

Sounds of Life

A celebration of the power of
Cochlear Implants to Transform Lives



*Loneliness doesn't come from having no one around you,
but from being unable to communicate the things that
are important to you. - Carl Jung*



The Cochlear Story

By Professor Graeme Clark

This book is a celebration of sound. The sound of waves crashing on the beach, the rustling of leaves, raindrops falling on the window pane, of music and lively conversations – and perhaps most joyous of all, the voices and laughter of children.

This book is dedicated to all the sounds heard and treasured by the more than 400,000 people who can now hear again, or for the first time, with their Cochlear and bone conduction implants.

It is also dedicated to hope and the belief that all things are possible if only we persist. Forty years ago, there was a widely held belief that nothing could be done about hearing loss. Many experts said that the inner ear was too complicated and delicate for the concept of cochlear implants to work.

But my optimism and passion could not be overcome, no matter how overwhelming the opposition became. It was the passion of my childhood – to help my deaf father and “fix ears” when I grew up.

It took many years of research, and the inspiration found in the shape of a shell on the beach, but my childhood dream was finally realised in 1978. This was thanks to the optimism and belief of another man, Rod Saunders, who agreed to receive the world's first multi-channel Cochlear implant.

Rod had lost his hearing in an automobile accident, but when we turned on his implant he could hear again. Seeing his face when he heard those first sounds was one of the happiest days of my life.

So this book is dedicated to Rod, whose faith in my dream paved the way for hundreds of thousands of people around the world to treasure those everyday sounds that the wonderful people in this book can experience now, and that so many of us take for granted. Their joy, and that of their loved ones, continues to inspire all those who dedicate their lives to make each new implant better than the one before.

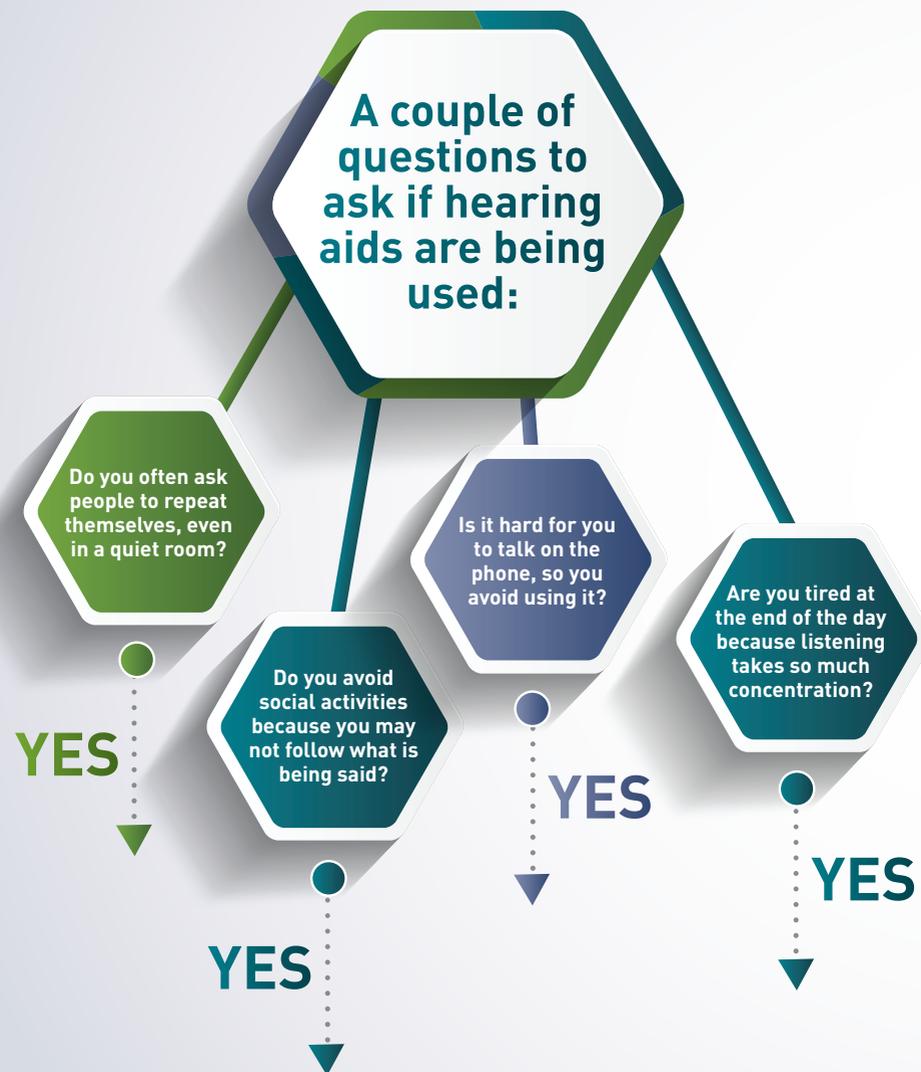
To those passionate and eternally optimistic professionals, this book is dedicated to you too. May you continue to find ways to make the ‘impossible’ possible.

Lastly, and sincerely, if you struggle to hear, this book is for you too. May its stories inspire you, as they have me, and give you hope that you will once again celebrate the sounds of life.



Professor Graeme Clark AC
Inventor of the multichannel Cochlear Implant

If you are a health professional or
an adult with hearing loss,
A COCHLEAR IMPLANT
may be the right hearing solution.



If the answer was **YES** to one or more of these questions, please refer to the Cochlear Implant Program. For information visit the Northern Cochlear Implant Programme at www.ncip.org.nz or the Southern Cochlear Implant Programme at www.scip.co.nz

ASSESSMENT PROTOCOL FOR ADULTS



Following the Adult review meeting a letter is sent to client and to supporting professionals to advise of outcome



Ngairé Mathew
73, Hamilton

My progressive hearing loss was already significant as a child.

I was determined not to let it stop me fulfilling my ambitions and became a physiotherapist and practiced until my late forties when my deafness forced me to retire.

As my hearing became worse I became increasingly isolated from conversation, spending most of the time just watching others talking, feeling as though I was encased in a glass box. My difficulty to communicate caused frustration for family, and friends to drift away .

I finally received a CI in May 2014. It is just amazing to hear speech clearer than I can ever recall, and to enjoy conversation at cafes, restaurants, walking along a footpath, travelling in a car, and to hear the dialogue of TV, films and so on. Social functions are enjoyable now, and I can take an active role in society including, chairing meetings for the first time in my life.



Mariana Yip

21, Auckland

I was born in New Zealand and my family came from China. So I am Kiwi-banana, (aka Kiwi-Chinese).

Losing my hearing at first, I had no memories until I had surgery. After surgery, I suffered a lot and I believed that the hardest thing was to develop language. Speaking and writing development was very challenging for me because I was a bit late to develop learning at the age of 6.

After having my CI, things were very challenging! I had to practice HARD for my development skills and language. Meeting people is pretty exciting and scary at the same time. I thought I was like an alien because I wore the thing that holds the CI around my body. However, people embraced me with open arms and made friends with me. I learnt to be accepted by others and myself, too. I tend to stay positive and work hard no matter how hard it is for me.

I really enjoy this life because I never give up on learning and practicing. There are some things I need to improve, so I keep going and work hard on this life. "Work hard. Play hard," is the inspiring quote for my life.

I love listening to music and watching movies or dramas while listening to their voices and music soundtracks. I also enjoyed the sounds of waves, too.



Lynn Chen

23, Auckland

Howdy Kiwiland! I'm Lynn, aged 23 from Auckland! Since my arrival on this planet, I had been immersed in the world of silence. Looking back, I am extremely appreciative that I had been given the opportunity to be a cochlear implant wearer at the age of 7.

Since then, the Cochlear Implant had planted a seed in allowing me to proceed to where I am now- a person who is capable of experiencing 99% of what life has to offer. The sounds I loved is the little sounds which tends to be overlooked by many- rustling of the leaves, rumbling of hungry tumms, and ringing of tiny bells...oh...and I also enjoy having fun with my friends.



Aynsley Staessens

32, Tauranga

Hi, I'm Aynsley, a 32-year-old mum to three children, and together with my husband, we live in the beautiful city of Tauranga.

I was born with a genetic severe hearing loss, however it wasn't until I gave birth to my second daughter in 2011 that my hearing loss really began to impact my life, and discussions were had and decisions made to investigate if I would be a suitable recipient for a Cochlear Implant. At the beginning of this process my hearing was still "too good" for a CI, but as it continued to deteriorate I was reassessed by the CI team in Auckland and was officially put onto the waiting list in early 2014. My whole life I never believed that my hearing was actually affecting mine or my family's life until early 2015 when I became more self-conscious, withdrawn and isolated, as I was unable to hear accurately and many times just assumed what was being said. In late June 2015 I received my CI and I was switched on in early July.

The sounds I love to hear include hearing my own voice on the voicemail - it doesn't sound as "different" to normal people anymore; how noisy a quiet house actually is; and the ability to be able to correct my children when they say words/sounds incorrectly.

Being able to go a café with friends, to chat over coffee and catch up on life's events is something I love and treasure now too.

My own CI journey hasn't exactly been smooth sailing, but I don't regret it for one second and only now do I realise how much sound I have missed out on throughout my life.



John Reweti Davis

63, Kaikohe

I am of Ng Puhi descent, and I received my cochlear implant in 2015. It changed my life.

Life was tough before I received my implant because I had isolated myself from my friends and family. I thought I was useless and had cut myself off from everyone. I spent a lot of time in the bush and my friends were the animals - they didn't get frustrated with me.

The implant has resulted in a big improvement in my hearing but the social damage the hearing loss caused will take much longer to recover from. I've missed out on so much but I'm slowly getting back in touch with my family. It's going to take time.

Things are a bit better now. I say a 'bit' because I'm never going to get back all those relationships with those people I pushed away because I felt like I was letting them down. But I am back playing touch rugby and have even completed a computer course since having the implant. Life is getting better day-by-day.



Donna Quinn

41, Waitakere

I was born with a congenital progressive hearing loss for which I was fitted with bilateral hearing aids when I was 2 years old. When I reached my early twenties, my hearing progressively got to the point where the hearing aids were of no benefit. I had developed Meniere's disease, which saw me hospitalised and bedridden when attacks flared up and eventually what hearing I had was eroded.

A world of silence robbed me of the business I had built up. I could not hear or talk to my customers as well as I used to, answer the phone, take bookings...it was just too hard. I had been a social and outgoing person, but when the silence came all I wanted to do was to be alone, away from the world in a sense. Unbeknown to people on the outside, I was in a very dark place.

Looking back, I think I was really quite depressed. But then I was given hope. There was light at the end of the tunnel that I could be part of the hearing world again, through the gift of a cochlear implant.

It was 2007 and I was 32 years old when I got my life back after receiving a cochlear implant. For the first time in my life, I was exposed to new and exciting sounds... sounds I never thought I would get the privilege to hear, my daughter's whispers and laughter, the ticking of the clock as time moves forward and the sounds of raindrops as they gently fall against the window pane. To me these are the most beautiful sounds in the world...

I also regained my confidence in all aspects of life, personal, working and socially. It definitely opened up doors of opportunities. Within a matter of months, I was back to using the phones again, a skill that is used on a daily basis in my job. I am no longer in a silent world and feel inclusive in the hearing world. I can safely say that there is nothing I cannot do...





Lyn Polwart

80, Pukekohe

I had been a teacher, but as my hearing loss got steadily worse, I struggled more and more in the classroom. Then 10 years ago, I became severely deaf which robbed me of my career, my position in my family and society. I thought all hope was gone.

Likening deafness to a living death is not too much of an exaggeration. Living with deafness, you are in solitary confinement all day and everyday. It was torture.

In dire desperation, I researched and researched, trying to find a hearing solution, which could break me out of the prison of my disability.

That was when I found out about the life changing hearing solution that is cochlear implants.

In 2010 I self funded myself into a cochlear implant after 7 years of struggling with severe hearing loss.

My life has been changed irrevocably ever since. The relationship with my children and grandchildren has improved immensely. Nothing brings me greater pleasure than being able to hear my grandchildren's chatter and the joy in their voices as they share their achievements with me.

I now have full participation in life again.



Josie Calcott

41, Papamoa



I lost my hearing when I was about two years old due to chickenpox. A hearing test revealed my hearing loss was severe to profound. I wore hearing aids from about the age of 3 years old and I learned to cope with my brilliant lip-reading skills as I was 100% dependant on it.

In my late 30s, a marriage, a nursing degree and three children later, I was beginning to really believe what a cochlear implant might do for me as, over the years my hearing had declined and I was struggling to cope on a day to day basis.

I finally found the courage to go ahead with receiving a cochlear implant three and a half years ago and this changed my life in many ways. I have found myself becoming more outgoing and sociable, more confident in myself and less frustrated. What I love hearing the most are probably birds. But having said that I also love that I can hear voices from a distance, or from another room. That.... iswicked!

I never realised what the quality of sound was. It's beautiful, it's crisp and clear and the weirdest, biggest thing for me is that I can often hear what is said without looking at people's mouths. WOW!

I can now enjoy being part of the running club, and being able to have conversations with my running buddies!





Viola

42, (married to Mark) Auckland

I was born in Germany and lost my hearing in one ear due to chicken pox at 15 months. After immigrating to New Zealand with my family aged 13, my hearing suddenly got worse.

The hardest thing was not being able to hear conversations at family gatherings. Talking to 1-2 people at a time was manageable but if more people were involved it got too hard. It is a very isolating and lonely experience!

Hearing aids helped until in my early 20's then there came a time I could no longer hear my mother's high pitched house alarm! That was when I decided I was ready for a Cochlear Implant! I remember my first time back on the phone after switch on - I was talking to my grandmother in Germany and I could hear everything she said!! We both cried with joy!

I love music! In fact we as a family love watching "The Voice" and I feel blessed to be able to hear what others may take for granted!

.....
Mark

52, (married to Viola) Auckland

I lost most of my hearing in a rugby accident at the age of ten and wore a hearing aid. As a boy I was devastated not to play any contact sports and also had difficulty developing friendships, especially as a teenager.

Later, however I formed a successful business and became very outgoing and confident. That all came crashing down when I suffered a head injury at work and progressively lost my hearing completely. I had to sell my business, my marriage broke down and I became withdrawn from any friends and family.

I received my Cochlear Implant 19 years ago and what an incredible difference it has made. I can use the phone again; listen to music and watch movies easily. Also I have regained my confidence and am able to speak at seminars and conferences. But the greatest benefit from receiving my CI is being able to interact with my family and friends again!



Michael Allen

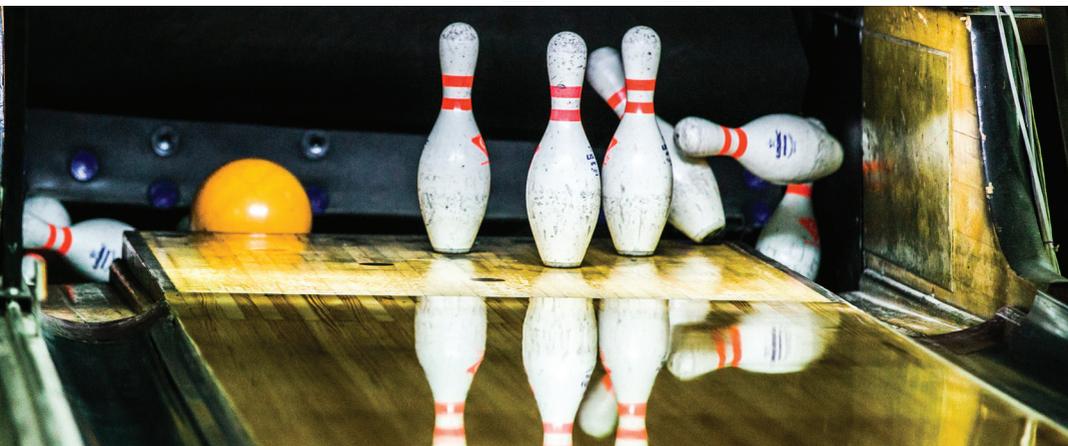
32, Auckland

I was born profoundly deaf and wore hearing aids from a very young age. I couldn't hear much with my hearing aids so I relied on lip reading and my incredibly supportive family to get through those early years. My biggest struggles were in group conversations and following what people were saying in the classroom and other noisy places. I would arrive home exhausted from concentrating all day.

At 16 I qualified for a cochlear implant and never looked back. They say having a cochlear implant is like hearing in colour after living in a world of black and white. All of a sudden I could hear many new sounds, such as the cicadas outside my bedroom window and the light switches clicking on and off. I was even able to start using the telephone for the first time in my life.

Ten years later my grandparents funded a second cochlear implant. This was like going from a world of colour to 3D. Hearing in surround sound has made me more confident at work and socially. After a lot of hard work, I don't have to strain as much to follow conversations in background noise.

My cochlear implants have opened many doors. I was able to become head boy at my high school and later graduated with a degree in communications. I have also travelled the globe, living and working in the UK and volunteering in Kenya and Thailand. Today I am happily married and working in communications.



Apiti Joseph

58, Mangere

I started losing my hearing 40 years ago and over the years it got worse, and worse and worse. Eventually my hearing loss was so severe and profound I could no longer hear with the help of hearing aids.

Communicating was really difficult and I had to rely on lip reading. This was not perfect, as I often misunderstood the conversation and would answer the wrong thing. This had an impact on my career too and I was often subjected to workplace bullying, teasing and being called stupid and dumb. It was so demoralizing.

When people found out I had a hearing loss it was like they didn't want to know me. I would laugh at jokes and they would say, 'what are you laughing at? You can't hear'.

My life changed completely 3 years ago when I got my cochlear implant. It gave me the strength to speak up, join in conversations and to get out and socialize. I especially love going to the markets on a Sunday, catching up with friends there and exploring the stalls.

I can also now enjoy my grandchildren, and I love hearing their laughter and stories, it brings me so much pleasure to be an active part of their lives now.

The CI also opened up a new world of sounds I had not heard for so long, like the sound of raindrops, waves crashing on the beach and birds singing. I'm also able to enjoy music once again, a simple pleasure I thought I would never hear again.

Life is good now.





Christine Candy

47, Okaihau

I live in a very small town call Okaihau in the bay of islands, 20 minutes out of KeriKeri. I work on the farm and my passion is my horses.

The worst part of not hearing was missing out on a lot of conversation.

It was especially embarrassing when I would reply to someone with the wrong answer...I'd totally misunderstood the whole conversation! Socializing was a nightmare and meetings were confusing.

But how the CI has changed my life: it's a new world!

I can hear music, pick up the right conversation, and even talking to strangers is no problem now. It's allowed me to go out socialising and even to join new clubs like roller derby...

What I love the most is being able to hear music but I still don't like to hear the phone ringing. I don't have the confidence yet to talk on the phone. It's still very hard to hear on that phone!



Derek Butcher

70's, Whangarei

I enjoyed perfect hearing until my 50's. At this time I was subjected to major industrial noise through my work. Even though I was wearing top grade ear protection I still experienced hearing loss and ringing in my ears.

Through our regular hearing checks I found my hearing in both ears had taken a major dive and I was fitted with my first hearing aids.

From then, my hearing continued on a slow slide to oblivion where life became somewhat a self-contained experience. I avoided talking to people or participating in any events and social gatherings as I found it extremely hard to be totally alone and unable to participate. I felt totally isolated from society. I retired from work at age 66 not being able to communicate effectively.

My Audiologist then recommended a cochlear implant and referred me onto the CI program and I eventually got my CI in 2013.

The switch on was a major milestone and I was blessed with hearing speech straight away. I became very tearful and happy at the same time. I thought I was so lucky for this. Everyone sounded like the 'Chipmunks' and this I thought was hilarious.

I heard so much in those first few hours that I was overwhelmed by it. Flushing the toilet sounded like Niagara Falls; I could hear the coffee machine and people talking; the bells and whistles on our car, the turn indicators, door alarm, it was all a cacophony of sounds.

The ability to be a part of a conversation again has been the biggest thing. My self esteem and confidence has taken a major boost and I actively look for people I know so I can chat with them. Strolling along with friends, having a coffee and chat is a simple pleasure I really enjoy now.

I also rediscovered my love of music, the sounds of nature, rain falling, birds, trees blowing in the wind, things we take for granted when we have normal hearing. I find my computer with it's sound system is much better than listening to TV, the landline phone is only as good as the person on the other end with the speech clarity they have. My mobile is far better but again depends on the person talking. I stopped using a phone completely years before. Just did texting and email. Now I can use it with confidence.

I really have no idea where I would be without it but probably shut away at home living a totally isolated life.



The Pindrop Foundation

Communication is at the heart of all human relationships, and the gift of hearing enables us to interact and communicate with our loved ones, friends and work colleagues

Over 20,000 New Zealanders are living with an invisible and silent disability which is excluding them from the heart of human relationships: severe hearing loss.

The Pindrop Foundation was established in 2006 to address this growing need in New Zealand and to ensure the ability to hear well is available to all.

We help to achieve this through raising awareness of cochlear implant technology, peer to peer support, education and research.

Cochlear implants are life changing devices, giving the gift to sound to those that are affected by severe hearing loss.

In the words of one client, "The cochlear implant helped break me out from the prison of my disability. Free to hear again, I could embrace life to the full."

The Pindrop Foundation is here to support and ensure that all those affected by severe hearing loss have access to this incredible technology.

A cochlear implant gives back more than sound; it gives back quality of life.



giving sound to silence

In Closing: A Tribute.

This exhibition is a tribute to all those adults in Aotearoa who can hear the sounds of life that they could not hear before.

Having the knowledge that cochlear implants have changed the lives of over 1000 adults in New Zealand since the first implant here nearly 30 years ago is quite awe-inspiring.

We have come along way in 30 years, but we still have a long way to go. There are still too many people living in limbo as they languish on an ever changing, growing waiting list for a cochlear implant.

To imagine what it is like to lose your hearing is eloquently expressed by Angela, a cochlear implant user, "The effects which deafness has on ones life cannot be over-estimated, it isolates you...likening it to a living death is not too much of an exaggeration."

That's what drives us all at the Pindrop Foundation to work toward making cochlear implants available to all adults that need one...as soon as they need one.

We hope the images within this booklet resonated with you, where you could imagine for a while what it would be like to miss out on any of the sounds of life.

Thank you to everyone who made it possible; Lara Boddington from Soul-Sisters Photography, the participants and our supporters, including:

Craig Brown of AutoPlay NZ and Ryan Petersen of Wildcard Media.

Bendall and Cant

Benefitz

Cochlear (NZ) Ltd

Hudson Gavin Martin

KPMG

Scarecrow



Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk.

- Doug Larson



[●] auckland
festival of
photography

PINDROP
Foundation

giving sound to silence

Contact: nic@pindrop.org.nz
027 345 2514 | www.pindrop.org.nz