

# **A SILENT AFFLICTION...** (Continued page 2)

Over the course of seven years, she tried a variety of FM systems and hearing aides to amplify the little resonance she had in her right ear.

Her left ear was completely deaf. She thought she could get by with lip-reading, however, she was stricken when people began to avoid her.

"It was like I had the plague or something," she recalls. "Not only did it hurt my feelings, but it prohibited me from being involved in the school, church, and community. Things just weren't working for me or my lifestyle."

All attempts to be 'normal' were unsuccessful until Gracey. After much research, because after all she is now a private investigator, Sheiladawn underwent surgery to get a cochlear implant, whom she calls Gracey, in February 2010.

"I didn't tell my family, they just got a photo the next day after my surgery."

A cochlear nucleus implant system makes sounds louder and clearer, while hearing aides simply amplify the sound. The implant improves the clarity of hearing for the individual to better understand speech in both quiet and noisy situations.

There are two primary components of the cochlear, an implant that is surgically placed underneath the skin and the external sound processor.

"I wanted to get Gracey because I didn't want to miss my daughter's wedding vows, or the dance music afterwards, and most importantly, I heard my grand-babies cry their first cries."

Hearing loss is one of those silent afflictions that impacts millions.

In addition, it tends to cut people off from the world so the general population may not realize just how widespread it is.

An astounding 36 million Americans have hearing loss, affecting 17 percent of our adult population. Adults reluctant to pursue other solutions, such as a cochlear implant, find themselves exiled to a lonely, muted world.

Sheiladawn was not going to be that woman.

She spends many months on the road, she refuses to fly, traveling across North America to speak at conferences telling her story, encouraging others, and meeting individuals who have similar stories.

"I truly feel at home with these people, they understand me and what I have gone through."

Gracey changed her life, enabling her to recently attend the Texas Institute of Investigations and become a licensed private investigator.

It took some time, but she got her confidence back and has reverted back to the spunky woman I call Mom.

\*\*\*\*Sheiladawn is a spokesperson for the cochlear association and can be reached at [sheiladawnk@yahoo.com](mailto:sheiladawnk@yahoo.com)




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 Wear Your Color In Support.

*First 20 people to register for the walk will receive a FREE t-shirt. A \$20 donation fee for the walk. \$1 raffle tickets will be sold for gift baskets and more! All proceeds benefit 2 local cancer recipients. Give from the heart!*