

SEPTEMBER 27, 2025



Turning up the *volume*
on *family* connection...

Celebrating connection, confidence and community

A DAY BRINGING TOGETHER FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND PROFESSIONALS—
CELEBRATING EVERY UNIQUE HEARING JOURNEY.



How it Started...

What began as a simple connection on an international Facebook group became the start of something deeply meaningful. Two moms, each walking the cochlear implant journey with their sons—born just eight months apart—found each other while navigating the same questions, hopes, and challenges. Though miles away, their shared experiences created an instant bond. Both felt a strong pull to do more for the cochlear implant community, not just for their own children, but for families coming after them. That shared vision became the foundation for collaboration, community, and connection.



Bianka is the mom to Oliver, also known as Oli or Olipop, and the founder of Olipop Toyshop. What started as an idea to support parents with practical, thoughtfully designed resources quickly grew into something much bigger. Olipop Toyshop was created to offer LMH and Ling sound toys, puzzles, and AVID Language books, giving families one less thing to worry about during an already overwhelming journey.

As Bianka connected with more families, it became clear that while material resources are important, they are not enough. Parents needed more than toys, puzzles, and books, they needed understanding, reassurance, and connection. They needed support that only another parent walking a similar cochlear implant journey could truly offer. Meeting Alecia helped crystallise this realisation and strengthened Bianka's commitment to parent-to-parent support as a vital part of the cochlear implant community.



A little about Alecia



Alecia is mom to Blayne, who uses bilateral cochlear implants and the owner and founder of Little Hearo. Little Hearo was born from Alecia's deep understanding of how essential consistent device use is for children with hearing loss. Her work focuses on all things retention, creating practical, child-friendly solutions to help little ones keep their hearing technology on and working throughout their day. Through her own journey and the families she has supported, Alecia recognised that behind every device is a parent doing their very best. Retention is not just about products; it's about encouragement, shared experiences, and knowing you're not alone. Connecting with Bianka affirmed Alecia's belief that alongside practical solutions, parent-to-parent support is a powerful force, one that strengthens families and helps children thrive.



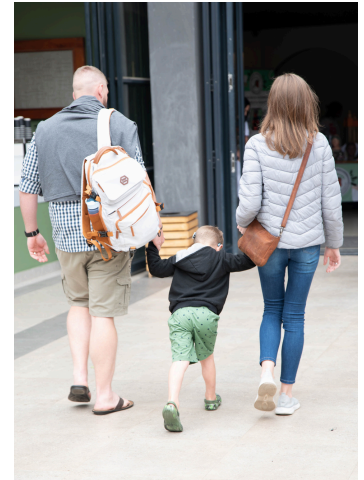
WELCOMING EVERY JOURNEY



A SPACE TO FEEL SEEN



EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS



CONNECTION @ SUPPORT @ BELONGING



KNOWLEDGE, SUPPORT & SHARED LEARNING





Marinda Beukes

Audiologist at the Pretoria Cochlear Implant Unit

Marinda spoke about the importance of assisted remote microphones, such as Phonak Roger and the Cochlear Mini Mic. These tools help bridge distance between speaker and listener, improving access to sound, especially in noisy environments.



Dani Schlesinger

Speech Therapist & Audiologist at Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital

Dani shared how speech therapy can be naturally integrated into everyday life at home. When therapy becomes part of daily routines, play, and conversation, it no longer feels like work—making learning more meaningful and sustainable for families.



Ariella Levin

Biokineticist & Cochlear Implant Recipient

Ariella received cochlear implants at ages two and five, undergoing four operations in total. She shared her personal journey, the hard work behind it, and her resilience, serving as an inspiring role model for deaf and hard-of-hearing children and their families, and showing that anything is possible with determination and support.

Jaco Kruger

The Disability Tax Specialist

Jaco Kruger shared both his tax expertise and his personal experience as a parent of a child with a disability. This gave him deep insight into the day-to-day realities families face, including the financial pressures of raising a deaf or hard-of-hearing child.

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THROUGH SHARED KNOWLEDGE,
WE STRENGTHEN THE SUPPORT
WE OFFER EVERY FAMILY.

Penny Cooper

Master of Ceremony & Cochlear Implant Recipient

We were so fortunate to have Penny Cooper as our Master of Ceremonies for this incredible day. Penny lost her hearing after contracting meningitis and openly shared her journey, including the emotional challenges following her diagnosis, activation (“switch-on”), and her ongoing experience navigating life with hearing loss. Her honesty, warmth, and resilience made her truly inspiring to all who attended.



LEARNING AND CONNECTING THROUGH PLAY



LEARNING AND CONNECTING THROUGH PLAY



THE MOST VALUABLE MOMENTS OF THE DAY



"To experience the cochlear family day for the very first time with other colleagues and see different families from different CI units."

"Different information about cochlear that was shared by our speakers of the day and motivation by people who have cochlear implants that shows you can achieve many things in life, hearing impairment it's not the limitation of all people affected by hearing loss.'

"Our children enjoying themselves and us not worrying so much about them because they are in good hands and the information provided and our kids and us will learn so much from the bag we received."

"I gained lot of information and got encouraged a lot, and my kids enjoyed a lot."

"The Guest speakers, and being around other families."



THE MOST VALUABLE MOMENTS OF THE DAY



"Children playing and listen to others journey, getting information about cochlear implant and connecting to other families."

"Connections. We are not the only family."

"The talks especially from the first speaker because she grew up with the Cochlear implant it gives me hope for my child."



"Connecting families together, seeing what is possible for children with CIs, reinforcing the importance of conversation and use of remote microphones."

"My daughter saw friends with CI and it encouraged and motivated her to wear hers."

"The community of other families like us."



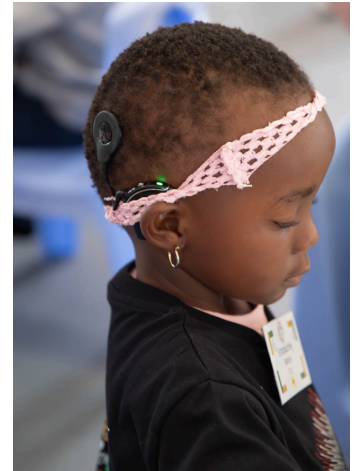
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MOMENTS OF CONFIDENCE



MOMENTS OF CONFIDENCE

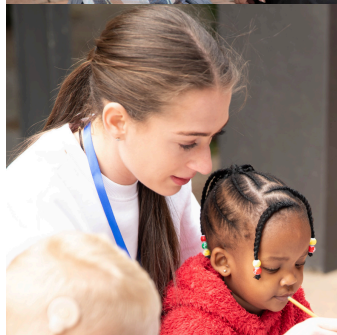


JOY IN EVERY SOUND



WHEN CHILDREN FEEL
CONFIDENT WEARING THEIR
DEVICES, EVERYTHING
CHANGES — COMMUNICATION,
DEVELOPMENT AND
CONNECTION.

THIS IS WHY WHAT WE DO
MATTERS.



COLLABORATION BETWEEN FAMILIES, PROFESSIONALS AND SUPPORTIVE TOOLS MAKES THIS POSSIBLE.



THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF EVERY CHILD'S HEARING JOURNEY



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WITH HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS & PROFESSIONALS



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What's next?



Alecia and Bianka are beyond excited to share that we are recipients of GPODHH scholarships and will be attending the GPODHH and FCEI Conference in Austria, from 8-12 June.

This opportunity follows our completion of the Preparing Professionals and Parents in Rehabilitation and Education of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (Project PrePPaRE-DHH) continuing education program, hosted by Listening Together and approved by the AGBell Academy for Listening and Spoken Language. Taking part in this course with Dr. Uma Soman was a pivotal step that opened the door to this scholarship and the journey ahead.

We can't wait to connect with other parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children from around the world. Our hope is to return home equipped with the knowledge, tools, and inspiration needed to take Parent-to-Parent support in South Africa to the next level—and to pour that learning straight into our next Family Day.

This feels like such a meaningful step forward, and we are incredibly grateful for the opportunity.

SUPPORTING CONFIDENT HEARING JOURNEYS, TOGETHER.