

PRESS RELEASE

## **World Hearing Day video highlights benefits of early treatment for childhood hearing loss**

**Global campaign to support World Hearing Day raises awareness of early intervention**

**Innsbruck, Austria – (March 3, 2016)** – Today is World Hearing Day – an initiative led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to raise awareness about the impact of hearing loss. The WHO estimates that around 360 million people (or approximately 5% of the world’s population) live with disabling hearing loss; of these, nearly 32 million are children.<sup>1</sup> This year’s theme ‘Childhood hearing loss: act now, here is how!’ will raise awareness about public health strategies that help to reduce the prevalence and impact of hearing loss in children.<sup>2</sup>

MED-EL, a leading provider of hearing implant systems, is supporting World Hearing Day with the launch of a new video, [Through the ears of a child](#). The video highlights the potential advantages of treating childhood deafness or hearing loss at an early age, when children are first exploring the world around them and learning to engage with their peers.

The video is also being backed by HEARRING, the global network of hearing implant experts: “This year’s World Hearing Day focus on children strongly supports our HEARRING vision that early identification and intervention through implantation can help children with severe hearing loss,” said Paul Van de Heyning, Chair of the Scientific Committee at HEARRING. “Treating children with hearing loss early gives them a better chance of reaching their full developmental potential. Together as health professionals, we must work globally to reach as many children as possible and restore the gift of hearing to them.”

The ‘Through the ears of a child’ video brings to life the different ways that young children experience the world when they are struggling with hearing loss, and how their life can be transformed when their hearing becomes restored.

Research shows that children, whose hearing is profoundly impaired before they learn to speak, are more likely to benefit from treatment with a hearing implant if it is given at a young age.<sup>3</sup> These children start to receive auditory information at a time when their brain is especially ready to learn language. Therefore, their hearing and speech has an opportunity to develop in a manner similar to that of their normal hearing peers.<sup>4,5</sup>

Visit [www.earsofachild.com](http://www.earsofachild.com) to view the video from MED-EL’s international headquarters and learn more about the ways in which childhood hearing loss may be prevented and treated.

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**About World Hearing Day 2016**

World Hearing Day is an annual awareness-raising event organised by the WHO. The theme for 2016, 'Childhood hearing loss: act now, here is how!', aims to draw attention to the need for global action to improve strategies for preventing and treating deafness in children.<sup>2</sup> For children, hearing is key to learning spoken language, performing academically, and engaging socially. Hearing loss poses a barrier to education and social integration.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, children with hearing loss may benefit greatly from early identification and suitable, timely interventions.<sup>1</sup> You can find out more about World Hearing Day [here](#).

**About MED-EL**

Austria-based MED-EL Medical Electronics is a leading provider of hearing implant systems with 29 subsidiaries worldwide. The family-owned business is one of the pioneers in the industry. The two Austrian scientists Ingeborg and Erwin Hochmair developed the world's first microelectronic-multichannel Cochlear-Implant in 1977. The cochlear implant was and remains the first replacement of a human sense, the sense of hearing. In 1990 they laid the foundation for the successful growth of the company when they hired their first employees. To date, the company has grown to more than 1500 employees around the world.

Today MED-EL offers the widest range of implantable solutions worldwide to treat various degrees of hearing loss: cochlear and middle ear implant systems, EAS (combined Electric Acoustic Stimulation) hearing implant system and auditory brainstem implants as well as the world's first active bone conduction implant.\* People in over 100 countries enjoy the gift of hearing with the help of a product from MED-EL.

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

**About HEARRING**

HEARRING is a network of preeminent international centers offering comprehensive hearing implant solutions for the treatment of hearing loss. HEARRING surgeons are worldwide leading experts in restoration and preservation of hearing. HEARRING members are committed to leading the exploration of new avenues of research in hearing implant science, to advancing clinical procedures and to developing and perfecting surgical techniques. Membership in the HEARRING network is founded on the belief that research, and any subsequent advancement in the field of hearing implants, is possible only through international collaboration and the pooling of collective experience from leading clinical centers around the world.

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

**Responsible for the content**

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\*Not all products and indications are approved in the USA. For a complete list of FDA-approved products currently available in the USA, visit [www.medel.com/us](http://www.medel.com/us).

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation (WHO). Childhood Hearing Loss: Act Now, Here is How! Brochure (2016). [http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/world-hearing-day/WHD2016\\_Brochure\\_EN\\_2.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/world-hearing-day/WHD2016_Brochure_EN_2.pdf?ua=1). Accessed February 2016

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/world-hearing-day/2016/en/> Accessed February 2016

<sup>3</sup> Valencia D M *et al.* Cochlear implantation in infants less than 12 months of age. *Int J Pediatr Otorhinolaryngol.* 2008 Jun; 72(6):767-73.

<sup>4</sup> Moeller M *et al.* Vocalizations of infants with hearing loss compared with infants with normal hearing: Part I – phonetic development. *Ear Hear.* 28(5), 2007 Sep:605-627.

<sup>5</sup> Moeller M *et al.* Vocalizations of infants with hearing loss compared with infants with normal hearing: Part II – transition to words. *Ear Hear.* 28(5), 2007 Sep:628-642.