

**CALIFORNIA  
EAR  
INSTITUTE**

*HEAR FOR YOUR FUTURE!*



**HEADQUARTERS**

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Fax: 650-322-8228



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[www.letthemhear.org](http://www.letthemhear.org)  
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**ADVANCED  
CAPABILITIES**

- Acoustic Neuroma Center
- Assistive Listening Devices
- Skull Base Surgery
- Pediatric Hearing Loss Evaluation & Treatment
- Vestibular Rehabilitation
- Sudden Hearing Loss
- Tinnitus Retraining Therapy
- Cochlear Implant Program
- Congenital Aural Atresia Repair
- Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program
- Hearing Device Evaluation & Fitting
- Laser Stapedotomy for Otosclerosis

# WE'RE ALL EARS!



MEDICAL/SURGICAL SERVICES



HEARING DEVICE CENTER



AUDIOLOGY



LET THEM HEAR FOUNDATION

## Volume 1, Issue 1

August 2004

### A Message from Our CEO

Get to know us in this, our inaugural issue of "We're All Ears!" - the patient and professional newsletter of the California Ear Institute and The Let Them Hear Foundation!

Our organization has grown and is flourishing, offering ever expanding options for treatment of hearing impairment and balance disturbance. As partners with industry and research scientists ourselves, we are very excited with the development occurring in this field now and within the next several years. A sample of recent advances include new treatments for Single Sided Deafness (the BAHHA device featured in recent seminars on both sides of the Bay), bilateral Cochlear Implants with advanced electrode design (our youngest bilateral implantee is 6 months of

age!), the Meniette Device for Meniere's disease, and a newly released middle ear prosthesis for surgical reconstruction in Otosclerosis designed here at CEI.

Take a look at the Let Them Hear Foundation, which came to exist in late 2003, and the new LTH website. To learn more, I invite you to peruse [www.letthemhear.org](http://www.letthemhear.org). An explosion of opportunities have surfaced in the key HEAR areas of Hearing, Education, Access and Research. Recent trips to Costa Rica, Peru, and China exemplify the world-renowned individuals available at the California Ear Institute who have given of their time to make a difference in the world.

Our goal and passionate desire is



**Dr. Joseph B. Roberson**  
CEO & Managing Partner

to provide the ultimate care to our patients with a lifetime of commitment as we strive to allow you to... *"Hear for Your Future"*.

- **Joseph B. Roberson**

### CEI - San Ramon

At present we have 4 extraordinary physicians eager to participate in your medical care. Dr. Katrina Stidham is our primary surgeon working in the San Ramon location on a full time basis. Dr. Joseph Roberson primarily practices out of our Palo Alto office and surgery center but also sees surgical consults in San Ramon monthly. Dr. Sean Althaus, a Medical Otolologist with over 25 years experience, sees patients on various days throughout the month. Dr. James Cres-

ton, with over 30 years experience, is also a Medical Otolologist and is here a few days every week. He joined CEI this past year, allowing us to further increase our available medical services. We have a fantastic new office manager, Erin Caravantes. Erin and her stellar team are ready to assist you with your medical care needs and are dedicated to making your medical experience a positive one! Please see the "Upcoming Events" section for a list of exciting activities you can participate in!

- **Katrina Stidham**



**Dr. Katrina Stidham**  
Partner - San Ramon

***Did you know...?***

*The incidence of hearing loss in children is much higher than other birth defects for which children are screened. PKU affects 1 in 10,000 live births; hypothyroidism, 1 in 5,000 live births; and sickle cell anemia, 1 in 12,000 births. In contrast, hearing loss affects 1 in every 300 babies born.*

***CEI in Newsweek!***

On May 3rd, 2004 Nancy Pfeffer of Long Beach, CA asked **Newsweek**, "When we *strain to hear* a faint sound, are we really straining anything?"

**Newsweek** turned to Dr. Joseph B. Roberson of the California Ear Institute for an answer! According to Dr. Roberson, "you are not straining anything in the ear but you are stopping other cognitive ability to focus on the sound." In other words, mental juices are needed to concentrate, so the strain is put on the brain! For answers to anything hearing related give CEI a call!

**CEI - Palo Alto**

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Michael Murray as an



**Dr. Michael Murray**  
CEI - Palo Alto

Associate beginning September 7, 2004. Many of you have come to know him as a CEI Fellow who

finished his additional 2 years of training with us in July. Dr. Murray is a board-certified otolaryngologist who trained at the University of Oklahoma and will join CEI Headquarters in Palo Alto in a surgical and clinical capacity. He is currently an active member of the AMA as well as AAO-HNS.

Welcome to the team Dr. Murray!

Also part of our Palo Alto staff is Dr. Steven Dear who is a Medical Otologist with over 30 years experience. He has been with CEI for over 8 of those years. His specialties include vertigo, dizziness and balance disorders as well as tinnitus and hearing disorders.

**Upcoming Events**

Please join us at these exciting upcoming events:

**"Do You Have Hearing Loss?"- August 26th.** This is a free hearing loss seminar presented with San Ramon Medical Center. Both Dr. Katrina Stidham and Lisa Olson will be speaking on advanced medical rehabilitation treatments for hearing loss and communication problems. Learn about cochlear implants

and other implantable hearing devices, surgeries for conductive hearing loss, as well as single-sided deafness and assistive listening devices. Please call [925-275-8230](tel:925-275-8230) to reserve your place now!

**"Crush the Silence"- August 28th.** This is the first fundraiser for the Let Them Hear Foundation and it promises to be simply amazing! Set in the picturesque scenery of the

breathtaking Robert Mondavi Winery in Napa Valley. Call [650-462-3143](tel:650-462-3143) for more details!

**"Taking Advantage of Early Identification - Early Medical, Therapeutic and Educational Interventions" - September 24th/25th.** In conjunction with the Children's Hospital Oakland, CEI is proud to present the 14th Annual Seminar on Cochlear Implants in Children. Call [650-462-3143](tel:650-462-3143) for details!

**Fellowship Program Vestibular Rehabilitation**

The positions in our esteemed Fellowship program have doubled and we welcome Dr. Larisa Kunda and Dr. Michelle Inserra to the CEI - LTH team. They graduated from the accredited residency program in Otolaryngology at Stanford University and will be under the supervision of Dr. Roberson in Palo Alto and Dr. Stidham in San Ramon for the duration of the two year program.

Vestibular Rehabilitation is an exercise approach to the remediation of disequilibrium and dizziness. This program is designed to help your brain compensate for the deficiencies or misinformation it receives from the affected area. This is an alternative approach to the use of medications to suppress Vestibular Dysfunction. Cynthia Drotar, OTR, is an Occupational Therapist who has been working with CEI since 1997 to offer the program in both our Palo Alto and San Ramon offices.

## Let Them Hear Foundation

The Let Them Hear Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) corporation in the State of California and is co-located with the California Ear Institute. The Foundation provides clinical services for the fitting and monitoring of children with hearing aids as well as the evaluation of children and adults who may be candidates for cochlear implantation. We are very committed to educating

colleagues as well as patients regarding the availability of appropriate hearing technology.

We are very excited to share with you that our educational services within the last two years have been extended beyond the Bay Area! Our travels have taken us to communities in Costa Rica, Peru and China allowing us to educate and give access to hearing tech-

nology where it was previously unknown. To support endeavors like this, as well as others, we are having our first fundraising event, a **weekend in Napa Valley on August 28, 2004**. Please see the "Upcoming Events" section for more details!

Be sure to keep an eye on us through our new website ([www.letthemhear.org](http://www.letthemhear.org)) to watch where we land next!



**Becky Highlander**  
Director of Promotions  
Palo Alto & San Ramon

### ***Did you know..?***

*Approximately 59,000 people worldwide have received cochlear implants.*

*About 250,000 people would be good candidates for a cochlear implant.*

## Hearing Device Center

"Listener, coach, problem-solver, teacher...and also audiologist." All are titles we answer to here in the Hearing Device Center at California Ear Institute. Although hearing loss may seem like a small problem and you are only occasionally saying "What did you say?" we know that gradually increasing hearing loss leads to increased anger, frustration, insecurity, nervous-

ness, irritability and depression. The Hearing Device Center audiologists and staff are available to help you with all your needs regarding hearing devices, assistive listening technology for special situations, hearing aids that you have purchased elsewhere, repairs and, of course, the newest technology designed to help people function in noisy situations. If you haven't been

in for a while or purchased your aids elsewhere, please call us or come in to our **free** walk-in clinic on **Mondays, 12:30-1:30pm** at both our Palo Alto and San Ramon locations!

We will clean your hearing aids, answer your questions and help you toward your goal of better understanding the world around you!



**Lisa Olson**  
Director  
Hearing Device Centers  
Palo Alto & San Ramon

### ***Did you know..?***

*Number of people who need hearing aids: 25 million*

*Number of people who own hearing aids: 5 million*

## Audiology

The Audiology department at CEI is proud to offer two state-of-the-art diagnostic tests in addition to the standard tests for hearing and balance function.

The **Auditory Steady State Response (ASSR)** test is used to quantify the amount of hearing loss in children too young to participate in a traditional hearing test. ASSR testing is innovative because the

test is automated and results are frequency-specific. CEI was one of the first sites in the United States to begin using ASSR technology in early 1999. ASSR testing is available at CEI locations in Palo Alto and San Ramon.

The **Stacked-Band Derived Auditory Brainstem Response (SABR)** test is used to identify small tumors affecting the hearing nerve.

SABR results can also aid in the diagnosis of Meniere's Disease. SABR testing is available in the Palo Alto location only. CEI Audiologists are uniquely qualified to administer the ASSR and SABR because both tests were introduced initially in our clinic for research purposes. Both tests are now FDA-approved and being incorporated into clinics across the country.



**CarolAnn O'Rourke**  
Director  
Clinical Audiology  
Palo Alto & San Ramon

### ***Did you know..?***

*Hearing loss is the number one disability in the world.*

*It is also the most preventable disability in the world!*

**COUPONS & OFFERS!**

CALIFORNIA EAR INSTITUTE

WWW.CALIFORNIAEARINSTITUTE.COM

1900 University Ave., Suite 101, E. Palo Alto, CA 94303



**FREE!**

Hearing Aid Cleaning & Performance Check!

California Ear Institute

Call us now for this limited offer!

Palo Alto: 650-462-3139 / San Ramon: 925-807-1140

Expiration Date: 09/24/2004

**OUR HISTORY**

Founded in 1968 as the first "ears only" medical practice in the United States, the California Ear Institute has provided more than a quarter of a million visits for patients with Surgical, Medical, Hearing Aid, Cochlear Implant, Facial Nerve Disorder and Cranial Base Disorder needs. CEI is Northern California's premier site for treatment of ear related disorders and is highly ranked among the world's Centers of Excellence specializing in hearing and balance related disorders. The California Ear Institute is known for and will continue to offer the finest surgeons and surgical services in the world. Patients who choose CEI experience the benefit of a cutting edge research center in a private practice setting avoiding the risks found in organizations responsible for training surgeons early in their careers. It is our goal at CEI to provide the ultimate care, service and capability available for those who put their trust in us.

**MANAGEMENT TEAM**

Joseph Roberson, M.D.  
*CEO and Managing Partner*

Katrina Stidham, M.D.  
*Partner, San Ramon*

Trenna (Teri) Cott  
*Chief Operating Officer*

Monica Hellner  
*Executive Assistant*

CarolAnn O'Rourke  
*Director,  
Diagnostic Audiology*

Lisa Olson  
*Director,  
Hearing Device Centers*

Lisa Tonokawa  
*Director of Research  
Let Them Hear Foundation*

Rebecca Highlander  
*Director of Promotions  
Let Them Hear Foundation*

Kaustuva Das  
*Director, Marketing*

Gino LiBerati  
*Manager,  
Billing/Collections/Contracting*

Erin Caravantes  
*Office Manager, San Ramon*

Louisa Chang  
*Accounting Manager*

Hyacinth Reyes  
*Supervisor, Palo Alto  
Patient Communications/  
Medical Records*

**Hearing Aid Programming!**

**FREE**

California Ear Institute

Call the Hearing Device Center Now!

Palo Alto: 650-462-3139 / San Ramon: 925-807-1140

Expiration Date: 10/24/2004

**Featured Patient - Valerie Smrtic**

Dear Dr. Roberson,

Where do I find the words to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to you and your wonderful staff for your care and unrelenting devotion, your genuine and constant concern, and for your warmth and love for me as not only a patient but also a person? Seven years....I have been part of the C.E.I. family for seven years. From the moment I walked through the door for the very first time, I have felt cared about, cared for, and protected. If there is a safe haven in the medical world, it is the California Ear Institute.

My medical history is long and rather intricate, as you know. The California Ear Institute and I have been through medical wars like no other. The ear problems alone are enough to weaken even the strongest and brightest, but your tenacity and perseverance have carried us through some very rough times with

a problem that has proved to be baffling and bizarre, challenging and amazing. But we have harnessed it, controlled it, and through patience and diligence have discovered how to manage the problem effectively.

You and all of C.E.I. are always there with me every step of the way. Guiding and advising, listening, hugging, always concerned and always loving. You are professional, knowledgeable, completely competent, but equally as important, you are also compassionate and kind, gentle and humble, and I trust you with my life. Indeed, when I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1999, I turned to you for advice regarding a general surgeon, and you led me to the best. I honestly believe that I am alive today because of that recommendation.

I am so lucky that you and your staff are my friends. They are sunshine to my soul.

Michelle and Jennifer at the front desk, and Virginia at the farewell window, who treat each patient with grace and kindness and good cheer; Lydia, who is never without a smile; Teri and Hyacinth, who always make a patient feel comfortable; Jennifer, who compassionately and competently guides a patient through the surgery scheduling process and incomprehensible horrors of insurance companies; Ken, whose gentle manner calms and reassures; Dr. Murray, whose ease with patients is bettered only by his expertise and concern; Bruna, who is the light and the foundation of C.E.I.. They brighten my days, lift my spirits, hold me close in their hearts because they are loving and giving people. They are C.E.I.'s anchor, and you are so blessed and so fortunate that they are a part of your team. From the bottom of my heart, thank you very much.

With love, Valerie Smrtic