



Sound Wave

The Hearing Foundation of Canada

Issue 5 - Summer, 2017

You did it!

You and about 11,699 other people

What an amazing month of May! In honour of Hearing and Speech Awareness Month, donors like you joined The Hearing Foundation of Canada (THFC) in advocating for infant hearing health. Thank you so much for coming together for Canadian babies.

Only five out of thirteen provinces have sufficient programs for newborn hearing screening and intervention. Access to screening and, if needed, early intervention programming is essential for babies to communicate with parents and for brain development in the very early months of their life.

THFC launched a petition calling on the Federal Government to make infant hearing health a priority. In early June the tinyEARS.ca petition, with your signature on it, was formally presented to the Canadian Government.

Thanks to you, Canada is one step closer to developing a national mandate for infant hearing health. This mandate will ensure that every baby across Canada has the opportunity to receive early diagnosis and treatment for hearing loss.

It is moments like this--Canadians coming together to take action--which proves our collective power to incite change. With every dollar you give, you are enabling us to help babies across Canada, and ensure that they have the resources necessary to thrive.



Canadians like you raising their voices in support can make such a difference to Canada's most vulnerable citizens.

On behalf of parents, grandparents and siblings and the hearing health community, we simply cannot thank you enough. Thanks must also be given to the Newborn Infant Screening Task Force, the Canadian Academy of Audiologist and the Canadian Hearing and Auditory Research Translation Group (CHART). These groups were instrumental in making sure the campaign was successful. We are stronger together.

Much work remains to be done. But with your continued support, we will continue working for lasting change for Canadians. Together we can ensure that every baby has the best possible start.

For more information, please visit www.tinyEARS.ca, email hello@tinyears.ca or call us at 1-866-HEAR-YOU (432-7968).

Thank you for all that you have done for hearing health in Canada!

The Hearing Foundation of Canada
1801-1 Yonge Street
Toronto, ON M5E 1W7
www.hearingfoundation.ca
Charitable Registration # 11883 3045 RR001

Could Canada do more for babies like Beckett?

The tinyEARS.ca campaign has provided a voice for thousands of Canadians, from coast to coast to coast, that have been affected by infant hearing health programs, or a lack thereof. Supporters of this campaign have proven themselves to be highly dedicated to the cause; voicing their support to the Minister of Health, generating support for the online petition, and sharing their stories. One of the most compelling stories we have heard so far has been that of Aimee Lewis, and her son Beckett.

Aimee Lewis, mother to 2-year-old son Beckett, was starting to think the 'terrible twos' really were consuming her son. He wasn't responding, he wasn't listening; Aimee felt she couldn't communicate with him:

"We started to wonder if this was normal "terrible twos" but it felt like we were missing something, so we booked a hearing test."



Beckett Lewis, before his diagnosis of severe hearing loss.

Just recently, Beckett was diagnosed with severe hearing loss. Initial screening should have been done at birth, and at the latest, before one month. But because Beckett was born in Saskatchewan, where there is no provincially mandated or delivered early hearing detection and intervention program, Beckett's hearing was not tested at birth.

Now mostly nonverbal, Beckett has now gone two years unable to hear his mother sing him to sleep, or his father chuckle at his adventures.

"If it was caught at birth, he would have the implants already and we could be working on his communication skills. To find out at a young age would have been a lot easier.

If we had put it off longer, then who knows what would have happened. I can keep him safer now that I know he won't be able to respond to my voice if he is in danger."

- Aimee Lewis

We are so grateful to the Lewis family for sharing their story and really stepping in to help more babies like Beckett. Thanks to donors like you, we are taking the steps necessary to ensure that all Canadian babies have the best possible start.

To share your story, please email hello@tinyears.ca, or call us at 1-866-HEAR-YOU (432-7968). We welcome hearing from you!

Hearing Health Legacies: Honouring Those Who Remembered THFC

Choosing to leave a gift in your will is a big decision. It's important to consider the impact you want to make in the world long after your passing.

THFC thanks Margaret Hayward, J.I. McRae, and Alwyn Ione and Sidney Graham Weatherhead, all of whom remembered THFC in their estate plans.

We are very grateful, and wish them peace. We promise to continue to advance the issue of hearing health on their behalf.

When you are ready to discuss your estate plans, we are here for you. Please contact Kimberley MacKenzie on her confidential line at 289-231-1339 or reach out via email, kmackenzie@hearingfoundation.ca.

Promoting Hearing Health in First Nations Communities

Introducing a Sound Sense Champion: Dr. Jane Lea!

“Several months ago, when we discovered an unusually high prevalence of noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) in Hartley Bay, we knew that something had to be done.

Having heard about the Sound Sense program, and its effectiveness in reducing the risk of NIHL, I reached out to The Hearing Foundation of Canada, volunteering to deliver the program to Hartley Bay and other Northern B.C. communities.

It is crucial that northern First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) communities have the opportunity to participate in initiatives like the Sound Sense program.

I am hopeful that Sound Sense will help to provide the knowledge and resources necessary to reduce the risk of noise-induced hearing loss in these Northern communities.”

- Dr. Jane Lea, BSc MD FRCSC



Thanks to Dr. Lea, The TELUS Community Board of Northern B.C., and donors like you, we are now able to offer Sound Sense to those who need it most. Approximately ~30% of FNMI children currently experience some degree of hearing loss – that is nearly double the percentage of the general population. Your support allows us to reduce the risk of noise-induced hearing loss for children in the First Nations communities of Bella Bella, Tofino, Kitkatla, and Hartley Bay, and we only hope to keep growing.

Thank you.

Innovative Partnerships

When asked during a Sound Sense presentation what sounds they most enjoy, children in every classroom across Canada always give one common answer – music! So several years ago, THFC partnered with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony to deliver a musical version of Sound Sense.

The results have been outstanding. Working with the symphony, we have been able to reach more children in the Kitchener Waterloo region than ever before.

Given the great success of our Kitchener Waterloo partnership, we set out to build upon this musical model and reach more children with our important hearing health message.

Thanks to The Ottawa Community Foundation the University of Ottawa's School of Music, and donors

like you, THFC is now able to expand this musical delivery of Sound Sense to the Ottawa region.

“The Sound Sense program aligns with the University of Ottawa's commitment to service, learning, civic responsibility, and dedication to bilingualism.

This program provides an excellent opportunity for our students to share their knowledge with younger students and grow as community leaders.”

- Lori Burns, Director, School of Music,
The University of Ottawa

For more information about the Sound Sense program your gifts made possible, please contact our Manager – Program Development, Mary Smirle, at m-smirle@hearingfoundation.ca or 1-866-HEAR-YOU (432-7968)



From the desk of your Executive Director

Stronger Together



What an amazing spring we have had at THFC. Thanks to our bold and innovative board of directors, THFC was able to invest in the tinyEARS.ca campaign. To be honest, we weren't sure whether this was something that Canadians or the hearing health community would respond to. We took a big risk. That risk sure paid off.

We were all so inspired to see how the hearing health community came together. Everyday, we were glued to the comments section of the website as well as Twitter and Facebook. Yes, we read every one that was posted. Thank you again for stepping up for Canadian babies.

As a result of our activities this past spring we now know more than ever that a strong national voice that advocates for hearing health is fundamentally important to our society. On your behalf, we will continue to petition the government at all levels, foster collaboration amongst Canada's leading hearing clinicians and researchers, and send our Sound Sense Coordinators into schools in your community to teach children about the importance of protecting their hearing.

Funding continues to be our primary challenge. Like many organizations we are experiencing a downturn in revenue and are looking for innovative ways of continuing to deliver programming.

If you are passionate about the work we do and have some ideas for potential funding opportunities, I would be very happy to hear from you.

Yours for better hearing health,

Kimberley MacKenzie, CFRE
KMackenzie@hearingfoundation.ca
289-231-1339

Did You Hear?

Ontario Invests In Reduced Wait Times For Babies

Earlier this week, Ontario unveiled its plan to add additional support to detect potential hearing loss in newborns. This \$3.2 million investment will ensure that families with children who have hearing health issues get the supports they need.

Please join us in congratulating all of the organizations that have been working so hard for so long on this issue. This progress demonstrates what can be accomplished when the hearing community comes together to get results. Well done!

THFC is very proud of Ontario for demonstrating leadership on infant hearing health. This serves as a fine example for other provinces and territories to follow.

WHO Adopts Resolution On Prevention Of Hearing Loss

On May 30th, 2017, the World Health Assembly adopted a resolution to 'intensify action to prevent deafness and hearing loss,' by pushing governments to impose safety and accessibility measures.

"Too many people are suffering unnecessarily from hearing loss. Unless action is taken, the numbers will continue to rise as populations age and young people continue to engage in listening practices which are harmful to their hearing. It is urgent to take action."

- Dr. Etienne Krug, World Health Organization (WHO).

THFC was proud to provide a letter of support for this resolution and applauds WHO's global leadership on this resolution. For more information, visit <http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness>.