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## **HEARING LOSS AND MUSIC: ENJOYING MUSIC WITH COCHLEAR IMPLANTS OR HEARING AIDS**

Kathy Allen

**KATHY ALLEN:** Thank you. I'm happy to see so many people come in here to hear about music and hearing loss. I was actually born with a severe to profound hearing loss, which was identified when I was five. I went to school and got in trouble for not paying attention. Mom and Dad said, "Well, Kathy never pays attention; she always ignores us." I continued to go to normal public schools, and in fifth grade they had band. Why I wanted to be in the band, I don't know. Maybe it was just some way for me to be more involved or have something to do. The only instrument that my parents could afford to rent at the time was an oboe. Oboes were what they had for low-income families. So I started by learning to play the Oboe.

Unfortunately, when I was playing oboe in the fifth grade band, I could not hear myself. I could hardly even hear the rest of the band around me. The band director decided maybe I could hear better if I played the saxophone. So they switched me to the tenor saxophone, which I played. I was doing well. But the director said, "Kathy, you're not hearing your sharps and flats." And I said, "What are those?" I just couldn't hear certain higher pitches. They felt with my hearing loss being so significant, it would be best to switch me to the drums so I could feel the music that I was playing. I fell in love with the drums. Despite the fact that I really couldn't hear the rest of the band playing, I loved the beat. I loved the rhythm of the music.

Every day when I would go home, my sister and I would play records. We had these little 45 records, and a record player in our bedroom. We would listen to the songs over and over and over again. I could not hear the words or understand the words. I couldn't understand how to sing along. So my sister would write down the words to the songs

for me, and then she would lip sync or sing along herself. I would read her lips and that's how I learned to sing along to music. I finally remember lots of record playing, also lots of nights watching television, the Tony Orlando and Dawn show? Do you remember that? That's how old I am. For Tony Orlando and Dawn, I would turn the TV up really, really loud, get right in front of it, and try to lip-read everything that was going on. At the same time, I had my sister next to me, nudging her, "What did he say, what did he say? Get me the words to the songs." You can imagine how excited I felt this past Christmas when my sister gave me the DVD set of all the Tony Orlando and Dawn shows.

Another unique story was when I got to high school, I actually signed up to play in the marching band. This was in Edwardsville high school, which is right across the river from St. Louis. The first day of my freshman year in high school, we had to go to band practice. I came home just absolutely upset and crying because the movements that we had to make on the field to form all of these patterns and shapes that the audience would see, were all organized by certain parts of the music that I was not able to hear. I thought my band career was over. I went home crying and upset, but my mom said, "Kathy, we will work something out." She took me back to school the next day for a meeting with the band director. She explained the severity of my hearing loss, that I could not hear the rest of the band. But I wanted to be a part of the marching band. The director explained to me, that I was a great drummer. He said, "Kathy is a great drummer. She can, in the drummers, lead the band. We can teach her how to make her movements with certain parts of where the drumming pieces are in the music." So that was the beginning of my marching band career.

I have very fond memories. I marched in parades; I marched at football games and even in one in college, all with a profound hearing loss. Quite as challenging as it is, it can be done.

In my mid to late 30s, I had been wearing two hearing aids. Hearing aids were actually kind of getting very painful to me. My ears were always red. I had severe migraine headaches all of the time. Music was just not sounding good anymore. I really always only got the low pitches of the music, the beat, the rhythm. And then I would always get the words to try to sing along. But the thought of losing that music was so dark and sad for me. My audiologist told me I had the most powerful hearing aids on the market. They were just not working for me and causing me more harm than good. So you might want to consider taking them off.

My dad then suggested, "Kathy, why don't you get a cochlear implant?" I said, "Dad, I'm not a candidate for a cochlear implant, because I was born deaf. I don't believe in cochlear implants because I'm very active in the Deaf community and all of my friends there don't believe in cochlear implants. They told me I was going to have a hole in my head. I wouldn't be able to play sports or go swimming.

My dad has always searched for a cure for my hearing loss; that's how parents are. I thought maybe it was time for him to accept the fact that I had a profound hearing loss

and that that is the way it was going to be. I thought I was being really smart making a bet with my dad. I told him, "Dad, I'll get an evaluation for a cochlear implant and I'll prove to you that I am not a candidate. And then you will drop this subject of curing my hearing loss and you will take a sign language class and make it easier to communicate with me." We shook on that. I thought I would win this bet, because I never make a bet that I'm going to lose. Never.

I'm very happy to say that this is the best bet that I ever lost in my life. I went to the evaluation here in St. Louis at Washington University. During the evaluation, they told me that all I would probably hear with the cochlear implant would be environmental sounds. I said, "Oh, all right, fine."

But I was a candidate. I'm like darn, you know, I am a candidate. They introduced me to another young woman who had a severe to profound hearing loss all of her life, and she had an intense love of music. She was telling me how much she loved music with her cochlear implant. My ears perked up or my eyes perked up. I said, "You mean really? You can hear music with the cochlear implant? You can understand it? Can you sing along? She told me all these wonderful things about her favorites, the Beatles, and how she could recognize the songs when she was in a store. I got to thinking that maybe if I could get music with my cochlear implant, that would be worth it. If I could just get a little bit of environmental sound, it would be worth it.

I made the decision to go forward and get the cochlear implant. It has been one of the best, most gratifying decisions I ever made. My life changed incredibly since. I'm able to enjoy music much more than ever before. I am able to talk on the telephone. I can understand speech without lip-reading in a quiet environment. And life: I'm no longer an isolated, withdrawn, depressed individual who hated going to family gatherings or going to group outings with my friends. I'm now more a part of conversations than I am someone sitting along the side, reading a book. So life has been very great. Cochlear implants are great. Music with two cochlear implants or music with even one implant can be a very gratifying experience.

This talk is not just about cochlear implants. That was just my experience. I know that many of you here have hearing aids. And music can be a challenge when you've had hearing loss, especially later in life. It's just not what you remember, so I'm hoping to give you some tips and tricks to help make music enjoyable and a part of your life again. Please know that it does not and it will not come easy. You have to decide how important is music to you? How much do you want it in your life? How much effort are you willing to put into getting that back? So I hope to share some ideas with you.

One of my favorite quotes says "I think I should have no other mortal wants, if I could always have plenty of music. It seems to infuse strength into my limbs and ideas into my brain. Life seems to go on without effort when I'm filled with music." There is nothing better than enjoying wonderful music while I'm driving four hours from Chicago to St. Louis. It's something to fill the time. There is nothing more relaxing than listening

to some good music after a stressful day, or hearing the words to songs that just might fit in to what you're feeling with your life right now.

Why is music so challenging with hearing loss? What can we do to develop listening skills? I've even brought a few accessories that we can use to improve the sound quality when listening to music. We will talk about creating a play list. But most important, practice makes perfect when trying to develop and listen and enjoy music skills.

So first of all, why is music so challenging? For myself, and many people with hearing loss, it's challenging because we can hear the sounds of music. It's made up of so many different things, rhythm, tone, timbre, and pitch. Different singers have high or low-pitched voices. It's very challenging. There are fast beats, slow beats, hip-hop, all kinds of challenging situations. So it's kind of like trying to hear in noise. There are all different kinds of listening environments that are thrown at you through music.

The most common thing people say to me is they can understand speech with their implant, but music doesn't sound so good. For people who get cochlear implants, if you've had a hearing loss later in life, music is not going to sound the way you remember it. With a hearing loss, you lose the quality of sound, the pitch, the highs, the lows, the moderates. Those losses are going to make enjoying music different. It's more difficult and a lot more challenging.

We also have to consider our hearing history. Did you lose hearing suddenly? Did you have a progressive loss, where sounds just started sounding worst and worst and worst over time? We have to look at the length of the hearing loss. Have you had no hearing since birth? More important, one of my favorite parts is the motivation. Motivation is key to everything.

I'd like to say that if you want to enjoy and appreciate music, it's up to you how much effort that you put in. It can be done. Anything that is important to you is worth the effort. You have to suffer a little before you succeed. When I got my implant, music sounded terrible. I thought how could this woman tell me she loved music so much when it sounded just horrible? I was so disappointed. But I was very fortunate to have an audiologist and a support system both open to showing me different things that I could try. For example, wearing a hearing aid with a cochlear implant made music sound so much better than with just the implant alone. Also, using different accessories that I could plug into or hook up into my hearing aid or cochlear implant to make music sound better. Those things worked.

Also, I had to have a really good attitude. I had to want it. One time I did a music presentation at the Hearing Loss Association of America. A man came up to me after the presentation and said, "You know, I love music. I used to love music. But it just sounds terrible now." I asked him, "How much have you listened to music?" He said that he only listened to a few things and gave up because it sounds so terrible. I said, "You really need to listen to it more and more and more. You need to practice so that your

brain can get used to hearing it.” He said, “Well, I don't have time for all this practice.” You have to really figure out what is important to you. Do you really want to hear music or not? If you really want to hear it, you're going to work at it. He told me he didn't have time. He was retired.

So face the challenge. Face the challenge. Understand that enjoying music again will take time and effort. Accept that it may never sound exactly as you remember it.

One of the key things is start with simple or familiar music. If you remember sounds of Tony Orlando or big band or the Carpenters, go back and listen to that kind of music. Yes, it's not going to sound the same as you remember it, but if you listen to it over and over and over again, it will begin to come back. Even if you get a new hearing aid, you have to learn how to use that new aid, right? The same is true for a cochlear implant. You have to redevelop that appreciation. If you listen to things you're familiar with, you've already got a memory for it. Otherwise, if you go from loving the Carpenters to trying to enjoy hip hop or country western music, of course you'll be frustrated and you won't know what it sounds like because you're not used to that kind of music. You have to start with what you know.

How do you get started? First set up a listening schedule for yourself. The reason I was so successful was I practiced. I listened to music for at least a half hour to an hour every single day. It didn't always sound the greatest. The more I listened to it, the better it got. I set time aside to practice and make improvements in listening to music.

Keep a journal to track your progress. This is really important. When you get frustrated, you can go back and look at how you were doing before and where you are now. Sometimes as time goes on, we forget how poorly we performed in the early stages. Without a journal, we don't get to see our progress. So keep track of that because it can inspire and motivate you.

Find something positive. If you never had any experience with music and you want to enjoy it, start with children's books, or children's music, or holiday songs. Most people know and remember holiday songs. Pick something that sticks in your brain constantly. Start with something that is very simple.

Experiment with different accessories. I'm going to show you accessories. These are things like personal audio cables that you can attach into your cochlear implant. A TVHi Fi cable and a HATIS are nice. You can use them with the telecoil off your hearing aid or implant.

When you're listening to music, you want to think about creating the best listening environment. An old transistor radio is not the best listening environment. It is not the best sound quality. A Bose stereo system is probably the best sound quality or stereo system that you can buy. But everybody is different. Find something that is good for you: find a CD player, a cassette tape player, an MP 3 player, or iPod, or DVD, VCR music videos, find something.

**AUDIENCE:** The computer?

**KATHY ALLEN:** Yes. Absolutely. The computer. You can download the songs, then get the lyrics and then look at the words so you can follow along. You have to find out the best listening environment for you. Some people may like headphones that have the big cups that fit nicely over your hearing aid or over your cochlear implant. Some people like little headphones that work with a telecoil. Some people like to use the HATIS that just fits comfortably on your ear and works off of your telecoil. There are a lot of different options. So experience with them and see which one is most comfortable.

**AUDIENCE:** Can you have a stereotype effect?

**KATHY ALLEN:** Stereo? Yes. Absolutely. If you're using a neckloop, or other HATIS device or any other type of device, you can differentiate with a stereo sound from just the regular straight transistor radio effect. There are devices that do have better sound quality than others. So it's really important to find out what works best for you.

One way to do it is direct connection with a personal audio cable into a cochlear implant. It's probably a very good way to listen to music and enjoy the sound quality. You can do this with personal audio cables. This will be a cable that will patch into the iPod or audio CD player and then the other end will attach directly into the processor of your cochlear implant.

Headphones are really great. Then there are times when I do well with speakers, just a regular speaker in the room or in the car. Then we have what we call a TV/HiFi cable. You use this for a battery-operated component. It's not something you want to use with anything that is plugged into the wall. It works exactly the same as the audio, personal audio cable, but it has a volume control on it and it has a surge protector. The sound quality is a bit better than with the personal audio cable.

One of my favorite components for enjoying music is called the HATIS. You can use it for the phone and you can use it for listening to music. In fact, if you actually have a HATIS for your phone, you can go to Radio Shack and spend \$4 and get a little adapter that will take your cell phone adapter and turn it into an adapter for an audio component. Then you can plug it into a CD player or iPod. The HATIS works very well for those of you who have a built-in telecoil in your hearing aid or with your cochlear implant. What's the beauty of this? Nobody else can hear it. Nobody else knows that you're listening to music. Sometimes when I'm on a plane, I can hear the music coming from other people's headphones. You don't get that with the HATIS.

Some people will tell me that the HATIS just is too big for them. Maybe they have a smaller ear. It doesn't work quite so well. Or they just can't afford it. Unfortunately, the HATIS is very expensive, about \$150. That's quite expensive. There are other options. We have what we call a Noiz free. It works the same as a HATIS. Simply hook it on

your ear and plug it into the CD player or the iPod or anything that has an audio Jack. Put on your telecoil, and you'll be able to listen to the music.

You see other people running around with iPods and they have the buds in their ears. This Noiz-free gives us something to put on our ears, which is not big and cumbersome so we can be just like those other people. The Noiz free is actually about \$35 to \$50, depending on where you buy it. It's much more affordable than the HATIS. However, I urge you to try it before you buy it. The HATIS has a stronger sound quality than the Noiz free does. People who have hearing aids may not like the Noiz-free, whereas people with cochlear implant might like it, because they are getting more sound. I encourage you to try them all and see which one works the best for you.

If you don't want to hook anything onto your ear and you have a built-in telecoil, you can use the Clear Sounds. Costs about \$100. It can be used for listening to music and for audio components. You can use it for cell phones as well. It comes with the adapter in the kit. You have a plug-in for your cell phone and you have an adapter to plug it into the audio.

It works simply. Just put it around your neck and switch the device to the telecoil. Again they work off of the telecoil with the other end plugged into your component. The beauty of the Clear Sounds is that it has a volume control on the bottom of it. That gives you more flexibility and more options for enjoying your sound.

Now that we know some of the devices that you can use to enjoy music, what do you want to do to get started? The first thing you want to ask yourself is if you have a memory for music. You want to choose tunes that are simple and enjoyable for you. Perhaps first try just one singing voice as opposed to a chorus. Also, you want to make sure that you have the printed lyrics to follow along. For those of you who might have a limited experience with music, start with some children's songs or holiday songs. Choose simple music with a very strong beat. Find a buddy with a hearing loss, who enjoys music, and share tips and tricks, and try different things. Be open to trying a lot of things. It can take you a long way.

One of the things that I've done is to create my own play list. That can be challenging if you have limited computer skills. Or it can be quite easy, once you get to know how to do it. At the Apple Web site, they have an iTunes music store where you can listen to different songs before you buy them. You can get samples free. If you don't have experience, try out different tunes. Create a play list of different songs that you enjoy, things that you can practice on a daily basis. Make sure that you enjoy the songs. Otherwise you won't want to listen to them. Some bookstores or music stores, like Border's or Barnes and Noble, have headphones where you can listen to the music before you buy it. If you have any old CDs and records, pick out the ones that you like, that you're familiar with. Just create a tape, a CD, or an MP 3 player with music that you enjoy, so that you can practice on a daily basis.

It's going to be frustrating. I hate to say it. I have one of the most positive attitudes in the world, but yes, hearing and enjoying music can be frustrating. So, understand and

believe in yourself and know that it takes time. You will get out of this effort what you put into it. Listen to your songs over and over and over and over again. I don't think I've gotten sick of a song yet. In fact, I have started seeing the Christmas stuff out lately. So I've been humming a favorite of mine called "I want a Hippopotamus for Christmas." (I'll let Diane spell that one. I just had to throw that one in there.) Find a partner and ask your partner to sing along with you. Don't worry about what your voice sounds like, your partner can't hear you, either.

Listen to music when you're fresh and in the mood. If you're not in the mood for it, it's not going to do you any good. If you dance to it, get a sense of the rhythm, get a sense of the movement, get your whole body involved. Go to Karaoke clubs where the words and lyrics appear on the screen and people can sing along. It's helpful for improving your singing voice. Mine will never be any good.

Cochlear has a program called "Sound and Beyond." You can purchase it from Cochlear. It has different musical instruments that you can listen to and practice recognizing, and they have different tunes that you can listen to. You can practice with something like this to regain and redevelop your music listening skills. Remember, my final thoughts are, I can't stop saying this enough, you are going to be sick of it, but I have what you call the four Ps. These are Patience, Persistent, Practice, and a Positive attitude.

If you can follow those four Ps, you're going to go far. Accept that music may never sound the way that you remember it. Choose music that you're familiar with. Experiment with different types of music. Experiment with the different accessories that are out there. Even try different settings on your cochlear implant or your hearing aid. Sample songs before you buy them, so you don't spend a lot of money on music that you don't like. Print out your lyrics, and sing along with a partner. Finally, again, what I said, patience, persistence, practice, and a positive attitude will get you far.

So, with that, I thank you for your attention today. I hope that I answered some of your questions. I'd like to hear questions from you if you have them.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** It's helpful when you get a different singer for the same song. I listened to Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer sung by different artists. I got different records. I listened to Gene Autry. If you listen to the same song from different artists, you can really hear it.

**KATHY ALLEN:** That's good advice. Listen to different singers. If it's a male or female singer, they will have a different pitch. Open yourself up to that. Thank you for that tip.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Can you explain a bit more about how the Noiz- free and Clear Sounds enhance the music? What does it do exactly?

**KATHY ALLEN:** Well, how do the Noiz free and Clear Sounds exactly enhance the music? The world is not a perfect soundproof environment. We have a lot of

background noise. We have sounds that come into our environment constantly. With the Noiz free or the HATIS or the Clear Sounds, you're directly connecting into the audio source. They bring that sound directly into your ear without something that we call a signal to noise ratio. When using telecoil, these devices block out that background noise that interferes with our enjoyment and listening experiences. That's how they enhance the listening experiment.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** It's like headphones.

**KATHY ALLEN:** Yes. Headphones can do the same thing. Absolutely.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** What was the name of the listening to tones thing that you just mentioned? What did you call that?

**KATHY ALLEN:** "Sound and Beyond." It's a computer based training program. It's a DVD -- CD that you can purchase from Cochlear and load it on to your computer. Not only does it have different instruments or sounds of music that you can listen to and practice to, it also has sentences, words, male and female voices that you can practice in, you know, in improving your listening skills. Go to the Cochlear Web site or call Cochlear customer service and let them know that you're interested in purchasing "Sound and Beyond."

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I have an implant. My audiologist and I figured out something we call the music channel. As I understand it, it doesn't have the highs dampened as the language channels are dampened. It has more of a sense of pitch. I get rhythm on it just fine but I still don't get a lot of pitch. I can hear the frequency differences on my language channel. I don't understand that.

**KATHY ALLEN:** That is a really challenging thing to explain. See, when you go to your audiologist to program the cochlear implant, they can control how high pitches are you're going to hear. Do you have a Nucleus cochlear implant?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Yes.

**KATHY ALLEN:** So you have 22 channels. That is 22 electrodes that are stimulating your nerve. Each electrode will stimulate a different pitch. Then some in between will create even more pitches. So we can get up to about 161 different pitches. However, there are many more pitches in sounds that we have. We cannot possibly capture every single pitch that there is, so we have to make best with what we can do. Sometimes the audiologists will try to program it so that you can get more high pitches, more moderate and more low pitches. They do try to create a music channel. However, it is not something that has been perfected yet. It is something that is being heavily researched right now at the University of Washington. They are looking at ways to improve music listening or create programs in cochlear implants, especially, for music.

**AUDIENCE:** Where do you get the HATIS and the Noix-free?

**KATHY ALLEN:** You can order the HATIS. If you want the one-sided HATIS, you can order that from [www.Cochlear.com](http://www.Cochlear.com) . If you want a bilateral HATIS, you can order that from [www.soundclarity.com](http://www.soundclarity.com) . If you want to order the Noiz free, you can get that from [www.Harcmercantile.com](http://www.Harcmercantile.com) . The Clear Sounds, I believe you can get from the Hitec group.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** What kind of adapter do you have buy from Radio Shack?

**KATHY ALLEN:** Take your HATIS to Radio Shack. Tell them this is what I plug into my cell phone, but I want to plug it into my CD player or iPod.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Is the adapter the same whether it's for an iPod or...

**KATHY ALLEN:** Yes. It's the same whether it's an iPod or CD player or anything.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I have the long plug that goes into the implant processor and my computer. It won't fit into the HATIS.

**KATHY ALLEN:** It won't go into the HATIS because the HATIS works off the telecoil. The TV that goes into the cochlear implant and into the computer is something that you don't use with a telecoil. It's something that you're plugging directly into your cochlear implant. HATIS you can use to plug into your CD player and iPod, too.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** What is the telecoil?

**KATHY ALLEN:** That's a very good question. The telecoil is something that is in a hearing aid or in a cochlear implant processor that if you push a button or turn a switch to "T" it will put a signal on, which picks up and sends an electromagnetic signal. If you use it with a telephone, it kind of might buzz a bit. It will block out all the background noise and the sound around you. It picks up the signal from the phone so that the sound of the telephone or the audio player will come directly into your ear.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I don't know if you know much about the iPod. Don't they have speakers where you can put your iPod in. They have a thing where you can charge your iPod, too.

**KATHY ALLEN:** There are many speakers that you can just plug your iPod into. You just stick it in there. They have very good sound quality and you can just listen to it without having to use your telecoil. Absolutely.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I stopped listening to music for a while. When I first got the implant, I then listened to sound every day. Now that I know about the HATIS, I'm going back.

**KATHY ALLEN:** Good. I encourage you to try different things and be open to that. Bring music back into your life.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I had my implant turned on four, five months ago. I play my old music. I listen to the Chipmonks. I can get "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." I hear Theodore, Theodore. But I didn't know about the iPod things and all of this. So I'm very happy to come here and know at least I'm trying to learn these things, because I just want the music so bad. I practice for ...it's hard.

**KATHY ALLEN:** Yes. It is.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I'll listen for hours at night. I have to remember that I have to go to bed sometimes. You know, it's beautiful after 30 years of being completely deaf to hear my Christmas songs. And I thank God. I'm in heaven. It's wonderful.

**KATHY ALLEN:** Thank you for sharing that. It can be a very treasured and valuable experiences when you are able to hear and enjoy music again. So be open to trying those things. Yes?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I have a cochlear implant and I love it. This information is wonderful, because I have missed hearing music. I mean, I can hear it, but it sounds awful.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I was told that I could not hear music. I found out that was not true. I went to Macy's a couple Christmases ago and music was playing. It brought tears to my eyes because I heard and understood that they were playing "Jingle bells."

**KATHY ALLEN:** It is wonderful when you recognize a song. I mean, I remember the first time, after practicing and practicing and practicing, I was in a store one day and I recognized a song on the overhead radio. I was able to just start singing along to it. Those positive experiences are things that are going to keep you trying again, even when it does sound bad. Because I guarantee you, if you continue to work at it, it will get better.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** I don't want to bore people. I was working out in the yard in a windy day, and I heard music. I thought everything is starting to sound like music to me. The ice cream truck was coming.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** My audiologist told me to leave the radio on in the car. Every time I drove, my radio was on. But I didn't understand a word. But I listened to it every day. All of a sudden, one day, out of the clear blue sky, I understood every single word of a commercial. Every single word.

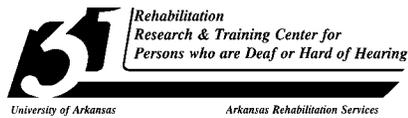
**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** The Empire commercial on TV. I was sleeping once and all of a sudden: "Empire" and it was like oh, my God!

**KATHY ALLEN:** Right. That is funny. Okay. We have run out of time and I have to leave for the next presentation. If you'd like to come up and try some of these cables, please do. Thank you.

## Biographical

Kathy Allen, MA is a bilateral cochlear implant recipient and Regional Volunteer Manager with Cochlear Americas. She holds a Master's Degree in Counseling from the University of Illinois. Kathy was born with a severe to profound hearing loss & received her first hearing aid at the age of 5. Despite her hearing loss, Kathy developed a love for music at a young age, often listening to records while her sister wrote down the words to songs & lip-synced so she could learn to sing along. Throughout her school years, including college, Kathy played the Oboe, Saxophone & Drums while performing with concert & marching bands. At the age of 38, she received her first cochlear implant and continued to enjoy music by utilizing the implant and a hearing aid together. In April of 2005 Kathy received her 2<sup>nd</sup> cochlear implant and states that music sounds better now than it has her entire life! Her favorite musical instrument is the harp.

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