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“I Am Not a Fan of Equality!”

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Marshall Chasin, AuD

On the surface this appears to fly in the face of mother and apple pie. But having said this, I am a fan of “equity.” The idea of treating all people the same comes with a list of requirements that include “all people require the same support.” It would be unequal to provide someone with a wheelchair ramp unless everyone equally was provided with a wheelchair ramp.

I recall Preston Manning making a seemingly innocuous statement that he is a fervent supporter of equality. For those who don’t recall Mr. Manning, he was the founder of the Canadian Reform Party which went on to merge with the federal Progressive Conservative Party. Mr. Manning’s statement was really: I support equality for all … and if you have special needs, that’s too bad because it would be unfair to everyone else. The idea of equality is not what we should be striving for.

We should be striving for “equity” where all people are provided with supports and opportunities that any one individual may require. Equity means that access is provided to everyone even though only a small group may require it. Equity means that closed (or open) captioning is available whether required or not and that access to services be universal even if only a few groups of people may decide to avail themselves of these services.
This issue of *Canadian Audiologist* is guest edited by Dr. Janine Verge and Christopher Sutton and is dedicated to the sometimes allusive property called “Accessibility.”

Janine Verge has worked clinically as an audiologist for over 20 years. She obtained her BSc (Psychology) at Mount Saint Vincent University, her MSc (Audiology) from Dalhousie University, and her AuD from AT Still University. Janine won the 2009 NSHSC Advocacy Award and the 2013 NSHSC Dr. N. Barrie Coward Continuing Educational Award. She is currently serving her second term as a board member of the Canadian Academy of Audiology and served as president of the Speech and Hearing Association of Nova Scotia from 2010-2013.

Janine is an adjunct professor at Dalhousie University, teaching in the area of vestibular testing and management. She is a lecturer for the School of Physiotherapy and the Division of Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery at Dalhousie University. She has also taught at the Nova Scotia Community College Communication Disorders Technician Program and has served as clinical coordinator at the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Dalhousie University.

Janine has single-sided deafness due to a case of the mumps when she was an infant. It was the meaningful experience of meeting an audiologist for the first time at the age of 20 that made her want to get into the profession. Accessibility issues have always been of great interest to her. She is a co-founder and continuing committee member of the Dalhousie Hearing Aid Assistance Program, which provides donated hearing aids to low income seniors. Janine is will be coordinator of a new column beginning in issue #2 (2019) in CanadianAudiologist.ca called, “Issues in Accessibility.” She is president and co-owner of “Accessible Hearing Solutions,” a consulting

business that provides site assessments, loop system and FM system installations, and educational training for schools, businesses, and organizations.

Christopher T. Sutton is the National Executive Director of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. Mr. Sutton's career has spanned across the non-profit, private and public sectors in both the United States and Canada, where he has worked in various leadership capacities for some of the largest organizations serving people with disabilities.

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) was established in 1982 and is the leading consumer advocacy organization representing the needs of the nearly 4-million Canadians living with hearing loss. With a network from coast-to-coast-to-coast, CHHA works cooperatively with professionals, service providers, and government, and provides life enhancing information, support and advocacy to ensure people with hearing loss can overcome barriers in all aspects of their lives.

CHHA has a global reputation in developing and delivering a wide range of initiatives that have challenged the status quo when working with people with hearing loss. As a leader in the sector Chris states that "we are often sought after to provide comments and feedback on various policy initiatives, identify best practices, develop and test technology, which in return has advanced the quality of life for people living with hearing loss."

Mr. Sutton holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Gallaudet University, and a Masters in Business Administration from the Ivey Business School at the University of Western Ontario (Western University), in addition to a number of professional certifications.

I wish to thank Janine and Chris for guest editing this important issue of *Canadian Audiologist.*