

The following is an article condensed from the Cleburne Times Review

"Sounds of Success"

Thomas Mahoney, An Audiologist, has made a career of helping others hear and decided it was his turn so he received two cochlear implants in 2010.

"It reached a point where I did not have enough hearing for hearing aids to help anymore," said Mahoney, whose hearing began declining when he was just nine years old. "That is when I investigated becoming a candidate for cochlear implants."

After using eight sets of hearing aids in the past 35 years, Mahoney finally received his cochlear implants. The left ear was implanted in February 2010 and the right in August 2010.

"Surgery was an Afternoon with very little recovery time," he said. There was only a two inch incision behind the ear where the implant was inserted in the cochlea. Three weeks later the processor was programmed, put behind my ear and I started to hear from the implant.

The processor converts sound into digital impulses and sends them to the implant. The implants electrodes sends the impulses to the various sites on the cochlea and from there the impulses travel up to the brain.

"At first, the sound in the left ear was very much high pitched and unusual," he said. "It was not very clear. However, I could still hear from my right side using my hearing aids. I used both ears daily, went to work, and attended church activities. The implanted side grew better and better at understanding speech."

Mahoney said he told people his brain was growing, a simplified explanation of the fact that his brain was learning to accept and interpret the new signals from the implant.

His brain grew fast, and only a month after he received the processor, he tested very well in speech recognition tests using only the implanted side in the sound booth. At this point, Mahoney decided he wanted to have the right side implanted.

"Now it is eight months after the second implant, and it is really great to be able to stand in a crowd of people and have a much easier conversation," he said. "And at my church, Eastern Heights Church, is a lot more fun too because I don't struggle to hear like I did before. "All these years my hearing has been digressing and since I've been an audiologist my hearing has just continued to digress while I was helping all these other people here and finally it is my turn," he said. "And I can relate with the directional mics and things like that. They are exciting for me."

"There is a whole new world of technology, from hearing aids, amplified phone, assistive listening devices, and cochlear implants. These devices are changing peoples lives," he said. I am happy to be in the middle of this revolution...to help others hear and to be able to experience the benefits of this technology personally.