

Article rank ■■■■■

BRUNO SCHLUMBERGER, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN



**Sheena Pennie, president of Delta Media Inc., with Carole WillansThéberge, national president of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association.**

# **PR prize to help hearing group make a lot more noise**

*BY VITO PILIECI*

Haven't heard of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association? You're not alone.

The national, 2,000- member organization has been struggling since 1982 to get out its message about hearing loss.

But the Ottawa- based association should soon be making a lot more noise.

This week it was named winner of a \$ 100,000 “extreme public relations makeover” competition sponsored by Ottawa PR house Delta Media Inc. Included are an overhaul of its website ( [www. chha.](http://www.chha)

ca) and the drafting of a communication plan. It also gets a public relations team placed at its disposal for a year.

“ This is quite an opportunity for us,” said Janice McNamara, the group’s executive director. “ We have had problems really getting out the message about hearing loss. It’s not just affecting old people.”

[See page 52](#)

## **Hearing: Others urged to join charitable efforts**

[From page E1](#)

The idea to offer a non- profit organization the chance to win \$ 100,000 in public relations services emerged in a discussion by Delta staff on how to celebrate the company’s 15th anniversary last fall.

According to Sheena Pennie, president of Delta, the competition attracted entries from more than 40 not-forprofit organizations across Canada.

“ We are extremely impressed with the time and effort the not- for- profit sector put into their submissions,” she said. “ They made this competition such a success.”

Ms. Pennie said she doesn't see this competition becoming an annual event, although it may be something to revisit when Delta marks its 20th anniversary in 2012.

Given the interest by non- profits, Ms. Pennie urged the business community to consider other such charitable efforts.

“ I am really hoping that other businesses jump onto this bandwagon and do something similar,” she said.

The association's Ms. McNamara said one in 10 Canadians has some degree of hearing loss and the problem is getting worse.

Statistics show that as many as 17 per cent of all Canadians over the age of 40 are suffering from hearing loss. Many may have damaged their ears by listening to boomboxes or portable audio devices with headphones,

“ That has made a whole generation of people experience hearing loss earlier,” Ms. McNamara said.

She hopes to use the services from Delta to warn of such dangers and to promote regular hearing tests.