

## **Myrtle's Story ...and good news I've heard**

I first met Myrtle Barrett when she , as a member of the Outreach Program of CHHA-NL, came to Happy Valley-Goose Bay in the fall of 2006 to provide an information workshop to those affected by hearing loss. Myrtle has had a progressive hearing loss since birth and is now considered to be late deafened.

Myrtle grew up in a time when there was no such thing as support groups for the hearing impaired. Being of a determined nature, she developed good speech reading skills and with some residual hearing, she found hearing aids beneficial. Now as a late deafened individual, she relies totally on speech reading in her everyday life situations.

Many people would let a severe disability such as complete hearing loss stop them from pursuing their dreams and goals. Not Myrtle! Her life-long dream was to become a social worker and she has made that dream come true. She does everything a person with no hearing loss can do ; she maintains a home, volunteers, sits on committees, and drives a car. I particularly remember Myrtle saying that after she became deafened, people contacted her wanting to know if she was selling her car. Her answer was, "I'm deaf, not dead!"

Myrtle is currently president of CHHA-NL and is the Newfoundland and Labrador representative on the CHHA National Board of Directors.

Myrtle's story is well-known in "Hard of Hearing" circles but I thought it needed to be shared with all readers of this newspaper because she is truly an inspiration to anyone with a disability as well as to those with none. She is a great advocate for the hearing impaired and she enjoying spreading the message that THERE IS LIFE AFTER HEARING LOSS.

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Good news I've heard

Thanks to Betty Parsons and the Listening for Labrador group, the Arcturus Theatre has installed an audio loop which means that people with "T" switches on their hearing aids can now enjoy listening to a movie more clearly. Cheers to the fine folks of PSP and Serco GES for making the theatre more accessible to hard of hearing patrons.

Again, thanks to Betty Parsons and the Listening for Labrador group, signs have been erected in pertinent parts of town alerting drivers of hearing impaired children in the neighbourhood. Cheers to the town council for complying with that request.

Cheers to Peacock Primary School for having Hush-ups installed in every classroom. Hush-ups are similar to tennis balls and are fitted on the legs of chairs to cut down on noise created by chairs scraping on the floors. This reduces background noise which is a nuisance to hard of hearing students. Just as important, it protects the hearing of students and teachers with no hearing loss.

Until next time, protect your hearing.

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