

# THE *Voice*



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COCHLEAR IMPLANT AWARENESS FOUNDATION

## *Dear Friends,*

Eighteen years ago, I became profoundly deaf after giving birth to my daughter Ellie, who was born deaf. Several years later, we were both fortunate to receive the gift of sound through bi-lateral cochlear implants. To celebrate our good fortune, I founded the Cochlear Implant Awareness Foundation (CIAF) so that we could assist deserving recipients with this miracle in healthcare.

A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that can help to provide a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly deaf or hearing-impaired. An implant does not restore normal hearing, but it can give a deaf person a useful representation of sounds in the environment, and help him or her understand speech. Obtaining this technology can be extremely complex, as well as costly. Despite the high price tag, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association reports that cochlear implantation consistently ranks among the "most cost-effective medical procedures ever reported."

Our mission at CIAF is to connect individuals with the information and resources they need to make an educated decision about cochlear implant surgery and to provide guidance and support to recipients. Through our Hear Again™ campaign, we accept cochlear implant equipment such as cables, processors, and batteries, from individuals who are upgrading their equipment and from hospitals and clinics with whom we partner. We then match the equipment to a person in need. All of our services are provided free of charge.

As an entrepreneur, I am constantly thinking outside of the box to solve problems. Five years ago, this led to the creation of District 23 Boutique. District 23 is a vibrant and visually appealing women's clothing, accessories and gift store. Proceeds support the efforts of the CIAF. District 23 has proven to be a very successful funding



source for the foundation through its stores in Springfield and Rochester, and with shopping now available online at [www.district23.com](http://www.district23.com). In fact, as you may have heard, our Springfield location is growing and has moved to a larger location at 830 South Grand Avenue West, which was the previous home of The Wardrobe. As we continue to grow and expand, we are able to help more people hear.

In addition to District 23, CIAF hosts many events throughout the year, which you will read about more inside this newsletter. We are also working on a membership program for next year, so be on the lookout for more information. It will include exciting benefits at our events and stores!

Thank you for all of your support. We are deeply committed to providing incredible service and products to our District 23 patrons, and doubly committed to providing lasting hearing support to our CIAF community.

With gratitude,

*Michelle Tjelmeland*

CIAF & District 23 Founder & Director

E-commerce comes to

# DISTRICT23 BOUTIQUE

Our management team has been hard at work preparing for the next phase of District 23 – a full-blown e-commerce division! Shoppers everywhere can access the same great merchandise that our local clientele has grown to love.

In addition to owning D23, Michelle also operates e-websmart.com, a web site development and online marketing business. So you can expect wonderful and hassle-free shopping based on the latest in technology.

Ready to start shopping? Check out all of our amazing merchandise that is continuously changing at:

[www.district23.com](http://www.district23.com)



## Words of thanks

"Got the cord & coil today!  
You are a LIFE SAVER!!!!  
Thank you so very much!"

Kim Sneath

"Hi Ivy! Bill has received the parts and all is operating well! I wanted to send a special thank you to you and everyone there. You are so kind."

Bill and Susan McCrary

"I just wanted to say thank you very much for coming to my assistance by providing me with two N5 cables and charger. I can't tell you how much I appreciate it."

Maureen Dugan



## Tinnitus – More Common Than You Think

We take for granted being able to hear the world around us, until we start experiencing problems. For millions of Americans, their ability to hear is disrupted by a persistent ringing in their ears, an affliction known as tinnitus.

Most tinnitus cases are caused by damage to the cochlea or inner ear. It results in many different perceptions of sound including buzzing, hissing, whistling, swooshing, and clicking. Tinnitus can be a temporary condition or a chronic health malady. Common causes include excessive or cumulative noise exposure, head and neck injuries, and ear infections.

Tinnitus is one of the most common health conditions in the country. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control estimates that nearly 15% of the general public - over 50 million Americans - experience some form of tinnitus. Roughly 20 million people struggle with burdensome chronic tinnitus, while two million have extreme and debilitating cases.

To help prevent tinnitus, it is important to always protect your hearing. Use ear protection when working around loud machinery. If you listen to music with headphones, keep the volume at a moderate level. Seek medical attention if your ears ache due to illness, or if you think a foreign object may have gotten into your ear canal. Exercise, healthy eating, good sleeping habits, avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol use, and stress management all contribute not only to optimum physical health, but good hearing health as well.

# D23 Springfield Finds a New Home

You know how it goes - you love your home, but it's just not big enough for everyone anymore. Both D23 and CIAF have been growing by leaps and bounds in recent years, so we had to start looking around for something bigger. Luckily, a good friend of ours presented us with an incredible opportunity.

For the past 16 years, Kim Dixon has owned The Wardrobe, one of Springfield's finest and most successful boutiques. When Kim decided to sell her building at 830 S. Grand Avenue West, we quickly realized that its size, location and history would make it the perfect new home for our Springfield D23 location.

"The new building is five times the size of our current Springfield location. The additional space will allow us to expand our inventory to keep up with customer demand," Michelle says.

The building has amazing architectural features such as tall ceilings, bright chandeliers, and a great flow for customers to shop with ease. Merchandise displays will also work well with the variety of D23's inventory. There is also a prestigious



legacy that remains, one that we'll work hard to maintain.

"I have big shoes to fill in taking over The Wardrobe building from Kim. She has built an incredible business over the years, and I hope we can enjoy the same success," Michelle says.

As for our building on MacArthur, we're keeping it in the family. Future plans will be announced soon!

The District 23 retail stores exist solely to benefit the foundation. We invite you to "Shop For a Cause" at one of our incredible boutiques and take advantage of our new hours on Sunday.

## D23 Rochester

130 South John Street  
Rochester, Illinois 62704

217.498.1369

## D23 Springfield

New location

830 South Grand Avenue West  
Springfield, Illinois 62704

217.679.1352

## D23 Hours:

Monday - Friday 10 am - 6 pm  
Saturday 10 am - 4 pm  
Sunday 12 pm - 4 pm



In 2017

# \$782,122

worth of CI equipment given  
to 67 deserving recipients

# 120+

Families helped



# DISTRICT 23 BOUTIQUE

In honor of opening our new location, we will be having a celebration on South Grand Avenue.

Stay tuned to our Facebook page for the latest details.

[www.facebook.com/DistrictTwentyThree](http://www.facebook.com/DistrictTwentyThree)

# DISTRICT23 BOUTIQUE

## TOMS® at D23 Springfield

We love products that support a cause, which is why we carry TOMS shoes at D23 Springfield.

Not only does a sale of TOMS directly help CIAF, but TOMS pays it forward through the TOMS model—One for One®. The TOMS Giving Team collaborates with Giving Partners around the world to donate shoes, provide vision care, improve access to clean drinking water, provide safe births, and assist with bullying prevention. Shop for two causes all at once at D23 Springfield!

## Our Customers Love Brighton®

Our stunning collection of Brighton handbags and jewelry are incredibly popular with our District 23 shoppers in Rochester.

Brighton® proudly states that every piece is “inspired by artwork around the world, created with the finest materials and irreplaceable craftsmanship.” We also love that Brighton has a deep commitment to empowering families in the communities which surround their stores. Since 2003, they have donated over \$10 million to various charities and are committed to continuing this tradition. Come and see what Brighton® has for you at D23 Rochester!

## Phone and Facebook Orders

Our new web site will make online shopping easier than ever. Go check it out at [district23.com](http://district23.com).

But if you prefer to shop on Facebook or order by phone, we would never take that away from you. We're always featuring merchandise on Facebook, so if something catches your eye, send us a message or give us a call (217.679.1352 for the Springfield location and 217.498.1369 for the Rochester location) and we can make the transaction right then and there. No matter where you are in the U.S., we'll ship it to you.



# A Year in Review:

We had a lot of fun in 2017, all in the name of funding our mission to Help People Hear! In April, we hosted a CIAF/District 23 Trivia Night at the Fire Fighter's Lake Club and had an incredible turn out of support. In May, we held the first ever Sound Bites Food Truck Music Festival in Rochester, which brought out over 1500 hungry supporters. July's warm summer weather was great for our first Watermelon 5K, with 350 registered runners coming out to support CIAF in Rochester Park. October was a busy month for CIAF, as we hosted another Sound Bites Food Truck Festival in conjunction with Rochester Olde Towne Festival, complete with a beer tent and music. Despite the wet weather, die-hard food truck foodies still came out to support CIAF. Our Halloween GloBingo night was a frightfully good time. Thanks to the Prairie Reception Center in Chatham for rolling out the red carpet for our event.

## We LO♥E Bites on the Boulevard



The warm summer months meant it was time to embrace our favorite way to eat—enjoying local fare at Bites on the Boulevard (BOB) Food Truck Meet-Up sponsored by MacArthur Boulevard Association.

Eight local vendors converged on the D23 Springfield parking lot to offer incredible dishes to our neighbors and community. Our goal was to support CIAF and the local food truck scene all in one event, and we did it!



## Save the Dates 2018

In June, lace up those sneakers for the second annual Watermelon 5K & 10K

on Saturday, June 30. To change things up, we are adding a 10K! Packet pick-up night will take place at a local church and for a few extra dollars added to your registration, you can take part in the Pre-Race Pasta Dinner.

## Sound Bites

will also take place in October as a participant in the Rochester Fall Festival, with food trucks on hand serving local favorites.

# Hear Again™ Program

If you or someone you know can benefit from one of our programs, please visit our website at [www.ciafonline.org/application-page](http://www.ciafonline.org/application-page) to access our application, or contact us at [www.info@ciafonline.org](mailto:www.info@ciafonline.org) for more information.



## CIAF Hear Again™ Children's Program

Hearing loss can dramatically affect a child's ability to develop communication, language, and social skills. This affects their ability to fully function in a school setting, as well as their ability to reach their full potential as adults.

As CIAF's founder, Michelle Tjelmeland knows it is important to give a child the hearing resources they need at an early age. Her daughter Ellie was born deaf and received cochlear implants as a small child. Since then, Ellie has experienced a rich and full life with the gift of sound.

As the parent of a child with severe hearing loss or deafness who is eligible for cochlear implants, you may have many questions and concerns regarding treatment options, resources and its effects on your child's future. CIAF is here to help. As the nation's only cochlear implant bank, we are willing and able to answer your questions, provide support and equipment to those in need.

## CIAF Hear Again™ Seniors' Program

According to the Hearing Health Foundation, 50 million Americans experience hearing loss. Anywhere from nine to 22 out of every 1,000 people have a severe hearing impairment or are deaf.

At least half of these people reported their hearing loss after 64 years of age.

In addition, a large portion of people past the age of 65 with profound hearing loss have lived in a world of silence their entire lives because of the lack of technology available to help them hear. For them, the option of receiving a cochlear implant is life altering.

CIAF is dedicated to giving seniors a chance to restore their hearing by offering support through information and equipment should they choose to explore the option of receiving a cochlear implant.

## CIAF Hear Again™ Veterans' Program

Hearing loss and other hearing-related problems are the most common disabilities reported in military veterans.

While much of the public concern about injuries suffered by post-9/11 troops has focused on missing limbs, brain injuries, and post-traumatic stress disorder, Scott C. Forbes, past-president of the Association of Veterans Administration Audiologists, finds that auditory injury is the signature injury of veterans. In recent years, it is estimated that 60% of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan come home with hearing loss. Since severe hearing loss is not fatal, it is often overlooked as a significant injury, even though it dramatically alters the life of the affected individual and his/her family.

Because of these staggering statistics, CIAF created the Cochlear Implant Veteran's Program to help military

veterans who have sustained severe hearing loss while serving their country. We welcome the opportunity to offer our knowledge, resources, and database of cochlear implant equipment to qualified veterans.

## CIAF Hear Again™ Women to Women Program

In this modern day, women have important responsibilities and are significant contributors in making a better society. Women with hearing impairments or deafness play a pivotal role as well, while facing obstacles that others aren't forced to navigate. Limited resources for hearing healthcare, fewer educational opportunities, and even depression may prevent a hearing-impaired woman from realizing her full potential. Michelle fully empathizes with her hearing-impaired peers as they chart their course through life.

CIAF developed the Hear Again™ Women to Women Program to provide these women the resources and support they need when considering cochlear implants or other hearing-related treatments or technologies. We want to help hearing-impaired women everywhere reach their goals and live fulfilling lives.

**If you or someone you know can benefit from one of our programs, please visit our web site at [www.ciafonline.org/application-page](http://www.ciafonline.org/application-page) to access an application, or contact us at [www.info@ciafonline.org](mailto:www.info@ciafonline.org) for more information.**

## A donation to CIAF® is a perfect gift anytime

CIAF® is supported by generous individuals and community sponsors who often tell us that the joy of giving to our efforts has blessed them in numerous ways. If you want to share in the love and generosity, we have several opportunities for you to give:

- Make a one-time financial gift securely through Paypal at [www.ciafonline.org/donate-pay-it-forward](http://www.ciafonline.org/donate-pay-it-forward).
- Arrange a planned financial gift, including will/bequests, life insurance, and charitable remainder trusts.
- Donate CI equipment.

*It takes a group of talented, organized individuals to make a great team!*

## DISTRICT23 BOUTIQUE



**Lindsey Hensley** Receiving, e-commerce Manager

Lindsey began her career with District 23 as a store manager at the Springfield boutique. In just one short year, she is now our receiving and e-commerce division manager. Her knowledge of all things D23 makes her a perfect fit for managing our organization's inventory and keeping the online sales and fulfillment portion of the boutique operating smoothly. Lindsey loves that D23 supports a good cause as it makes her work much more rewarding.



**Brooke Larson** Manager, Rochester

Brooke has been in the customer service industry for almost nine years and loves to make customers happy. Her favorite part of District 23 is that there is something for everyone and she can use her creativity to market items and set up beautiful displays. During her time out of the shop, she enjoys spending time with her family, crafting and painting. Thank you for sharing your creativity with us, Brooke!



**Lori Von Behren** Buyer

Lori has been a volunteer and employee for District 23 since the doors opened. She has done every job, from computer work to keeping things neat and organized. Lori now assists Michelle in buying the merchandise for all three locations. She knows our suppliers well and what our customers want to see on D23's racks. Lori loves the family environment and the many close friendships she has made at the boutique. She is married to Nick, and they have two grown children and are blessed with grandchildren. We lean heavily on Lori's experience and role as the D23 Mom!



**Stacy Wright** Manager, Springfield

Stacy, our D23 Springfield Manager, loves the atmosphere and environment she works in each day. Stacy comes to us from the insurance industry and says that being a part of the D23 team "is the happiest I've been in my 30 years of work! It does not feel like a job as it is a beautiful, happy place and the staff is like a family. I love what D23 stands for and how much the foundation gives back. It is rewarding to be part of something so massive!" Stacy has a 14-year-old daughter who attends St. Agnes School. Her boyfriend owns the clothing store Jim Herron Ltd, so she is very comfortable with the retail clothing business. Be sure to stop by D23 Springfield and say hello to Stacy!



**Ivy Molen** Patient Care Coordinator

Ivy has been our Patient Care Coordinator for five years. Her organizational and personal skills are paramount as she works with implant doctors, hospitals, and clinics to make sure our recipients receive the correct equipment in a timely manner. She also coordinates donations of CI equipment, cleans the parts, and inventories everything into the computer system. CIAF® thrives because of Ivy's dedication!

# Hear Again® Program

Since its inception in 2005, the Cochlear Implant Awareness Foundation's (CIAF®) Hear Again® program has played a critical role in our efforts to help people hear. What started as a storage cabinet of miscellaneous cochlear implant equipment in a corner of our founder's basement has evolved into a highly organized, digitally cataloged inventory bank at our foundation's headquarters. CIAF® is the only source in the world doing the work we do.

## HOW TO GET HELP

1. We have a general application, as well as applications for children, veterans, and seniors.
2. Complete and submit the application for either the Cochlear Corporation or Advanced Bionics. These can be found at: [www.ciafonline.org/get-help](http://www.ciafonline.org/get-help)
3. Once we receive the application, we attempt to match eligible applications with equipment from our inventory bank.
4. Applicants will be notified regarding the status of their application
5. If we make a match of equipment to fill the applicant's need, our program director will contact the applicant's cochlear implant audiologist or doctor directly.
6. When a match is made, equipment will almost always be sent directly to the applicant's cochlear implant audiologist or doctor.

## HOW TO GIVE HELP

Donations of cochlear implant equipment to the Hear Again™ program are simple to make! No need to contact CIAF® ahead of time.

1. People, clinics and hospitals from all over donate cochlear implant equipment like processors, cables, cords, batteries, and accessories.
2. Equipment is then processed digitally into our cochlear implant inventory bank.
3. A letter of receipt is sent to the donor for tax purposes as CIAF® is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

If you wish to donate your cochlear implant equipment like processors, cables, cords, batteries, and accessories, including discontinued models, please send your donation by regular mail to:

**Cochlear Implant Awareness Foundation®**  
**Attn: Donations**  
**830 South Grand Avenue West**  
**Springfield, Illinois 62704**

Processing will be handled generally within two weeks of receiving your package, and a letter of receipt will be sent to the donor.

