

# the **BIG** news

The Newsletter for the Buffalo Implant Group

Volume 26 • Issue 4 - 2014

## B.I.G. staff

Gail Cronin - Editor and Publisher  
 Margie Fitchlee - Writer  
 Sean Cronin - Proofreader

## UPcoming Events

|                       |          |
|-----------------------|----------|
| B.I.G. Picnic         | Oct. 29  |
| ESSP Conference       | Nov. 7-8 |
| An Afternoon with FDR | Nov. 15  |

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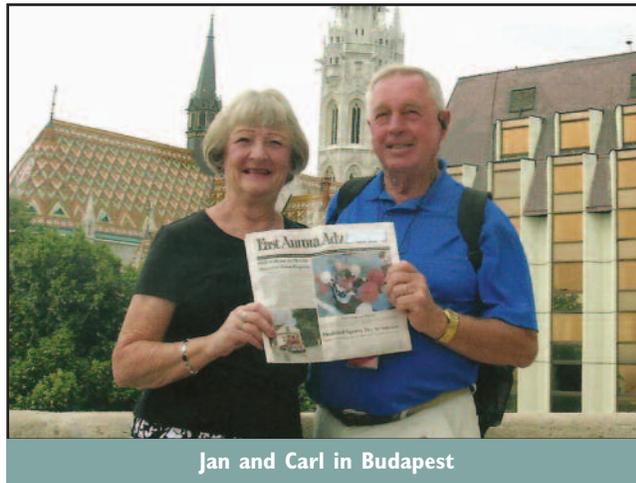
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**B.I.G. Meeting**  
**Wednesday, Oct. 29**  
**6:00 – 8:00 pm**  
**St. Mary's School for the Deaf**  
**2253 Main Street - Buffalo**

## JOURNEYING WITH MY COCHLEAR IMPLANT



By Jan Telban



Jan and Carl in Budapest

My husband and I went to Europe two years ago when my implant had only been activated for six months. My experience at the airport in Amsterdam made me slightly apprehensive to travel there again. I had been stopped by a gentleman from security who spoke very little English. As I handed him my fine tuner, and asked him to just walk it around, he appeared very nervous and called for his superior. Neither knew what a cochlear implant was and a third authority figure came over. They kept telling my husband to move, and I became apprehensive thinking he would go on vacation without me. Finally, after all the "authorities" checked everything out, I was allowed to walk through the security checkpoint and join him.

In August 2014, we flew to Europe again. The security person in Buffalo actually knew what a

cochlear implant was, but still looked at everything I showed him including my implant processor, my card, and my fine tuner, as well as extra batteries that were in a zippered case which I asked him to carry around the metal detector. Everything I had read suggested that these items should not be placed on the x-ray belt. The security person verified everything with another

person and then told me to walk through the metal detector. Coming back to the USA was easier because I did take the initiative by showing the security person everything beforehand. When flying, I disconnected my processor when taking off and during landing. I don't know if this was necessary or not.

Before leaving Buffalo, I did considerable reading regarding the places we would visit. Most days the people in our tour group used head phones to hear the guides. Because I couldn't do this, my prior reading knowledge supplied me with valuable information on our locations. Walking as close to the guide as possible was beneficial because they tend to enunciate well, making it easier to lipread.

Several times during our river cruise there would be announcements made over the loud speaker. I was able to hear some of

~ Continued on page 3

# THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



By Sue Wantuck



Sue Wantuck

Hello to all my BIG Friends! I hope that everyone had a wonderful summer, I certainly did! As always, it went by too fast. In August my husband and I traveled to Colorado to visit our son, David. He moved there recently for a work-study program at the US Air Force Base Academy. We had never

been out west before and would highly recommend it to anyone. We flew into Denver, rented a car and drove to Colorado Springs where David lives. I noticed a few differences travelling as a bilateral implant user this time around. While in-flight I was able to understand more of the information, such as the weather and arrival time, that the pilot was communicating over the speaker. I was also able to pick up more information while listening to people talk in a crowd. At the Cheyenne Mountains Zoo, there were several lectures on certain types of animals that I followed well using speechreading skills. One day we went out to lunch at a restaurant in a very old/small town, Pueblo, CO. The waitress noticed my implants and asked me how I liked them. She explained that her boyfriend has bilateral processors as well. We shared positive comments and it was an interesting experience.

I had a wonderful time at our annual B.I.G. picnic at Westwood Park. Thank you to all of the members who

came to support our group, especially those who helped with setup and cleanup. It was nice to socialize and spend time together. The inside shelter had some positives and negatives. On the bright side we did not have to battle wind or rain, on the down side it was hot, with little to no cross breeze, and the sound acoustics were extremely poor. We will have make sure to get our preferred location when we reserve for next year's celebration, as it is going to be a special 30 year anniversary!

Our fall general meeting will be Wednesday, October 29 from 6 - 8 pm at St. Mary's School for the Deaf. There will be a technology update given by a representative from Advanced Bionics. There will be several agenda items/announcements to make before and afterwards. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone there!

We are in the process of finalizing a special fundraising opportunity. Margie Fitchlee's brother, a noted actor and impersonator of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, will be performing An Afternoon with FDR on November 15 from 2 - 4 pm at St. Mary's School for the Deaf. We will need members to volunteer to assist. If you are willing and interested please email me. See the announcement in this issue of The B.I. G. News, as well as on Facebook and Twitter.

See you all on Wednesday, October 29! Happy Hearing!!!



## FROM THE EDITOR



By Gail Cronin



Gail Cronin

The autumn issue of The B.I.G. News marks the last communication I have with all of you for the year. Once again we have fulfilled our mission, and obligation, to produce four full issues of our newsletter. I am indebted to our Board members who have worked so hard to contribute this year. We are all

volunteers, and I know that everyone's time is precious. They say that "time is money" and that too has been in short supply this year. I want to remind all of our readers that the Buffalo Implant Group is one of the most frugal organizations you are likely to ever find. We splurge on nothing. We don't give our Board members any rewards or thank you dinner, as you often find in other organizations. In fact, our Board members are always contributing their own supplies to assist in our efforts. We watch every penny of your contributions. And we need more.

Costs are rising. We learned just prior to the publication of our summer issue that printing costs would increase in September. We were able to work

with our printer, Zenger Group, to slightly mitigate our cost increase by trimming our mailing list and decreasing the number of extra issues we have printed. I am both relieved and most grateful to Stephen Zenger, president of Zenger Group, for his willingness to work with us and continue to offer us a discount based on our long relationship with his family. It is only through Mr. Zenger's generosity and support that we are able to continue with this important work.

While looking at possible cost-cutting solutions for the production of our newsletter, we contemplated using another means of design and layout. As I explored our options, it made me realize how incredibly blessed we are to work with Jeanette Berry, our Pre-Press Technician at Zenger Group. I have relied on Jeanette's talents for design and layout for years, to the point where I forget how easy she makes things for me. Jeanette Berry is known to her clients and colleagues as "The Fix-it Goddess" and her nickname couldn't be more fitting. It is with a huge sigh of relief that I can say that we will continue to work with Jeanette.

Speaking of the newsletter, we have added a new feature called Parents' Corner. In recent months we have had few submissions from parents and children

## JOURNEYING WITH MY COCHLEAR IMPLANT..... *Continued from page 1*

the words, but never the whole statement. My husband Carl was so helpful!

Over the years, it has annoyed me that I have no means of being awakened at a certain time, especially when traveling alone. I can't hear an alarm or hear the telephone ring for a wake-up call. Shirley Jaskier encouraged me to search for help because of her experience with her son's situation of living as a CI user in a college dormitory. Our B.I.G. group is phenomenal – someone always helping another. I researched using the internet and started with "aids for the hearing impaired." I now own a watch which vibrates at the scheduled time.

Music on the trip was a struggle for me as usual. I have been singing in musical groups since I was six, and losing that ability is the hardest thing with which to deal. I chose my MedEl implant because their

literature seemed to indicate the highest success rate in regaining musical sounds. I heard four dingers who came onboard to perform but I couldn't even tell what the pianist was playing. The problem seemed to be the electronic piano sound.

Conversations over dinner were almost impossible, but conversations in small quiet groups or walking around towns were fairly good. "Life is good!" That's my opinion and I accept what my cochlear implant has enabled me to hear. Progress is slow, but always try to make the best of the situation. You have to figure out what works best for you. I don't want to miss out on anything and want to stay in the two singing groups, hoping my brain will adjust and make everything better. My thanks to Joanne Hammer for her help in getting me this far.

## FROM THE EDITOR..... *Continued from page 2*

and we would like to change that. If you are a parent of a child using an implant or hearing aid, please consider sharing your story and/or contributing your thoughts and experiences to our new Parents' Corner.

As costs continue to rise in all areas, it has become apparent that with four issues per year we are doomed to have a negative fund balance unless we step up our efforts at fundraising. Margie Fitchlee has been working diligently on finding ways to raise funds. One of the projects that we are currently working on is bringing a performance of "An Afternoon with FDR" to Buffalo on Saturday, November 15 from 2:00 – 4:00 pm in the auditorium at St. Mary's School for the Deaf. Tickets are \$10 and 100% of the proceeds will go to the Buffalo Implant Group. PLEASE come out and support the show. We need a sell-out crowd. Details of the performance can be found on page 10.

We will be needing a great deal of help in 2015 in order to achieve our goals. We have a full slate of officers running unopposed for our four offices. Three of

our four officers will remain the same. Sue Wantuck is running for President, Melissa Burroughs is running for Secretary, and Lisa Hill Nowicki is running for Treasurer. Our Vice-President, Kathy Maroney, will not be running again for the coming year. Currently, Margie Fitchlee is running for that office unopposed. We thank Kathy Maroney for all her years of service to our organization. Kathy has always been very faithful in her attendance to our meetings and dedicated to our Board. But we all understand that busy lives mean that we can only serve in the same capacity for a time. Kathy has been a great asset to our organization.

You could be an asset to our organization too. We are looking for people to help write for the newsletter, expand our internet presence, organize fundraisers, assist with existing projects, and brainstorm new projects. If you could share a few hours a month with us, please let us know. Speak to a Board member or email any of us. We have the potential to grow in 2015, but we will need you to do it!

## Our Sympathies are with the Kolis Family



It was with great sadness that our Board member and past-president Joe Kolis informed us that his father, Stephen Lewis Kolis, passed away on Wednesday, August 6. The family requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be sent to the Buffalo Implant Group.

We thank Joe and Gail Cronin, Paul Grzybowski, Dorothy Harezga, Steven and Kim Krolczyk, and Cheryl McNatty for their memorial contributions in memory of Stephen L. Kolis.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Joe, Dawn, Jillian, Adam, and Paige, and the entire Kolis family.



## TREASURER'S REPORT

By Lisa Hill Nowicki

Thank you everyone who continues to send in their 2014 dues. Though still in the red, we continue to narrow the gap around our expenses with a (\$277) deficit at present. In an attempt to curb a price increase request from our newsletter printer, we have reviewed the current mailing list and will be trimming many tardy names at the end of this year. Again, your status is the date to the right of your name on your mailer label. If you would like to continue to receive this newsletter please make sure your membership is up to date and mail your \$15 payment to PO Box 350, Clarence Center, NY 14032.

## REFLECTIONS ON:



## THE ARRIVAL OF AUTUMN AND LOOKING FORWARD TO CHANGE



Margie Fitchlee

By Margie Fitchlee

The summer season in Western New York has started to wind down. Thoughts of the arrival of my favorite season, autumn, have been dancing in my mind. Changing leaves, apples, pumpkins, warm sweaters, hot apple cider, bonfires, festivals, hayrides, football games, trick-or-treating, Thanksgiving dinner complete with pumpkin pie - who could ask for anything more?

Autumn is a season that brings forth change. It is a time of preparation, a time to celebrate. An unknown author said, "Just before the death of flowers, and before they are buried in the snow, there comes a festival season when nature is all aglow." This year, like no other, I welcome the season of autumn more than ever. My daughter Allison and her husband Michael are getting ready to welcome twins (a boy/a girl) into all of our lives and into our hearts. We have all been very busy preparing for their arrival and anticipating the changes we will all encounter. This is a time to celebrate for sure!

There are those in the cochlear community who also have much to celebrate as well. Many have faced huge challenges and changes in their lives. Many, who like me put their fears behind them and had the implant surgery, and those who will undergo the implant surgery during this autumn season. They are on my mind. My thoughts, my prayers and my hopes are with them as they embrace the changes that lie ahead for them. John F. Kennedy said, "For time and the world do not stand still. Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are sure to miss the future." I can relate to those words all too well. Life does go on and with patience, practice, and perseverance we forge ahead. We

can strive to make our future the best it can be. We can leave behind the fear and the loneliness the past has presented us with. We can meet the present with determination and we look forward to what the future will offer us. The new Cochlear Implant recipients will have so much to look forward to in their future as well.

I believe that with much thought and preparation they have done just what (singer) Debby Ryan suggests when she writes, "Look at what you want to change, gather a few people [your family, friends, and members of the Buffalo Implant Group and Dr. Diaz-Ordaz] who believe in it like you do and start moving forward. It's important to remember you don't always need a destination. Sometimes, you just have to make a forward motion [the implant surgery] and you absolutely can."

The Irish say that there is always a way. So here is a little Irish inspiration I want to pass your way: "Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start." Those are the words of Kara Verlaney. You are at the starting line and it is a good place to be. You have traveled down that stormy path that God has sent you on. He has given you the strong shoes you needed to walk that path. He has lead you to the door of Dr. Ernesto Diaz-Ordaz. You are in the best of hands. May God Bless you.

So you can see that I am ready to welcome in the season of autumn with open arms. I am ready to accept the changes and challenges that will come with it. I am sure all of you are too. I leave you with a poem I wrote that expresses the way I feel about this special time of year:

**HELLO AUTUMN**

By Margie Fitchlee

As gazing out my window  
This fine mid-August day  
I simply can't but wonder  
Has summer slipped away?

The temperature is changing  
A sweater I must wear  
The landscape is preparing  
For Autumn everywhere.

Hello, I'll say to Autumn  
My favorite time of year  
Hello, I'll say to falling leaves,  
And football games to cheer!  
Go Bills!

Hello I'll say to Autumn  
Your presence makes me smile.  
Hello, I'll say to Autumn  
I hope you'll stay a while.

I'll welcome Autumn gladly  
And its colors all aglow.  
I'll walk, I'll dance, I'll holler  
I don't want to let you go!

For Autumn is the season  
To celebrate God's grace.  
To reap the summers bounty  
To give thanks I cannot wait.

For Autumn is the season  
To help us to prepare  
For Winter, it's a coming  
We will feel it in the air.

Please Autumn stay a while,  
I know you have to go.  
For change is part of living  
That much I surely know.

I'll miss your presence dearly  
I don't want to let you go!  
Your memory will warm me  
Jack Frost won't bother me.

Time marches on before me  
That much I plainly see.  
Other seasons come before me  
They'll try to beckon me.

But, I'll welcome Autumn  
back again  
My favorite time of year,  
With cheers of adoration,  
The best season of the year!

# PARENTS' CORNER: CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS

By Lisa Hill Nowicki



Lisa Hill Nowicki

As a parent, these past few weeks have been busy as I work with the members of my daughter's team to confirm and tweak her classroom accommodations for the new school year. Sienna, a mainstreamed 5th grader, has Auditory Neuropathy (AN), dysarthria and is hypotonic in the trunk area as a result of Kernicterus (a form of brain damage from high levels of jaundice not treated early). These three issues have made finding the appropriate classroom accommodations a bit of a challenge. But let's begin.

**Amplification:** Sienna has hearing aids and uses an FM system provided by the district. (We also have a personal one that we use at summer functions). Initially, we only used the FM system for the classroom setting, but found out during this past summer that even in small settings it provides her with a "little extra" to help her focus. As a result, the FM system is now being used in most settings.

**Assistive Devices:** We continue to pursue this avenue. Writing is difficult. It is hard to stabilize the trunk area and then write. In the early years Sienna used a weighted vest and a Rifton chair to give her more support. Though she has outgrown the need for those items, she continues to struggle. We have investigated text to speech programs, but with her dysarthria we have not found a match, so for right now we are seeing if she can take a picture of things she has to write that are less important, such as the homework assignment list, or have her dictate long homework assignments to me and then I write them out (in her words).

**Communication Accommodations:** Being a strong lipreader, Sienna can lose focus easily if something is happening around her because she has to stop what she is doing and look at other people's facial expressions. As a result, she does have preferential seating (front and near the teacher) and is working on being a self-advocate in each situation. For example, saying, "Can you please repeat?" We are also incorporating more visual cues this year with her vocabulary/spelling words.

**Curricular Modifications:** In the past we have used modified assignments, but it is something I do not start the year with, as I want to see what she can accomplish.

**Evaluation Modifications:** Sienna does get extra time on tests and can take them in a quiet setting.

In addition to the above, over the last few years Sienna has had a 1:1 aide. In the early years the aide was responsible for maintaining Sienna's IEP schedule - pulling her from the classroom to her appropriate therapy. As the years and curriculum progressed, the aide became the smooth transition back into the

classroom, bringing Sienna up to speed on what was taught while she was out, without disrupting the class. Though this service was invaluable, it can also be a crutch. Sienna learned the system. She knew the aide was there to help her, making her less accountable and independent. With this being her last year in the elementary school it was agreed that this was the year to try to go without an aide. Had I written this article two weeks ago I am not sure that she was up to the challenge, but I am happy to report the last two weeks have made me think differently. She is starting to be accountable for her homework, reading the problems out loud and trying them first before using the "I need help" statements.

We also have a Teacher of the Deaf who works with Sienna once per week. This person is now co-treating with our consultant teacher for part of the time to make ensure advocacy, and ideas are captured and communicated to the rest of the staff.

And finally, on Sienna's IEP is a monthly meeting for all therapists, teachers, and advisors who work with Sienna and myself. This I have found to be invaluable. Many times it is the only time the PT and OT overlap to collaborate together on how to work on a deficit. This allows us to address issues on a timely basis (for me, at the quarterly parent teacher conference is too late) and to brainstorm on solutions.

Below is an itemized list that may help you in creating the best IEP to help your child be successful. The following is from the Minnesota Resource Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing:

## Amplification

- Personal hearing device (hearing aid, cochlear implant, bone conduction aid);
- FM amplification;
- Classroom amplification system;
- In-service for teachers regarding hearing loss, amplification, and classroom implications of hearing loss; and,
- Hearing aid monitoring—including in-service for monitoring staff and monitoring equipment.

## Assistive Devices

- Access to school media and technology (describe the device to be used and the purpose).

## Communication Accommodations

- Preferential seating (describe appropriate seating);
- Evaluation of classroom acoustic environment;
- Encourage noise reduction, such as: closing the classroom door when there is noise in the hallway, reducing noise made by heating and cooling systems, keeping order in the classroom, and encouraging students to respond with voices loud enough to be heard clearly;
- Clearly enunciate speech. Allow extra time for processing information;

# PICNIC REPORT

By Gail Cronin

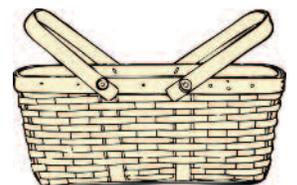
On Friday, August 1, the Buffalo Implant Group held its annual picnic at Westwood Park in Lancaster. We did things a little differently this year, by having our gathering in the indoor space rather than the outdoor shelter. This decision was made in an effort to avoid occasional challenges in the past including wind, stormy weather, and buzzing insects. However, after trying the indoor space it was a nearly unanimous decision to return to the outdoor shelter again next year. The open doors still allowed insects in, and we found that many other park users would wander into our meeting space looking for restrooms or a shortcut to the parking lot. But most importantly, the acoustics in the room were poor and made it more difficult to hear. We will try to reserve shelter #5 again, and will keep you posted in our winter and spring issues of The B.I.G. News.

There were at least 45 people in attendance, not including some of the kids who perhaps wouldn't come in

from the playground. Several of our area professionals were in attendance, as were some new members and cochlear implant candidates. We particularly welcome new member Will Licata, who offered his photography services and took wonderful pictures during the event. A delicious dinner was catered by Desiderio's, and desserts were provided by our members. A brief meeting was conducted by President Sue Wantuck, followed by our annual basket raffle to support our upcoming scholarship fund, which we are currently in the process of gathering seed money for. There were 32 baskets for raffle, breaking last year's record number, thanks to the efforts of our many member donors and our wonderful auction coordinator Sr. Dorothy Feltz and her assistants, Fr. Bob McArtney and Marie Giovinetti. Several hundred dollars were raised. The basket raffle provided not only funds, but also entertainment for the entire crowd. Additional thanks go to all who participated.



Photos by Will Licata and Gail Cronin



## WHY IS AMPLIFICATION CRITICAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS?



By Jessica Holst MS CCC-SLP

The effect of amplification is difficult to measure in a young child. A doe-eyed baby is not able to tell you if he or she is able hear, if that sound is too loud or too soft. As a parent our number one job is to protect that little baby and shield him or her from harm or discomfort. As such, parents are often hesitant to force the use of hearing aids or cochlear implants on their young child, who likely bats these new foreign object off their ears or worse, continues to put them in their mouth! You begin to rationalize why tomorrow may be a better day to force their wear because you can't bare upsetting your adorable new addition!



Jessica Holst

It is sometimes difficult to understand why a child needs to wear hearing aids or a cochlear implant, let alone wear it all the time. Many children respond to loud sounds or the voice of their mother without amplification. The important question then becomes, do they understand that message? What is the quality of the auditory signal the child receives? As early education professionals, it is our job to be sure a parent understands this critical difference.

Without amplification a child only hears "fuzzy images" of words and sentences; some hear even less than that. Imagine listening to the world from underwater. How can you be expected to understand what is said, let alone accurately replicate or respond to that message? All-day wear of amplification devices ensures that a child receives the clearest image of sound possible, essential to the development of listening and talking. Consider this; a normal hearing baby listens for about 10 waking hours per day, 365 days per year. That adds up to 3,650 listening experience hours per year. If a baby wears amplification only 3 hours a day, it will take over 3 years to give that baby as much listening experience as a hearing baby or a baby who wears amplification all waking hours. (Data obtained from Learn to Talk Around the Clock program by Karen Rossi.) A hearing baby learns language through listening during direct interaction with their family as well as overhearing the world around them. A sound, word, phrase or sentence must be heard and understood before a child is able to coo, goo, babble or speak. If spoken language is the goal for your child, it is imperative the same quality and quantity of listening experience be afforded.



## THE BASKET RAFFLE AT THE B.I.G. PICNIC



Oh, what a wonderful time! Everyone appeared to be so delighted to see each other and to socialize and the food was yummy, too. Thanks go to Fr. Bob who worked so hard behind the scenes helping assemble raffle baskets, printing numbers for baskets and cans, and making signs for the tables. He also assisted in transporting 20 baskets to the park, helped set them up and then sold tickets. No small accomplishment!

I would not have been able to get the raffle all together without all of Marie Giovinetti's help. Marie is Fr. Bob's and my mutual friend. She worked tirelessly loading all of the baskets (including one she donated) and cans into our cars. And then she unloaded everything for us when we arrived at the park. She then organized all of the baskets and cans so neatly on the tables. After the picnic she again loaded boxes and cans back into our cars and made sure everything was left neat and clean.

Our ticket sellers, Marie, Margie Fitchlee, Fr. Bob, and I did a great job too. Marie remarked that everyone was so friendly.

Thank you to all of the members who donated wonderful baskets and gift certificates, as well as to those who bought tickets. All went well.

With much gratitude,  
St. Dorothy





# TRAINING THE BRAIN: CI EXPERIENCE

By Gloria M. Matthews



Gloria M. Matthews

I have been wearing my Cochlear Implant for almost two years. I will say I hear more in general. If you want to get down to the specifics, well that is still a learning process for me. I have worn hearing aids from the age of four. I didn't get my first cochlear implant until the age of twenty-eight. So, with twenty-four years of

wearing hearing aids bilaterally to going bimodal (one hearing aid/one CI), that is twenty-four years of decreasing ability to hear well. That is also twenty-four years of missing out on sounds that most people are used to hearing and probably take it for granted. So, think about it. While the sound does not sound normal at first with the CI, the brain still has to process all the sounds you are hearing either for the first time ever or the first time in a long time.

The brain has long been a mystery in medical sciences; how it works, how it functions and what it is capable of doing at different stages in life. With a cochlear implant, depending on how long you've been deaf to sounds or how long you've been slowly losing your hearing while wearing hearing aid(s) (hearing aids don't cause future deafness), the CI will be like a reboot to your auditory nerve. It will sound robotic at first but over time as you get used to wearing it more and more. The sounds should soon "normalize" for you. This process does not happen overnight. It does take several weeks of either training or retraining the brain to recognize sounds and to be able to identify not only where the sound is coming from but what kind of sound it is. However, that training goes on for as long as you may have it. Many speech pathologists and audiologists encourage CI users to practice listening to audiobooks, familiar music and music styles, and your home and outdoor environments for real life stimulation so that you can pin-point where you are struggling and where you do well. Knowing what sounds good and what doesn't helps your CI audiologist to make the appropriate adjustments to your processor, which is the external piece of the cochlear implant system.

Many of today's newest speech processors have a built-in chip that collects data on which kind of program you use, what kind of environment you are in (quiet or noise), how often you use one or more of your programs, and how often you are adjusting your volume and/or sensitivity. This data has the ability to help your CI audiologist to pinpoint what works and what doesn't. But data alone isn't always going to be on point. I believe that as a client, your feedback on how you are hearing will give your CI audiologist a better idea and sense of what potential changes they can make to your mapping. A mapping is an adjustment

made to your processor to enhance the ability to pick up speech and sounds more clearly. It's like a sound check board. You go across all the frequencies to get the sounds to come out (but in this case "in") as comfortable, as normal as possible. In order to get the best out of your map, be honest with your CI audiologist. Let them know what you are hearing and what you are not. All this is done on a computer with a special cord hooking your processor up to the computer and the program specifically designed for the cochlear implant's make and model.

With each new map, your brain has to go through an adjustment period. Usually a few weeks at most, but for some it may take longer. This is why many stress the importance of having patience. Patience is much needed and there are those who want to return back to an active lifestyle as soon as possible, and they are usually the first to get frustrated. Don't be discouraged. Be realistic. Know that it will take some getting used to, and remember that your brain is also undergoing a process of its own. You will have some ups and downs. Do not keep this to yourself. Let your CI audiologist know when you are having issues or struggling with something. I myself have had a few ups and downs, like right now, speech comes in clear at first and then after a while it gets slurry. This means a new map is needed, which I will be getting soon.

Another time you may need to contact your CI audiologist is if you have a mechanical failure. Once I accidentally dropped my remote while visiting Canada with a good friend of mine and I had to get it replaced. Thank God for the warranty!

There are times where I do take my processor off and need to take a rest, and that is OKAY! Sometimes it helps to give the brain a rest. When sounds don't seem to be making much sense and you are tired, take off your processor(s) and just rest for a while. Some people can wear it all the time, some can wear it for most of the day but have to take it off for a rest, while some may have to take multiple breaks throughout the day (this is usually after activation) until they get used to wearing it longer. Everyone is different and everyone responds differently. Each individual is unique.

So in closing, the brain is constantly at work to process sounds every day. Some may struggle, while some may not as much, but it is all a process and it all requires PATIENCE. Take the advice from your CI team, talk to those who understand the process and make connections to online communities where many gather to share their experiences. If there is anything such as pain to the site of the magnet or redness or swelling or headaches (followed by ear pain) going on around your implant ear(s), please keep in mind those issues should be directed to your ENT Specialist/Surgeon.



# MANY THANKS



Buffalo Hearing and  
Speech Center  
Tracy Balon  
Jeanette Berry  
Melisa Burroughs  
Craig and Jackie Carpenter  
Carleen Christner  
Joe and Gail Cronin  
Sean Cronin  
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Margie Fitchlee  
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Dorothy Harezga  
Sharon Hehr  
Jessica Holst  
Shirley Jaskier  
Joe and Dawn Kolis  
Seven and Kim Krolczyk  
Will Licata  
Monica Lucarelli  
Gloria Matthews  
Fr. Bob McArtney  
Janet McKenna  
Cheryl McNatty

Kathleen Maroney  
Norma O'Brien  
Jane Ploetz  
Janet Richter  
St. Mary's School for the Deaf  
Joe Sonnenberg  
Mary Lee Thorpe  
Sue and Dan Wantuck  
Helen Zgoda  
Michael Zogaria  
Zenger Group  
*And all those who  
donated raffle baskets*



## DEAF AWARENESS WEEK

By Gloria M. Matthews

On Saturday, September 13, Deaf Access Services, formally known as Deaf Adult Services, hosted their annual Deaf Awareness Week Kick-Off event at the Galleria Mall near the Apple Store. The event ran from 10 – 2 pm. The Kick-Off ushered in Deaf Awareness Week, which continued until September 19.



The event turned out to be a success thanks to all who came out to support Deaf Awareness Week! There were eight organizations in attendance, including our very own Buffalo Implant Group and two new organizations, along with local community leaders who came to express their ongoing support for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Hearing communities. It was refreshing to know that local community leaders from the City of Buffalo understood the importance of promoting awareness for the Deaf Communities (including the Hard of Hearing). It also went to show the community just how hard Deaf Access Services has worked to advocate and educate the communities at large about what services and organizations are available in the Western New York region.

The goal of Buffalo Deaf Awareness Week is to help connect the hearing, Hard of Hearing and Deaf communities in Western New York and to offer insight about Deaf culture, sign language, advocacy, employment assistance, and more. This is an event where you can learn about the organizations and groups who serve in the Western New York communities to help promote awareness of what they do, how they can help and how you can benefit from their services. Yes, ASL is heavily used at this event, but if you didn't know ASL,

that was okay! Deaf Access Services hosted a couple of free sign language sessions during the event. There was also a coloring table for the young ones and candy available at most of the tables along with contact information and freebies.

Sue Wantuck, Margie Fitchlee, and I represented our group next to Deaf Access Services. We got to meet new individuals and talk to one BAHHA user who had never heard of our group. We also were able to explain to people about cochlear implants, what they are, how they work, the process of getting one and the support that our group offers. It was very educational and enlightening to share with others what our group does. It is our hope that next year, more of our members will come out to share their stories and to be a part of rooting out the negative stigma and misinformation that some people have about the technology we use to help us hear.

You too can be an active advocate, not only for yourself but for others. Let us share our experiences and help those who may need to be pointed in the right direction to get the help they need with their hearing loss.



## PARENTS' CORNER: CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATIONS..... *Continued from page 5*

- Repeat or rephrase auditory information when necessary;
- Frequently check for understanding; and,
- Educational interpreter (ASL, signed English, cued speech, oral—describe role of the educational interpreter).

### Instructional Accommodations

- Use of visual supplements (overhead, chalkboard, charts, vocabulary lists, lecture outlines, homework in written form);
- Captioning or scripts for television, videos, movies);
- Buddy system for notes, extra explanations/direction;
- Down time/break from listening;
- Extra time to complete assignment;

- Step-by-step directions; and,
- Note taker.

### Curricular Modifications:

- Modify assignments;
- Pre-teaching/review of vocabulary and concepts;
- Provide supplemental materials to reinforce concepts;
- Provide extra practice; and,
- Alternative curriculum.

### Evaluation Modifications:

- Reduce quantity of tests;
- Use alternative tests;
- Provide reading assistance with tests; and,
- Allow extra time on tests.

## BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP TO HOST A SPECIAL EVENT

### “AN AFTERNOON WITH FDR”

*Saturday, November 15  
2:00 – 4:00 pm*

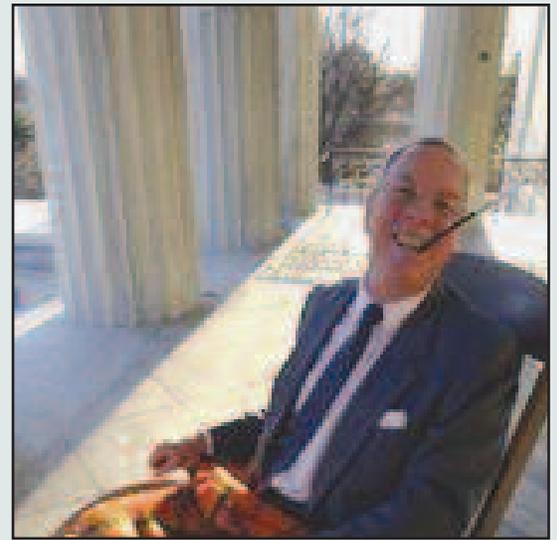
*St. Mary's School for the Deaf  
Assembly Hall  
2253 Main St. Buffalo, 14214*

*Tickets are \$10. Doors open at 1:30 pm.  
Free parking*

Performed by local actor Albert McFadyen. This special program will bring American history to life in word and song, as the audience takes a trip down memory lane reliving all the major events of the Great Depression and WWII years through the eyes of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Tickets are available at the October 29 B.I.G. meeting, by mail or will-call.

**All proceeds to benefit B.I.G.**



*Checks payable to:  
The Buffalo Implant Group.*

For tickets by mail, send check to:  
Lisa Hill Nowicki,  
1 Robert Rich Way  
Buffalo, NY 14213



## ESSP CONFERENCE COMES TO BUFFALO

The 28th Annual Conference for Educational Support Service Personnel will be held at The Adam's Mark Hotel in Buffalo, New York from November 7-8.

Educational Support Service Personnel is a statewide organization dedicated to the education of deaf and hard-of-hearing children. The theme for this year's conference is Paving the Way to Progress Using the Common Core, featuring two days of workshops and

speakers on promoting student success using the common core. The schedule will include keynote speakers, round table discussions, and workshops relevant to professionals and family members who work with/have deaf or hard of hearing children. The keynote speakers are Dr. Thomas Holcomb and Dr. Michele Berke. For more information go to <http://www.essp-ny.org/conference.html>

## Buffalo Implant Group

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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Subscription/Membership Form  
- \$15.00 per Year -

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Implant User

Parent Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Device Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age Implanted \_\_\_\_\_

Professional, What field \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to **Buffalo Implant Group** and send the Subscription/Membership Form and/or donation to:  
**Buffalo Implant Group, P.O. Box 350, Clarence Center, NY 14032-0350**

Without your support, there can be no B.I.G. News. It is our belief that the *B.I.G. News* is of great value to our readers and to those who would like to learn more about us. We strive to provide you with current, useful information, inspiring stories and valuable resources for cochlear implant users and the people who care for them. Please show us your support by joining B.I.G. now!



## OUR NEXT B.I.G. MEETING AND SOCIAL



The Buffalo Implant Group is excited to welcome Pam Kruger, Au.D., Clinical Specialist in the Northeast Region with Advanced Bionics Corporation, as the guest presenter for our October meeting. Pam joined AB in January 2014, after working as a Clinical Audiologist since 1985. Pam spent much of her career working in Dallas, Texas prior to relocating back to her home town of Buffalo, NY. Pam most recently worked at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center prior to joining the Advanced Bionics team.

This presentation was rescheduled after the March 2014 storm forced the cancellation of our scheduled speaker from Advanced Bionics. Pam is excited to share ABs' most recent advances with our group. Her presentation will be focused on technology updates and connecting with local AB users.

The meeting will be held in the St. Mary's School Assembly Hall. Free parking is available in the lot behind the building. Enter on Main St. In the driveway marked "Main Entrance." Sign Language interpretation and CART transcription will be provided.

Pizza, pop and water will be provided. Please consider bringing a snack or dessert to share if possible. But most importantly, we need YOU. Friends and family are welcome. A 50/50 raffle fundraiser will take place, and the treasurer will be available to accept your 2015 dues. A brief business meeting and elections will also be conducted.

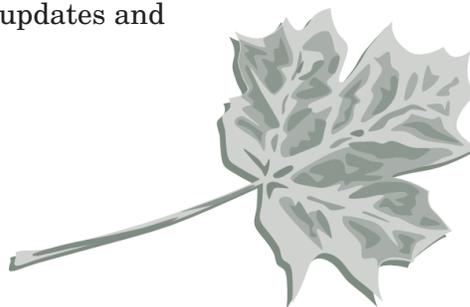
### Please Join Us

Wednesday, October 29, 2014

6:00 – 8:00 pm

St. Mary's School for the Deaf

2253 Main St. Buffalo 14214





**BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP**

**P.O. BOX 350**

**CLARENCE CENTER, NEW YORK 14032-0350**

**[www.buffaloimplantgroup.com](http://www.buffaloimplantgroup.com)**

## **Awards our Newsletter has Received:**

**Best National Chapter Newsletter by CIAI**

**Service to the Hearing Impaired by Kenmore Lions Club**

**Judy Weiner Award for Service to the Hearing Impaired by Western New York Academy of Audiology**