



**2023**  
**Fall Edition**  
[www.hlaawi.org](http://www.hlaawi.org)

### In This Issue....

Page 2 President's Message + Veteran's Info  
Page 3 Walk Review, Cochlear Implants & More  
Page 4 National HLAA Convention Gleanings  
Page 5 **Contact Us.** Board & Committee Members  
Page 6 Good Reads + How Advocacy Works  
Page 7 Information on Cyber Security  
Page 8 HLAA Chapters in Wisconsin  
Page 9 Bits & Pieces from Other Places  
Page 10 HOHA Advice + Important to Know

*Disclaimer: HLAA does not promote or recommend providers, products, or services. Our mission includes information sharing that may be helpful to people with hearing loss.*



**Save These Dates!**  
**April 26-27 2024**

**We will “Shine Light on Hearing Loss” at the biannual HLAAWI State Conference to be held in Appleton at the Bordini Center where the 2019 state conference was held.**

HLAA Fox Valley Chapter is currently working on presentation/presenter options for this conference. Those may include introduction to new technologies in both hearing aids and cochlear implants, an opportunity to help healthcare providers better understand the unique needs of hard of hearing people, addressing the emotional side of hearing loss, bringing young adults with hearing loss together to share their experiences, & more.

There will be food, fun, prizes and a bucket raffle to raise scholarship funds.

**We want your thoughts and ideas! Can you help us get raffle prizes? Let us know.**

Stay tuned for more information to come.

**If you can help promote the conference in any way let us know. [hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com](mailto:hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com) Let's connect!**

NOTE: The conference is being held in the spring rather than in the fall due to constraints in hotel availability during the Packer season. The fall schedule is not announced early enough to secure presenters, exhibitors and hotel rooms.

### Annual Meeting Open to HLAA Members

**Saturday, October 14, 2023**  
**Portage County Public Library**  
**1001 Main St. Stevens Point WI**

The annual meeting of HLAAWI will be held in Stevens Point at the Portage County Public Library. We will meet in the Pinery Room that is equipped with a hearing loop. CART captioning will also be provided. We will begin setup at 9:00 AM. The meeting will begin promptly at 9:30 AM, and will conclude by noon. We will have box lunches\* and time to visit. We will wrap things up by 1:30 PM.

All members of HLAA who reside in WI, including all who participate in a WI HLAA Chapter, are invited to attend and participate in this meeting. We value your ideas. Reports will be presented, goals will be discussed and set, and elections of directors will take place. A brief closed meeting of the Board of Directors will follow the open meeting to elect officers of the Board.

\*Box lunches will be ordered before the meeting. The anticipated cost should be around \$10 and will be collected at that time. We will offer 3 or 4 basic choices of sandwiches in order to accommodate preferences and dietary needs.

## HLAWI President's Message by Jim Rau



This has been a pretty quiet summer so far for HLAA WI. We all seem to be busy. Things are starting to pick up now as we prepare for our upcoming annual meeting on Oct 14<sup>th</sup>. (Meeting notice on pg. 1)

Fox Valley Chapter is busy planning to host the 2024 state HLAA conference in the spring. Most recently there has been a new undertaking to communicate better with ODHHS (Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing in the WI Department of Health Services). A state HLAA committee has been named to address that. Pamela Martin, Jack Spear, Katherine Rybak, and Kathy Johnson compose that committee.

A hard of hearing HLAA member will be leaving the Governor's Council for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. That means we will be underrepresented on that council. If anyone has interest in this, please apply. Information can be found at: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/dhhcouncil/index.htm>

HLAA members, B.J. Ermenc and I, have recently been appointed to the Assistive Technology Advisory Council within the Department of Health services. Hard of hearing people have been under represented there too. We will keep you informed when we know more.

Next is the hardest part for me to write. By the time of the annual meeting, I will have been president of HLAAWI for 3 years. Our HLAAWI bylaws suggest that officers serve 2 consecutive one year terms in the same office, after which others replace them. Exceptions have been made, but we all know that turnover is healthy in a volunteer organization. Ideally, the vice president or another officer should move up. However, that has not been the case for the past decade. It is time for a new president, however no one has stepped up. What should we do?

The Board of Directors will need to elect a president at the annual meeting in October. Because I live 5 or more hours away from any chapter I don't know many of our members. That has been a big disadvantage for me.

There must be someone out there who could be the next HLAAWI president. I'd like to see that happen. There is also an opening for someone to be elected to the board at the annual meeting. Yes, that person could also be elected president. Not the ideal progression, but it did happen to me! I'm reaching out to all of you readers out there to help us find this "next president". Please contact me with your input.

*Jim Rau*, HLAAWI President

[jimrau@cheqnet.net](mailto:jimrau@cheqnet.net)

## Hearing Loop Map for Wisconsin!!

HLAA and it's Wisconsin members have done great work at getting the word out about how helpful hearing loops are. Thanks to Juliette Sterkens AuD, HLAAWI board member who also serves as Loop Advocate for HLAA, we have a new way to find them!

This [LINK](#) will take you to a map of Wisconsin that shows where loops are located. If your area doesn't have them or needs more, get in touch and find out how to advocate and educate to get this technology out to the public.



**Don't buy hearing aids that are not equipped with telecoils. Telecoils connect you to these loops. TELL** your provider this is important to you. Insist on them and make sure they have been activated by the provider. **This is truly a 'Buyer Beware' issue.** HLAA advocates to make this communication access technology available, but YOU must self advocate to be sure you can connect and benefit from it.

## HLAA Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter

If you are a military veteran with hearing loss, a spouse or a caregiver of a veteran, we welcome you to join our chapter. We communicate, collaborate, and coordinate meetings via the **HLAA Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter** email group.

To join, click this link [HLAA Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter](#). Scroll down the page and click on the button, +Join This Group. If you have any questions, please email [Chapters@hearingloss.org](mailto:Chapters@hearingloss.org).



The Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter meets on the third Tuesday (via Zoom) at 7:00 PM Central Time. Registration for the meetings is required and information can be found here <https://www.hearingloss.org/hearing-help/communities/veterans/>. Sometimes we have a guest speaker but often it's an "open agenda" with conversation about hearing loss, ALDs, and of course VA.

### Complimentary HLAA Membership for Veterans

HLAA is honored to offer a complimentary one year Regular Individual Membership to United States Veterans. Veteran members will receive the magazine, [Hearing Life](#), in print for one year. After that they can continue membership and receive the online version of the magazine. They are eligible for one complimentary registration for a national HLAA convention.

***"Alone we can do so little; Together we can do so much."***

**...Helen Keller**



## We Walked for Better Hearing

By Jerry Lapidakis



On Sunday, June 11, walk teams made up of families and friends joined with local HLAA chapter members and nonprofit business partners to raise funds for local programs and promote hearing health.

Children walked with their parents alongside corporate sponsors and HLAA members from all over Wisconsin at Veterans Park in Milwaukee. The rainy day didn't dampen the fun, enthusiasm and excitement of the walkers.

HLAA Wisconsin's team, the State Steppers, raised nearly \$3,000. Together all the teams and sponsors raised a grand total of close to \$30,000. Money raised by the state team will go towards our annual scholarship to a high school student with hearing loss.



Pamela Martin

In addition to sponsoring a state team, Wisconsin HLAA members assisted National Walk Chair Ann Rancourt with arrangements, set up and implementation. Pamela Martin headed up the crew of volunteers who set up the registration table, food, awards, resource information, children's play area and put out the signs around the 5K walk route. Pamela Martin headed up the crew of volunteers that included Jim Rau, Juliette Sterkens, Max Maxfield, Katherine Rybak, Carolyn Ludka (and her family), Jack and Deb Spear, BJ Ermenc, James Goddeyne, Kathy and Jeff Johnson, and Jerry Lapidakis.

It was a fun and successful day for promoting hearing health and raising funds for important causes.

**We are grateful to HLAA Wisconsin board members, Pamela Martin and Jerry Lapidakis, for taking the lead in making this annual event special. Funds raised through pledge donations support the team of the donor's choice. Teams are formed by non profit organizations that have missions related to hearing loss. The annual event is sponsored and organized by national staff of The Hearing Loss Association of America, Inc. It is held nationally in over 23 major US cities each year. We look forward to the 2024 Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Walk4Hearing, and will announce the date when it's available. Thanks to everyone who supported the 'State Steppers' and all the other teams.**



## UPDATE on COCHLEAR IMPLANT CANDIDACY



Today, cochlear implantation is no longer a treatment option only for people with severe-to-profound hearing loss in both ears. CI candidacy now includes patients with less severe hearing loss & also those with single sided deafness.

Confusion regarding candidacy is a reason why rates of cochlear implantation for qualified individuals, both children & adults remain low.

Expansions in candidacy criteria stress the importance of audiologists & other healthcare providers referring patients for a CI candidacy evaluation, & also to share the most current information available.

**Important:** There is no upper age limit for cochlear implantation. The candidacy evaluation considers the patient's overall health as opposed to age.

Medicare and most insurers cover cochlear implantation. If you struggle to hear even with powerful well fit hearing aids be assertive. Ask about CIs.

HLAA Fox Valley Chapter sponsors a CI Support/ Discussion Group that is held via Zoom every other month. It's a place to ask questions of people who have CIs. It is expected that the 2024 HLAWI State Conference will include information on CIs. Stay tuned!

[hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com](mailto:hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com)

## Do Our Healthcare Providers Know We Have Hearing Loss?



Adults who recognize their hearing ability has diminished often don't tell their doctors or nurses. Nor are they asked about their hearing at appointments. Why? Do the providers know how to help if it is disclosed? Lots to think about. Were you ever told "You'll just have to live with it" after mentioning it?

Plenty of research shows that unaddressed hearing loss can lead to isolation, depression, and reduced quality of life. Research also shows that people who use hearing aids have fewer problems with poor balance and falling. Isn't it a 'no brainer' to want help?

We complain that too little is being done to help people with hearing loss, but reality is: it's difficult to help people who are unwilling to help themselves. People who advocate for better solutions are making headway, but advocacy works best when it's backed by large numbers of people who care about a specific topic.

The original preamble to the constitution of HLAA went something like this: "We are people who do not hear well. We are not deaf, nor are we able to fully participate in the hearing world. For too long we have been unable to explain this, even to those who are closest to us. Let's come together to find solutions through medical research, and the development of better technology that can keep us in the hearing world."

HLAA provides a voice for hard of hearing people. and depends on your support to speak out loud and clear.

[www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)

I have been to a number of national conventions and wasn't very excited about this one. After all, I've been around HLAA a while and thought I knew almost everything. But I decided to go, especially when I realized I could use my credit card points to take the Amtrak City of New Orleans train and use our timeshare points for a condo. I just wanted a trip to get away for a while.

Jack and Deb Spear, who drove, picked me up at the station. After checking into the condo, we took the trolley to the convention center at the Marriott. (Note: The senior fare for the trolley is only .80 for an unlimited day pass.) We attended the General Session for the welcome by Executive Director, Barbara Kelly, and the keynote address by K. Renee Horton, Ph.D. Dr. Horton gave a dynamic, vibrant talk about her struggles with hearing, and her dream of becoming an astronaut. She describes herself as a "hearing impaired, black, physicist, mother of three." We enjoyed the plentiful buffet snack there.

Then it was a pedal taxi ride, shared with BJ Ermenc, to the Welcome Back Bash, "A taste of New Orleans" at the Presbytery that houses the Mardi Gras Museum. The museum tells the story of Mardi Gras over the years, with displays of costumes, jewelry, festival photos and more in an historic building. Wonderful food offerings were in various rooms throughout the museum and provided us with an adventure in eating. But the best part of the evening was the interesting people we met there. Everyone was so friendly and willing to talk about their families, discuss their hearing situation, chapters, and state organizations. Just getting to know them was a treat.

The Research Symposium on Friday highlighted research into hearing loss and music. The coffee break was billed as a "Beignet Break" and was enjoyable. In the afternoon I attended the Amazon Prime Video and Device Accessibility presentation. The speakers demonstrated features for HOH and deaf such as Alexa Captions, Alexa Call Captions, and a new Prime Video feature called Dialogue Boost that enhances audio experiences. Also covered was Amazon Prime's streaming to compatible hearing aids with Low Energy Bluetooth. Later, I sat in on the Art's & Accessibility presentation by Abby Stonehouse, a comedian with hearing loss. Abby told her hearing loss story and how she incorporates it into her stand up comedy routine.

The awards ceremony and reception were on Friday evening. Various national, chapter and state awards were presented. It reminded me that HLAA Wisconsin should nominate projects and people who do outstanding work. It had been several years since we nominated anyone. And, of course, the evening included a great dinner featuring Louisiana delicacies.

Saturday morning, I was invited to the Walk for Hearing breakfast to discuss ways to obtain better public exposure and involvement for the walk. Representatives from each state/city walk attended and brainstormed ideas to promote and increase the visibility of the Walk. TV morning shows, and talking to service organizations like Liona, Kiwanis and other community groups were among the suggestions.

The best, most interesting presentation for me was by pediatric audiologist Michelle Hu, AU D. She grew up with hearing aids and now CI's. Based on her own experiences, she shared her thoughts on how to avoid the frustration of aids and accessories not working properly and how to bridge the communication gap between patient and audiologist. Her goal was to help us learn how to optimize a programming or troubleshooting appointment. She also discussed selecting an audiologist who meets your specific needs and expectations, both technical and personal. Her message of not settling for an audiologist who doesn't meet your needs resonated with me. Dr. Hu has a popular Facebook presence and a popular blog.

Dr. Michael Harvey's session titled "The Transformative Power of Relationships" was excellent. His presentation style was comfortable, and easy to understand. He relates to people with his no-nonsense, practical, and down to earth delivery. His sub-title was "Advanced Tools for Couples to Manage and Benefit by a Partner's hearing loss." Dr. Harvey discussed how hearing loss doesn't just affect an individual but also affects significant others. He presented "an in-depth array of psychological growth-enhancing tools for both partners, well beyond communication strategies."

Saturday night we were on our own and dined in the French Quarter and then walked the length of Bourbon Street among the throngs of people. It was an experience all its own.

The time on the train going home allowed me time to reflect on the wonderful experience of these meetings. Having the chance to meet and talk to so many people who share common interests and listen to presentations that inform and educate are a true gift. It was a great, informative, and educational trip. I am so glad I decided to attend. Oh, yeah, there was good food, too!



**Jack Spear, Julie Olson & Jerry Lapidakis at the Delegates Luncheon**

***Sidenote from Julie Olson:*** It was fun to see old friends and those I see more often, the contingent from HLAAWI. I had the pleasure of traveling with my daughter and 2 granddaughters. They learned a lot at the exhibits, and Colleen and I participated in the book signing event. We traveled by AmTrak and had the pleasure of traveling back to WI on the train with Jerry. The convention, as always, beat all expectations. Wonderful presentations, special events, and as Jerry mentioned, nobody's taste buds went unsatisfied! A great time was had by all. So much to learn!!



- Jim Rau-President
- Katherine Rybak
- Jerry Lapidakis Past President
- Jean Tyler
- Pamela Martin-Vice President
- Michelle Frisbie-Treasurer
- Juliette Sterkens
- Jack Spear



• kathy johnson



• Mike Mair



• Neethi Magar

Contact Us at: [HLAAWISTATE@gmail.com](mailto:HLAAWISTATE@gmail.com)

Off Board Support  
is Needed and  
Appreciated.  
Let us know what  
you can do.

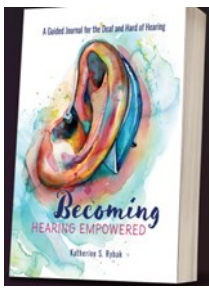


Julie Olson - Newsletter Editor



Colleen Van Rooy - Webmaster

Thanks to all the chapter folks out  
there who help in so many ways and  
to those who represent us on  
councils and committees.



## Fresh Off the Press!

Katherine Rybak, a member of the HLAAWI Board who recently retired as a teacher of deaf & hard of hearing students, has published a new book called ***“Becoming Hearing Empowered”***.

*‘Becoming Hearing Empowered’*, a guided journal that educates through journal prompts is designed to push a person with hearing loss forward on a path from impaired to EMPOWERED as they discover the immense value of a growth mindset & how to apply it to living with hearing loss.

This book contains sections that help you:

- \* Understand the mechanics of hearing loss & how to decode your audiogram.
- \* Consider the emotional impact of negative experiences, & get your roadmap to move confidently forward.
- \* Fight internalized stigma.
- \* Confidently disclose your hearing loss clearly & effectively in any situation.
- \* Explore how stigma influences your feelings about hearing technology.
- \* Learn the secrets to finding detailed information about personal hearing technology & use that information at your next audiology appointment.
- \* Effectively provide detailed feedback about your personal hearing technology & advocate for improvements in programming and options.
- \* Become well-informed about assistive technology & accommodations & know how to access them.
- \* Understand that hearing loss is actually a communication loss that happens between 2 or more people & that you are not the only person responsible for your understanding.
- \* Effectively & respectfully refute accusations of “selective hearing” & only hearing when “you want to.”
- \* Set healthy social & experiential boundaries that protect your energy.

This 281 page soft cover full color print book can be purchased on Amazon at the link. [HERE](#)

## Does Advocacy Work?

**Do you ask “Why Should I Support HLAA?”** Think about it. We can make a lot of positive things happen when we’re willing to let decision makers and businesses know what we need to be able to participate and have access to the technology we need to truly enjoy the things that bring joy to our lives.

In Wisconsin we’ve succeeded in getting hearing loops installed in many places. See page 2 for the ‘Loop Map’. We can do so much more if we get more people involved. Chapters in other states have achieved goals too. Think about what you want to see happen and what you are willing to do.

**Attend our annual HLAAWI meeting on October 14th to share your ideas & thoughts. We hope to see you there.**

## Find Open Captioned Movies in Theaters

The Big Screen Cinema Guide released an Open Caption Search Site to help people find open caption screenings of current popular movies.

1. Go to <https://www.bigscreen.com/advsearch/advsearch.php?id=oc>
2. Select the movie you're interested in.
3. Select theater name.

NOTE: There are very few theaters in Wisconsin that provide open captions. Some states have been successful in getting this job done. They are states that have an active HLAA presence. Let the theaters in your area know that you want this. Be proactive! Arrange for a group to attend a show! Theaters do provide caption devices, however open captions would be so much better!

## Illinois bill passed requiring insurance providers to cover hearing aids & related services for people of all ages 8-14-2023

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (WAND) - A bill has passed that will require insurance providers to cover hearing aids and related services for people of all ages.

State Senator Dave Koehler (D-Peoria) said, “Illinoisans shouldn’t have to pay ridiculous fees for something necessary for their health and well-being.

These devices make daily routines attainable and allow a high quality of life for people who are hard of hearing.

“House Bill 2443 builds upon a 2018 measure that required insurance to cover hearing aids for children under the age of 18. Koehler’s measure expands on that by requiring insurers to provide coverage for everyone if their doctor prescribes a hearing instrument, which can cost up to \$4,000.

**NOTE:** Legislation happens when people work together to effect change. We need more people on our band wagon in Wisconsin to help with advocacy.

Julie Olson & her granddaughter Colleen Cline took the book they wrote together to New Orleans for the national HLAA convention. Signing & sales went well. Both found inspiration from the responses

of people there. ***Can She HEAR This Cat’s Meow; Living With Grandma’s Hearing Loss from a Kid’s Perspective*** is available

on Amazon [HERE](#) It can

also be ordered from them at:

[catsmeow2167@gmail.com](mailto:catsmeow2167@gmail.com)





So often we hear a story about someone getting scammed or hacked. It is challenging to determine whether the email you received is real or spam. You are a target to hackers. We need to be sure we are doing all we can to prevent our personal information from being stolen, since a lot of us do banking and other financial transactions on line. Having worked in privacy in my job for 21 years, I have become paranoid about people out to get me because people are out to get us, online. Here are some tips to consider using to protect yourself.

**Phishing scams - email links.** You received an email from your bank or PayPal informing me that your account may have been compromised. Please log in so we can correct the problem. DON'T! A bank or business will never send such an email to you. Sometimes these emails look like the real thing, but whatever you do, do not click! Call the business and inform them of the email – never use the phone number provided in the email. Look up the phone number on documents you have or visit the website directly.

**Don't open email attachments unless you're expecting it.** Recently, my mother received an invoice attachment for Norton Antivirus that she had made payment for – which she never used. It looked very legitimate. Do not click on these types of attachments, especially if you weren't expecting it. If you do receive an attachment that you're unsure of, call the sender and asked if they sent it. If you did open such an attachment you weren't expecting, scan your hard drive with anti-virus software to ensure no malware was installed.

**We provide way too much information.** Where were you born or what was your mother's maiden name are common questions asked on websites to ensure your account will be safe. Unfortunately, providing this information may make you more vulnerable to being compromised in the future. They have no need for all this information. When this type of information is requested, make it up. I never provide my actual birthdate when websites ask for this information. Provide the minimal amount of information as needed. This includes information like gender and race – which I never provide.

**Social Networking - providing too much information on social media.** Make sure the information you share is minimal. Your family and friends already know basic information about you such as your birth date, phone number and email. Be careful of sharing information on children, such as what school they go to. This also goes without saying, don't tell people when you go away as this could put your home at risk. To minimize exposure to your information, look at your Facebook profiles as they are often open. You can manage who sees your Facebook profile and select 'Friends' for different questions. Go to Settings, and then click on Privacy to manage your profile.

**Free Mobile Apps are free for a reason.** They want your information. Before installing an app, be sure to check the permissions to ensure they don't store unnecessary personal information. Once you install the app, look in your phone settings to determine what the app is accessing. For example, your McDonald or Dunkins app does not need access to your contacts list, pictures, microphone, or your camera. You would be shocked how often this occurs with free apps. It's scary what information could be accessed and/or used.

**Protect Your Desktop.** Be sure to use anti-virus/anti-malware protection software, which scans your computer for malware.

**Be careful in using public Wi-Fi.** Public Wi-Fi provided free, found in public places such as coffee shops, libraries, airports, hotels and others, are typically not secure. Your information could potentially be compromised. It is fine for browsing information like news but do not log into banking websites or other personal websites, as this information could be captured.

For more information on tips to protect yourself, check out the following:

<https://consumer.ftc.gov/identity-theft-and-online-security/online-privacy-and-security>

[https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/IdentityTheft.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/IdentityTheft.aspx)

**The HLAAWI e-mail address hlaawistate@gmail.com is secure. Attachments are safe to open.**



**You are welcome to submit information, suggestions, & articles for publication in our newsletter. Positive Stories about living well with hearing loss are encouraged.**

**We reserve the right to edit submissions.**

## HLAA Madison Chapter

A group of Madison HLAA members are developing a program/presentation, with the focus for those living with hearing loss, whether it is the individual with hearing loss, as well as their loved ones.

We will provide basic information on hearing loss as well as provide tips for those who have hearing loss as well as those who live with those with hearing losses. We are working with a local library in establishing a venue where we plan to present this information sometime in November 2023. Check our web-site for more information as we firm this event up.

Beginning in January and on a regular basis, Madison HLAA is planning to bring together a group of interested individuals to review the "Becoming Hearing Empowered" book by our own member, Katheine Rybak as well as the "Hear and Beyond" by Shari Eberts and Gael Hannah book.

Submitted by Kathy Johnson

[information@hlaamadison.org](mailto:information@hlaamadison.org)

We'd like to hear from you!



Friends from the 2022 HLAWI Conference in Madison



## HLAA Fox Valley Chapter

The chapter meets on the 2nd Monday of the month, except in January and August. We've held evening meetings for 40 years, but are going to try a few daytime meetings this fall. We meet, in person, at the Bordini Center in Appleton. where we have access to hybrid tech that allows us to include people via Zoom. You're welcome to join us. Subscribe to our newsletter/meeting notice to get info about time & topic.

[hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com](mailto:hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com) It's posted at [hlaawi.org/chapters](http://hlaawi.org/chapters)

A Cochlear Implant Support Group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of odd months at 6 PM by Zoom only, so people from outside our area are welcome! The CI group is non-brand specific.

The H.O.P.E. (Hear Other People's Experiences) Support Group meets in tandem with our in person chapter meetings just to talk, ask questions and share our experiences. In person only.

The chapter is working hard right now to get plans in place for the 2024 HLAA Wisconsin State Conference. Stay tuned to learn how we plan to SHINE LIGHT ON HEARING LOSS in 2024. You don't want to miss it!

## HLAA Metro Milwaukee

This chapter is currently in hiatus. Contacts:

BJ: [BJEHLAAMKE@gmail.com](mailto:BJEHLAAMKE@gmail.com) Jim [jgoddeyne@gmail.com](mailto:jgoddeyne@gmail.com)

We hope things will get back on track soon.

Help Revive this Chapter! [hlaawistate@gmail.com](mailto:hlaawistate@gmail.com)



This has been a busy summer for the SW WI chapter of HLAA that meets in Platteville.

Our chapter had a garage sale in conjunction with the Platteville City Wide Garage Sale. It was a success. We asked our members, friends and neighbors for donations of garage sale items! We also sponsored a booth at the Christian Music Festival in Platteville! We gave out cold water, freeze pops hearing loss literature, and had crafts and face painting for everyone.



Mike Mair

On another note, our President, **Mike Mair received Volunteer of the Year Award at Home Days in Platteville.**

Congratulations to Mike and thank you for all your efforts and dedication to our Southwest Wisconsin HLAA Chapter! You truly deserve this award and more!!!! You not only started this chapter, but are the main reason we keep going!!!! This group is a very needed service in the Platteville area! Thank you to Mike and to everyone!!!

Submitted by: Jackie Mihelcic, Vice president of SW WI Chapter of HLAA.

[Jackie.mihelcic@live.com](mailto:Jackie.mihelcic@live.com)

## Bits and Pieces from Other Places...

**AG Bell's Learning Experience and Adventure Program (LEAP)** is for middle school and high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing and use listening and spoken language to communicate. Participants join together in activities that allow them to interact, become more self-aware, and learn about their strengths. LEAP is facilitated by adults who have grown up using listening and spoken language. **IT IS FREE TO ALL STUDENTS. Space is limited, so register now.**

### **LEAP for Middle School**

**STUDENTS IN 6TH, 7TH, AND 8TH GRADE (ages 11-13 years old)**

**UPCOMING SESSIONS: September 23**

**REGISTRATION CLOSES September 21, 2023**

**October 1**

**REGISTRATION CLOSES September 29, 2023**

Register: [LEAP for Middle School](#)

### **LEAP for HIGH School**

**STUDENTS IN 9th THROUGH 12th GRADE (ages 14-18 years old)**

**UPCOMING SESSION: October 20-21 (Two-Days)**

**REGISTRATION CLOSES October 9, 2023**

Register: [LEAP for HIGH School](#)



### **Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program**

Wisconsin's TEPP program helps people with disabilities buy the equipment they need in order to use basic telephone services. The TEPP is paid for by the Wisconsin Universal Service Fund, established by the Public Service Commission. Money collected from WI telephone service providers funds the USF.

**Website:** <https://psc.wi.gov/Pages/ForConsumers/TEPP.aspx>

To request and receive a voucher you must be a Wisconsin resident who is deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired or mobility impaired who needs special equipment to use the telephone. There is no age or income limit, but one can only get a TEPP voucher every three years.

Mayo Clinic CONNECT is an online community where people ask questions & share their experiences with a variety of health issues. Hearing loss is one of them. HLAA supports MCC. Julie Olson, our newsletter editor for HLAAWI, is the 'Hearing Loss Mentor' on MCC.

Other HLAA members often share helpful information. MCC. Information can be shared anonymously. Might you have experiences to share, or questions to ask? You can also tell people about HLAA. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/mayoconnect>



### **Wisconsin Office for Deaf/Hard of Hearing ODHH Community Connect for 2023**

ODHH is hosting a series of informal meetings to share information, answer questions, and connect with our Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Each meeting will have a general theme. We encourage you to bring your questions and comments to share.

Email ODHH at [dhsodhh@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:dhsodhh@dhs.wisconsin.gov) with your topic suggestions for future ODHH Community Connect meetings. We welcome your ideas!

We will have interpreters and live captioning for all of our meetings.

**We hope to see you!**

**Connect with ODHH Community Connect  
for information about the next meeting.**

**E-mail us for upcoming dates & Zoom link.**



**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT  
of HEALTH SERVICES**

**Help us keep information up to date. Send updates to:  
HLAAWI newsletter Editor at: [julieo@athenet.net](mailto:julieo@athenet.net)**



**"Listening"** is a monthly newsletter published by The American Cochlear Implant Alliance that shares information on cochlear implants that is helpful to hearing healthcare providers, adult CI recipients, those exploring CIs, parents & family members interested in CIs, educators who work with children who have hearing loss, & anyone who wants to learn more about cochlear implants. Sign up to receive notices [HERE](#).



It always pays  
to get good advice

Our advice column is managed by Diane Koosed, an HLAA member from Ashland WI. Diane says "We are 'Hard of Hearing Allies (HOHAs)' who can help others by sharing our experiences. You can help Diane by sending your questions to her.

Here is the latest communication from our advice columnist.

My friend Cindy, an HLAA member from another state, asked this question:

**Question:** I take my elderly mother to her doctor appointments. She also had a recent hospital stay. Mother wears hearing aids but they don't help much in these situations. I'm there to help clarify, but sometimes it's even difficult for her to understand my familiar voice. I end up leaving her out to communicate directly with the healthcare providers to keep things moving. I know this isn't good. Help! What can we do?

**Answer:** There are technologies that could work in this kind of situation, but some are tricky to use. Others are simply not readily available. However, there is one technology I would recommend over speech to text apps like Ava, or even BlueTooth microphones available on some hearing aids. Why? Because those take time to explain and set up, and are often too complex for the person who needs this kind of communication access to be comfortable using unless they have past experience with them.. Also, the healthcare provider doesn't have time to learn them. (Although they should!)

A personal amplifier like the Pocketalker device from Williams Sound is the best solution in my book. It does not involve confusing tech or any skill beyond managing the volume control and turning it on. It comes with headphones that are easy to use, and can also be used with a neckloop if telecoils are activated in a person's hearing aids. When using that device, the sound is transmitted directly to the listener's ears via the Pocketalker's microphone held and used by the speaker.

The drawback is minor: The headphones are attached by wire to the amplifier/microphone, but it is long enough to be easily manageable. There is a manual volume control you will want to set at a comfortable level, so test that with the speaker's voice.

**After Thought:** In my opinion, every household should have a Pocketalker. I have put one with my box of directions and documents (box entitled "When the Inevitable Happens...") Will my family members be able to hear my possibly soft and muffled voice when I'm at the end? Will I be able to hear them? After all, I might not have my hearing aids in. It is said that hearing is the last sense to go in the dying process.

Who among my HOHAs out there believe this?

If you have other thoughts for my friend Cindy, please send them to me at [koolake@gmail.com](mailto:koolake@gmail.com).

Send your questions on other topics to Diane too. Let's help each other! Thankyou.



## STAY CONNECTED

Follow us on social media.



## GET HLAA E-NEWS

**Learn about current hearing loss issues and how HLAA is working for you.**

**SIGN-UP** This is a free service from HLAA.

### WORTH REPEATING



**New Online Alliance Aims to Inspire  
More Accessible Technology for People with Hearing Loss**

*Industry and consumers invited to collaborate on products  
that improve everyday lives*

ROCKVILLE, Md., April 26, 2023 /PRNewswire/ --

One in seven Americans now has hearing loss, and according to the World Health Organization (WHO), globally the numbers are expected to double by 2050. This growing problem is driving the need for new technologies to help people successfully communicate, live and work. These products and services are often developed without the input of consumers with hearing loss who use them. A new online program called the **Industry-Consumer Alliance for Accessible Technology (ICAAT)** hopes to change that.

ICAAT provides an easy, structured way for industry and consumers to connect, work together and inspire better technology from the ground up. For the first time, industry representatives can enlist consumers with hearing loss in product research and testing and talk directly with them to learn more about their accessibility needs. Consumers can also engage in discussion groups and share user experiences. ICAAT was developed by [Gallaudet University](#), [American Institutes for Research \(AIR\)](#) and [Hearing Loss Association of America \(HLAA\)](#).

You can access ICAAT at [allianceforaccess.org](https://allianceforaccess.org).

**Disclaimer: HLAA does not endorse products or providers. We do share our experiences with them. HLAA advocates, educates, shares information and provides peer support.**