



Cochlear Implant Center
Westchester Medical Center
 Westchester Medical Center Health Network

CochlearConnections

News from the Cochlear Implant Center | Fall 2022

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

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Advancing Care. Here.

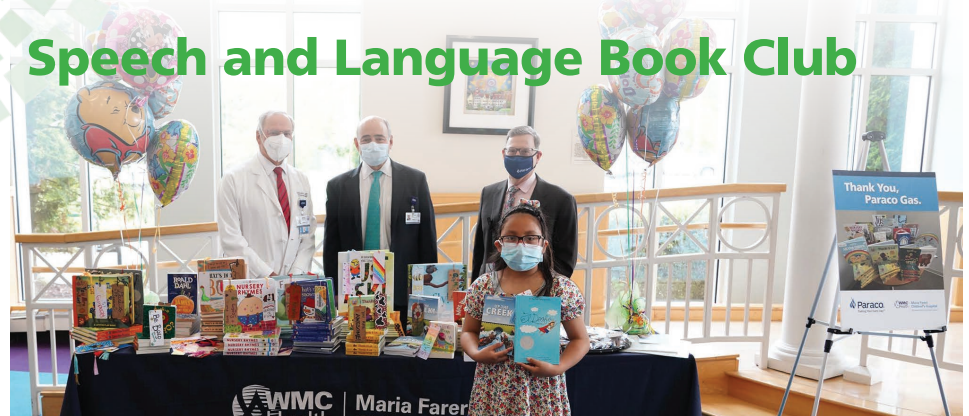
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Schedule your appointment today!!

Call 914.493.4634 or email us at

CochlearImplantCenter@wmchealth.org

Speech and Language Book Club



Pictured above (left to right): Michael Gewitz, MD, Executive Director and William Russell McCurdy Physician-in-Chief, Maria Fareri Children's Hospital; Michael D. Israel, President and CEO, WMCHHealth; Joe Arentano, President and CEO, of Paraco Gas and our own wonderful patient, Joselyn Pintado Pintado.

We have kicked off our Speech and Language Book Club!

Early childhood is the perfect time to implement auditory verbal strategies, take turns with one's child, and instill a love of books at an early age. Each month the children who participate in speech therapy at our center receive a book to keep and add to their home library. Michelle Albera, our speech therapist, helps families practice strategies to engage their child in a book. Caregivers learn ways to emphasize new vocabulary, elicit comments, questions, or simple vocalizations from babies.

We are so excited to contribute to your family library and to grow your child's brain and love of reading!

We would like to say a special **THANK YOU!** to **Paraco Gas and the Eastchester Rotary Club** for their generous donations to our book club! Without their support this wonderful new service would not be possible.

Reading and Impact on Language

Families can be discouraged when their child doesn't seem interested, is distracted, or wants to grab the book. Like anything else, reading sometimes takes practice!

Reading aloud is one of the most important things we can do with children. Research indicates that children who regularly participate in read-alouds learn twice as many words as those who do not. Reading aloud before age 6 positively impacts a child's language and reading development. Research has shown that having books in your house has more of an impact on a child's level of education than a parent's income, ethnicity, or level of education.

Some Reading Tips:

Open a book and just start to talk about it! You don't have to read every word!

Repeat the same books — children love the repetition.

Open a new world by reading about new topics and ideas.

Change around your words to teach new vocabulary.

Act it out by taking turns or changing your voice.

Share books that you love and your child will like them too.

Daily practice sitting and listening for your child.

Point out the different parts of the story like the beginning, middle, and end.

Don't stop reading aloud just because a child can read to themselves!



Barbie Dolls

Thank you so much to **Partners in Hearing** for donating Barbie Dolls with behind-the-ear hearing aids to the young children at our center. We saw many happy faces when we handed these dolls to them. We are so excited to give the children we work with a toy that represents their hearing loss and celebrates their differences!

Behind the Scenes in the OR

Regina Albinus, MS, CCC-A, is our hospital Audiologist at Westchester Medical Center. Regina is present in the operating room during all cochlear implant surgeries, working alongside **Katrina Stidham, MD**, Director of the Cochlear Implant Center, using new technologies to improve techniques for inserting cochlear implant electrodes. She measures responses from the cochlea as Dr. Stidham inserts the electrode. These responses help assure Dr. Stidham that the electrode is inserted at the proper angle and that it causes the least amount of trauma.

Once Dr. Stidham inserts the electrode, Regina measures impedances and neural responses. These measures confirm that the electrode is making contact with the cochlear tissue and that the electrode is stimulating the nerve cells, — assuring Dr. Stidham that the electrode is functioning well.

The information that Regina obtains is used for the initial mapping session. We all thank Regina for her dedication and hard work “behind the scenes.”

Let’s get to know Regina better.

You have been at WMC for 20 years. Which aspect of your job do you enjoy the most?

Wow! Twenty years... While some aspects of the job can be quite routine, it's the new challenges that I enjoy most. Whether it's an unusual diagnosis, a difficult-to-test patient, new technology, or the constant need to

change gears in order to get my work done while also accommodating the patient's schedule, I feel like I can help in all cases. No day is ever the same!

What does your typical day at WMC look like?

On any given day, I will typically see 6-10 newborns or NICU infants for their New York State required newborn hearing screenings. There's really no better way to start a day than meeting a new human! From there, I may have orders to evaluate an elderly patient who needs an assistive listening device during their stay, or a child in the oncology unit who will need their hearing regularly monitored during treatment. Other days, I'm in the OR performing auditory brainstem response (ABR) evaluations under sedation or I'm with Dr. Stidham performing neural response telemetry (NRT) or electrocochleography during her cochlear implant (CI) surgeries.

You are an integral member of our cochlear implant team but most recipients are asleep when you meet them. What would you like them to know about you?

While it is true that I usually only “meet” the adults on the day of their surgery, I am a member of the CI team and have been “introduced” to them and their particular case through the other members of the team. I do sometimes meet the children and their families in the NICU and then for follow-up diagnostic testing prior to their CI surgery.

I'm a mother of three grown children, one with special needs. I've been an audiologist for 32 years, working mostly with pediatrics and intellectually and developmentally delayed individuals prior to joining the team at Westchester Medical Center. My family and I enjoy walking in our local nature preserves and state parks. I enjoy crocheting and other needlework. My love of nature and history has led me to become the advancement chairperson for my youngest son's Boy Scout troop and a board member of our town's historic cemetery preservation group.

Which of your character trait(s) help you do such a wonderful job at WMC?

I am quite introverted (in fact, answering these five questions was a struggle) but I have worked very hard over the years to be more outgoing with my patients, as well as an advocate for them. I have a strong work ethic and a desire to achieve favorable results for my patients. Since I was a teenager, I always knew I wanted to work in a profession where I could help people and it is a pleasure to work with such a talented team of professionals who strive to improve our patients' lives.

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go? Why?

There are still many places I'd like to see here in the United States and Canada, Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks in particular. It's not exotic, but I would like to go to Ireland to visit the counties of my family's ancestors and perhaps spend more time building our family tree.

The newest iOS 16 Featured Update: “Live Captions” are finally here!

This new update is available for iPhones 11 or later, any iPad with A12 Bionic processor or later and all Macs with Apple Silicon

The newest Live Captions feature for deaf or hard-of-hearing users can automatically generate automated transcriptions of all audio content from podcasts, TV shows and videos, phone calls, FaceTime conversations and even from live speakers in person (similar to the Otter app)!

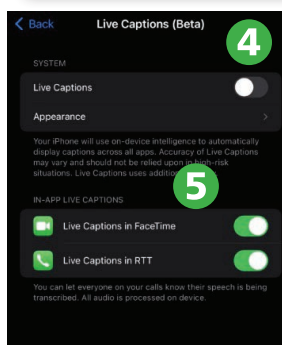
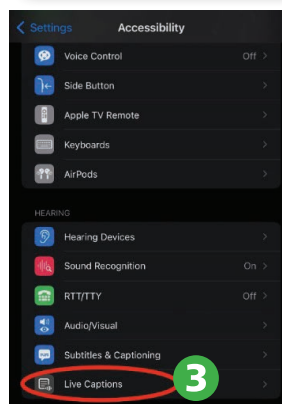
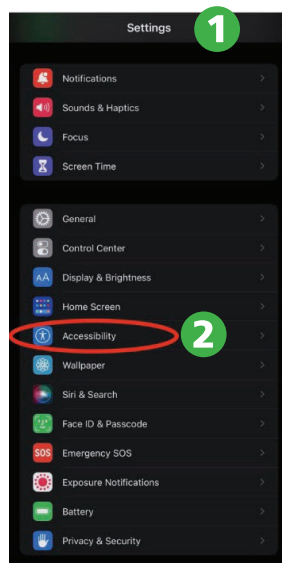
The captions will appear at the top of the screen while audio is playing in real-time and users can customize the captions’ font size to better accommodate their visual needs. This is only available for US English language transcription. The best part is that the captions can account for multiple speakers and sounds; the device will automatically detect and attribute the different speech patterns of each person on the call.

This wonderful addition for Apple is finally catching up to accommodate our population. Google Pixel and many Android phones already offer this Live Caption technology.

How Live Captions work

While on an audio or video call, or watching video on your device, the Live Caption will automatically appear at the top of your screen in a separate pop-up window, similar to a push notification. For FaceTime calls or conference sessions, the speakers’ names are determined by the contact information that is already saved in your phone’s address book and includes their images and first names.

For videos, the Live Caption does not include the same audio descriptions as general closed captioning, but only transcribes the live speaker voices instead of all the sounds playing on the screen.



It is important to note that you may see a selection for “Closed Captioning” settings on some videos; these are different from Live Captions. Closed captions are usually pre-typed captioning by a real-life (person) transcriber. Live Caption is an automated speech-to-text voice recognition system.

If you are an iPhone user and interested in enabling the new Live Captions, here’s how to do this and customize the feature to your liking:

- 1 Go to the “Settings” app
- 2 Select “Accessibility”
- 3 Scroll down to the section labeled “Hearing” and select “Live Captions”
- 4 Turn on the captions system to your preference. You can turn on Live Captions across your entire device, then turn on the TOP button. For calling apps such as FaceTime, you can manually select which app allows Live Captions. Note that if you turn on these features, it will alert the people you are speaking with that their audio is being transcribed to text.
- 5 To adjust the **Live Captions appearances**: If you go to the Appearance settings, you can adjust the text size, font color, and background color of the caption text window.



ASHA Presentations

Audiologists from Westchester Medical Center's Cochlear Implant Program were invited to present at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) Audiology 2022 conference, which commenced on September 7, 2022. The conference included expert speakers and discussions on various audiology topics such as implantable devices, working with patients with intellectual



disabilities and expanding clinical roles. **Rivka Bornstein, AuD, CCC-A; Kristi D'Auria, AuD, CCC-A; and Jessica Hoffman, AuD, CCC-A**, delivered two insightful presentations: From 8-Track to Hi-Res: Trends in Cochlear Implant Technology; and Cochlear Implant Candidacy and Indications: Single-Sided Deafness and Asymmetric Hearing Loss. These audiologists also sat on the

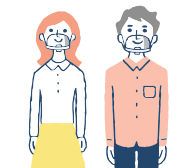



expert's panel, holding live sessions that allowed for a more detailed look into case studies, as well as a "Q&A" section with participants. In recognition of their exceptional commitment to lifelong learning, Drs. Bornstein, D'Auria and Hoffman were granted the Award for Continuing Education (ACE) by ASHA's Continuing Education Board (CEB).

Listening Fatigue

Things that do NOT alleviate listening fatigue

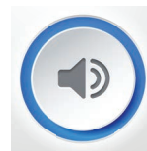
-  Masked Communication
-  Group Conversations
-  Too Much Light
-  Not Enough Light
-  Mumbling and Rambling
-  Dense Information/ Heavy Topics

Things that DO help listening fatigue

-  Clear Masks
-  To the Point
-  Visuals
-  Captions

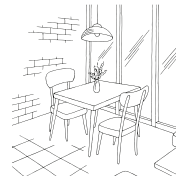
Coping Strategies for Noisy Environments

Whether your hearing levels are within normal limits or not, everyone has difficulty hearing amidst noise. Listening fatigue can affect anyone and here are some strategies that are recommended for both adults and children!



Turn hearing devices lower/off (if you have them)

Move away from loud sound sources (e.g., speakers)



Situate yourself with your back towards the wall or booth



Focus on one person (get into a 1:1 conversation)



If possible, ask for the volume to be turned down



Take an adult time-out – step away if possible!

