DeafHear Matters

Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

Autumn 2011

Family Day at Tayto Park

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Cost of production €3
It has been a busy time for Parents Corner over the summer! There have been a lot of local events, summer camps and activity days, while on 21st August over 300 people attended the Family Day in Tayto Park (see page 10-11). During the summer we have opened the Parents Chatline and our online survey for parents of children with hearing loss went live in July. The online survey will be open until the end of September, and we are encouraging as many parents as possible to complete the survey. At this point we are able to report on some intermediate results from the survey.

How do parents find out about DeafHear?
So far, parents who completed the survey said they found out about DeafHear:
- From the Visiting Teacher: 32%
- From the audiologist: 24%
- From a friend/family member: 24%
- On the Internet: 15%
- In a newspaper/magazine: 5%

To date, over 60% of parents indicated they did not have access to sufficient information about their child’s development and hearing loss, while 70% said they would like more contact with other parents and more workshops.

So far, over 50% of parents who completed the survey indicated their child with hearing loss was aged 0-4 years, while less than 10% indicated their child was aged 13-18 years. We hope more parents of teenagers will complete the survey in the coming weeks!

Already we have received completed responses from almost every county. The regional breakdown of where parents are living is as follows:
- Dublin: 30%
- Rest of Leinster: 17%
- Munster: 22%
- Connacht: 19%
- Ulster: 11%

The survey is due to close at the end of September, and full results will be available later in the year.

Parents Corner will also be advertising a new series of workshops for parents in the autumn focusing on parenting Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. In September Parents Corner will publish new factsheets focusing on early child development.

If you are a parent of a Deaf or Hard of Hearing child and you haven’t completed our online survey, please do so as soon as you can. You can log on to the survey when you visit Parents Corner!

Visit Parents Corner on our website at www.deafhear.ie

A New Weekly Weather Broadcast in Irish Sign Language

RTÉ and Met Éireann have launched a new service for the Deaf Community. The first weekly weather forecast in Irish Sign Language (ISL) was broadcast on Sunday, 17th July, at 5.45pm on RTÉ One. The two-minute bulletin presented by Sarah-Jane Moloney and Caroline Worthington will be broadcast each Sunday evening with details of the predicted weather conditions for Ireland for the coming week. If you miss the Sunday broadcast you can view it anytime on RTE Player: www.rte.ie/player

I Love You

President Barak Obama signs to the crowd in College Green, Dublin during his visit in May 2011
Applications to close on 16th September 2011

The Residential Institutions Redress Board (RIRB) was set up to make fair and reasonable awards to persons who, as children, were abused while resident in industrial schools, reformatory schools and other institutions subject to State regulation or inspection. Recently, the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn T.D. announced that the RIRB will be closed down. This means that the last date that the RIRB will accept applications is September 16th 2011.

Who can apply?
You can apply to the RIRB if you were a resident in an industrial school, reformatory school, children’s home, special hospital or a similar institution at any time while you were under the age of 18, and you experienced sexual, physical or emotional abuse or serious neglect while you were living there. This means if you attended the schools for Deaf children, and you experienced sexual, physical or emotional abuse or serious neglect while you were living there, you can apply to the RIRB.

How can I apply?
To apply for redress you must complete an official application form, which is available on the RIRB website (www.rirb.ie). If you need any help with your application, contact any DeafHear Resource Centre in complete confidence.
Introducing the Deaf Education Centre’s New Co-ordinator

My name is Elizabeth Mathews and I’m delighted to have been given the opportunity to introduce myself and the Deaf Education Centre to the readers of DeafHear Matters.

On 1st June, I took up my position as Coordinator of the Deaf Education Centre, part of the Deaf Village project. The Deaf Education Centre is under the management of the Education Partnership Group, a consortium of the Catholic Institute for Deaf People, the Centre for Deaf Studies, DeafHear, and the Irish Deaf Society.

While this Centre is a very new venture, I have been working in the field of Deaf Education since 2003. That was when I first took a class on the history of Deaf Education and American Sign Language while spending a year abroad in Boston College. The year in Boston was part of my BA International programme with the National University of Ireland, Galway where I studied Geography and English. I had a particular interest from the start in the debates around mainstream education in the US and the difficulties faced by Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HH) children in that setting. So on my return to Ireland for the final year of my degree, when I had to choose a topic for research, I decided to look at mainstreaming of Deaf Education in Co. Galway.

Mainstreaming
It was a very small project, but it came at a time when there was a lot of concern over mainstreaming. It was when the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act was being debated and also around the time that the Irish Deaf Society organised a conference on education called “Are we being listened to?” There was growing concern around mainstreaming, growing numbers in mainstream, and yet surprisingly little research being done on the topic. I knew that there was scope, as well as a need for more work on the subject, but I also knew that I needed to expand my own knowledge on the area. So with the help of funding from Fulbright, I returned to the US to undertake a Masters in Deaf Education at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C.

Becoming More Deaf-Aware
Gallaudet University is the world’s only liberal arts college for Deaf students. While the vast majority of the undergraduate students are D/HH, every year a considerable number of hearing students enrol in the postgraduate programmes on offer, hoping that their training on Gallaudet campus will make them more Deaf-aware, improve their level of Sign Language, and provide them with the experience and challenges they need to work as successful advocates in the Deaf Community. My year there was a unique and inspiring experience. I learned from experts on the importance of language acquisition and cognitive development in D/HH children, as well as the particular needs of D/HH children from non-English speaking households and those with additional disabilities.

I studied the history and emergence of Deaf Communities across the world, and the importance of Deaf leadership as well as hearing advocacy. I learned as much in the canteens and dorms of Gallaudet as I did in the classroom and gained an appreciation for the valuable education you get both inside and outside the classroom. On my return to Ireland in the summer of 2005 I was ready to embark on my PhD research on the mainstreaming of Deaf Education in the Republic of Ireland.

Research
My PhD (funded by the Office of the Minister for Children) was completed with the Geography Department and the National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) at NUI, Maynooth. My research brought me all over Ireland to meet parents, professionals, and D/HH children involved in mainstreaming. All in all, I interviewed 21 families and 22 professionals (which involved the stories of 26 children) and I interviewed eight children and young people directly. I was interested in finding out not only how mainstreaming was proceeding for those families, but why we have mainstreaming as an educational philosophy. While there isn’t space to discuss my findings here, I will be publishing summaries of the findings online specifically for parents, professionals, and the Deaf Community over the coming months. More recently, I have completed a piece of consultancy research for the Education Partnership Group on the issue of accessibility to primary teacher training for D/HH individuals. A full copy of this paper is available at www.cidp.ie.

One-Stop-Shop
In the meantime, you can keep an eye out for updates on the Deaf Education Centre on my Facebook page. The Centre is in the early stages of planning but we hope that it will be a ‘one-stop-shop’ where parents, professionals and D/HH people can find out about all aspects of deafness as they relate to education. Material will also be designed and distributed relating to the various approaches to Deaf Education, the development implications and the services available to children and their families. We hope to run some educational programmes in 2012 that should be of interest to DeafHear members. Please feel free to send me an email (elizabeth@cidp.ie) if you have any suggestions for what you would like to see the Centre doing.
Charity 25 - Text Appeal Launched

DeafHear is delighted to be part of the Charity 25 initiative. Charity 25 was set up by Kevin O’Brien in October 2010. With the downturn in the economy and Irish charities desperately needing funds to carry on their good work, Kevin identified an opportunity to bring a group of Irish charities together to raise funds.

Charity 25 launched its first campaign ‘2WILLDO’ in October 2010 where €1.94 from every €2 text donated goes to the charity. All monies raised are divided equally between the 25 charities. This is the first time that such a large group of Irish charities have come together for a fundraising campaign.

This year, BAFTA nominee Mrs. Agnes Brown (aka Brendan O’Carroll) has agreed to become the main patron and face of the charity. At the official launch in May, Mrs. Brown said “this is the most important thing I will do this year, I am very proud to be involved and be able to support 25 Irish charities”.

To donate: 
text 2WILLDO and your COUNTY to 57802 (€2 per month) (Example: 2WILLDO DUBLIN)

In addition to the ‘2WILLDO’ phone text campaign, there will be five major events in 2011. These will include ‘Mrs. Brown’s Tea Party Gala Ball’ in the Burlington Hotel on 5th November and four Mrs. Brown’s celebrity golf classics which will take place the week commencing 12th September, one in each province. Check out www.2willdo.ie for details.

Monthly subscription service. €2 per month 18+. Helpline 0818 217100. To unsubscribe text STOP to 57802. A minimum of €1.94 of your €2 text is divided equally between all 25 charities with the remaining €0.06 for administration fee charged by mobile phone operators.

The 25 Charities are: Age Action Concern • The Alzheimer Society of Ireland • Asthma Society of Ireland • AWARE Ireland • Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland • DeafHear • Debra Ireland • Down Syndrome Ireland • GROW • Headway • Irish Autism Action • Irish Guide Dogs Association • Irish Heart Foundation • Irish Motor Neurone Disease Association • Laura Lynn / Sunshine Homes • Meningitis Trust • MS Ireland • Muscular Dystrophy Ireland • Myasthenia Gravis Association • National Association of Housing for the Visually Impaired • St Joseph’s School for the Visually Impaired • Samaritans • Special Olympics • Teenline • Variety Ireland

Mrs. Brown with representatives from the 25 Charities
An important part of DeafHear’s work is advocating for improved access for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in their communities and in society generally. This work involves lobbying key stakeholders, writing submissions and working with partner organisations. Below is an update on some of our recent work in this area.

**EMERGENCY CALL ANSWERING SERVICE (ECAS)**

It is over two years since Minister Eamon Ryan announced that the new service provider for the emergency call services would be BT Ireland. The Minister’s statement said that the emergency services would be accessible to Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and that “the Department of Communications, BT Ireland and ComReg will engage with representatives of the Deaf Community as to the provision of the best and most appropriate service for Deaf people or those with hearing impairment”. The emergency services include the Gardai, Fire Brigade, Ambulance and Coast Guard services.

During 2010, the Department of Communications, Energy, and Natural Resources indicated that text access to ECAS would be available before the end of 2010 or early in 2011. Since then the Department has indicated that there were a number of unexpected technical issues, and that they are now confident that the ECAS service would be accessible to Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, (and other people who cannot make voice calls) from October 2011.

**Pre-Registration**

It is expected that people who might want to use the text service will need to pre-register and provide some personal details. This is to avoid any misuse of the service and to avoid unnecessary delays. Having registration details such as a person’s name and address available will save time, and this could be vital in an emergency where lives are in danger.

DeafHear expects to have more details on the ECAS service in the next edition of DeafHear Matters, and we will be posting any new developments immediately on our website @ www.deafhear.ie ECAS is a vital citizen service that literally saves lives. DeafHear has been advocating for some time for equal access to ECAS for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, and now we hope that this wait is almost over.

**UNHS UPDATE**

On 26th April 2011, after many years of campaigning by DeafHear, babies born in Cork University Maternity Hospital became the first babies to have their hearing screened under the new National Newborn Hearing Screening Programme.

Newborn Hearing Screening has been available for many years in the US and most European countries, where it is the expected standard of care. It enables early diagnosis of hearing loss, which, combined with early intervention, has been shown to result in dramatic improvements in the growth and development of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children.

Mr. Peter O’Sullivan, Consultant Ear Nose and Throat Surgeon, CUH/SIVUH and Chairperson of the Cork Newborn Hearing Screening Implementation Group, said that he was, “delighted that Cork University Maternity Hospital had been chosen as the first hospital in Ireland to implement the National Newborn Hearing Screening Programme.

The earlier that a hearing loss can be picked up in a baby the better the outcome that baby will have. It is therefore very important to screen all babies at an early stage. In Ireland, one to two babies in every 1,000 are born with a hearing loss in one or both ears. Most babies born with a hearing loss are born into families with no history of hearing loss.”

2,800 Babies Screened

By mid August, over 2,800 babies have been screened at CUMH. There are eight trained hearing screeners at CUMH. The hearing test is carried out while the baby is settled or sleeping, usually at the mother’s bedside. The screener uses two non-invasive tests to screen the newborn’s hearing with neither test causing any discomfort to the baby. To date, the parents have been most welcoming of the new screen and have been highly supportive of the programme. The referral rates for babies to the HSE Audiology Clinic who fail the test is relatively low (at about 3% of all babies tested). The referral does not necessarily mean that a baby will have a hearing loss, it could be due to a number of other factors, including:

- The baby may have been too unsettled at the time of the screening test.
- The baby may have had fluid, or a temporary blockage, in the ears after the birth.
- There may have been too much background noise in the room when the screening test was carried out.
**UNHS Continued**

Babies born through the HSE’s homebirths scheme will also be included in the programme. Arrangements are in place to have these babies’ hearing tested at an outpatient’s clinic at the hospital within weeks of the babies’ birth.

The HSE National Service Plan for 2011 included €1.9m for the development of the new sites for Newborn Hearing Screening. HSE South has informed DeafHear Matters that it is at an advanced stage of planning of newborn hearing screening for Wexford General Hospital; Waterford Regional Hospital and Kerry General Hospital with implementation within 2011. DeafHear will be continuing its representations to the Department of Health and Children and the HSE to ensure that this important service is available to all children in the country as soon as possible.

**RSA**

In late 2010 DeafHear made representations to the Road Safety Authority (RSA) about a number of issues relating to the accessibility of RSA services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. These included the appointment of an Access Officer, access to training, text access to services and accessible road safety adverts on TV.

As reported in the spring issue of DeafHear Matters, the RSA have now appointed an Access Officer. The role of an Access Officer in a public body is to provide or arrange for assistance and guidance to persons with disabilities in accessing its services. Anyone who has difficulty accessing RSA services should contact the RSA Access Officer. Her contact details are as follows:

**Geraldine Browne**

RSA, Moy Valley Business Park
Primrose Hill, Ballina, Co. Mayo
Telephone: 096 25142
Fax 096 25252
Email: accessofficer@rsa.ie

The RSA have now got all of their TV road safety ads subtitled. The RSA has also agreed to provide ISL interpreting for some Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) training courses. A CPC is required by professional drivers such as bus or lorry driver, and involves completing a one-day training course every year. Contact the RSA Access Officer for more details.

If you are doing your driving test and need an interpreter, this can be arranged. The driver theory test is also available through ISL. For more information about driving tests, visit http://theorytest.ie/ or email them at theorytesthelp@prometric.com

At present the RSA are still working on providing a text access line to deal with queries from Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, and the RSA have not yet responded to our request to have at least some of their safety adverts on TV signed in ISL. We have also asked the RSA to abolish the requirement for Deaf people to provide a medical report each time they renew their driving licence. This results in extra expense for Deaf people, which is unnecessary. We hope that the RSA will respond to these issues soon, so we can report further progress in the next issue of DeafHear Matters.

**NEXT TIME**

In the next issue of DeafHear Matters Access All Areas will feature the switchover from analogue to digital TV. Analogue signals will end throughout Europe in December 2012. This is a very important issue, as access to television is important to almost everyone. It is vital that the switchover does not result in vulnerable people being left without TV reception.

We also hope to report on the launch of the new Garda text service for the Dublin Metropolitan area, and we will provide an update on developments in the areas of telecommunications and energy providers.

For more information on any of these issues contact Brendan Lennon and Julianne Gillen in DeafHear, Michael Tighe in the IHHA or email us at info@deafhear.ie

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**Student Grant Scheme**

The Department of Education and Skills has announced details of the further and higher education Student Grant Scheme for the 2011/12 academic year.

Up until now, there were four grant schemes which have been replaced by a single unified scheme this year. This will make it far easier for students to apply for a grant.

Details of the scheme together with the application form and guidance notes are available at www.studentfinance.ie

If you are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, check out the ‘Fund for Students with Disabilities’ section of the website.

**European Health Insurance Card**

The European Health Insurance Card or EHIC (formerly the E111 form) allows the holder to access health care services when travelling to other EU or EEA countries. The card entitles you to necessary health care in the public system of any EU/EEA member state or Switzerland if you become ill or are injured on a temporary stay in the country. Anyone who is living in Ireland or intends to live here for a year can apply for an EHIC from the HSE.

If you have your old EHIC number, your PPS number and your address is unchanged you can renew your card online.

Go to www.ehic.ie
Radio You Can See

By Maureen Whittle, South East Region

On Sunday 29th May, Community Radio Kilkenny City made a unique connection with the local Deaf Community by allowing three of their programmes to be ‘SEEN’ as well as heard. This was done through the use of high definition cameras and live streaming via a direct link to the internet. While WATCHING online, live radio as it happened... the programmes were interpreted into Irish Sign Language (ISL) by Mary Dermody who volunteered her time and skills to support the Deaf Community and the efforts of the radio.

This initiative was the brainchild of Liz Kett, a presenter with the radio who has strong links with the Kilkenny Deaf Community. Liz, in her own words, “saw no obstacles” with this undertaking. She wanted to facilitate Deaf people to access “local news, sport and entertainment and other local happenings in their own areas and in their own language”. Liz received strong support from the Station Manager, Mark Collins, who stated “Radio is not something that Deaf people have thought about being able to access at any stage; but with new technologies, like web-cam and on-line streaming, it is now possible to make radio more accessible too”.

The planning started weeks in advance with the support of the small but vibrant Kilkenny Deaf Community. This was vital to ensuring the success of the project as, through them, Deaf Communities in Kilkenny, the South Eastern counties and all over Ireland were alerted and asked to tune in or tune ON to CRKC 88.7FM on the day.

Programmes
Programmes featuring online sign language interpreting commenced at 10.00 am with: ‘Spirit Alive’ - this included Mass with Fr. Willie Purcell which was attended by a group of Deaf people from Kilkenny and Carlow. After the Mass, members of the Deaf Community remained at the Station and watched the next two programmes on laptops, which had been especially set up for them, as they went out on live stream simultaneously with the radio transmission. The Community Programme ‘Your Community, Your Group’ was co-presented by Liz Kett and Tony Coy – guests included Claire Bolger, DeafHear, Kilkenny, followed by various tutors and students exhibiting their handiwork from some of the ‘Get Connected’ courses from the radio’s ‘Sharing of Skills’ initiative.

The final programme slot was ‘Sports Scene’ during which Barry Henriques held a live interview with two of Kilkenny’s most famous hurling legends – Fan Larkin and Pat Henderson. All three programmes were facilitated by Mary Dermody, ISL interpreter, as they went out, for the first time in the history of radio, to a Deaf audience on live stream, while simultaneously being broadcast over the radio to a hearing audience.

Understandably, the Deaf people were truly excited and commented: “I never dreamed that we would see this, that a Deaf person could SEE radio. The Deaf Community will love this. It is very important what is happening here today”, Josephine O’Leary, Carlow; “I never expected that radio could be available for the Deaf Community; this is a very important chapter in Deaf history”, Frank Muldowney, Kilkenny; “The Deaf Community brought into the 21st century”, was how it was described by another local woman.

Temporary Licence
29th May marked the last day of broadcasting for Community Radio Kilkenny City under their current temporary licence but they hope to be back in September for the next stage of the licensing process. Community Radio Kilkenny City must be congratulated on the success of this initiative which truly reflects the ethos of Community Radio Stations to work towards ‘reinforcing local identities’ while acting as ‘a catalyst for integration and inclusion’. They have actively encouraged the Deaf Community to tell their ‘own diverse stories, to share their experiences’ and to become ‘active creators and contributors’ rather than passive consumers. We look forward to ‘logging on’ to the next phase of this initiative during the radio’s autumn schedule as one the projects planned includes the Deaf Community making their own programmes; these will be interpreted through ‘voice over’ by an ISL interpreter back to the hearing listenership.

Volunteers
Craol is the umbrella organisation for the 20 fully licensed Community Radio Stations throughout Ireland. All programmes are delivered by volunteers who have a passion for radio and who primarily reside in the franchise area. Community Radio Kilkenny City has set a precedent for other Community and Local Radio Stations in making their programmes accessible to Deaf people. We hope that others will take up the challenge and let Deaf people throughout Ireland SEE THE RADIO!
Eurofest Finland 2011

Bernard Daly

This year the FEPEDA Summer Camp was held in Turku in South Western Finland from 2nd to 7th August. The main theme of Eurofest was “What is it like to be a hearing impaired child or young person in Europe in 2011”.

The camp was held in Harjattula Manor, about 12 miles from the city of Turku. This was very much a countryside location. The weather was superb - we had blue skies and warm sunshine for the four days.

The camp was extremely well organised by KLVL (the Finnish Association of Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children). However, it was also a very relaxed, informal and friendly gathering. The programme for adults included interesting lectures and workshops as well as cultural and sporting events.

The programme for children and young people was very varied. They were divided into different age groups and each group had its own individual programme. There was a wide variety of activities, ranging from games, sports, fishing, swimming and visits to theme parks. Young Deaf Finns were involved in planning and organising these events and many of them acted as volunteers.

An important feature of the event was the number of new families who attended from Lithuania, Estonia and Bulgaria. In total, there were 320 participants, including 50 volunteers. 15 different countries, including Ireland, participated and there was a particularly strong representation from Finland, Spain and Germany.

**Highlights of Eurofest included:**
- A special performance by Signmark, the famous Deaf Finnish rap-artist.
- A special sauna evening, where you were also required to swim in the Baltic Sea!
- A guided boat tour of the archipelago of Turku.
- An excursion to Naantali, which included a guided tour of Kultaranta (the summerhouse of the President of Finland).

On a more educational note, there were workshops on various themes, including communication and interpreting, day-care and welfare benefits. There was also a talk on “Evidence of Best International Practice in Deaf Education”. In addition, five Finnish Deaf and Hard of Hearing young people either spoke or used sign language to describe their “Life with a hearing impairment”. Finally, there was a very lively farewell party on Saturday 6th August. This included a visit from Santa Claus (who has his summerhouse near Turku – his only concession to the hot weather was that he wore open sandals instead of boots). Needless to say, he got a wonderful welcome from all the children.

It was a great International Summer Camp. Many thanks to our Finnish friends for all their hard work.

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**Bernard Daly is Elected President of FEPEDA**

Bernard Daly is Elected President of FEPEDA

FEPEDA is a non-governmental umbrella organisation which was founded in 1990 to represent associations of parents and friends of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children at a European level. Ireland is a full member and is represented by DeafHear. The aim of FEPEDA is to advance the cause of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, young people and their parents in all the relevant institutions, organisations and agencies of Europe.

**General Assembly**

Bernard Daly, Chairman, DeafHear has represented Ireland at FEPEDA since 2005. He was General Secretary for three years and at the General Assembly held in Finland in August 2011 he was elected, unopposed, as President and will be in office for three years.

In 2007 Bernard started an initiative within FEPEDA called the twinning scheme, whereby, the long established members of the EU are each twinned with a new EU member further east. Ireland is now twinned with Bulgaria and a number of projects have already commenced.

Speaking of his election Bernard told DeafHear Matters that his vision for the future will be: “to build a more inclusive, larger and very focused FEPEDA, making a tangible difference to European families with Deaf children”.

Bernard and his wife Pam live in Whitehall in Dublin. They have 3 adult children, including Christina who is profoundly Deaf. It was his experience as the parent of a profoundly Deaf child that prompted Bernard’s involvement with DeafHear and he has been Chairman of the Volunteer Board of Directors since 2002. Everyone here at DeafHear Matters would like to wish Bernard success in his new role.
Over 300 people attended DeafHear’s National Family Day in Tayto Park on Sunday August 20th. Families from Waterford to Louth and Dublin to Galway enjoyed the day. It was a very busy day… with visits to the exciting Eagle Sky Adventure Zone, and guided tours of the farm and the Tayto factory… where our favourite crisps are made!

Everyone had lunch and a chat in the Tayto Park Lodge, a beautiful wooden building with shops and restaurants. There was facepainting and an exciting colouring competition judged by the very friendly Tayo Park staff. Congratulations to the overall winner, Ben Slein, aged 8 from Dublin, who won tickets for a family day out in Tayto Park!

It was a very successful day enjoyed by young and old, and a big thank you to the staff and volunteers of DeafHear and Tayto Park for making it possible.
Back in the dark, and very cold, days of January this year I received an email asking if I would be interested in attending the 2nd International Hearing Loop Conference. My first reaction was ‘why me?’... but it soon transpired that I could bring valuable information to the conference from three different perspectives. I was asked to participate on the following panels:

- Dispensing Professionals (in my role as an audiologist)
- Consumer Advocacy Around the World (as an advocate for loops through my work in DeafHear and my past council experience with the IHHA)
- Strategies for Success

The first panel was probably the one I felt most at home with: ‘Dispensing Professionals’. I had a 30 minute slot and gave my audience a brief background to who I was, where I worked, what my hearing loss was like and how that played a part in me training to become an audiologist. I then went on to talk about my clients’ ‘audiology’ journey i.e. getting their hearing tested; explaining the results in terms they understand; talking about what hearing aid might be suitable (if they need one); explaining what a telecoil is, how it works with a loop system, environments in which they would find it beneficial and trying to ensure the client has it fitted. One of the comments made after I had finished speaking was that I “had set a ‘Gold Standard’ for hearing aid dispensers”. From other comments it sounded like America was no different to Ireland in terms of the strong sales techniques used by a lot of private hearing aid dispensers, leaving many of their clients bewildered after parting with thousands of dollars for a hearing aid (or two) most of which do not include a telecoil. From my point of view as both an audiologist and a hearing aid wearer, the value for money comes from the service offered by the audiologist and not just the hearing aid.

Get in the Hearing Loop
My colleagues on the panel, Juliette Sterkens and Patricia Kricos, spoke about how they have encouraged their local communities and colleagues to embrace the “Get in the Hearing Loop” project which is a joint project between the HLAA and the American Academy of Audiology (AAA). Juliette received an award for ‘Technology Access’ in recognition of her role in trying to loop Wisconsin. Two years ago there were only a couple of loops in churches in Wisconsin and now there are over 90. She also spoke about how some hearing aids which have telecoils are not correctly programmed to pick up the sound from a loop system clearly and how audiologists should be aware of this and link with hearing aid manufacturers to seek a solution. Patricia spoke about how she has used her time as President of the AAA to encourage her audiology colleagues to issue hearing aids which have telecoils in them, and what the benefits are both to the audiologists and to their clients.

On my second panel, ‘Consumer Advocacy Around the World’, I shared the podium with speakers from Norway, Switzerland, UK and the US. I spoke about findings of a recent survey carried out by the Irish Hard of Hearing Association on loop systems and signage in and around Dublin. This survey “Where’s Our Loop?” was published in the spring edition of DeafHear Matters.

Strategies for Success
On the third panel ‘Strategies for Success’ I spoke about the Part M Building Regulations 2010 Technical Guidance Document, and how in several sections there is an actual mention of ‘loop systems’ as opposed to the general ‘communication access’. This will provide advocates, for the installation of loop systems to aid communication access, more clout when approaching public (and private) service providers. Also speaking on this panel were John Woodgate and John Edworthy both Audio Engineers from the UK.

Although the 2nd International Loop Conference was only a day and a half duration, a lot of information was shared, with 235 delegates from over 11 countries in attendance.
Hearing Loop Conference cont.

HLAA Annual Convention
The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) hosted their Annual Convention immediately prior to the loop conference which was attended by over 1,500 delegates from all over America. I was lucky enough to be given a free attendee pass. This was a four day convention which was packed with very informative sessions for all age groups. Here is a list of some of the sessions I attended:

- Consumer Reports on Hearing Loss
- The Looping of America begins with YOU – Juliette Sterkens
- Surviving the Stress of Hearing Loss: What You Can Do – Ellen Rupert and Donna Wayner
- Dare to be Different – Susanne Dussling
- The ABCs of Stress Produced by Communication Difficulties – Sam Trychin
- Beware the Droids are Coming – Perry Hanavan
- Coaching Parents Through the Early Years – Janet Trychin
- Minimal Hearing Loss; Not a Big Deal, Right? – Jeanne Pease
- Common Pitfalls in Parenting your Child with Hearing Loss – Alison Freeman

Wicked
The evenings contained an equally full schedule. On the opening evening there were a couple of “Welcome Receptions”. On Friday, we were treated to a fantastic performance of “Wicked” in the JFK Centre for Performing Arts in Washington DC which was captioned, had sign language interpretation and a loop system – talk about being spoilt for choice. Saturday was ‘The Banquet’ which was a joint event for the Convention attendees the Loop Conference delegates. Finally on Sunday evening, we boarded the Spirit of Washington for a dinner cruise along the Potomac River which was wonderful.

Finding a New World

DeafHear, Dundalk customer, Dermot Bell (pictured, right) shares his story of customer satisfaction and great customer service!

I remember the day clearly. It was another mundane Thursday when I found myself in DeafHear Dundalk looking for batteries. As always when I’m in the shop some gadget or other catches my eye and I invariably start asking questions! This time it was left to Catriona (volunteer), who incidentally I hadn’t met before, to show me this box of tricks made by Comfort Audio - the Comfort Audio Contego.

She was so enthusiastic about this gadget that I had to listen. It was a Digital Assistive Listening two box device which worked on the Loop/FM Transmitter/Receiver principle with very sophisticated digital processing and internal pick up microphones. As Catriona already had one herself, she knew exactly how it would benefit me, and then some! So, with the equally enthusiastic help of Ronan, I was convinced to try it out. This I did and I was shocked at how good this device really was! It completely transformed every aspect of my life especially in the area of television and music. No longer would I need to put on the subtitles as I could follow 99% of what was going on and it was so clear and natural.

Blown Away
However as a seasoned hi-fi fanatic and with extensive experience in sound engineering, it was in the area of music that this device completely blew me away! I was hearing detail and incredible natural renditions of well known pieces which literally left me in tears! Every listening session was an emotional tour-de-force and I simply could not believe what I was hearing. Needless to say I ended up buying this wonderful box of magic! To this day I will never forget that mundane Thursday and the sheer enthusiasm of Catriona and Ronan who had only one thing on their mind, namely to show me a new world and then some!

The following week I decided to contact Comfort Audio themselves to tell them about my overwhelming appreciation of their wonderful device. I also asked them a few mundane (that word again!) questions about the device especially concerning the little rubber retaining ring on the wire loop itself. Would you believe I actually received a lovely e-mail from Stefan of Comfort Audio thanking me for my response. He reassured me about the rubber ring and as a double reassurance offered to send me a spare loop free of charge! The following week I received a bulky parcel containing, not one, but two neck loops plus cable and connectors!!!! I couldn’t believe it as these are expensive items! I most certainly wasn’t expecting this level of courtesy especially in the current cut throat climate.

I’d really like to thank Catriona and Ronan for guiding me in the right direction and Comfort Audio for inventing such a magnificent device and for their incredible help and courtesy! Also a big thank you to the very friendly and helpful staff of DeafHear who are always there to help.

Dermot Bell

Emma McAuley
Big Birthdays for IHHA and ITA

Maggie FitzGerald, President, Irish Hard of Hearing Association

This year we are celebrating 25 years of the Irish Hard of Hearing Association which started life as 14 people with a hearing loss meeting once a month to support each other. It has progressed to being an organisation that is there to hold out a helping hand to anyone with an acquired hearing loss who is finding life difficult. Over the years, there have been many great leading lights in the association including Jacqueline Fleming, Diana Erskine-Hill, Ken Edwards, Kate Byrne, Michael Tighe and Freda Keenan. To these people and many others, we owe a great debt of gratitude.

Today, the IHHA is at the front line helping those with an acquired hearing loss. We are in the midst of revitalising our aims and goals and are also improving our website so that people can get relevant information and updates. We lobby for better services for Hard of Hearing people, such as subtitles on television and loop systems in all public places. We are also keenly involved in the changeover to digital TV and the impact it will have for our members.

And of course, we have social events too. We marked our 25th year celebrations by hosting a dinner for all our members where our founding heroes were given pride of place. The dinner was held in the National Yacht Club in Dun Laoghaire on Friday 20th May. We also organised a very enjoyable walk in the Wicklow Mountains followed by a celebration picnic.

A lot of soul searching is going on at this time to see where we can best position ourselves to be of the most help to those who need us. We can now boast of having captioned performances of each play at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin and the National Gallery organises a bi-monthly tour with hand-held loop systems for Hard of Hearing people, both pioneered by Freda Keenan.

But to keep us fresh and vibrant, we need new members and input. To make the next 25 years even more successful than the last, we need to promote an integration programme in the society in which we live and not accept a back seat due to our hearing loss. The responsibility is on our shoulders to play our part to make our society a better and more caring one where disability is embraced and not ignored or sidelined.

We are looking forward to the challenge! If you can help us, do get in touch.

Email: ihha@deafhear.ie or visit www.ihha.ie for further information.

Jean Scott, Chairperson, Irish Tinnitus Association

The Irish Tinnitus Association was founded 15 years ago by Valerie O’Dea. The first meeting was held in her house. About 10 people arrived for this gathering after an appeal, by her, in the BTA Quiet magazine ‘for anyone in Ireland who had tinnitus and was looking for advice or wanted to help others’.

In April 1996, when Valerie had to return to the UK, I took over. My first publicity venture was to write to the Irish Times asking if anyone out there needed help; within a week we had 100 replies! Our first general meeting was held in October 1996 in the Gresham Hotel and we have continued, as far as possible, to hold two general meetings each year, one in Dublin and one in another part of Ireland.

Over the years, the Association, which is run by a very small group of unpaid volunteers based at DeafHear’s premises in North Frederick Street in Dublin, has gone from strength to strength. Some of the original committee members are still with us, namely myself, Derek Scholefield and Patrick Morrissey.

As part of the strategy of learning to cope with tinnitus we know that counselling can be of great value. Our tinnitus helplines, in Dublin and Cork, which are manned by volunteers, continue to be very busy. We are grateful to Sr. Anne Byrne and Angela O’Leary who, for many years, have organised the Cork helpline on Wednesday mornings and have devoted so much of their time to looking after the needs of people with tinnitus in the Cork/Kerry region. I have looked after the helpline in Dublin on Thursday mornings since its beginning in 1996 and in 2006 Martin Carroll joined me. Both helplines are an important part of our work, as this is often the first contact people have with the ITA. We now have tinnitus support offered by professionally trained staff from many of DeafHear’s regional centres throughout Ireland.

To celebrate our 15th year we decided to hold two special general meetings. Our first general meeting was held earlier this year in Cork, on 21st May and Petter Tungland ENT Consultant was our keynote speaker. Our second meeting will be held in Dublin on 19th November 2011 in the Ashling Hotel, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8 and we are really delighted that David Baguley, Laurence McKenna and Don McFerran will be returning to our shores, this time as a team with their Tinnitus Roadshow. For more information on this event, please contact the Irish Tinnitus Association on 01-817 5700.

We are indebted to Niall Keane, Chief Executive, and the staff of DeafHear from all parts of the country, for without their back-up of practical and financial support we could not have made such progress over the last 15 years.

15 years! When I look back at our small beginnings and see what we have achieved, I am certainly amazed! Among our many achievements we have established ourselves as a national organisation, a registered charity with the President as our Patron, set up two helplines and produced a quarterly newsletter.

Tel: 01-817 5700
Email: ita@deafhear.ie
From Challenged to Charmed!

Hayleigh Scott is 12 years old and she has designed and created Hayleigh’s Cherished Charms to make hearing aids fun and help the people who wear them to feel special.

At 18 months, after a series of life-saving surgeries, Hayleigh was diagnosed as profoundly Deaf and has worn BTE hearing aids ever since. Her parents tried to disguise and hide her hearing aids but Hayleigh decided she wanted her hearing aids to “stand out and shine” and so she started to design her charms. She now has an online store and sells a full range of hearing aid charms, tube twists and cochlear implant charms. You can check out her designs at www.HayleighsCherishedCharms.com.

Communication Through Music

Orla at the launch of her CD, Sound Senses
Orla O’Sullivan is a Deafblind pianist. She uses music as a way of overcoming her profound deafness and visual impairment. Qualified as a teacher since 1991, she teaches music in a unique and successful way. “Through my music I have found a freedom... the freedom to express myself, to entertain, to achieve, and not let disability limit my enjoyment and celebration of life”.

But her greatest joy comes from performing in front of a live audience. This is where she can feel and share the music of the great composers like Chopin, Debussy, Liszt, and Beethoven. She also plays music from popular film scores and musicals.

After a recent performance she told the audience: “You see I wear powerful hearing aids... if I did not have them I would have to ask you to stamp your feet instead of applaud. That way I’d feel the vibrations through the floor... so, hobnail boots are welcome at my performances. I tell you these things to make a point... the point is, just because I am deaf does not mean I can’t hear... just because I am almost blind does not mean that I don’t see. You see I have the other senses that give me the gift of imagination... the ability to feel the sound, to enhance a vision. And my great vision is that all Deaf, Blind and Deafblind children can appreciate music, to feel it, to perceive it, the beauty of it... to play it, to see it in their imagination”.

You can view some of Orla’s performances through her website at: www.orlaosullivan.ie. Her CD ‘Sound Senses’ can be purchased through her website, or from Cork School Of Music, Pro Musica, Cork City Library, and the Cork Deaf Association.

Orla participated in the Cork Life Learning Festival in April this year along with Russ Palmer. Russ was born severely deaf and was registered blind in 1991. He qualified as an international Music Therapist at Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland 1999. His latest album Warm Summer Days (producer and arranger Jon Rosslund) is a musical biographical album which has taken eight years to complete. The album was recorded in Norway and the UK. All the music is composed and performed by Russ with lyrical and musical contributions from Peter Palmer, and Terje Johannesen.

The CD has enabled him to pursue his love for music as a songwriter and musician and hopes to increase Deafblind awareness to the public. He explains: “Just because I cannot hear or see so well I can use my other senses, to feel the music and environment around me”

Both Russ and Orla have dual sensory losses which prevents them from participating in many of the usual activities that others take for granted (unless there is a suitable interpreter at hand). They see the presentation of these CDs as a rare opportunity to raise awareness about Deafblindness, and to promote the benefits of music in dealing with the daily challenges of life.

Further information on Orla and Russ at: www.orlaosullivan.ie and www.russpalmer.com
Despite everyone’s best efforts, I began the barriers to inclusion that still existed sometimes felt with hearing sport, given some extent at least, the frustration I more about this. She was aware, to and she suggested that I try to find out had heard about a Deaf basketball team club basketball coach told me that she

Sport is a Great Leveller

That is what Cathy McCormack, a Deaf athlete believes. She shares her story with us.

I was born Hard of Hearing with a genetic progressive type of hearing loss resulting in becoming profoundly Deaf at the age of eighteen. My family are hearing and I attended mainstream schools. The language used at home and at school was spoken English and I accessed this, with varying degrees of success, through bilateral hearing aids and lipreading. I was fortunate to have supportive parents who valued education and instilled in me the belief that I had the potential to achieve my dreams, whatever they might be.

My education was good allowing me to achieve my dreams of a university education and a professional career. However my social development, as the only Deaf person in my family, school and local community, was far from positive and my dreams of achieving full social participation were not realised.

I encountered barriers to inclusion in every social activity that I tried to engage with and as a result, I experienced overwhelming feelings of loneliness and isolation.

The only respite I found was through sport. Sport proved to be the only viable means of some semblance of interaction with my hearing peers and I was heavily involved with basketball at both school and club level. Communication exchanges in these environments were structured with hearing athletes in mind and were still fraught with difficulty and full inclusion and participation seemed to remain beyond the realms of possibility.

Turning Point

Around the time I started university, my club basketball coach told me that she had heard about a Deaf basketball team and she suggested that I try to find out more about this. She was aware, to some extent at least, the frustration I sometimes felt with hearing sport, given the barriers to inclusion that still existed despite everyone’s best efforts. I began my journey into Deaf sport, a journey that would prove to be one of the single most important and positive turning points in my life.

I was nervous, but I was also extremely excited that first evening I showed up for training with St. Vincent’s Deaf Ladies Basketball team in St. Declan’s School in Cabra, Dublin. Never having met another Deaf person before and having absolutely no knowledge of Irish Sign Language, I had no idea what to expect.

Initially there were communication barriers because of the language differences, but I still knew how to play basketball. Sport is a great leveller, it has the potential to bring people from disparate backgrounds together through a shared interest and this proved to be in my case - sport became my passport into the Deaf Community. Gradually I became more involved, felt more included, learned Irish Sign Language (ISL) and began exploring my Deaf identity; all of which contributed hugely to my personal development as a d/Deaf person. Achieving a league and cup double in the process was definitely a nice bonus!

Full Inclusion and Participation

It is in my opinion that Deaf sport has given me the opportunity to experience full inclusion and participation; something that I found to be impossible to attain through hearing sport alone. My experience through Deaf sport has increased my confidence, improved my self esteem and afforded me the opportunity to reach my full potential as an athlete.

I have had wonderful experiences and lots of fun over the years with my fellow Deaf basketballers and golfers, and also a short time with my fellow Deaf footballers (before my body told me that a lady of my vintage would be more suited to concentrating on the golf!!). My appearances as an Irish international in basketball at the 1996 European Deaf Games and the 1997 Deaflympics, and in golf at the 2008 and 2010 World Deaf Golf Championships are particularly cherished memories.

As a Deaf athlete from a mainstream school background, I have experienced difficulty in integrating in Deaf signing environments due to linguistic and attitudinal barriers. These barriers did not prove to be insurmountable, but I feel that they could, and should be addressed by the IDSA through the establishment of an organisational infrastructure that will support Deaf athletes’ acquisition of ISL while supporting the development of an ethos within the organisation that acknowledges the existence of diverse d/Deaf identities.

I believe the IDSA’s 2011-2013 Strategic Plan to be a vital step in the achievement of this vision and that it will contribute to an increase in Deaf athletes’ participation and enjoyment of sport.

You can view the IDSA’s Strategic Plan at: www.irishdeafsports.net and keep up to date with all the latest Deaf sporting activities.
Tony McElhatton Retires

Tony McElhatton signed his final bulletin on Wednesday, 27th July before being given a surprise send off by his Newsroom colleagues.

Tony has been signing for RTÉ News for 19 years and blazed a trail by bringing signing to national audiences for the first time. He even provided sign language classes for News Division staff in the early years.

Tony’s help was also much appreciated in the recent recruitment process for new signers who have taken up the challenge enthusiastically.

Tony is well known in the Deaf world and a very popular Sign Language Tutor. He was first Deaf person to teach sign language to the Gardai in Templemore and to the staff of Superquinn.

Both RTE and DeafHear wish him well in his retirement.

Support for Italian Sign Language (LIS)

The Italian Government is discussing the enactment of the Italian Sign Language (LIS) bill, wherein, a proposal was made to rename the Italian Sign Language as the Language of Mime and Gesture (LMG), in effect reducing and demeaning the status of Italian Sign Language. The Italian Deaf Community is horrified by this proposal and has asked the global Deaf Community to join their protests. Vigils have been organised in front of Italian embassies in several cities including Dublin, Belfast, London, Edinburgh, Washington DC and Berlin.

Irish Deaf Society

According to the Irish Deaf Society: “About 40,000 people here use Irish Sign language and occurrences such as this one have serious ramifications for the campaign to have Irish Sign Language (ISL) recognised as a full and official language. So we stand in solidarity with the Italian Deaf Community and the global Deaf Community.”

In a letter to the Italian Ambassador to Ireland, Dr. John Bosco Conama says: “The proposal is clearly a serious counter to years of research, which confirm that signed languages such as LIS are genuine spoken languages. The proposal can have unimagined negative effects on the well-being of current and future generations of the Italian Deaf Community.”

According to the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) in the United States: “This classification (as a sub-language of mimes and gestures) is not only offensive but also has social, educational, and political implications that are detrimental and harmful to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community of Italy.”

The World Federation of the Deaf has sent a support letter to its Italian member, Ente Nazionale Sordi – Onlus (ENS), in which it encourages the Italian legislators to cease immediately all the measures aiming at decreasing the status of the Italian sign language (LIS). In its letter WFD states that: “Non-recognition of the Italian sign language would have serious impact on the whole Deaf Community in Italy and it would reject all the principles and goals of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which mandates that all countries will recognise their respective native sign language(s) as official languages deserving protection and promotion among the Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens of the country.” The CRPD was ratified by Italy in 2009. “Worsening the status of the Italian sign language would have consequences such as reduced government funding for all Deaf and sign language related issues, including a serious threat to the Italian schools for the Deaf.”

European Union of the Deaf

During the European Union of the Deaf General Assembly in May 2011, the EUD President Berglind Stefansson and Board Member Humberto Insolea officially handed the EUD support letter signed by delegates from 29 EUD member countries to Sebastiano Manciagli, the board member of the Italian Association of the Deaf. The letter states: “The EUD strongly encourages the Italian legislators to cease immediately all measures aiming at decreasing the linguistic status of LIS. Undermining the status of LIS would have a serious impact on the Italian Deaf Community and their linguistic heritage.” This letter will be used to support the lobbying efforts undertaken by the Italian Association of the Deaf.

Peggy Morrissey RIP

It is with regret that we report the passing of Peggy Morrissey (mum of Roger – past pupil of St. Josephs, Cabra) former Director on the DeafHear Board. Her funeral was held on 12th June in Bansha, Co. Tipperary. For the last 40 years Peggy was very active in the Tipperary area and concerned in particular for unemployed Deaf people. Her immense energy and commitment to the Deaf Community was well known, it was very normal for DeafHear to receive queries from people around the country and say the lady from Bansha told me to contact you. Peggy never took no for an answer and believed that anything was possible and involved her family and local community in fundraising activities for DeafHear.

DeafHear would like to extend their sincere sympathies to her family. May she Rest in Peace.
In Conversation With...

60 seconds with Regina O’Connell, Principal, St. Mary’s Girls’ School.

Regina O’Connell hails originally from Clara, Co. Offaly and is now living in Newbridge, Co. Kildare where she is happily married to John with two adult children, one grandchild and another on the way. Regina graduated from University College, Galway with a degree in Microbiology before the lure of the teaching profession led her to complete her HDip in Education in Maynooth in 1975. After teaching Chemistry and Biology for a couple of years in St. Dominic’s College, Cabra she took up a teaching position in St. Mary’s. She was appointed the first lay Principal in 1998, following 150 years of leadership provided by the Dominican Sisters.

What made you decide to work in Education and specifically with Deaf Children?
It was just something that happened as a result of teaching in St. Dominic’s and being on the same campus as the school for the Deaf. The Principal of St. Dominic’s suggested that I move to St. Mary’s for a year to replace a Science teacher on career break. It was my intention at the time to move back into mainstream with gradual isolation from the rest of society.

How do you think that the proposed Deaf Village in Cabra will affect St. Mary’s?
I think that the village will have a positive impact on the provision of supports and availability of resources for the larger Deaf Community whilst also providing a focal point for integrated social interaction. In relation to St. Mary’s, I feel that the school has a very proud tradition in the education of Deaf girls and the individual needs of our students are catered for in a wide variety of academic programmes.

The schools for the Deaf have highly trained, experienced staff members who contribute enormously to the preparation of our students for their adult lives. It will be a challenge to ensure that this tradition is maintained. It is important that the Village is open to the wider community as an area of concern that I may become insular with gradual isolation from the rest of society.

What are you most looking forward to when you return in September?
The start of the new academic year is always a very busy time and I look forward to welcoming our new students both in primary and post primary and hope that they settle in well and are happy in the school. Of course there is always great excitement in the first few days when our students and staff meet each other after the long holiday and they spend a lot of time sharing the stories of their summer.

However, after a day or two the holidays become a distant memory as the work of the new school year commences and we look forward to the mid-term break!

What are you least looking forward to in September?
The daily commute, as the mornings and evenings become increasingly darker, allied with the decrease in temperature in December and January. Here’s hoping that the winter period will be nothing like 2010 and 2011 which affected the entire school community to a great extent.

What would be the first thing that you would do if you were Minister of Education?
I would ensure that the schools for the Deaf are properly resourced and funded, in terms of staffing, training, audiology and ICT. I would also acknowledge the unquantifiable contribution that teachers have made and continue to make in shaping our society by providing the foundations that are fundamental to the success of all our citizens.

What do you like to do in your spare time?
I love walking in the mountains, I play golf and I love spending time and socialising with my family and friends.

If you were not working in Education what would your dream job be?
If I was not working in Education, my dream job would be in the travel business provided I could visit and rate all the destinations myself!

Pocket Talker

The Pocket Talker Ultra is a versatile, high quality assistive listening device designed to improve communications in difficult listening situations.

Simply plug the neckloop, headphones or earphones into the Pocket Talker and point the product in the direction you want to listen. It will amplify the sound you want to hear and reduce the background noise from everywhere else.

The Pocket Talker delivers clear, distinct sound, while its large, manageable controls provide for easy operation. Use the Pocket Talker to improve listening on a one-to-one basis, in small group situations or while listening to your favourite TV or radio programmes.

Features:
- Powerful sound amplifier - improves speech understanding
- Portable, sleek compact design - take it with you anywhere
- Compatible with telecoil-equipped hearing aids
- Includes 2 AAA batteries for 100 long-lasting hours of performance

Available either with Neckloop or Headphones/Earphones

Prices start from €102 from www.deafhear.ie
Money Matters

Money Matters is a new section on the DeafHear website. It is a guide to give you a better understanding of what is involved in claiming different social welfare benefits and if you are entitled to them.

There is detailed information on the following:

- Supplementary Welfare Allowance (SWA) including:
  - Basic SWA
  - Rent Supplement
  - Mortgage Interest Payments
  - Exceptional Needs Payments
  - Urgent Needs Payment
  - Back to School Clothing & Footwear Allowance
  - Cost of Dietary Needs
  - Humanitarian Assistance Scheme

- Disability Payments:
  - Disability Allowance
  - Invalidity Pension

- One Parent Family Payment:
  - One Parent Family Payment – who can qualify?
  - One Parent Family Payment and maintenance
  - One Parent Family Payment and working

- Carer’s Section:
  - Carer’s Leave
  - Domiciliary Care Allowance
  - Carer’s Benefit
  - Carer’s Allowance

- Medical Card:
  - Full Services Medical Card
  - GP Visit Card
  - Long Term Illness Book

On every page you will find an ISL video for that section. This video will automatically start once you click on a link. There is a control bar on the base of this video that will allow you to view the video in full screen mode. You can also pause, fast forward, rewind, jump to and adjust the volume of the video.

Check out www.deafhear.ie/MoneyMatters for more details.

DeafHear would like to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Social Protection for sponsoring this project.
DeafHear.ie Resource Centres

Our services are delivered through a national network of Resource Centres

**Dublin North (Head Office)**
DeafHear.ie
35 North Frederick Street,
Dublin 1.
Tel: 01 8175700
Minicom: 01 8175777
Fax: 01 8783629
Email: info@deafhear.ie

**Killarney**
DeafHear.ie
10 Flemings Lane, High Street,
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Minicom: 064 6622608
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**Dublin South**
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**Dundalk**
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Sensory Resource Centre,
14 Jocelyn Street,
Dundalk, Co Louth.
Tel/Minicom: 042 9332010
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Email: dundalk@deafhear.ie

**Letterkenny**
DeafHear.ie
Sensory Resource Centre,
Justice Walshe Road,
Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.
Tel: 074 9188252
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**Galway**
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Text: 086 8648659
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**Limerick**
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**Sligo**
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**Wexford**
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Outreach Services

For details of DeafHear.ie Outreach Clinics
log onto [www.deafhear.ie](http://www.deafhear.ie)
or contact your local Resource Centre.