

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!
By Cyril Peach
HEARING MATTERS

This is my first attempt at writing a newspaper column but, because there are so many issues surrounding hearing loss and those affected by it, I feel there is need for a column such as this. Hopefully I will create public awareness concerning this topic and offer some advice to those who are affected in any way with hearing loss.

Did you know that hearing loss is the fourth largest chronic disability in Canada? One out of every ten people suffer from some sort of hearing impairment. Studies show that six out of every thousand children are hearing impaired. Hearing loss is indeed a significant health issue!

It is a common misconception that all hearing impaired people are deaf. This is not the case. A Deaf person was born deaf and hears no sounds. Then, we have a Deafened or Late Deafened person who was born with hearing but, over time, lost the ability to hear. Finally, we have a Hard of Hearing person who has a mild to profound hearing loss. Such a person can use hearing aids or other assistive devices to aid with hearing.

Many people think that you need to “shout” at a hearing impaired people to get them to hear you. This is not the case. If you wish to communicate to a person with a hearing loss, you should look directly at him or her, speak in a normal conversation volume, and enunciate clearly. Background noise plays havoc with a hearing impaired person so it is best to have a conversation in a quiet area.

In May, I attended the National Conference of The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) in Edmonton. There were many young people in attendance and there were some workshops dealing with issues concerning hearing loss in youth. As a former educator, I was pleased to see that the national organization recognizes the fact that a large number of Canadian children have hearing problems; at the same time it saddened me to find out that more and more young people are becoming hearing impaired. I'll discuss this further in a future column.

Until next time, please protect your hearing.

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