and that education of the population is the best route to overcome discrimination. They also argue that the law alone cannot change attitudes.

In response to those arguments I ask, is there any evidence that education, as opposed to legislation, does work? History shows otherwise. In respect of religion, race and gender, did education alone overcome prejudices? Where in the world is there an example of this? Even in the most enlightened of nations there has been a need for legislation to change public attitudes.

It is true that the law alone cannot change attitudes. It does take awareness and education to achieve this, but legislation is required to change behaviours. This underpins the process of education and eventually leads to change in attitudes.

There is no doubt that effective legislation is required to allow deaf people to be treated in the same way as anyone else in society and that we must campaign to achieve it.

Levelling the playing field

Deaf people start life at a disadvantage due to the extra cost that has to be incurred to enable them to function effectively in a world that is based on sound. This is usually compensated for in many of the developed countries by the provision of free hearing aids, special education, assistive devices and, in some situations, human communication support.

In the case of employment, there should be some sort of allowances from the government to enable deaf people to be independent and to compete on a par with anyone else. The payment can be either directly to the employer (eg, for adaption to premises) or to the deaf person (eg, to purchase the necessary support). Otherwise the onus of the additional costs will have to be borne by the employer (or the deaf person!!), to the detriment of the deaf person's chances in employment.

Ideally, there is legislation to prevent discrimination and there are allowances from the government to enable access. But the reality is likely to be around the situation of no legislation and minimal allowances from the state.

Enabling access to employment

As we press for legislation and improved allowances, deaf people are losing out in their lives. Therefore, with or without legislation, we can and must make progress to improve the situation of deaf people in employment. The key is through enabling access.

Key Issues

Before we look at what we can do to make progress through enabling access, there are some issues which deaf people need to resolve within themselves. As they stand, these issues will not help us to make any advances in changing the situation in employment. They have to do with the disparity between the perceptions and expectations of many deaf people and the reality of the situation. Some examples of this:

- a. Deaf people often demand certain jobs as if of right, just because they are deaf, especially if the jobs are in the field of deafness. Not giving a deaf person a job is not necessarily discriminatory. Equal opportunities policies does not quite work that way. It means having as fair a chance in the employment market as anyone else
- b. Some deaf people tend to demand that, as their first language is BSL rather than English, allowances should be made for this to enable them to read reports or whatever. In reality, if the job specification requires a good level of written English, then it is not valid to use the BSL argument. The same would apply to a hearing person whose first language is, say, Russian. He/she would be expected to meet the specification in English competency.

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c. Many jobs require specific qualifications. Due to the inadequacies in the education of deaf children, many deaf people do not have qualifications. Some claim that as the problems in education are not their fault, they should be allowed to by-pass the qualification criteria. It is not as simple as that. The same rule applies to any hearing person who had an inferior education. It is the responsibility of the deaf person to try and obtain the qualification required for their preferred career path - the same as anyone else.

These elements will have a great effect on deaf people's employability. They need to be addressed by deaf people if they want to obtain jobs and make progress in their chosen career paths. It is hard, and does seem unfair, but that's the way it is. We just have to take things as they come.

Key reality

Let us look now at what is necessary to change the situation of deaf people in employment around the issue of removing the barriers to access.

However we approach or perceive all this, the key reality that we have to face is the balance between the rights of deaf people and the employers need to make a profit. We, deaf people and the employers, need to work together to come up with practical solutions that fits in with that key reality.

There are some employers who are willing to work on improving the situation without waiting for legislation. Others would also do something if they are convinced that it would benefit their businesses to introduce non-discriminatory practices.

While it is clear that there is an onus on many employers to change their attitudes, deaf people themselves and their organisations also need to change their attitudes in some respects.

We need to become more aware of and understand the employer's perspective. We need to take responsibility for doing more than merely exhorting our rights. We have a responsibility to adjust our expectations and to work in a

positive way with those employers who are willing to do so.

The Key Action Points

In moving into action on this, there are three key action points that can do a great deal to break down the barriers that deaf people face.

a. First, employers need to be shown how they can benefit from employing deaf people. With some simple research, we could produce figures to convince employers why they should change their attitudes and the benefits they would gain from it.

They should see the enormous number of deaf people that are out there in society and how, by employing them, and demonstrating to the world their positive attitudes to deaf people, they are opening doors to many potential customers. It would also improve the public perception and reputation of their company.

They should also be encouraged to bear in mind the possibility of some of their existing employees becoming deaf. Their experience in employing deaf people would enable them to support the newly deafened employees to continue as before they became deaf. By employing deaf people they better understand the needs of the large number of potential customers among the population of deaf people.

b. Deaf people and their organisations do have a responsibility of offering practical solutions which would enable employers to take on deaf people. Those solutions should not be too expensive for the employer. Two examples of these from the UK experience are:

i. *The RNID'S Louder than Words Charter.*

This lists ten practical points which, if the employer follows, makes their company and its services fully accessible to deaf people. For example:

- providing visual as well as audible information when communicating with employees and customers;
- installing induction loops or amplification systems in key meeting rooms;

**“ Success is measured
not so much by the
position one has
reached, but by the
obstacles one had to
overcome to get there ”**

- providing textphone facilities;
- installing visual fire alarms;
- providing communication support for essential meetings.

All these examples are simple, practical and not too expensive.

ii. *Doncaster College's Guidelines*

This is an example of an easy to understand guide to employers on the needs of deaf employees and how to work with them.

- c. For the national organisations with deaf people to offer some sort of recognition and reward to those employers who comply with the good practices. This would give the good employers good publicity to improve their image and to attract more customers.

With these three principles:

- conviction,
- solutions and
- recognition,

we can achieve many positive steps to improve access for deaf people in employment.

Conclusion

The point of this talk is that, although legislation is the best way forward and we must continue to campaign to achieve this, we can do a great deal right now to improve the situation of deaf people in employment.

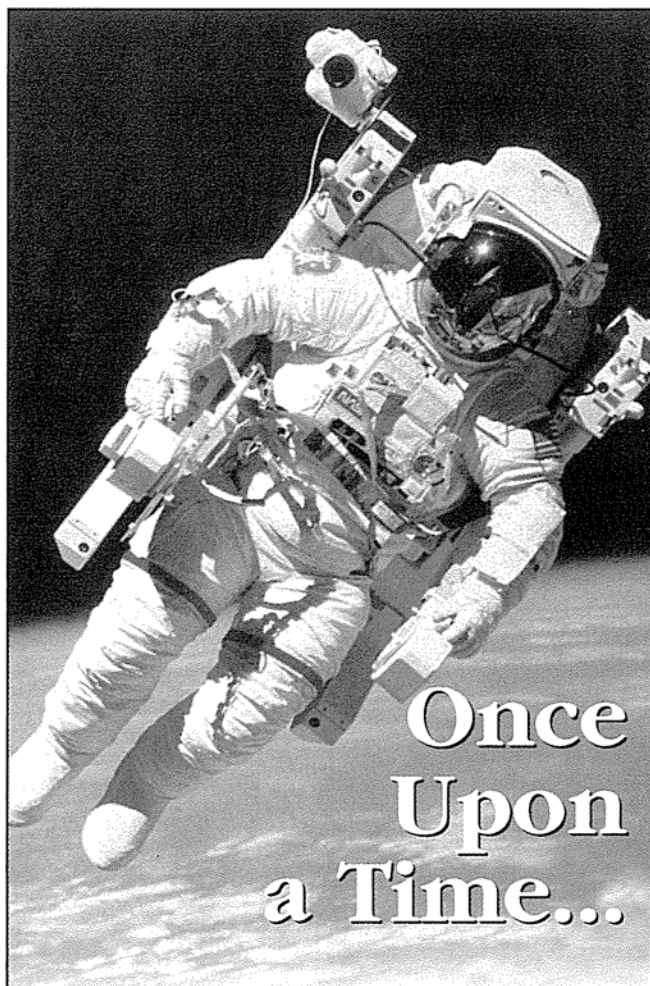
It is not merely through exhortations on rights and all that. It is not to pin all the whole onus and responsibility onto the employers. It is not to wait for someone to do something. Deaf people themselves do have to take on some responsibility to improve the situation by offering practical solutions.

It is a two-way process. Employers need to be aware of the issues and deaf people need to be aware of their own responsibilities. The two of us should be working together to improve the situation to mutual benefit.

It is a slow progress, but by chipping away at it bit by bit we will achieve it and at the same time gain more respect and penetration at the end.

I would like to end by using a quote which is relevant to our situation. It is by a black American campaigner, Booker T. Washington.

“Success is measured not so much by the position one has reached, but by the obstacles one had to overcome to get there”.



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YOU DON'T HAVE TO SHOUT

*Victoria Batchelor talks to New Plymouth woman
Susan Broadhurst about her experiences as a
hearing impaired person*

Susan Broadhurst first noticed something was different when she went for a walk in New Plymouth's Pukekura Park.

"My husband said, 'Listen to how loud the cicadas are', and I couldn't really hear them."

Susan has a severe hearing impairment - cause unknown. "It coincided with my arrival in New Zealand and with the birth of my son. The doctors don't really know what it is. It could be from my mother having german measles before I was born, or it could be the drugs I had as a child."

Although Susan's hearing probably will get worse, "You don't tend to focus on that," she says in her clear, soft voice. "You've got to keep positive. You don't wake up during thunderstorms in the middle of the night," she laughs.

But the common perception that people with hearing loss live in a totally silent world is wrong. "People think you don't hear, but what you hear are distorted sounds. Everybody's hearing loss is different. I have quite good hearing in the low frequencies, so I hear men better than women."

Susan, who has lived in Taranaki since emigrating from England in 1974, works part-time for the IHC as a support person for students at polytech. She also works for a local fruit winery on a casual basis.

She wears a hearing aid behind each ear; without them she can hear very little. She has taken classes in lip-reading and says it is generally no trouble communicating one-to-one.

"With some people it's very easy. Other people, ones who don't move their mouths or people with beards, it is more difficult." And Susan thinks the worst thing about being

hearing-impaired are feelings of frustration.

"You really want to hear everything. You don't want to miss out. Probably the worst aspect of having a hearing loss is you tend to avoid large gatherings. You miss parts of the conversations so it is frustrating as you can't always follow what's being said, and you tend to withdraw. Sometimes you feel like a stuffed dummy."

Although lip-reading provides a bridge to communication, Susan likes spaces to do activities on her own. She reads, gardens and embroiders for enjoyment and time out. Susan's beautiful garden is a riot of colour - a visual feast.

"Lip-reading can be quite tiring. I need spells on my own - you need to strike a balance." But there is little she misses out on.

"Probably the only thing I avoid is going to the theatre. It's annoying as you can't follow what's going on, that and music. Music is hopeless. It's just a distorted noise."

However, there is a vast array of technology available for the deaf and hearing impaired. They can use faxes and TTY's - machines attached to telephones which enable a person to type messages - to aid communications.

"It was different 50 years ago, with little help available, but there is technology available today to aid people."

Susan herself uses a telephone with an amplifier, and a vibrating alarm-clock placed under her pillow. Television programmes with subtitles are a big help, she says. And dealing with the everyday world has frequently led to Susan to see the lighter side of things.

"You develop quite a sense of humour," she laughs on recalling various occasions. "If somebody comes to the door and I am vacuuming, well I can't hear the doorbell."

"If it's good friends they just come in anyway and stand there for a while wondering how to let me know they are there. So they tap me on the arm and of course I jump, and then they jump from my reaction - well, you just have to laugh."

And there is no need to shout, she says. "Once in Stratford some lady thought it might be helpful to shout at me. But I could see she was just trying to be helpful. I could see the funny side."

Susan visits the Hearing Association, a voluntary support organisation which provides support, information and educational services for hearing impaired adults.

The Association estimates that one in seven adult New Zealanders is hearing-impaired and that number is steadily increasing through the effects of noise and in recreation.

The services of the Hearing Association are there for people if they want assistance and Susan says people's quality of life would be vastly improved if they sought help earlier. "Hearing aids make such a difference". Since the article in the March issue of Communicate about Lance Cairns and his own experience with hearing loss, sales of hearing aids around the county shot up. That is what it is all about - public awareness, she says.

"The big thing is that deafness or hearing impairment is not a visible handicap - you can't tell to look at a person. My husband says it would be easier, in a way, if we walked around with Mickey Mouse ears on."

"It's an invisible impairment."

- Daily News New Plymouth



The Deaf Association Interpreter Service

The Human Rights Act Amendment 1993 encourages us to do everything reasonable to make services accessible to the Deaf community. Interpreting services are a cost-effective way of giving access for Deaf people to all aspects of community life, including employment, education, law or government information.

Deaf people need an interpreter

Most deaf people use NZ Sign Language to communicate, but even if they speak so you can understand, it does not mean they can "hear" your response.

It is virtually impossible to get full information without an interpreter. Lipreading is just too hard and inaccurate and compromises all participants.

Do you have to pay?

The Deaf Association is funded only for some interpreter services. It does not charge for assignments with private doctors and other medical specialists, lawyers, employers, funerals, banks and budgeting advice bureaux.

They are, however, required to charge all government departments and large organisations, including hospitals.

Is one interpreter as good as another?

Interpreters and communicators differ. They are professional people who have undergone various levels of training. The Deaf Association will advise which level of skill is appropriate to your needs, particularly as there are different modes of communication used by deaf people in New Zealand.

How do you book an interpreter?

Ring your local Deaf Association office. Any charge is negotiated at the time of making the booking and invoiced when the assignment is complete.

Working in the Deaf world sometimes feels like looking through a prism. There are so many different perspectives, and reality can be hard to pinpoint. As in this picture on the right, one can see the old and the young woman, but it's very hard to see them both together at the same time.

Working in the Deaf world is often like that. The issues and positions are often extreme and emotional. It can be hard to recognise all the realities and that there is truth in all views.

The question of whether deafness is a disability or a culture is as controversial and as emotional as any of the great debates such as cochlear implants, Signed English and oralism. While the debates rage, Deaf people in New Zealand and in many other parts of the world continue to line up for benefits or unnecessarily take low paying jobs and become so accepting that many do not even ask why.

It is important to answer the question. Because Deaf people identify as a cultural linguistic minority and because



The effect of disability on

Tricia Fitzgerald, Chief Executive Officer, Deaf Association of New Zealand

Paper presented to the 18th Rehabilitation Conference

services are largely funded through disability sources, both must be carefully considered and analysed. Both culture and disability have strong values and philosophies which impact on service delivery and whether Deaf people get opportunities to reach their potential.

A Cultural Perspective

Most definitions of culture refer to a common "world view" of members of a cultural group: interpretations of the world, beliefs, how meaning is given to things, decisions on what is important or good. Manners, traditions, customs, language, history and art all define culture. Culture is usually learned at birth but can be learned later in life.

Deaf people see themselves as a cultural-linguistic minority and certainly easily fit the cultural definitions. They point to their shared history, their linguistic bond, the feelings of kinship, the international brotherhood, etiquette on farewells and the beauty of Deaf oratory.

Reasons to hold a cultural perspective

Valued Self and Public Image

Recognition and respect for culture allows Deaf people to avoid discussion of any "impairment".

The cultural model argues that there is no impairment - there is only difference. People who are Deaf simply communicate differently. Lack of hearing is only a problem because of the environmental barriers so prevalent in our communities. Consideration of Deaf people as a minority generates the need for equipment and interpreters to live in a hearing world.

The view of Deaf people as a minority culture which has been socially and economically marginalised fits the need for social supports and development opportunities. In the public's eye, disability is associated with weakness, infirmity and inferiority. Cultural groups are seen more positively.

Respectful services

Perhaps the greatest value of the cultural model is that it forces service providers to view the Deaf community as an

equal, rich and complex society. It demands that we see members of that community as capable of great achievement. Deaf culture, language and communities are celebrated and honoured. The cultural model insists upon linguistic and social knowledge in all Deaf services. Deaf people feel patronised by the view that deafness is simply a "deficit" that should be both fixed and mourned.

Access

Services with a cultural view are more useful for the Deaf. For example, many Deaf people experienced the effects of the disability theory "normalisation" as feeling forced to be normal and speak. Acceptance of Deaf culture allows educationalists to provide a more effective alternative to mainstreaming, the practice of normalisation in schools.

Learning in Deaf schools and classes can be easier and more economic because information is given to groups of

Information for education, work, relationships and life in general is missed unless another communication medium is used. The cost of the bridge between those who hear and those who do not must be borne by the entire population.

Reasons to hold a disability perspective

Service Philosophy and Design

Disability philosophy, values and models of service delivery are well developed and could be used more by Deaf people. The principle of "normalisation" argues that people with disabilities have the right to live normal lives. Normalisation demands that Deaf should be able to develop skills and opportunities like anyone else.

The "social role valorisation" theory has further argued that people with disabilities should have social roles which are seen positively by the public. It encourages organisations

f c u l t u r e a n d D e a f s e r v i c e s

Deaf students in sign language, with knowledge of Deaf learning needs.

Deaf community services are similarly expected to focus on getting Deaf people access to information and services using NZ Sign Language and Deaf friendly ways.

Cultural Resources

Being associated with other cultural groups can be useful. In England's multi-cultural cities, the provision of spoken language interpreters made it much easier to argue for publicly funded Sign Language interpreters.

A Disability Perspective

Disability in this country is defined as "...an intellectual, psychiatric, physical, sensory or age related disability which is likely to last longer than six months and results in a loss of independent function to the extent that ongoing support is required." Deaf people fit this definition, requiring equipment and interpreters because of lack of hearing. The loss of one of two major information channels (sight and hearing) has a huge impact on Deaf people's lives. It is much harder to be deaf in this hearing world.

for people with disabilities to focus on enhancing both the image and skills of the group it serves, so they can be equal and participating members of their own communities.

Disability services are very practical. They are based on the idea that there is plenty of resource in the community to support those who need it. Every available resource is used to meet needs now, including Government funding, as well as family, friends, and other unpaid supports.

Good disability services ensure professionals intervene only to empower and should create as little dependency as possible. There are formal ways to work with devalued people, identifying and meeting need, and advocacy, which can be valuable to all disadvantaged groups.

A long term view

Disability services take a long term view. For example, interpreters, equipment and training opportunities are likely to be needed throughout a Deaf person's life. Support structures and processes are then developed.

This contrasts with social work practice which has traditionally provided support for people only in hard times. Government social work systems tend to focus on short term solutions for individuals or on major social change.

Financial Resources

Recent research shows that hearing people in New Zealand generally see hearing loss as a disability. They are willing to financially support people who, through no fault of their own, need extra assistance. Disability funding is available for equipment, interpreters and support services.

Current disability thinking believes that disability is a natural part of humanity and nothing to be ashamed of. People with disabilities have different abilities but are of no less worth than anyone else.

The community is responsible for giving support. It is optimistic that there are endless opportunities and resources for people with disabilities to get what they need. Unpaid support from family and friends for advocacy or personal support should be provided as much as Government funding.

In contrast, minority cultures in New Zealand do not get access to State or community funded interpreters. They certainly do not access interpreting, support or special equipment services for life.

Political Allies

Disability is the latest "ism" that challenges the prejudices of the larger society. Like the battles for women's and black people's rights, the struggle for disability rights is only possible with unity and strength among the different groups.

Do we really have to choose?

Without the benefits of either culture or disability, Deaf services are weaker. If only a cultural model is used there will be less support for equipment and interpreters, and less access to thoughts and ideas of how to provide those services. If only a disability model is used, there is insufficient attention given to the cultural needs of the Deaf.

If Deaf people want to continue to use disability resources for essential support services with a clear conscience, Deaf people need to be clear about the issues. The Ministry of Health, responsible for disability services, does not recognise the Deaf as a legitimate cultural group in its publications. Nor is interpreting formally recorded as a disability support service. If we are to challenge this thinking, the Deaf Association needs to have firm support for its actions.

Deaf people do not need to choose between the two perspectives. They can choose the best of both to make culturally appropriate disability services which are useful to Deaf people. Cultural and disability perspectives have several important things in common. They have strong values that **Deaf can**. They believe that Deaf pride in their

language and culture is positive for self and public image. They aim to employ staff who will increase the independence of the people they support.

Two major changes are needed if Deaf people use both of these models, however:

1. Recognition of Deaf as a unique and valued culture

Deaf culture is often not fully appreciated and can be confused as simply an expression of common bonds and experiences. Because there is no genetic link between Deaf people, it is not seen as a "real" cultural group.

There is not enough appreciation in New Zealand that linguistic and cultural knowledge is pivotal for any service to Deaf people. Most disability service providers do not train staff working with Deaf people in Sign Language.

2. Deaf acceptance of other disability groups

Resistance from Deaf people to accept the disability label makes a difficult relationship with people with disabilities.

It is normal for people to fear or feel uncomfortable with people who are different. Often this is exactly the reaction Deaf people get from the general public. Only more time and discussion will give Deaf people enough information as to whether they have issues in common with other groups and whether they can treat them as equal and worthy of respect

Deaf Services in New Zealand

Meanwhile, in New Zealand, the blend of both models has resulted in specific tools and processes for identifying and meeting the needs of the Deaf. We are using a needs assessment process which is common throughout the world. NZ is the first country I know of, however, that has committed to operate an holistic needs assessment service for all people with disabilities.

Our service co-ordination services increasingly focus on the fact that there are many resources available now for support and development. We are using families, friends and keen volunteers more for support, while staff learn to juggle the support and training needs of the local Deaf population.

The idea of need, interviews and service coordination have come from disability but they are now based in Deaf culture. All our tools and processes are focussed on being Deaf friendly and respectful of the communities we serve. We believe that the cultural model should lead our services because this is how Deaf people see themselves.

It is still too early to be able to say that these services will motivate and allow Deaf people to take an equal place in New Zealand communities. It has though already brought more training courses, equipment, interpreters and other supports than have ever been available before. ■

Equipment Management Services - Midland, Central and Southern Health Districts

All Deaf and hearing impaired people south of the Bombay Hills should be aware of Equipment Management Service (EMS). EMS administers funding on behalf of the Midland, Central and Southern RHA's for the purposes of essential equipment items for people with disabilities.

To obtain these services, a person requires an assessment with the specialist working with the person to identify the correct solution.

Telephone Project ENABLE 0800 80 1981 to find out where the assessment services are located.

Of particular relevance for Deaf and hearing impaired people, equipment will be provided, where essential, for persons to undertake education and/or vocational training and for obtaining and/or retaining employment.

Contact: Equipment Management Service
New Zealand Disabilities Resource Centre Ltd
840 Tremaine Ave, Palmerston North
e-mail ems@nzdrc.govt.nz
Freephone 0800 18-1995
Fax 06-358-7912



Pamela Cuthbert being presented with her Therapist's certificate by Ted Watson, the then President of the Hutt Valley branch of the Hearing Association, at the branch's AGM earlier this year.

Pamela has tackled her duties with great zeal, because, as she enthused, "I love the job".

And there's plenty to be done, judging by the branch's annual report. Pam and co-therapist Adrienne Lawson assisted well over 1000 members and clients in the wide range of services offered by the branch.

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New Zealand Games for the Deaf

The 39th New Zealand Games for the Deaf were held at Auckland during Labour Weekend 1996. Two hundred athletes from Otago to Auckland entered the Games in the following sports: Basketball, Golf, Lawn Bowls, Netball, Ten Pin Bowling, Touch Rugby.

Interclub points were contested between Otago/Southland, Christchurch, Central, and Northern. Northern and Central District entered teams for the first time this year. In the past, players were entered under their own Deaf Societies and Clubs. After 39 years, it was decided to form regions or districts to allow smaller clubs to get together to form competitive teams. Northern and Central have proved the success of the idea, with more teams entered this year and a total of 200 athletes. This will encourage players from rural and small clubs, and will increase sport membership.

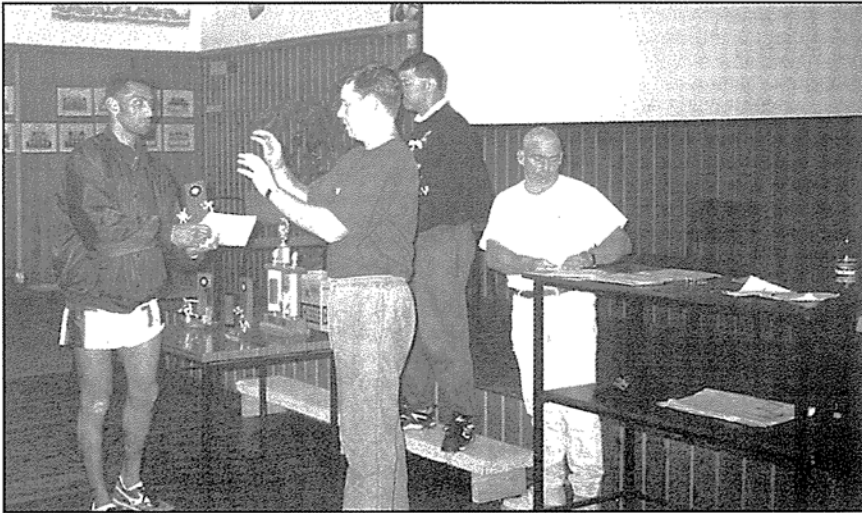
This year, for the first time, Touch Rugby was held as an Interclub sport. Touch Rugby is very popular with young people. Auckland Deaf Society Inc. donated four trophies to Touch Rugby; for men, women, mixed team, and club overall points. Northern and Central entered several teams in Touch Rugby, with all trophies won

by the Northern teams. Touch Rugby went very well in spite of the wet weather endured by players, and all enjoyed it very much. Touch Rugby and Ten Pin Bowling had the largest number of teams entered, with ten teams in each sport. Both sports are very popular with a wide range of ages.

The wet weather affected Lawn Bowls. Rocky Nook in Mt Albert was booked for the Lawn Bowls, but was forced to close due to wet weather damage. Fortunately, Browns Bay Bowling Club was able to take the booking at the last moment and players travelled to the North Shore for their games. The South Island triumphed, with Christchurch repeating their 1995 first place, and Otago/Southland placed second.



| Ten Pin Bowling



Touch Rugby - Dean Gould and Fetuao Valesi

Netball did well under the introduction of Northern and Central. This allowed more teams to enter than in 1995, with six games held to get the final result of a win by Northern "A". Basketball also had more teams and played nine games with Central winning for the men, and taking the prize for the women. The new system also allowed for a stronger Golf entry, and women's interclub was played again for the first time in some years.

This year's games were well supported by sponsors. Auckland City Council gave a grant towards the games, to support Deaf people and their Deaf culture. The Hon, John Banks, Minister of Sport, sent a supportive letter and enclosed a cheque to assist with the games. Our grateful thanks for this support for our Deaf sports people.

A big thank you to Wayne Baston of Kirk Motors, New Lynn, for the loan of a Mitsubishi Lancer 1.6 L for the games. This car was used by volunteer administrators, Shona McGhie and Marion Forrest. The dark blue Mitsubishi was an excellent advertisement for the games, with its NZ Games for the Deaf sign on both sides. Thanks also to Mark Carter of Albion Press, Puriri Street New Lynn, for donating a trophy for women's interclub golf. We are grateful for the continued support that we get from business people.

Points for all sports in the New Zealand Games for the Deaf go towards the Aotearoa Shield. The Aotearoa Shield was won by Northern with the highest overall points for the Games. Northern also won the Albion Press Trophy for women's golf. Cups and Trophies were given out at the prizegiving social at Auckland Deaf Society, and the evening was greatly enjoyed by the large crowd. Many thanks to the host organisers from the Auckland Deaf Society, and particular thanks to Shona McGhie and Marion Forrest for all their hard work as NZGD Administrator and Host Administrator. ■



Christchurch Women Basketball in blue. High leaping intercept against Northern



Wayne Baston, Kirk Motors with Mitsubishi Lancer Marion Forest (L), Shona McGhie (R)

Shona McGhie says Farewell to NZDSA and the NZ Games for the Deaf

Shona McGhie retired from the NZDSA Executive Committee in June 1996, after ten years of service as the Honorary Secretary. For seven of those years she was also the New Zealand Games for the Deaf Administrator, and stayed on to the end of 1996 to assist one last time with the NZ Games for the Deaf. Shona was farwelled at the game's social and left with heartfelt wishes to all Deaf sportspeople to carry on for the future. This is how she remembers those ten years:

Back in 1986 Margaret Coutts left her voluntary position as Honorary Secretary to become Chairperson for the committee for the 16th World Games for the Deaf to be held in Christchurch in 1989. I took over from her as Secretary for the NZDSA. My highlight of all time was preparation before and during the World Games for the Deaf at Christchurch. It gave NZ Deaf Sports Association a great honour to be the first country in the Southern Hemisphere to host the World Games. It was also the first time for New Zealand as a host of an International Deaf Games, and a first for the biggest Deaf Sports Team ever fielded by New Zealand, with 111 New Zealand athletes in all. The 1989 World Games for the Deaf gained New Zealand one Gold Medal, two Silver Medals, and three Bronze Medals. This was a wonderful moment for all of us.

During my time as Secretary, I was Delegate for NZDSA to attend International Games and Congress meetings. I went to Asia Pacific in Australia in 1988; 1993 was the World Games for the Deaf in Bulgaria; and 1996 was again Asia

Pacific in Malaysia. Attending these games and congresses gained me more experience of world-wide Deaf sports and their cultures.

I have continued on for ten years in my position as Honorary Secretary, but it has been a struggle with a full time job as well. My sports work continued on for long hours at night after work and in the weekends, until a part-time National Sports Administrator started work for NZDSA in late 1992, with Hillary Commission funding to support the Administrator's salary. I had the help of Stuart Campbell for eighteen months until he moved overseas for a job contract, then Jill Tremain for the last two and a half years. I have given so much to these two NSA's to understand our NZDSA system and now let us hope for someone Deaf to take over my job as Secretary. It will be much easier for the new Secretary because the NSA will have all the work done for the NZDSA.

For the future, I will continue to help the Deaf children in the Sports Camp weekend early next year, and I will not be far away from NZDSA. I would like to say thanks to the present President, Jeff Went, and the past President, Tony Walton. Thanks also to all present and past Executive Delegates who have worked with me during my 10 years' service. And finally, many thanks to all Deaf sportspeople who have made me a Life member of the NZDSA.

Shona McGhie. 

"Two roads diverged in the wood,
and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the
difference."

— Robert Frost

AIT'S Sign Language Course

The small number of sign language interpreters available for the RI Congress made life difficult for organisers.

"More interpreters would allow more deaf people to make more individual choices rather than be dictated by the lack of interpreters," said interpreter co-ordinator, Catherine White.

However, she and Tricia Fitzgerald, chief executive of the Deaf Association of New Zealand, were pleased with the standard of service they achieved at the Congress.

The use of interpreters at the Congress made Deaf people feel included, Tricia Fitzgerald said.

Before the Congress, she and Catherine White had worked together with the Deaf community and the Congress committee to ensure Deaf people's communication needs were met.

"This has made Deaf people feel their needs are important", says Mrs Fitzgerald.

There were twelve qualified interpreters at the Congress to provide access for Deaf people to the main sessions and workshops and a number of student helpers.

With 120 seminars at the Congress, the association had to devise an alternative programme for Deaf people. The seminars of interest to Deaf people were allocated interpreters. This changed day by day and required a lot of organisation.

Auckland's Institute of Technology offers a ground-breaking sign language course which recognises the skill as an official language in New Zealand. The course is the only permanent formal training course offered by a NZ tertiary institution for sign language interpreters.

Established four years ago, the two year training programme awards official qualifications to those who graduate as interpreters.

Big demand for interpreters a challenge to Congress organisers.

Hutt Valley Hearing Association comes up with a useful sign.

One of the hardest things for the partially deaf is to hear in a noisy background, such as shops or offices. The Hutt Valley Hearing Association has made an effort to address this problem with a small sign for display in shops and offices which advises those with a hearing problem to "Tell the Assistant".

On the reverse side there is a advice to the Assistant or staff. This tells them to

- Face them
- Speak clearly, but don't shout
- Re-word difficult sentences
- Try writing

The Association reports that business people in the area have been very good at displaying the sign on their counters but they are working to get even more doing so.

Contact the Hearing Association on 04-567-8036 for more information.

Flying communication

Boeing and United Airlines have worked together to include a TTY in each personal communications station on their new 777's. The personal communications station is built into each seat's armrest, and consists of a telephone, video recorder, television, intercom, compact disk player, video game, computer link, fax station, shopping kiosk, credit card card scanner and TTY.

Income Support Service Reaching out to the Deaf

The Income Support Service is making a great effort to reach out and assist Deaf people in their employment efforts.

The Deaf free fax and the free TTY lines are one aspect of that support. In addition, each of their offices have been issued with staff guideline booklets with hints and information about communicating with people who are deaf. They are very serious about initiating a new era in communication with their Deaf customers.

They have also produced a package comprising video, booklet and posters to meet the needs of their Deaf and hearing impaired clients, a copy of which was supplied to the National Foundation for the Deaf. This letter was written in response by Alexander Carr, previous National Co-ordinator for Access 2000:

Thank you very much for your package...

What can I say? BRILLIANT! Absolutely fantastic! This is a model for other government departments to follow and should help immensely in breaking new ground in the other areas. ISS is to be commended on being the first to implement such a broad and comprehensive policy and for that, Deaf and hearing impaired people in New Zealand have a lot to thank you for.

I have been showing the booklet and video to various groups of Deaf and they all sit up in shock at the professionalism and commitment that ISS show in making their services accessible for us. This really is the first time it has happened and I can't stress enough how much of a difference it will make.

Congratulations ISS. Perhaps some other Government departments might soon follow your example.

TOLL FREE FAX NUMBERS FOR THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED

Sky Television has a toll free fax number for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired community. It is

0800-759-329

(SPELLS SKY FAX)

and is available for use now.

Income Support has a national free-fax service for the Deaf from 8am to 5pm every weekday.

Their operator is Sandy Giles and the number is

0800-621-621

When we pull together....

We could all learn from this letter forwarded to us from the Southland Branch of the Hearing Association written to them by the Southland Association of Grey Power:

Re: The Sound System in the City Council Chamber

...the council has finally acceded to our request to install a sound system in the Public Gallery.

We have nothing but praise for the equipment. It is effective and unobtrusive from both visual and auditory criteria.

Grey Power Southland is deeply grateful to your Association for the endorsement and support you gave to our submission. We have no doubt that being able to align our claim with an Association experienced in dealing with hearing problems such as yours, gained it a respect it fully deserved.

Co-operation between organisations such as ours proves what can be accomplished by people working together. We would welcome any opportunity to add our weight to issues you feel have a common cause to both our organisations.

Kelston Deaf Education Centre Teacher Honoured

Mary Ann Harding, who teaches at the Whangarei outpost of the Kelston Deaf Education Centre, received a National Excellence in Teaching Award at a ceremony in Wellington in November.

Twenty New Zealand school teachers - 10 primary/intermediate and 10 secondary - were selected to receive Regional Awards from over 300 nominations from parents and secondary school students.

The National 'Excellence in Teaching' Awards are a community initiative designed to identify and honour excellent teachers, to raise the status of teaching in the community and to encourage excellence within the teaching profession. They were launched in New Zealand this year by the Australian Scholarship Group (ASG), a non-profit co-operative of New Zealand and Australian parents planning for their children's academic future.

Mary Ann Harding was praised for her work in educating Whangarei's Deaf and hearing impaired children. The parent who nominated her said she is highly regarded and her successes are held up as an example of what can be achieved.

The parent who nominated Mrs Harding for the award said her child has benefited from her teaching to an extent that she is currently performing on a par with top hearing students in her mainstream school. The parent explained how Mrs Harding took shopping and to a bank a child who was struggling with the concept of money. Another child

was taken to the local stock sales to give him a better understanding of auctions.

Mrs Harding's mission statement is, 'keeping kids keen'. She says what satisfied her most about teaching is happy, successful learners acquiring English literacy despite enormous odds.

Schools from which the teachers receiving the Regional Awards come will also receive a volume of the 'Program Achieve' series published by the 'You Can Do It' educational programme, and book prizes donated by education publishers Rigby Heinemann.

Regional Award recipients each gave a short presentation to an independent selection panel comprising representatives of parents, school trustees, students and teachers. These addresses and written submissions will be considered in the process of selecting six national award recipients to be announced next March.

These National Award recipients will receive ACORN computer equipment and special trophies at their schools.

In addition, two teachers - one primary/intermediate and one secondary - will each receive a \$5000 study grant for professional development and \$2000 in educational material for their schools

For further information contact:
Alan Merrie, Co-ordinator, ASG
Ph 09-373-5218, Fax: 09-373-2030

Mary Ann Harding who teaches at the Whangarei outpost of the Kelston Deaf Education Centre receives her National Excellence in Teaching Regional Award from Chairman of the NEiTA Foundation, Terry O'Connell.



Hearing Dogs!!!

Johanna Brens

Technology is not the only answer

An article that appeared in the Waitakere Times took the eye of the editor - who's a sucker for dogs at any time. First reaction was, "this can't be serious"; then, "Wow! What a concept". Johanna Brens has won a scholarship to go to the UK to train to be a trainer of Hearing Dogs, and Communicate invited her to tell her story.

I have moderately severe deafness and my hearing has been deteriorating since I was young. I used to receive some support from Kelston Deaf Education Centre (as it is now known). I trained as an enrolled nurse in 1984 and in 1990 qualified as an Occupational Therapist. Currently, I work in a local hospital assisting people with their rehabilitation after injury or illness and am learning NZSL and know some Signed English. I have worked with a few Deaf people and have some Deaf friends.



In 1991, while living alone in Whakatane, my hearing deteriorated further. I could no longer hear people coming to the door or the telephone ringing. People told me later that I was home but hadn't heard them. I



was also used to hearing the pots boiling. One day, I was working in the kitchen boiling chicken and I didn't hear it boiling away. Flames were coming above the pot by the time I turned around to see; thankfully there was no damage.

During this time I heard about Hearing Dogs for the Deaf overseas.

I wrote to the Hearing Association and a while later was given the contact of a lady in Hamilton. After some correspondence, I joined the committee headed up by Pauline Halcombe and attended these meetings throughout 1992 and 1993. Pauline had circulated a survey via the National Foundation for the Deaf to gauge/judge people's interest and need for Hearing Dogs. Pauline trained a demonstration dog, "Hope", a springer spaniel. However, for various reasons the committee eventually ceased to exist. At

these meetings, though, I met others with an interest in Hearing Dogs and lately I have re-established contact with two women who have trained their own Hearing Dogs.

I also have my own dog who now has "Hearing Dog" recognition which allows you to have a reduced dog licencing fee. My dog is Ettie. Her full name is Fayette, which means, "Little Faithful One". Ettie is a poodle x spaniel x fox terrier. She alerts me to many things around the home and when we are visiting close friends and family.

Are Hearing Dogs useful to Deaf people?

Hearing dogs are trained to alert their Deaf or hearing impaired owner to:

- baby alarms
- telephones ringing
- doorbells or people at the door
- alarm clocks ringing
- kettles whistling
- smoke and fire alarms
- oven timers

Hearing dogs let their owners know of these sounds by tapping their owner with their paw and leading their owner to the sound source. The dogs are trained with a specific owner's needs in mind.

With the help of a hearing dog, Deaf and hearing impaired people can enhance their independence and may feel less lonely. Hearing dogs are working dogs: they also provide security and are friends to their owners.

How are the dogs selected and trained?

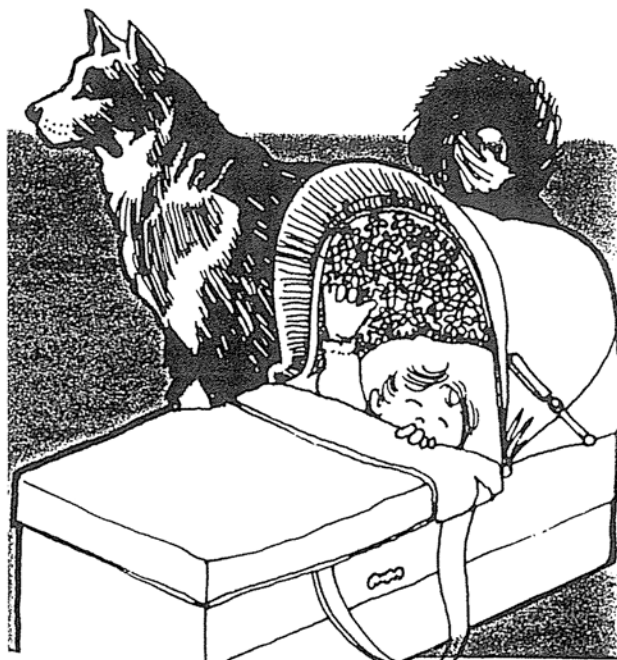
Overseas, prospective dogs are received from various sources, eg. animal refuge centres or purebred donations. The training centres assess the dogs' responses to sounds and willingness to learn.

They take them to the training centre for a few weeks' further assessment and either place the dog with a puppy walker or return the dog.

After puppy walking, the dog enters the three to four month training programme whereby they are trained to respond to sounds mentioned above.

The prospective recipient then stays at the centre before returning home with the dog and receives monitoring from the trainer for a few days. The trainer returns regularly to start with, then periodic followup unless the recipient asks for a visit or reassessment. The visits then become yearly.

Overseas, hearing dogs are identified by their yellow or orange lead, while a dog that is in training may wear a yellow



or orange coat. In colder countries, they also wear their coat once they are trained.

Hearing dogs have access to many public areas. This is an ongoing process to receive recognition and access along the lines that have been established for guide dogs for the blind.

Proposed project to benefit New Zealand

I wish to see a hearing dog service in New Zealand and have applied to several organisations for funding and to date have been successful in one of these applications. This year in April, I was awarded a \$4,000 Woolworths Scholarship towards travel and study at the British Hearing Dogs for the Deaf Training Centre. I made enquiries about training in the Pacific but at the moment they are able to offer observation rather than training. I have been advised that the British service would like to see an international baseline standard set and that is why I am planning towards training in England.

Presently in New Zealand, people who would like a hearing dog are training their own dogs to varying stages of ability. This is great but further skills are needed in the training of hearing dogs.

This type of observation and training would mean that a hearing dog service to the Deaf and hearing impaired community in New Zealand can be provided.

I hope to undertake this training/observation time in April - June 1997 and possibly into July to assist with the British Hearing Dogs Centre in their major fund raising event of the year.

*inter*active

from David Guthrie
e-mail gmm@ihug.co.nz

There has been debate in the pages of the New Zealand Herald lately arising from an article, which appeared on October 29, that raised the issue of the moral basis of society. Some of the article's key points, as summarised by the Herald were

- The whole intellectual foundations of the world we live in have changed dramatically in the past generation;
- Traditional "virtues" were based on a legislating God, an unbounded confidence in reason and Western values;
- The essence of the world in which we live is that the past does not bind us;
- We have reached the end of the period of human history in which our lives were shaped by "Western" culture and its associated values and virtues;
- As the world of global culture settles on a new tack, there will be a new set of "virtues" - because the community chooses them to be so.

Now, for the deaf and hearing impaired, for all those fighting for recognition of the rights of the disabled, there are major issues here. What grounds are there for supporting the claim that the disabled have any rights at all, including the right of access? The whole human rights movement is a product of a Western value system that may or may not survive the transition to global culture. If the

interactive sets out to be deliberately thought-provoking and debate-generating. You can interact by

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If you are connected with the Internet, follow the interactions on:

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and each Communicate will give a running account of the interactions.

deaf and the hearing impaired are to maintain the ground they have made, let alone move forward, they are going to have to stake a claim for recognition. The new environment recognises no universal moral principle, beyond question, which says that they necessarily have any rights at all.

The position is going to become sharper and more intense in the future. The world is rapidly exhausting its resources and humanity cannot long continue to live its present lifestyle. As resources become scarcer, who gets any slice of the cake? Who loses out? If the human race has to manage its population level down to a fraction of the present number, where does this leave the disabled?

To crystallise the issues:

- Why should those with disabilities receive any support or be recognised as possessing any "rights"? What is the moral basis - is there a moral basis - for the claim on society by the disabled?
- The future holds a radical change in the way human beings live. Resource consumption is going to become meagre in comparison to the present and we may see a drastic downsizing of the planet's population. What place will those with disabilities have in this not-too-distant future?

Note: This Interactive column has no connection whatsoever with Interactive Recruitment and any similarity between the names or the way in which the names are presented is purely co-incidental.

Disability complaints third highest in NZ

Discrimination cases against disabled people make up 17% of complaints to the New Zealand Human Rights Commission.

Disability complaints are third highest behind age and sexuality.

"We have come a long way in terms of acceptance of people with disabilities being active participants in society", says Dave Henderson, chief executive of the Disabled Persons Assembly. "But the figures show we still have a long way to go."

New Zealanders' attitudes towards people with disability are a bit like the curate's egg - good in parts, he said.

However, from a world view, New Zealand lies well towards the front both legislatively and in attitude.

"Legislation is meaningful here in that at least it is being implemented," he says.

Lauren Treep, reporting in the Congress News, RI Congress.

Deaf ears

My voice and my heart cry out for an ear,

Deaf to my screams, why can't they hear?

I go unheard and crawl within myself,

Crying for hours, it doesn't help.

My tears continue until I decide no more,

I wonder if they care what I'm crying for?

Each time I get louder, in hopes that they'll hear,

Each time my voice, falls on deaf ears.

Sonya Dickerson

<http://cam0432v2student.utwente.nl/writing/deafears.htm>

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New products

Phonak enhances hearing with latest technology

Phonak has released PiCS2, the Swiss hearing instrument company's latest digitally programmable hearing instruments. The first models in this range are behind-the-ear and in-the-ear instruments for mild to moderate hearing loss. Models for more severe loss are being developed to extend the PiCS2 range.

PiCS2 incorporates the most comprehensive range of automatic signal processing options available in any hearing instrument. This further enhances the flexibility with which PiCS listening programmes can be tailored for different listening environments. A touch of the remote control selects the most suitable programme for each listening situation.

The Piconet2 P2 also incorporates Phonak's patented AudioZoom system, the most effective system available for enhancing hearing in background speech noise.

For further information contact:
Phonak New Zealand,
Tel: 09 486 1849 or 0800 654 327



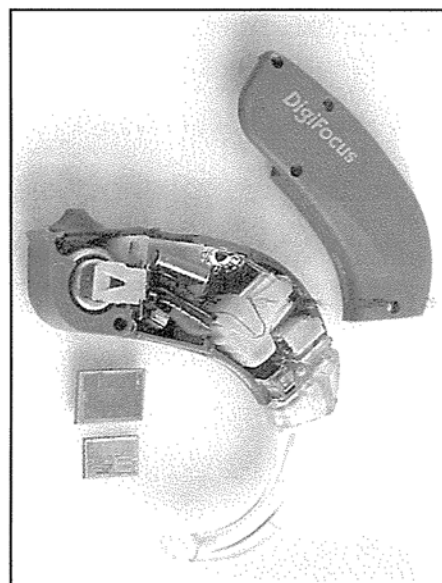
DigiFocus from Oticon

A new hearing aid which has the processing power of a Pentium desktop computer has been released in New Zealand by Oticon.

DigiFocus is a fully digital hearing instrument. A tiny 4-gram computer for the ear, DigiFocus will give hearing impaired people the advantages of state-of-the-art digital technology used for music CD's, digital video and mobile phones.

"DigiFocus marks the beginning of a whole new technology, a very important milestone in our profession," according to Dr Donald Schum, Senior Audiologist at Oticon headquarters in Copenhagen.

Oticon sees DigiFocus, which cost over \$26 million dollars to develop, as a major breakthrough in hearing technology. The DigiFocus aid can be programmed on a computer by an audiologist while the hearing impaired person is wearing it, allowing more adjustment than is possible for analog aids.



Analog aids offer, at most, adjustment in three frequency bands. DigiFocus divides sound into seven bands to enable it to be customised very accurately to meet each individual's hearing needs. Because a digital sound is more robust, it can be processed and manipulated without introducing distortion or noise.

DigiFocus is pre-set and self-adjusting, adapting automatically to the surroundings. The digital audio processor in its two tiny computer chips can organise frequencies and manipulate sound signals to separate them from background noise. Sounds never get too loud or too quiet, yet a realistic difference between soft sounds and strong sounds is maintained. DigiFocus is designed to provide the highest level of speech clarity even in crowds and noisy surroundings.

For further information, contact
Oticon New Zealand, PO Box 9128 Te Aro, Wellington
Freephone 0508-200 200, Fax 04-473-4440

Sennheiser

A1 Audioport

Over the years everyone experiences some degree of hearing loss. To alleviate difficulties that this can cause you, Sennheiser has developed an economical solution. The Audioport A1 amplifies surrounding noise without making your own voice seem unnaturally loud. Its special compensation electronics ensures perception of a properly balanced acoustic environment.

They are subsidy approved by the National Audiology Center. The Stethoscope style headset is easy to fit and wear. For hygiene reasons, the rubber ear plugs can be taken off and washed. An alternative foam ear plug is also available as an option. The Set is supplied with a spare battery and battery charger.

The volume control is easy to operate and the rechargeable battery has a ten hour operating time.

A two year warranty is standard with this Sennheiser product.

For further information, contact
Anthony King, Syntec International,
Ph/Fax: 09-358 2525

HELPS FOR TEACHING DEAF ADULTS THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

"Hearing" is more than the physiological process of transforming invisible sound waves into audible signals, it is also a matter of perception, of attention, of involvement, and of willingness (or motivation) to listen. Thus, recognizing that teaching is more than talking and that learning is more than hearing is a crucial insight required for the successful teaching of any student. However, teaching deaf students will make the hearing teacher more conscious of the complicated nature of the communication process and thereby help him become a better teacher in a class of hearing adults

Difficulties with English

The teacher of deaf adults can expect many of his students to have difficulties with English. Their vocabulary may be limited and their writing may reflect a great dependence on what they see. They may tend to omit entirely connective words such as prepositions. Their English may seem awkward or jumbled.

In a written exercise, some deaf students may leave out definite articles, to say nothing of the indefinite ones. But unless the class in which they are enrolled is one in English composition, it need be no big thing. In a driver education class, for example, the instructor might give a written examination on traffic safety and urge students to answer in complete sentences. But if the deaf students who have never heard a horn blow, or the sound of a traffic officer's voice, or the sputterings of an improperly tuned engine - not to mention their instructors voice - still manage to have all the concepts correct, the instructor should feel well rewarded even if all the sentences are not structurally perfect English.

Source: Willard J. Madsen

Recently I attended a get-together for a group of families with pre-school deaf children. I attended the meeting hoping that I may be of some help to the families, as I have a son born with congenital heart disease and profoundly deaf. He is now 16 years old.

I was saddened to see these families' look of hopelessness, that they were all learning sign language and had no real direction; and all seemed tied up with their own individual problems - which is only to be expected.

I know about sadness, as any parent with a deaf child is not happy about it. I will be sad for my son until the day that I die. Nevertheless, parents must realise that the main person to consider is the child. Sadness is not with the child, as they are born deaf and know nothing else at this stage of their lives. The child needs a positive parent who shows love and confidence, and to show happiness in all things that will ensure the child has the same outlook on life.

The child needs you and especially your ears. That is all that is missing - a good set of ears.

It saddened me to see parents signing to each other, laughing and playing some sort of game, thinking that learning sign language is the greatest thing since sliced bread; while the children were oblivious to what was going on.

The deaf children are the ones that must grow up and face life in a hearing world. The parents cannot be there all of the time to hold their hands; and the problems that the parents will face - and they are never ending - are only secondary to the problems with which the child will live .

My son had open heart surgery as a child and his heart still operates like an old agitator washing machine. Thankfully, it is stable and he is profoundly deaf. So, yes, I know about sadness; but I am a very proud father of a deaf

boy who speaks very well, never signed until this year at age sixteen and lip reads like a natural. I regard my son as being the complete deaf person as he speaks, signs, lip reads and interprets for his deaf friends when needed.

This description of my son was what I wanted to tell the parents of these pre-schoolers, to offer hope that all is not lost. Your child is full of potential. If the brain is not damaged and the voice box, etc, is not damaged, then why should there be no hope of the child ever speaking? The meeting brought back memories of our own experience when our son was diagnosed with rubella syndrome and we were told, "your child will never speak". Sign language classes were recommended as our only hope of communication.

Our son was then 16 months old, a victim of the rubella epidemic in the late 70s, born 1st November 1979, and most parents attending sign language classes were also victims of that epidemic. I believe that some 30 families were affected at that time. Everything was, of course, new to us, as was the case with all the parents in the same boat.

To us, the classes offered a negative outlook and we did not join in with the opinion that this sign language thing was exciting. In fact, we were amazed at how many people seemed to go overboard with this exciting thing called "Total Communication or Sign Language".

Our opinion was that we must put all of our energy and efforts into teaching our son to speak. If this failed, then we would have no alternative but to go to signing as the way for communication.

That first meeting was our last, and we went home to begin the long road of teaching our 16 month old son the art of speech. That decision has paid off handsomely and our son is very grateful to us that he is able to live in both the

Give your child
a chance

Tony Mullins

hearing and deaf worlds. This has caused a few problems for our son along the way in the sense of being accused of playing deaf because he speaks too well or lip reads too well to be deaf, etc. But those disappointments are only a hiccup as most people do not understand what our son has achieved in life with a handicap of being profoundly deaf. He can live with that problem as it is far better than not being able to talk, a problem that hearing people do not comprehend.

It is most heartbreaking to see deaf children with no speech getting into severe problems trying to express themselves in difficult circumstances. Like being accused of something they did not do or wanting to tell someone about something they have a problem with. The frustration that follows is horrendous and often they find themselves totally misunderstood and even end up in trouble or are punished simply because they might have wanted to say something quite helpful or nice to someone.

Yes, I am very pleased about my son speaking and able to cope in society, something that I believe every child should be given as a right. At least they should be given the chance to learn with 100% input from all people involved with the child.

Of course, there are some who will say everyone is different and you can't teach deaf kids to talk. There are sceptics in life for everything. But I say that if you get a percentage of kids to speak, then that percentage of kids will have a brighter future because they were given the chance. It is not our right to say, "my kid cannot be taught to speak" if you have not given the child every opportunity to learn. It took six months of trying to get our son to say one clear word, and that word for a child was one everyone says all the time to a baby - "up"! How many times do you say "up" to a baby during the course of a day and night or simply say, "up, up, up" so that word is all that you focus on all of the time. Other words or meanings can wait, as once the breakthrough comes, then other words will follow with the same focus on the next word, and so on.

Preschoolers have the best chance to learn, as the vocal chords are still developing and any noise is good, so natural development is happening.

For a hearing parent to simply say that I have chosen sign language as my child's first language means, in most cases, that signing will be my child's only language; and I say that it is unfortunate for the child if the parent has that attitude. Whether we like it or not, it is a hearing world and I believe that we must give our deaf children every chance of being able to live in this hearing world with as much skill as we can possibly give them.

Hearing aids are given to children in the hope that any sound received can be of help. Even if it is a muffled sound, it is quite different to the next muffled sound and words can be identified with the help of lip movement and pronunciation of the muffled word. Gradually the child will get closer and closer to the correct sound as they try to say it with you over time. Soon the muffled word takes on a real meaning and the speech clearly related to that word as the parent concentrates on helping the pronunciation of the word, and so on.

The most useful recognised sound will be the child's own name, as you may get the child's attention easier. If the child can recognise the sound as its own name it will turn to you, and that shows that the aids are very important for the words to be understood. The child must wear fully maintained aids at all times, except sleep. That means strong batteries, keeping the aids clean and dry and the moulds clean and dry.

Some aids will not work as well as others but, in a baby, this is hard to detect when starting to use them. We had aids that were the best you could get, but they were incompatible with our child.

A different brand may be much better, as in our case. Once the child recognises sounds with one make of aid then you will know when you try another whether your baby responds or not.

In our case, we found that the Oticon Box Aid was great to begin with. Others simply had no effect as our child did not respond at all.

The Oticon Box Aid was hard to keep clean all of the time with a spoon fed child, but it had the benefit of being able to speak directly to your baby into the box as the baby watched our mouth saying the words and with our hand gently under his chin to make a direct one-on-one situation.

We later moved on to Oticon aids behind the ears and we still find this brand to be the best for our son as he has tried everything, but is adamant this is the only make for him. He wears them all of the time.

I hope that what I have said will help parents and child to have hope in the knowledge that it is most likely that you can teach your child to speak and live a much better quality of life in a hearing world.

When we were told, "your child will never speak", I was hit hard, and sad at the thought that I will never hear my son call me "Dad". Well, I can tell you today that "Dad" isn't all that he calls me - and I am delighted.



letters

TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I write to express my disappointment over some of the content of the September issue of *Communicate*. I understood this would be a special issue designed to coincide with Deaf Awareness Week, focusing on the agreed theme of New Zealand Sign Language, and the New Zealand Sign Language Interpreting Service.

The first three major articles were very good, and then I turned the page to see "*Statistics ring alarm bells*", and further down in the same article "...*what it's like to suffer hearing loss as a child...*". Later in the magazine, I read of an individual "...*still striving to be "normal"...*" and an article on medical research into hereditary deafness.

You had the chance to fill the magazine with the themes of Deaf Awareness Week, thereby spreading the message that Deaf is different **and normal** for many New Zealanders. That Deaf people don't consider their deafness a condition of suffering. You could have run a feature article showing another side of hereditary deafness - families with several generations of Deaf people, people who are often the linguistic role models within the Deaf community and often the community's most eloquent spokes-people. You could have featured New Zealand's growing sign language interpreting service/profession - which was completely absent in the magazine - and highlighting the many rich and exciting aspects of the Deaf community. Instead, you chose to give much space to the merchandising of deafness with new technology and equipment, when the message of Deaf people is, "We're okay, we don't need fixing".

I'm left disappointed and frustrated, because an organisation such as the NFD should know better.

Nick Tilly

Sign Language Interpreter Service Coordinator

Tertiary Complaint Case Outcome Applauded

Victoria University's commitment to improve access for students with disabilities is a break-through for all tertiary students facing similar barriers, according to Diana Murray, President of ACHIEVE, the National Post Secondary Educations Disability Network.

It signals to all other tertiary institutions that they have a legal responsibility to provide equal educational opportunities, not just a moral obligation.

Victoria University's commitment to improved access and consultation is the result of a settlement in early November of a complaint to the Human Rights Commission made by a group of Victoria University students and supporters.

Cuts to tertiary institutions' bulk funds have made resource and access provision more difficult. However, in many cases she believes what is needed is a reassessment of spending priorities.

The outcome also highlights the urgency for the Ministry of Education to provide additional funding for high costs that tertiary institutions could not reasonably be expected to pay.

ACHIEVE has been working with the Ministry of Education to develop a funding system which would cover high cost resources such as interpreters and note-takers for deaf students.

What all this means, says Diana Murray, is that people with disabilities will at last have the opportunity to fulfil their educational and career aspirations and not be reliant on benefit payments.

The relatively small annual cost to achieve this will mean savings of millions to the country in the long term.

ACHIEVE is an organisation established to ensure equal opportunity and access to post secondary education and training for people with disabilities.

For further information, contact:

Diana Murray

Manager, Disability Liaison Office, AIT
Phone 09-307-9951; A/H 09-420-2882
Fax/TTY 09-307-9849

or *Sonya Logan*

Head of Department, Senior School
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