

Message from the President

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The Canadian Academy of Audiology offers 7 awards to honour outstanding individuals in the field of audiology. One of the awards is the Student Award, which is “presented to an outstanding audiology graduate student in Canada for academic or clinical excellence, outstanding research, or community service.” Our 2013 Student Award recipient is Hailey Ainlay who studied at Dalhousie. I had the honour of interviewing her for this issue.

SNO: Can you tell us a bit about yourself and why you chose to be an Audiologist?

HA: I was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario, and I have always enjoyed the festivals and events the city has to offer. I especially love musicals, and enjoy singing and dancing myself. I love learning new things, and I recently completed my third level of American Sign Language classes. On the weekend I volunteer at a local Farmer’s Market where I get inspired for another favourite hobby: cooking and baking!

I became an audiologist because I wanted to help people, and I saw an opportunity to integrate my interests in anatomy, neurology, and developmental psychology. As I learned about different rehabilitation services, I came to understand the importance of communication for a person’s quality of life. I believe that hearing is essential in order to communicate needs, thoughts and feelings, and it inspires me to know that I help to empower people in this way. I also love being able to work with a diverse client population from each stage of life.

SNO: Your clinical educators at Dalhousie gave you high praise in the submission for the CAA Student Award. Congratulations and well done! Could you tell us a bit about your internship experience?

HA: Thanks for the kind words! I feel very fortunate that I had a wide variety of internship experiences in two different provinces, which included both diagnostic and amplification work. I had the opportunity to learn in a public hospital setting for adults (including BAHA work), a children’s hospital (including cochlear implant work), and private practice. This also meant I was exposed to a wide variety of clinical approaches. The most valuable learning experiences for me were when I was able to work directly with patients and gain hands-on practice, which helped me to gain confidence in my skills. Personally, for any new clinical activity it was most useful for me to observe once, be guided once and then practice the skill completely on my own with the mentor always available for questions. I also found basic templates and protocols helpful as a starting point and reference. For example, one of my internships had a great initial training tool; a checklist “lesson plan” for interns to complete after reviewing the patient’s chart which they would then review with their mentor before seeing the patient.

SNO: Great tips for clinical educators. Can you tell us about the work you are doing now?

HA: I work at a not-for-profit private practice that is located in a major teaching hospital, so I am

able to draw on my experience in diverse learning settings, and enjoy the best of both worlds! We work closely with a leading hearing and balance clinic as well as a renowned ENT clinic that includes a neurotology team, so we see a lot of medically complex hearing losses such as patients with single-sided deafness, mastoidectomies, and post cancer treatments. I have the support of a skilled interdisciplinary team and am often prescribing unique amplification strategies (e.g., CROS systems) for patients. A typical work day for me could include any combination of hearing tests, hearing aid evaluations, programming, cleaning, fittings, follow ups, and discussions with other team members or attending educational presentations.

SNO: Sounds like challenging work. We are truly fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated individual such as yourself in our field. Finally, can you tell me in one or two sentences why you are a member of CAA.

HA: I am a member of CAA because I value the power of collaboration for advocacy and advancing the knowledge and skills in the field. I also cherish the camaraderie and being inspired by the amazing work being done throughout the country!

SNO: Thank you so much Hailey. It has been a pleasure to get to know a little bit about you and we hope to see you in Whistler in October.