

# Corporate social responsibility

At Sonova we are deeply committed to sustainable business. We work tirelessly to make sure that this commitment aligns with our overall business goals, our vision and mission, and our company values.

## Fostering corporate social responsibility

Our people are the heart of our business. Sonova's effectiveness as a responsible employer is reflected by a very high employee satisfaction score: above 80 %. We have set up a cross-company education platform, Sonova Academy, as an important contributor to sustaining and developing our human resources. We strongly believe that the key to sustainable success is developing talent with the goal of ensuring internal succession.

In environmental terms, we have further deepened our understanding of the Group's carbon footprint and will continue to optimize our environmental performance worldwide. Compared with the previous year, we were able to reduce the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per employee of our office buildings by 6.7 %.

A main pillar of our corporate social responsibility commitment, the Hear the World Foundation supports projects for people and especially children in need who have hearing loss.

In 2014 / 15, Sonova Holding AG provided the foundation with a total value of CHF 2.05 million in cash and in-kind benefits.

## Creating sustainable value

We are committed to further efforts to create sustainable value for the planet and people – by improving the quality of life of millions of those with hearing loss, by continuously innovating to offer the best solutions to our customers, by investing in the personal growth and development of our employees, by giving our people meaningful work, and by applying environmentally friendly practices across all our business activities.

Sonova reports on corporate responsibility in accordance with the requirements of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) G4 standards, applying the "Core" option.

The full CSR Report can be downloaded at: [www.sonova.com/en/csreport](http://www.sonova.com/en/csreport)



## TO HEAR AND BE HEARD

"I'm actually quite excited," says Cindy Stroh as she sweeps back her long blond hair. It's a hot fall day in Valencia, Southern California, home to the headquarters of Advanced Bionics. She has selected a simple violet dress for her first face-to-face meeting with her mentor at the Bionic Ear Association (BEA). She has been in contact with him time and again via email and chat with questions about her cochlear implants. He was always on hand to offer help, advice and explanations. Now Howard Samuels, who devotes some of his spare time to work for BEA, is suddenly right in front of her. "You must be Cindy," he says. They greet each other warmly, laugh and hug.

Hearing loss was a heavy burden for Cindy Stroh to bear. Isolation, powerlessness – no one close to her could offer advice. "At times like that, you need someone to understand you and

give you hope," Stroh explains. "Howard and the BEA network at Advanced Bionics were enormously helpful in doing just that."

The purpose of the BEA is to improve the quality of life for people with severe to profound hearing loss. Alongside training and contact with AB staff, interaction among each other is the core activity of this international network. Experienced cochlear implant recipients help those who are just starting out on the journey that will restore their own hearing. "Candidates often ask what cochlear implants sound like, or how long it might take to be able to use the phone or enjoy music. Many people find it difficult to distinguish between pitches at first. It takes patience and training to achieve the best results with cochlear implants," Howard Samuels points out.

Cindy's mentor himself wears Naída CI sound processors from Advanced Bionics in both ears. He chose a matte black color for these external units of the cochlear system which fit behind the ear on the head. Like Cindy Stroh,

Samuels was affected by significant hearing loss – and he decided to share his experience with those on the same journey.

The BEA is all about helping cochlear implant recipients to "Hear and Be Heard". Participants can exchange experiences and ideas online at [www.HearingJourney.com](http://www.HearingJourney.com). Anyone interested can ask or answer questions in the online forum. As well as making the online community available, BEA participants organize meetings for cochlear implant wearers and their family members. Like Howard Samuels, several hundred experienced users have already registered as mentors.

Cindy Stroh is delighted about her contact with her mentor: "I trust him totally!" she says. "I really don't know why she's so grateful to me," Howard responds with a wink. "After all, I didn't make her cochlear implants!"





Cindy Stroh meets her mentor at the Bionic Ear Association (BEA) for the first time face to face: She has been in contact with him time and again via email and chat with questions. He was always on hand to offer help. The BEA brings experienced cochlear implant recipients into contact with those who are just starting out.