



Cochlear Implant Center
Westchester Medical Center
 Westchester Medical Center Health Network

CochlearConnections

News from the Cochlear Implant Center | Spring 2021

Cochlear Implant Center

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The Cochlear Implant Center at Westchester Medical Center, flagship of the Westchester Medical Center Health Network (WMCHHealth), provides coordinated audiology and speech-therapy services for cochlear implant patients and those considering this life-changing technology. It is the only center between New York City and Albany providing comprehensive services for children and adult patients.

The Cochlear Implant Center is staffed by a team of highly trained audiologists and speech pathologists with expertise in evaluation and rehabilitation services for individuals who are cochlear implant candidates and those who receive a cochlear implant. Cochlear implantation is a highly successful technology that allows deaf children to hear and speak, and enables deafened adults to enhance their lives. The Cochlear Implant Center provides comprehensive services such as individualized programming of the implant and speech-therapy services.



Westchester Medical Center

Westchester Medical Center Health Network

Advancing Care. Here.

WestchesterMedicalCenter.org

Westchester Medical Center Health Network includes

Westchester Medical Center | Maria Fareri Children's Hospital
 Behavioral Health Center | MidHudson Regional Hospital
 Good Samaritan Hospital | Bon Secours Community Hospital
 St. Anthony Community Hospital | HealthAlliance Hospital: Broadway Campus
 HealthAlliance Hospital: Mary's Avenue Campus | Margaretville Hospital

Hello Spring!

The Cochlear Implant Center at Westchester Medical Center/Maria Fareri Children's Hospital provides services for current and potential cochlear implant recipients throughout the greater Hudson Valley area. In our newsletter, we like to connect with our patients about current happenings at the Implant Center and share information that we hope will be interesting and useful to our patients.

We continue to provide in-person and remote services for patients throughout the pandemic.

We, like all of you, are looking forward to a new spring!

Did you know that listening therapy for adults with a cochlear implant has been shown to improve:



Ability to use accessories



Articulation



Detection of environmental sounds



Music appreciation



Speech recognition



Telephone use

Schedule your appointment today!!

Call 914.493.4634 or email us at

CochlearImplantCenter@wmchealth.org

Spotlight on Staff

Mindy Schmelzer, AuD

is the Supervisor of Audiology at the Cochlear Implant Center. She has been an audiologist for over 30 years and working with cochlear implant recipients since 2003.

Let's get to know her better...

What is your favorite vacation destination?

Sedona, Arizona. I have been there many times and am still in awe of Oak Creek Canyon. I love the red rocks and find climbing the vortexes to be very peaceful and relaxing.

What is your favorite part about working with cochlear implants?

I enjoy guiding recipients in their journey through cochlear implantation and helping them adjust to their devices and the changes in their lives. I am still amazed and grateful for the amazing changes that cochlear implants have brought to the lives of the individuals and families that I work with. I am grateful for the trust that they have placed in me and the bonds that we have established.

If you could invite anyone to dinner who would it be, why, and what would you serve them?

I have always had a great deal of admiration for Dr. Marie Curie. She was a female scientist at a time when women had little representation in the sciences. I would ask her how she navigated her success in this male-dominated field and tell her about the advances women have made in latter part of 20th century. Because she spent much of her life in France, I would serve her wine, cheese and a baguette!!

As Seen in Advancing Care in the Hudson Valley Magazine



Baby Leah Kim Casey of Dobbs Ferry (seen here with parents Jihyun Kim and Trent Casey) is facing a bright future, now with speech and hearing, thanks to the highly skilled team at Westchester Medical Center's Cochlear Implant Center. Photo by John Halpern

One of our youngest cochlear implant recipients was highlighted in a recent publication, *Advancing Care in the Hudson Valley*, distributed by WMCHealth. We are happy to report that Leah continues to make progress in the development of listening, language and speech skills. Her parents' commitment to using her listening devices, attending regular auditory verbal therapy sessions and providing a rich acoustic environment are helping Leah gain full benefit from her cochlear implants!.

<https://www.advancingcarehv.com/bilateral-profound-sensorineural-hearing-loss/>



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Implant Recipient Perspective

Merle is a 20-year-old cochlear implant recipient with a unilateral hearing loss. She was diagnosed when she was 7 years old and progressively lost her hearing until she became a cochlear implant candidate. Merle finally decided to get a cochlear implant because she struggled to hear in various situations, especially noise. Here is our interview with her.

Q How does having a unilateral hearing loss affect your ability to hear at home or when you were in school?

A *Having a unilateral hearing loss affected my ability to hear immensely. It was extremely hard to grasp school lectures and lessons. It was very difficult to maintain conversations with my peers and family. I was missing out on all the jokes.*

Q How would you describe what a cochlear implant is to a friend?

A *I would describe the cochlear implant as a magnetic device implanted in my head slightly above my ear with a processor that attaches to the outside of my head that helps me hear.*

Q How did you feel before and after your surgery?

A *The night before surgery I was very excited and I couldn't sleep. Once it was time for the surgery, I became nervous. My Mom and aunt helped calm me down. When I got home, I felt extremely tired, loopy and very hungry.*

Q What is one thing you are able hear now that made you emotional (laugh or cry)?

A *What made me laugh was hearing one of my favorite movies from beginning to end.*

Q What was the silliest thing someone has ever said to you about your hearing loss?

A *People have said a lot of silly things about my hearing loss. The silliest thing that was said to me was "But, you don't look deaf!"*

Q What situations were especially hard for you with a unilateral hearing loss? Have these situations become any better?

A *There were a lot of situations that were especially hard with my unilateral hearing loss. A lot of them were in school and hanging with my friends. In school it was group projects and listening to the lessons. With my friends it was (hard) keeping up with conversations. Now that I have my cochlear implant the situations have improved tremendously. I'm able to keep up with conversations and listen to lessons.*

We are so thankful to

Partners In Hearing

for donating these teletherapy kits to our center. They are filled with toys and books to encourage listening and spoken language skills in our youngest cochlear implant recipients. Each family that participates in teletherapy was given one of these kits to take home so that virtual therapy can start to feel a little more like in-person therapy with all of these hands on activities.

Partners in Hearing is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to provide children who have cochlear implants and their families with the support and therapy they need so they can succeed in the mainstream.





Westchester/Rockland Walk 4 Hearing

Saturday, June 12, 2021

Online Celebration (access information coming soon)

9:45 a.m. Sign-on begins

10:00 a.m. Online program begins

**Please join our team,
WMC Cochlear Implant Center**
(sign-up available online)

[http://hlaa.convio.net/site/TR/Teamraiser/
WestchesterWalk?team_id=49844&pg=team&fr_id=2679](http://hlaa.convio.net/site/TR/Teamraiser/WestchesterWalk?team_id=49844&pg=team&fr_id=2679)

Westchester Medical Center is proud to announce that we are a local HLAA Alliance.

A portion of the money that we raise will come directly to the Westchester Medical Center Foundation for use by the WMC Cochlear Implant Center. The Foundation provides funding for many programs in the Westchester Medical Center Cochlear Implant Center, such as remote programming, group therapy, toys for children and equipment.

Please sign up for the Walk and help us support the HLAA Community and our Foundation

The HLAA (Hearing Loss Association of America) is a grassroots organization representing consumers with hearing loss.

HLAA's mission is "to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy."



Who Doesn't Love Jeopardy?

In Honor of Alex Trebek:

Audiology Questions Seen on Jeopardy

- A1:** Injury, infection & loud noises can cause this membrane between the external ear canal and middle ear to rupture.
- A2:** The stapes, the smallest bone in the ear and the body, is more commonly called this.
- A3:** Deriving its name from the Greek word for snail, this structure contains the actual organ of hearing.
- A4:** An inner ear disorder kept this first American in space from retuning to space until 1971.
- A5:** Living animal that has the largest ears.
- A6:** Of the 5 standard U.S. coins, the one on which you can see the right ear of a president.

Q1: What is the ear drum or tympanic membrane?
Q2: What is the stirrup?
Q3: What is the cochlea?
Q4: Who is Alan B. Shepard?
Q5: What is the Elephant?
Q6: What is the penny (Abraham Lincoln)?

Coming this spring...

**We will be hosting monthly
conversation and listening
practice groups on Zoom!**

Toddler Caregiver group

Cochlear Kids group

Adult Listening group

**Please check your email
for our invitation!**



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