

DDW VISITS SYDNEY COCHLEAR IMPLANT CENTER

This month, DDW was invited to visit the Sydney Cochlear Implant Center (SCIC) headquarters based in a former hospital building that is now remodeled. We met with several intriguing people over the course of two days to learn more in depth about cochlear implants, including Rob McLeod of the Client Relationships department, who showed us the latest models.

Hearing with the cochlear implant is not the same as how a hearing person would hear sounds. The technology has improved tremendously over the past three decades, filtering out interfering sounds to make speech more clearly understood.

While voices sound mechanical and robotic to a hearing person, one of the main purpose of the cochlear implant is to identify the sounds to understand spoken language. The emphasis is on understanding



**ROB MCLEOD EXHIBITS
A COCHLEAR IMPLANT.**

language, not the sound itself.

Cochlear implants are not an one-time-visit miracle ear. The surgery itself is permanent and SCIC ensures that clients who undergo the surgery understand they are making a lifelong commitment to speech therapy, audiology, counseling, and any necessary remapping of the implant. SCIC schedules regular appointments with their clients for such matters from the day of surgery for the rest of their lives, with a minimum of two visits per year.

DDW had the opportunity to witness a “switch-on” with an 11-year-old girl, who decided independently to get the implant. The “switch-on” was a two-day process in which the cochlear implant was turned on

SCIC, continued on page 2

WHAT IS DDW?

Dave Justice and Christy Smith are traveling the world to learn and share stories of empowerment, inspiration, and connection between international Deaf communities.

Discovering Deaf Worlds (DDW) is an opportunity to give deaf people worldwide a voice. For more information, photos, video logs, and newsletter stories, visit www.discoveringdeafworlds.com.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF EMMA AGNEW

Emma Agnew (1987-2007) of New Zealand was a leader, sister, daughter, friend, niece, netball star, writer, dreamer, and inspiration.

Her presence is missed by many, but her spirit and impact on the world last forever!



SCIC, continued from front page



and tested for the first time. The strength of the cochlear implant is increased a little at a time to

reduce overwhelming noise. It takes much time, practice, and dedication to work through the mental processing of identifying sounds. The girl we observed today was able to hear the “F” sound for the first time. She, her family, and her audiologist showed great excitement about the process and were proud of the accomplishment.

For more information about SCIC, visit its website at www.scic.nsw.gov.au.

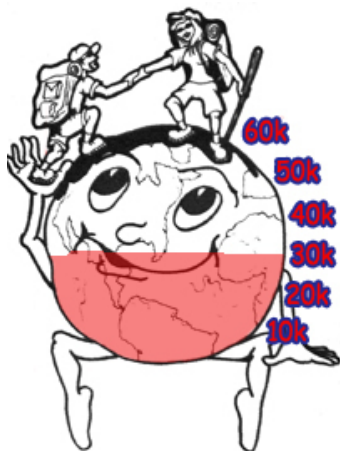
DID YOU KNOW...

- Cochlear implants were invented in Sydney.
- The first implant took place in 1978.
- Every implant at SCIC is handmade.
- The average cost of an implant varies country by country. In the United States, they cost approximately \$20,000 per implant.
- The earliest one can get a cochlear implant is at three months of age.
- The oldest person to get implanted at SCIC was 95 years old.
- Sydney’s Dr. Professor WPR (Bill) Gibson is the most famous cochlear implant surgeon, and has performed over 1500 surgeries.
- The largest manufacturer of cochlear implants in the world is also found in Sydney.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIDBITS OF THE MONTH

Learn from those who have been there, done that! After searching online diligently for hours to find a flight from Australia to Japan, the best deal we could find was nearly \$1,000 one way. We then went to the Lonely Planet “Thorn Tree Forum” discussion boards and learned of a discount airline for this part of the world we had never heard of before (Jetstar). We saved \$600 each and found a flight from Cairns, Australia to Osaka, Japan for just \$400! For more deals, check www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree/index.jspa.

HELP US REACH OUR GOAL!



Artwork by Yolanda Mosher, Portland, OR, 2007

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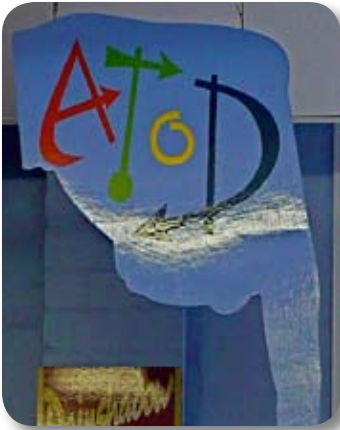
❄️ HAPPY HOLIDAYS! ❄️

We wish you all great holiday festivities and a happy new year with your families and friends!

Wa-hoo 2008!

Christy and Dave

CALLING ALL ACTORS AND ACTRESSES!



The Australian Theatre of the Deaf (ATOD) needs YOU! Come join this unique, inspiring professional drama team. Keep the dream alive. Star in their next play. Perform

in theaters and schools all throughout the country. Learn from the best.

For more information on how you can feed your creativity and be a part of something wonderful, visit ATOD's website at www.ozdeaftheatre.com.

A MAORI PROVERB



*He pokeke
Uenuku I
tu ai.*

*Against a
dark cloud,
the rainbow
stands out
brightly.*

SEE A COOL FILM THAT WON BEST NZ SHORT FILM!

Dr. David McKee, Research Director of Deaf Studies Research Unit and Senior Lecturer at Victoria University at Wellington in New Zealand, won the Best New Zealand Short Film award for his film. The film, *Life's In Your Hands!*, may be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=paw69u763cQ.

***SPECIAL THANKS TO KDEC FOR ALLOWING DDW
TO TOUR THE SCHOOL!***



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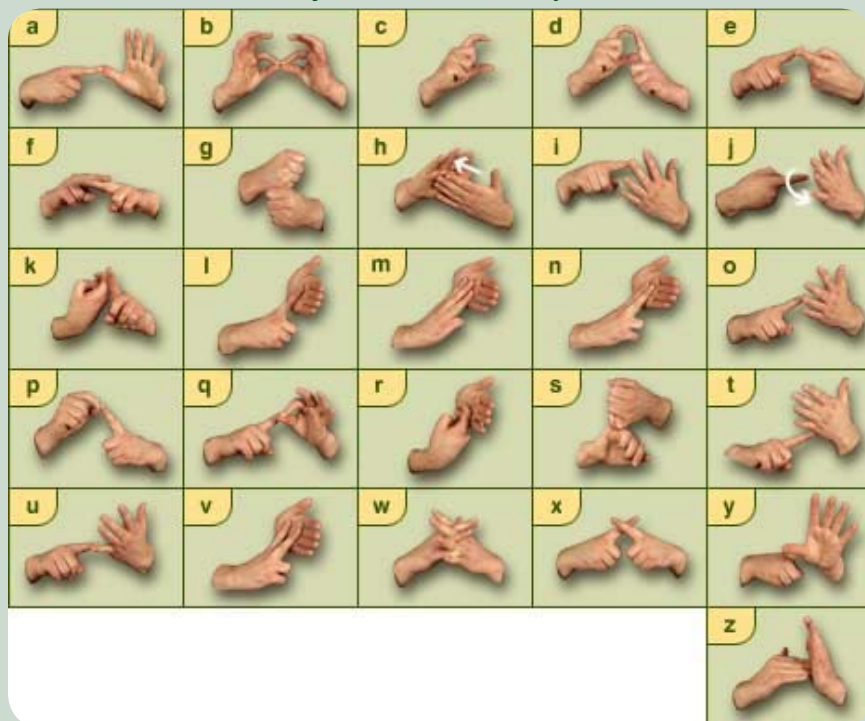
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Ralph P.
DeStephano

AUSTRALIAN SIGN LANGUAGE ALPHABET

*In each issue, DDW will print the fingerspelled alphabet
of a visited country.*



*For more information on Australian Sign Language, visit
www.auslan.org.au/index.cfm?skinname=content&page=6*

DEAF TEACHER ACCESSIBILITY IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand celebrated making New Zealand Sign Language an official language of the country in April 2006. The good news is more awareness will be spread, and sign language classes will be more prevalent in the school districts. The Deaf community is receiving well-earned recognition for their language and culture.

A current struggle, however, is the accessibility for Deaf professionals to become qualified teachers at universities. For example, meet Janet Stokes from Christchurch. Stokes received a bachelor's degree from Victoria University of Wellington in 1997, as well as a two-year certificate of teaching from Wellington College of Education (WCE). However, she left WCE in 1993 because they refused to provide an interpreter and a notetaker for her final year classes.

To fulfill her desire for teacher qualification, Stokes applied to the New Zealand Graduate School of Education. The response from the school was

“they would not accept me into the course because of my ‘disability,’” said Stokes. She has continued to fight for her right to education to get the decision reversed and has also looked into three other colleges. As of the publication of this newsletter, Stokes has still not heard back. Rather than dwell on the negativity, Stokes has a positive attitude.

“I believe in not giving up, and trying to prove that I can do it. It is very hard to get past the mindset that Deaf people are not suitable to be teachers, and that all Deaf people have terrible English skills,” she says. “They tend to label us and tar us with the same brush. They don't realize that there are Deaf people out there like myself who can achieve. Some things in life are worth fighting for – this is one of them for me. Fight for it.”

Let's continue to raise awareness, advocate for rights, and break down these barriers to give Deaf professionals their rightful opportunity to education. *Deaf people can!*

**ADD YOUR
LOGO OR
BANNER TO
THE DDW
WEBSITE!**



*Contact info@discoveringdeafworlds.com
for more information, options, and pricing.*

SHOUT-OUTS! SHOUT-OUTS!

New Zealand and Australian hospitality goes unprecedented above and beyond any expectation! Thank you, Kellye, Jake & Gabriel, Colleen Hill, Judith Aitkin, James, Allison, Isabella & Spencer Cleland, David Wulff & Lisa Calder, and Erin, Ant, Charlie & Jessica Olivieri! You added so much insight to our experience.

Thank you to the Hui family for opening up your lives and allowing us to be a part of Shun-Nga's cochlear implant "switch-on" experience.



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