

# THE B.I.G. NEWS

## BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP

COMMUNICATING ▶ SHARING ▶ COUNSELING ▶ SUPPORTING



### B.I.G. STAFF

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

B.I.G. Meeting June 17

B.I.G. Meeting August 14

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### MEETING NOTICE:

Wednesday, June 17

6:00 – 8:00 pm

St. Mary's School for the Deaf  
2235 Main St. - Buffalo

## Hearing Birds Chirp is Still Music to My Ear

by Diane Mogavero



Diane Mogavero

I gradually lost my hearing in my 30's. The first procedure that was used back then was called a stapedectomy. The stapes bone was removed and wire was inserted to vibrate and transmit sound. That surgery worked for years, and then I had a car accident. The accident broke my nose and the impact caused the wire to fall off. Five surgeries to replace the wire were unsuccessful and I became deaf in that ear. Single-sided deafness is a hearing loss in which there is no functional hearing ability in one ear. This condition can cause headaches, irritability, tinnitus, and difficulty distinguishing where sounds are coming from. All of this can lead to social isolation and even depression.

I found a wonderful otolaryngologist (ear, nose and throat specialist or ENT) named Dr.

Alexander Mandych. He sent me to Kevin Flanagan, who became my audiologist. I received the best hearing aid that money could buy. I had an audiologist and a physician who actually cared. I took a lot of trips to doctors to find one who cared. Both of these gentlemen convinced me that I had to try one more surgery. They both said, "Trust us," and I did. I figured that it could only get better. It couldn't have gotten any worse.

They both knew I needed to see Dr. Ernesto Diaz-Ordaz. He was the doctor who could help me to get my hearing back with a Baha Implant in my deaf ear. The name Baha originally comes from the acronym for Bone Anchored Hearing Aid. Dr. Diaz-Ordaz explained how the Baha works to help people with middle ear damage. The device is implanted behind the non-functioning ear. The system utilizes direct bone conduction, which allows the bone to transfer sound to a functioning cochlea, bypassing the damaged middle ear. He told me that after the surgery and three months of healing, the implant would be secure. Then a sound processor is snapped on behind the ear like a hearing aid. Dr. Diaz-Ordaz performed tests before the surgery to make certain that I was a good candidate and that a Baha would work for me.

*continued on page 11*

Hello! Finally Spring is here; what a winter we have had! Bring on the sunshine and warmer temperatures. I am ready to enjoy the outdoors. My husband and I recently returned from our first Caribbean vacation. We went to St. Maarten Island for five days and stayed at an all-inclusive resort. The weather was perfect, warm and sunny everyday. I spent my time by the pool, walking on the beach, listening to music and talking to/meeting some new people. I found it difficult to understand/interact with those from different countries and especially the English dialect from the natives. It was frustrating to me. I probably could only comprehend about 40% of what was being said. I felt I missed a lot of the information about the history of the island,

stories shared, etc. I had to ask people to repeat things many times. Luckily most were kind, patient and understanding. I appreciated that. My favorite part was sitting outside in the late evening or early morning just listening to the waves of the ocean. It was a relaxing trip that I needed. I hope to travel again soon.

I was very pleased to see so many members and students at our most recent general meeting on March 11. The Board received a lot of positive feedback. Thanks go to Jimmie Sorrento, Gloria Matthews, Diane Mogavero, and Sam Spritzer for volunteering their time to share their history, experiences and knowledge during our panel discussion. Thanks also goes to Jessie Holst for moderating the panel. If you were unable to attend the meeting, we did video tape the panel session and are

working to put it on our new website! Please visit our new website and scroll through all the pages. If you have any suggestions for information/links that should be listed please let us know. We are still working on it.

Our Spring meeting will take place on June 17 at 6:00 pm at St. Mary's School for the Deaf and the topic will be "Music Appreciation." Also, please mark your calendar and plan to join us in celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the organization at this year's summer picnic. The picnic will be held at Westwood Park in Lancaster on Friday, August 14 from 5:00 to 7:30 pm. We will be doing another basket raffle. If you are interested in donating, please let me know. Look for more details about the picnic in the July issue of The B.I.G. News and on our website. Happy Hearing!

## From the Editor

*by Gail Cronin*

Our second issue for the year is out a little late, but there should still be plenty of time for you to mark your calendar for our next general meeting on June 17. Our third of the year is already in production and should reach your mailboxes in late July. It will contain all the details of our annual summer picnic, which is scheduled for August 14 this year. Please take note of that date on your calendar as well. And while we are on the subject of this year's issues of The B.I.G. News, please note that the last issue was incorrectly labeled Volume 26. It should have been labeled Volume 27 once we started the year 2015. I apologize for the error.

I hope that all our readers are enjoying the new logos and graphics that were launched in the last issue. I

received a lot of positive feedback on the newer, sleeker look. Thanks go to Jeanette Berry and the team at Zenger group for their fabulous design and printing. And extra thanks goes to Matt Coleman, the graphic designer who redesigned our fantastic new logos! Matt really understood our needs and came up with two wonderful designs that were so great that we couldn't decide between them. So we are using both. There is a new logo with title on the front of The B.I.G. News and a smaller, round logo on the back using the same ear graphic. These images are being incorporated into our letterhead and hopefully some t-shirts in the coming year.

And speaking of new, have you checked out our new website? Will Licata completely redesigned our site, which now features his incredible photography. The new site launched last month. Please check it out and give us your feedback. Will is now a member of our Board and our web administrator, and we appreciate all that he is contributing

to the growth of our organization.

I would also like to take a moment to update our members about how we handle incoming mail. Our post office box is checked monthly, usually right before a general or Board meeting, except for December when we do not meet. So if you mail something to our PO box, it could be a month before someone actually picks it up and handles it. I then distribute items to the appropriate party when I see them at a meeting. So it might take up to 6 weeks before your check or request is taken care of. Please remember that all of the work done in our organization is done by volunteers. If you are mailing something to the B.I.G. post office box that is time sensitive, please send me an email to let me know so that I can check the box and handle it in a more timely fashion. You can reach me at [gdcronin@roadrunner.com](mailto:gdcronin@roadrunner.com).



# Parents' Corner

by Lisa Hill Nowicki

With summer around the corner, did you know there are camps and programs for kids who are deaf and hard of hearing? I found this list on the AG Bell website and thought I would share a few that are around this area. Please see the AG Bell website for their complete listing broken down by state. [www.listeningandspokenlanguage.org/SummerCamp/](http://www.listeningandspokenlanguage.org/SummerCamp/)

## Explore Your Future (EYF)

Rochester Institute of Technology/  
National Technical Institute for the Deaf  
52 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, NY 14623

Description: A six-day career exploration program at Rochester Institute of Technology for college-bound deaf and hard-of-hearing high school students who will begin their junior or senior year in the upcoming Fall. The program focuses on personal growth and career awareness for students as they begin to think about college.

## TechBoyz

Rochester Institute of Technology/  
National Technical Institute for the Deaf  
52 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, NY 14623

Description: A week-long summer camp for deaf or hard-of-hearing boys entering 7th, 8th, or 9th grade in the upcoming Fall who are

interested in science, technology, engineering and math.

## TechGirlz

Rochester Institute of Technology/  
National Technical Institute for the Deaf  
52 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, NY 14623

Description: A week-long summer camp for deaf or hard-of-hearing girls entering 7th, 8th or 9th grade in the upcoming Fall who are interested in science, technology, engineering and math.

## CJ Equestrian Camp

5725 6th Line, R.R. #1  
Rockwood, ON N0B 2K0,  
CANADA

CJ is Ontario's premier equestrian centre that offers a high performance riding camp program for girls. Girls from all over the world join us to enhance their riding skills and cross train in the three disciplines of dressage, stadium and cross country jumping. Lyssa is a certified coach and has been teaching and training riders for over 25 years. Our equestrian facility is located on 70 manicured acres. The cabins overlook the water and the walk to the dining hall is like walking through a park. Other activities include swimming, canoeing, archery, sports, games, campfire, girls' night, and evening programs.

# Many Thanks

Carm Bauer  
Jeanette Berry  
Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center  
Christine Burdzy  
Melissa Burroughs  
Margaret Campbell  
Craig and Jackie Carpenter  
Matt Coleman  
Joe Cronin  
Sean Cronin  
Deaf Access Services  
Jon Erwin  
Sr. Dorothy Feltz  
Margie Fitchlee  
Marie Giovineti  
JoAnn Hammer  
Lisa Hill Nowicki  
Jessica Holst  
Karen Hornung  
Donna Johnson  
Kaitlyn Kelly  
Joe Kolis  
Will Licata  
Kathleen Maroney  
Gloria Matthews  
Fr. Bob McArtney  
Albert McFadyen  
Chrisann Militello  
Kristin Miller  
Diane Mogavero  
Norma O'Brien  
St. Mary's School for the Deaf  
Carol Schillace  
Joe Sonnenberg  
Jimmie Sorrento  
Sam Spritzer  
Sandra Swaciak  
WNY Court Reporting Services  
Sue Wantuck  
Zenger Group  
Michael Zogaria



# Meet the BHSC Cochlear Implant Team



*Monica Lucarelli, Michele Dubé, Sharon Warner, Alison Ulatowski, JoAnn Hammer, Andrea Bauer*

The following is an update on the members of the Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center Cochlear Implant Team and the services that they provide.

**Andrea Bauer, M.S., CCC-SLP**, is a speech-language pathologist who has been working at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center for 9 years. Ms. Bauer completes speech/language evaluations for 3 month - post cochlear implant clients as well as for those clients who use hearing aids. Her goal is to identify cochlear implant/hearing aid users as potential speech/language therapy clients that would benefit from auditory rehabilitative based therapy, in order to utilize their cochlear implant at its maximum benefit, and to enhance their overall communication effectiveness. Ms. Bauer's past experience in the field includes working in BHSC's Oral Deaf Education Program. For 3 years, she had the opportunity to provide speech/ language therapy (following the Moog Curriculum) to preschool children who used cochlear implants, BAHA's and hearing aids to listen and process auditory information. Together, they worked towards the goal of increasing spoken language to age-appropriate levels as well as becoming proficient users of their devices. Ms. Bauer truly enjoys working with the clients of this field and looks forward to meeting you!!

**Monica Lucarelli, M.S., CCC-SLP**, is a licensed speech-language pathologist at Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center. Ms. Lucarelli earned her master's degree at Buffalo State College in 2001. She is trained in the Moog Curriculum philosophy for teaching deaf children to talk. She has worked in the Oral Deaf Education Program at Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center since the program began in 2003, providing Early Intervention services to children with hearing impairments. Ms. Lucarelli provides parent education and training in the community to children birth to 3 years of age. She is also a member of Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center's Cochlear Implant Team providing cochlear implant candidacy assessments and auditory rehabilitation for adults with cochlear implants.

**Sharon Warner, M.A., CCC-SLP**, is a licensed speech-language pathologist at Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center. Ms. Warner earned her master's degree at the SUNY Buffalo in 2006. She is the Literacy Coordinator in Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center's Early Childhood Program, developing and implementing appropriate curriculum to ensure a strong language and literacy foundation for all of our students. Ms. Warner is trained in

the Moog Curriculum philosophy for teaching Deaf children to talk. She has worked in the Oral Deaf Education Program at Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center since 2008. She has experience with children as young as 3 months of age through adults. She currently works with young children, school-aged children, and adults. Ms. Warner is also a member of Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center's Cochlear Implant Team providing cochlear implant candidacy assessments, auditory rehabilitation evaluations, and auditory rehabilitation therapy for adults with cochlear implants.

**Allison Ulatowski, Au.D.**, is the newest member of the Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center Cochlear Implant Team. Dr. Ulatowski received her B.A. in Communication Sciences and Disorders from James Madison University in 2006 and her Au.D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 2010. Dr. Ulatowski completed her fourth year Au.D. externship at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center and has been working as an audiologist at BHSC since 2010. Dr. Ulatowski began her cochlear implant training with audiologists Michelle Dubé and JoAnn Hammer in August 2014. She currently specializes in diagnostic audiology and hearing aid fitting for adult and pediatric patients. Dr. Ulatowski has served as a clinical supervisor for Au.D. graduate students from the University at Buffalo.

**Michelle Dubé, M.S. CCC-A**, has enjoyed working as an audiologist for the past 20 years. Eleven of those years have been at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. She received both her Bachelors and Masters Degrees from SUNY Fredonia. Ms. Dubé started her audiology career

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## Meet the BHSC Cochlear Implant Team... *cont. from page 4*

in Florida where she worked at an otolaryngology clinic. She moved back to Buffalo in 2003 and has been employed by Buffalo Hearing and Speech ever since. Ms. Dubé has been part of the BHSC Cochlear Implant Team for 11 years and provides services to both the pediatric and adult populations. She loves giving young children the opportunity to have a successful future, but she equally enjoys giving adults an improved quality of life through the optimized functioning of their cochlear implants and hearing aids. When Ms. Dubé is not working with patients in the clinic, she is working with the children in the BHSC Oral Deaf Education classrooms where she makes sure that the hearing aids, CIs and Bahas are functioning properly, and she performs routine hearing tests on the children. Ms. Dubé is also a supervisor for Au.D. students who are attending graduate

school at the University at Buffalo.

**JoAnn Hammer, Au.D.**, has been an audiologist for over 20 years, having graduated in 1990 with her Master's of Science in audiology from Hofstra University and her doctoral degree from Salus University in 2003. Dr. Hammer returned to Buffalo in 1992 and has been employed and associated with Buffalo Hearing and Speech ever since. During her tenure at the Center, she has served in the capacity of Manager of the Audiology Clinical Program and Coordinator of the Cochlear Implant Program. She is one of the original team members of the Cochlear Implant program since its inception in 1998. Dr. Hammer joined the University of Buffalo Speech Language and Hearing Clinic as a Clinical Assistant Professor in September 2002. She is currently part of the Cochlear Implant Team at Buffalo Hearing and Speech

Center that provides services to both pediatric and adult populations. At the University of Buffalo, Dr. Hammer is involved in clinical teaching of doctoral level audiology students and the placement of students in community agencies, including Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center. She enjoys providing clinical services and training students in general audiology including auditory processing, tinnitus management, amplification, diagnostics, and cochlear implants.

If you or someone you know is interested in being evaluated for a possible cochlear implant, you can contact BHSC at 885-8318 to schedule an appointment for a cochlear implant evaluation. You will be mailed information about the CI evaluation process and asked to bring in insurance information as well as a copy of your latest audiogram.

## Proud to be a HearStrong Champion!

*by Gloria M. Matthews*

It is my pleasure to announce that I was officially named a HearStrong Champion by the HearStrong Foundation in December 2014. Headquartered in Syracuse, NY, the foundation was created in 2013 with the goal of inspiring an awareness of hearing healthcare. HearStrong Champions serve as role models to help empower more than 30 million Americans with untreated hearing loss to take control of their hearing health.

I was nominated by a fellow HearStrong Champion and a good friend of mine, Jerome Evans, AuD. He is currently a CI audiologist based in San Antonio, Texas. He is also a bilateral recipient himself, so he

knows firsthand the experience his clients go through with their CI's. He was among the first to really tell me about the CI and gave me the confidence to make the decision. For that, I owe him a debt of gratitude.

A part of being a HearStrong Champion is telling your story about the obstacles you've overcome and what kind of achievements you've accomplished along the way. More importantly, your story is one that not only encourages but inspires many, young and old alike, to take back control and live life to the fullest with a hearing loss. If you wish to read up on my story go to [www.hearstrong.org/champion-gloria-matthews.php](http://www.hearstrong.org/champion-gloria-matthews.php)

## Does Your Child Use a Cochlear Implant?

Your child is invited to participate in a language development study if he/she

- 1) has **at least one year** of experience in using cochlear implants, **AND**
- 2) is at the ages between **2 years, 0 months and 10 years, 11 months**

The study involves three to six visits of approximately one hour each at a mutually agreeable location or the Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences on the South Campus of University at Buffalo. You will receive \$15 for each visit and a copy of the evaluation report. For questions about this study, please call Dr. Ling-Yu "Hugo" Guo at 716-829-5553 or email [lingyugu@buffalo.edu](mailto:lingyugu@buffalo.edu).



# REFLECTIONS ON: *Dreaming With My Open Eyes*

by Margie Fitchlee

I have often been told that one thing you can't change is the word after it is spoken. To me this is a very profound message and reminds me of a time a few years ago of something my daughter Allison stated to me. She said, "Mom, I think I am not a reader because I never saw you or Dad reading books for pleasure." Wow, those words cut through me like a knife.

After the shock, I digested what she said to me and had to agree that what she blurted out to me was true. We did not read for pleasure. In my youth, I scoffed at reading because the only things I read were assigned books for school. Books someone told me I had to read. The same thing occurred when attending college. Later, I worked in the field of Early Childhood Education where I did develop a love for children's books and avidly read to my young charges and to my own two young daughters at home.

I took those words spoken by my daughter to heart and a few years ago, after losing all of my hearing, decided to give reading for pleasure a try. Japanese author YoYo stated that "Reading is dreaming with open eyes" and that sounded just fine to me. I did just that. I read like there was no tomorrow. I was desperate to find new ways to enjoy myself. The things I took for granted like watching TV, going to the movies, listening to music, calling friends on the telephone

for long talks no longer worked for me. I had to reinvent the wheel (so to speak) and find new avenues of relaxation and enjoyment. I retired from school and moved to South Florida for the winter months. Our community had many opportunities for retirees to stay active and meet new people. I convinced myself that if I wanted to be productive and have a happy life I needed to start joining groups and put my fears about my hearing loss behind me. The ladies started a reading discussion club. I joined and I flourished!

Of course, I give my love of Dr. Seuss credit for helping me find my way into the world of reading. He said, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." I not only joined the Book Club in South Florida, but also joined one back in Western New York.

After finishing my first book and attending my first discussion I immediately contacted my daughter and exclaimed, "Ali, you will never guess! Your mother actually read and finished a book for pleasure!" I have been reading non-stop ever since. Libba Bray must have written this quote with my book clubs in mind; she said, "We're all strangers connected by what we reveal, what we share, what we take away-our stories, I guess that's what I love about books-they are the thin strands of humanity that tether us to one another for a small bit of time, that

make us feel less alone or even more comfortable with our aloneness, if need be." She described it to a tee.

Reading has given me a new avenue of enjoyment. It has taught me many things. It has taught me that I can adapt. It has taught me I can persevere. It has taught me I can accept my unexpected deafness. But most importantly it has taught me that I can find happiness and enjoyment in my given situation.

I have seen first-hand that the message Jonathan Franzer gives us about reading is so true. He said, "The first lesson that reading teaches us is how to be alone." You too can reinvent that wheel, you can adapt, you can persevere, and you too can accept your given situation. The members of the Buffalo Implant Group are ready and willing to make sure you understand that you do not have to be alone in your hearing loss. We are so ready to reach out and help you adjust, and embrace the options you might have. Our situations may all differ, but we can still band together, to educate, to mentor and to support those in our community and surrounding areas that need help.

I have to admit that when I lost all of my natural hearing I was devastated and very scared. It took me quite a while to get to the place I am at right now. An old Moroccan proverb says that "Reading books removes sorrows from the heart." It certainly has done just that for me. May God Bless All of You!

## Treasurer's Report

by Lisa Hill Nowicki

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to renew their 2015 membership. To date our 2015 expenses are about \$100 behind our revenue. There is still time to renew your membership if you have not already done so. Please look to the date to the right of your name on the newsletter mailer label to see if your membership has expired.



# Tracy Balon Joins Our Board



Happy Spring, Buffalo Implant Group members! My name is Tracy Balon and I am the new Community Outreach Coordinator for the Buffalo Implant Group. As the newest member of the Board, my focus will be to get the word out regarding the great support system that we offer through our organization.

I am a NYS Licensed Speech-Language Pathologist at Buffalo

Hearing and Speech Center. I have been working as an SLP at the Center since September of 2005, immediately after receiving my Master's Degree from Nazareth College of Rochester. My passion for working with individuals who have hearing loss began as I entered my graduate studies. Through my studies, I pursued an interest in, and am currently certified to work as an SLP for children and adults who use hearing devices (cochlear implants, hearing aids, etc.). Over the course of my last 9 years at the Center, I have been working with children who have hearing loss, aged birth-5 years. I am trained in the Moog Curriculum philosophy of teaching children with hearing loss to use spoken language and I truly love teaching and watching these little

ones grow! Each of these children has great potential and I have seen the technology of today help them reach this potential. I currently manage the Oral Deaf Education Program at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. Within this role, I provide speech-language therapy services for children and supervise/mentor the other therapists who work within the Program. I am also closely involved with the Cochlear Implant Team at the Center. I have been informally associated with B.I.G. over the past few years and have had the opportunity to learn from this wonderful community of people.

It is a pleasure to introduce myself to the B.I.G. membership and I look forward to the future of the group!

## What are CART Services?

by Gloria M. Matthews

CART is an abbreviation for Communication Access Real-Time Translation. What this service does is provide real-live captioning to show up on either a laptop screen or a projector screen to the individual(s) present who is/are deaf or hard of hearing. It was specifically developed for the deaf and hard of hearing community and is considered a huge breakthrough for individuals who did not learn the skills of lip-reading and/or sign language. In other words, this technology will print out, word for word, what a speaker is saying on a screen, giving those with hearing loss equal access to information and communication in different settings.

***Did you know that this service has been around for 8 years in Western New York and is primarily provided by WNY Court Reporting Services? Well, they have!***

When I first experienced CART services in the fall of 2010 at Buffalo State College as a student, I was amazed by the technology and the ability to read what the professors were saying on a laptop screen. I usually found myself doing my typical lip-reading, but when the instructor walked around a lot and I was missing out I was able to turn to the screen in front of me to follow along. It gave me the opportunity to raise my hand to ask for clarification or more information or ask questions out of general curiosity. It allowed me to participate in ways where I am usually unsure of myself about participating in classroom discussions. It was like I was able to function on the same level as all hearing students do. By the end of each class, I would receive the electronic version of the lecture on a flash drive or via email. Because of that, I made

honors and was invited to join the Honors Society shortly thereafter.

What I just described is a similar testimony of those students who have used CART in the past and have gone on to not only graduate with high marks but became gainfully employed. As it stands now, CART is most commonly used in educational venues. It comes under the "reasonable accommodation" aspect of the Americans with Disability Act. CART is not to be confused with C-Print or Note-taking, each an auxiliary aid. WNY Court Reporters provides CART for college students on a one-on-one basis. The CART provider attends each class with the student, sitting in the front of the room or off to one side where they are able to see and hear everything perfectly. Unfortunately, obtaining CART in educational settings remains a struggle, often

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## What are CART Services?... *cont. from page 7*

because of a lack of knowledge regarding the applicable laws and a lack of understanding as to the needs of people requesting auxiliary aid.

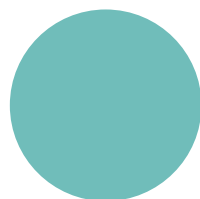
Many entities have obligations under civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination and require the provision of accommodations, such as captioning, in which they may be required to provide equal access to information and communication in employment settings, in the delivery of health care and mental health care services, for the provision of legal and law enforcement services and during court room proceedings. It is extremely important that you know and understand your rights to receive the proper accommodations to suit your needs.

In my experience of obtaining CART services, I originally went through ACCESS-VR (formerly VESID) as I was setting up my educational plan with them. ACCESS-VR then contracts with Deaf Access Service (DAS) to set up CART services under their Interpretation Services. From here, DAS contacts WNY Court Reporting Services to set up the schedule according to the needs of the individual requesting services. Currently, Jeffrey Strauss is the Manager of Interpretation Services at DAS. Upon my request to learn more about how they provide CART services this is the response I received, "DAS does provide CART Services as well as ASL interpreters. The request for CART services is the same as requesting a sign language interpreter. At the time of gathering information on the client's language preferences (ASL, Signed English, etc.) it is here when we discover the client is D/deaf or hard of hearing but does not know sign language. They may have encountered an illness that caused immediate deafness and/or are late-deafened. The person's first language

is English and with limited to no knowledge of sign language, CART Services would be the most appropriate means in communications." As you can see, DAS does cover CART under their Interpretation Services. Whenever one is in need of interpretation, do not assume it's just ASL; CART is also considered another means of interpretation.

The President of WNY Court Reporting Services is Chrisann Militello, who was previously a court reporter with the New York State Courts. Many of you who have attended a B.I.G. general meeting in the past have already met her. You may also know Linda Cancilla who is another CART provider for WNY Court Reporting Services, who has recently retired from the New York State courts. They have both provided CART service to Buffalo Implant Group at most of our general meetings. B.I.G. is grateful for their ongoing support and services, so a BIG THANK YOU for all that you do!

If you wish to learn more about CART services please feel free to contact Jeffrey Strauss of DAS at [jstrauss@wnydas.org](mailto:jstrauss@wnydas.org). For WNY Court Reporting Services contact Chrisann Militello at [wnycrs@gmail.com](mailto:wnycrs@gmail.com). You may also contact ACCESS-VR if you wish to have additional support in furthering your education or vocational training. Based upon my understanding, ACCESS-VR can cover the cost for interpretation services for educational and vocational training. Most services are supposed to be provided at little to no cost to those who are D/deaf and/or hard of hearing as it is required to be covered under the ADA law unless otherwise noted.



## Website Update

by Will Licata



On April 1 we revealed our new B.I.G. website. After five years of hard work and dedicated service, Father Bob McArtney has retired as the web administrator and passed the keys over to me. I am proud to have the opportunity to help serve a great group of people that I just met less than a year ago.

I started the web design project in late 2014 and have been working behind the scenes to provide a streamlined and refreshed look that will work on any device from your PC to your mobile phone. A lot of testing and sampling was done to get a workable design that is easy to navigate.

The work is far from done. As we move forward the plan is to add more content to help the community deal with what we as a group already know. Informative articles that share our experiences should bring comfort and help to those walking the same path we already have been down.

We will continue to grow our ties in social media and integrate more with the content found in our newsletters. Also, you will find updates to our online resources for those looking for specific help from professionals in the various areas of expertise. And as always, you can contact us online with specific questions that you might not be able to find the answers to elsewhere.

If you have suggestions or comments, please let me know. I can be reached at [will@buffaloimplantgroup.com](mailto:will@buffaloimplantgroup.com). Also don't forget to check the new site out at [www.buffaloimplantgroup.com](http://www.buffaloimplantgroup.com), and while you are there subscribe to our newsletter if you haven't done so already!



# What's New this Spring the World of Cochlear Implants?

Compiled by Jessica Holst



A large focus of the Buffalo Implant Group is to be sure members have access to up-to-date information about their cochlear implant technology and related accessories/services. Each of the three cochlear implant companies has exciting announcements to share this spring. We are fortunate to live in a day and age where competition has produced such wonderful innovations. As always, if you have any questions about your specific device and/or eligibilities, please contact your Audiologist.

## ADVANCED BIONICS

Advanced Bionics has a new accessory store for recipients looking to purchase accessories for their Naida CI Q70 or Neptune sound processor. Here is the link: <http://myabaccessories.com/> Available accessories meet a wide range of user needs both young and old. Of particular interest in the coming months may be the AquaCase. Be sure to check out what's available for your processors or to simply sport some AB swag.

Advanced Bionics has updated and expanded technology support resources as well. There are several new rehab apps available for iPad & iPhone, Android apps are in the works. Visit the Apple App Store and search "Advanced Bionics, LLC" for a full list of Apps. An all new "The Listening Room" website is up and running as well. This resource is a wonderful place for hearing aid users, cochlear implant recipients, and professionals to find rehab ideas and activities for all ages! Practice makes perfect. Go to

[www.thelisteningroom.com](http://www.thelisteningroom.com) to learn more! Finally, Advanced Bionics also hosts a YouTube page with recipient testimonials, troubleshooting and educational videos—<https://www.youtube.com/user/AdvancedBionics>.

*Submitted by: Advanced Bionics*

## COCHLEAR AMERICAS

Cochlear Americas has recently introduced two new hearing systems—The Cochlear Nucleus Hybrid System and the Baha 5 Sound Processor.

The Cochlear™ Nucleus® Hybrid System is an innovative and all-new hybrid hearing solution. While it's truly the first and only of its kind, it's also a combination of two proven hearing technologies. The first amplifies the low-pitched hearing a person has and the other restores access to the high-pitched hearing they've been missing.

Low frequency hearing includes the vowel sounds in speech, the melody of speech and certain ranges of music, such as the bass line of a song or a baritone vocal. High frequency hearing detects the consonants in speech, the higher pitches of music and sounds that can affect your safety or quality of life. For many people, traditional hearing aids cannot provide access to both, causing hearing gaps and difficulty understanding a conversation or enjoying music, especially in a noisy environment. The Nucleus Hybrid System is designed to bridge these gaps. Visit [Cochlear.com/US/hybridhearing](http://Cochlear.com/US/hybridhearing) to learn more!

The Baha 5 Sound Processor is the smallest and smartest bone

conduction processor in the industry. Inspired by simplicity, the Baha 5 Sound Processor incorporates innovative technologies including Bluetooth® Smart and Made for iPhone® technology that allows for direct streaming (phone calls, music etc.) from an iPhone, iPad or iPod touch. The Baha 5 Sound Processor is powered by the Ardium Smart platform featuring SmartSound® iQ signal processing technology to ensure users the best hearing experience across a variety of sound environments. Visit [www.Cochlear.com/US/BahaSystem](http://www.Cochlear.com/US/BahaSystem) to learn more!

*Submitted by: Cochlear Americas*

## MED EL

MED-EL USA's new SONNET behind-the-ear audio processor will be available spring 2015. Water-resistant, lightweight, and tamper-proof, SONNET allows for effortless listening in any environment. With hundreds of different color combinations to choose from, recipients can mix and match colors of processor parts for a SONNET tailored to their individual style. SONNET delivers up to 60-hours of battery life without compromising performance. The processor is programmed with MED-EL's MAESTRO 6.0 software. SONNET is compatible with all of MED-EL's multichannel cochlear implants, which have been consistently designed to access future-ready technology.

MED-EL's recently FDA approved SYNCHRONY cochlear implant is the first approved for use with 3.0 Tesla (T) MRI without surgical removal of the internal magnet; it is the only

*continued on page 10*

# Winter Meeting Report *by Gail Cronin*

Our winter meeting, held on March 11 at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center, was a huge success. Board member and speech-language pathologist Jessie Holst moderated a panel discussion about living with a hearing implant. The panelists were Sam Spritzer, Diane Mogavero, Sue Wantuck, Gloria Matthews, and Jimmie Sorrento. Our diverse group represented unilateral implant users, bilateral cochlear implant users, and bi-modal device users. Each panelist shared his or her story and

responded to questions prepared by Jessie and also to spontaneous questions from the audience. Topics included telephone use, sports and fitness, what sounds were surprising, and advice to new audiologists from the client perspective.

Approximately 60 people were in attendance, including a large number of graduate students from UB. Pizza was served and desserts were provided by our members and guests. All of our panelists were gracious



to stay late and chat with members and guests, answering questions and providing guidance. This evening epitomized what B.I.G. is all about.

## Our Next B.I.G. Meeting and Social

Please Join Us

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

6:00 – 8:00 pm

St. Mary's School for the Deaf

2253 Main St., Buffalo 14214

The Buffalo Implant Group is proud to welcome Alison Mendez of Cochlear Americas to discuss the

topic of "Music Appreciation" with our members. 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. A 50/50 raffle fundraiser will take place, and the treasurer will be available to accept your 2015 dues if you haven't already paid. A brief business meeting will take place, followed by a presentation by our speaker, and then social time. All are welcome!

## What's New this Spring the World of Cochlear Implants?... *cont. from page 9*

implant available with this indication in the USA. SYNCHRONY will also be available in spring 2015. SYNCHRONY is compatible with all current MED-EL audio processors. It is the smallest and lightest titanium cochlear implant on the market.

Also of interest as warm weather nears, MED-EL has received FDA

approval of the WaterWear fully waterproof cover for the all-in-one RONDO audio processor. The remarkably thin WaterWear will not compromise microphone performance, so RONDO recipients can be in and around water while enjoying excellent hearing performance. WaterWear packs

include three covers, each of which can be used up to three times. The covers can be worn for up to ten hours at a time, and have been tested at water depths of up to four meters (approximately 13 feet). For more information, visit [www.medel.com](http://www.medel.com)

*Submitted by: MED EL*

## Macy's Shop for a Cause ~ August 29, 2015

In August 2015, B.I.G. will again participate in the Macy's "Shop for a Cause" event. Last year we raised just under \$200 by selling savings passes for \$5 that allow participants 25% off on regular, sale and clearance merchandise, including designer

brands, throughout the store, as well as 10% off electronics, furniture, mattresses and area rugs on a specially designated shopping day. Members of B.I.G. will have the opportunity to purchase this pass at our June 17 meeting, August 14 picnic or from

B.I.G. board members at other times, and use the pass on Saturday, August 29 in any Macy's location. We retain 100% of the proceeds from each \$5 pass we sell. Happy Shopping!



# Quarterly Newsletter

## Subscription/Membership Form

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**Please make your check payable to Buffalo Implant Group and send the Subscription/Membership Form and/or donation to:  
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*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!*

## Hearing Birds Chirp is Still Music to My Ear... *cont. from page 1*

I decided to have the surgery. Finally, after three months the processor was snapped onto my head. This was the day I had waited for. The doctor asked, "Can you hear me?" I started crying tears of joy and nodded my head yes. I could hear this miraculous doctor! I could hear in my deaf ear!

My hair hides my Baha implant so well. Not that I care if it is seen. I was hard of hearing for many years, and then I became totally deaf in one ear. The Baha implant changed that.

This is my story, six years after my Baha was implanted. On my journey I

have met so many wonderful deaf and hard of hearing friends. The Buffalo Implant group helped me to feel whole again. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you are not alone. You don't have to suffer in silence. You don't have to laugh at something that you pretend to hear. There is help for you.

God and modern technology gave me a second chance to hear sounds that we all take for granted. Since the first day that my Baha implant was activated I have enjoyed hearing the birds chirp. I love taking the dogs for a walk and hearing their dog tags clanging. I can now carry

on a conversation and be a part of society again. I have the self-esteem back that I had lost. I can hear my grandchildren giggle again. And after six years with my Baha, I'm still enjoying listening to the birds chirp.

I feel that I have to get the word out about this wonderful device for people with conductive hearing loss. If I could help another person to hear, it would be wonderful. It was worth all I had to go through, and I know it would be for others as well. I can be reached by email at [smogavero@roadrunner.com](mailto:smogavero@roadrunner.com).

*Worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles.  
It takes away today's peace.*





## **BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP**

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*[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