



2023

Spring-Summer Edition

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

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*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.*



Milwaukee

Walk4Hearing

Sunday June 11, 2023

## Community is the Essence of the Walk4Hearing

Walk4Hearing is a nationwide event that brings attention to hearing loss and promotes the importance of hearing health. Funds raised support HLAA at all levels, and also supports alliances formed by other non profit organizations that have missions related to hearing loss.



Since 2006, the Walk4Hearing has raised \$17.5 million to fund programs for HLAA and other non profit alliance organizations nationwide. Milwaukee is one of 20 cities in 17 states that annually hosts this event. The Milwaukee Walk4Hearing is Wisconsin's walk.

**Funds raised at the Milwaukee Walk have made it possible for HLAawi to hold state conferences, provide scholarships for high school seniors, provide stipends for active members to attend the national conventions, to circulate a newsletter & manage a website.**

Participating in a Walk4Hearing means joining thousands of people across the country who understand what it's like to live with hearing loss. Hearing is an important part of overall health. Walk4Hearing calls on all of us to [take action](#). By being active, engaged, and in making hearing health a priority.

**Join the State Steppers Team!**

**Or Form a TEAM of Your Own**

**And choose an alliance to support.**

[www.walk4hearing.org](http://www.walk4hearing.org)



Walk4Hearing events bring people of all ages together. Families form teams for a loved one who has hearing loss. Many get creative with T-shirts. Friendships are made. An important cause is supported. Join us on June 11th at:

**Veterans Park 1010 N. Lincoln Memorial Dr. Milwaukee**  
**9 AM Registration, Entertainment, Etc.**  
**Information about registering and fund raising on page 4**

## HLAAWI President's Message by Jim Rau



In this newsletter I hope you recognize some new stuff. We have included some extra things like more thorough Chapter Reports and reports from other leaders to update you on HLAA WI happenings.

AND we want to hear from our readers too. We know that many of you have a story to tell about some hearing success (or failure) you've had, something you have done or something you have attended. Does anyone have a "deep snow" story from last winter? Send your offerings to us [HERE](#). We want to hear from you since our in-person connections were interrupted by COVID.

Please read and heed the article on Walk4Hearing. This has become a "Wisconsin" event rather than a Milwaukee event as the name states. Log in to the Walk4Hearing site [here](#) then go the Milwaukee icon and sign up. You don't have to walk or even attend to donate. Join our team. Encourage your friends to do the same. We need to make this a success.

### Fall meeting / Spring HLAAWI State Conference

This year we will hold our annual meeting in the fall as usual, but the Conference is being planned for next April by the Fox Valley Chapter. When plans get further along they will be on our website, in a future newsletter and emailed to folks on our list. Meanwhile, SAVE THESE DATES: April 26 & 27 2024.

Now I am going to do something I rarely do. I want to single out one person for doing an outstanding job at the risk of neglecting others who also do good work without getting proper recognition. Our newsletter editor, Julie Olson, has put out great newsletters for many years, and too often she had done it without the benefit of much input from us.

Thanks Julie.

Please take time to read the article included in this edition about the book written by Julie and her granddaughter Colleen. It is a unique and revealing view of hearing loss. You will definitely want a copy of the book! (see page 6)

Don't hesitate to contact me with your concerns and ideas. This is OUR organization and YOU are a part of it. So let's hear it!

*Jim* Jim Rau, HLAAWI President  
Iron River, WI [jimrau@cheqnet.net](mailto:jimrau@cheqnet.net)



**We look forward to hearing more about experiences at the 2023 national HLAA convention from those who plan to attend. Bringing back helpful information is very helpful to chapter development.**

**To HLAA Representatives from Wisconsin...**

**Have a great time in New Orleans!**

### HLAA Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter

If you are a military veteran with hearing loss 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). There is a meeting on May 12th.



### Complimentary HLAA Membership for Veterans

HLAA is honored to offer a complimentary one year Regular Individual Membership for United States Veterans. Veteran members receive the magazine, [Hearing Life](#), in print for one year only. Our quarterly magazine, *Hearing Life*, is a helpful resource on the latest in technology, medical issues, legislation, personal stories, and more. If you wish to continue receiving *Hearing Life* in print, after the first year, you can renew at the Regular Individual membership rate.

## **I have 3 stunning statistics to share with you. Submitted by Jim Rau, Member of HLAA Veterans Chapter**

- Tinnitus & hearing loss are routinely the top two health conditions among military veterans at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers.
- More than 1.3 million veterans were receiving disability compensation for hearing loss, & more than 2.3 million received compensation for tinnitus, according to the 2020 Veterans Benefits Administration compensation report.
- 72 percent of veterans with tinnitus also had a diagnosis of anxiety, 60 percent had depression, & 58 percent had both conditions, according to a 2015 study.

Two special members of our HLAAWI state board of trustees deserve our thanks for taking leadership roles in this years Milwaukee Walk4Hearing. Pamela Martin is the event chair person this year. She is working directly with the national Walk4Hearing chair to make sure that everything is in place on June 11th.



Pamela Martin

Jerry Lapidakis, once again, is the trusty captain of the HLAAWI

'State Steppers' team.



Sunday, June 11, 2023

#### Location

Veterans Park  
1010 N. Lincoln Memorial Drive  
Milwaukee, WI

[Map It!](#)

#### Schedule

9 a.m. Registration starts  
10 a.m. Stage Presentation  
10:15 a.m. Walk starts  
(5K/3.1 miles)



Jerry Lapidakis

Support The  
State Steppers  
[HERE!](#)

A View from 2022! Hoping for sunshine in 2023!

## Sharing HLAA in the Milwaukee Area — Meet BJ Ermenc

BJ Ermenc is a busy lady, one who currently leads the HLAA Milwaukee Metro Chapter. She has many other irons in the fire related to spreading the word about hearing loss from a HH perspective. **She needs help from more hard of hearing people in the Metro Milwaukee area to participate in the HLAA Metro Milwaukee Chapter.**



BJ volunteers with several senior citizen and disability focused agencies and coalitions in the Milwaukee area. When invited, She provides presentations to a variety of organizations about the effects of hearing loss. She was interested in becoming involved in the [Milwaukee County Falls Prevention Coalition](#) after learning they were unaware that hearing loss, which can affect balance, increases the risk of falling among seniors by 30%. Especially critical is that Wisconsin is the number 1 state in the country for death and head trauma by falling among seniors. This message definitely attracts attention at presentations.

BJ has represented the HH population on [Wauwatosa's Commission for Persons with Disabilities](#) since 2019. As Zoom meetings happened during COVID, she learned about Zoom captioning and advocated for them to be offered at all Zoom meetings. Two new events that involved BJ took place this April. One was Integrated Abilities: Resource & Learning Night; an educational event teaching students, parents, caregivers and the public about all types of disabilities. Another event was at the Wauwatosa Community Fair where she was on a panel of people discussing a variety of disabilities. She distributed a variety of HLAA materials at both of these events.

According to BJ, combining the HLAA message with the Wauwatosa Commission for Persons with Disabilities drew in a lot of people and enhanced HLAA's credibility as a resource. She says "Nearly everyone knows someone with hearing loss, whether they admit it or not!" Asking "do you know anyone with hearing loss" when people reach out to take some chocolate off the display table appears to be the best line to draw them in to hear more! "

BJ recently accepted an appointment to the [Wisconsin Governor's Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#). She has already discovered a lack of clarity on their web page regarding which council members are hard of hearing. She plans to review all public documentation about the council and welcomes input on issues and potential projects the council might take on. You may email her directly at [bjehlaamke@gmail.com](mailto:bjehlaamke@gmail.com).



## U.S. Attorney's Office Reminds Healthcare Providers of ADA's Effective Communication Requirements April 14, 2023

A detailed discussion of the ADA's effective communication requirements, including publications on ADA.gov: "[ADA Requirements: Effective Communication](#)," "[ADA Business BRIEF: Communicating with People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing in Hospital Settings](#)," and "[Guidance on Web Accessibility and the ADA](#)." In addition, a Dear Colleagues Letter provides links to settlement agreements that provide a roadmap to the steps that covered entities can take to comply with the ADA, including Settlement Agreements with [Goochland Powhatan Community Services](#), [Brookside Rehabilitation & Nursing Center](#), [Spotsylvania Regional Medical Center](#), [Rite Aid Corporation](#), and [Lincare, Inc.](#)

For more information on the ADA, visit <https://www.ada.gov> or call the Justice Department's toll-free ADA information line at 800-514-0301

### An Opportunity to Learn More...



@DOJCivil invites the public to attend on June 6 @ 1pm. (Eastern Time).

**"ADA's Effective Communication Requirements in Healthcare Settings"** This virtual meeting will cover the steps that medical providers can take to comply with the ADA's effective communication requirements. **Free Registration** <https://usao.webex.com/webink/register/r0d27b32d4e7b2b65b28f657f4ec00aea>

**You Are the Key to Educating Healthcare Providers. Know what works for you so you can educate and advocate for yourselves. Tell your medical professionals about this event.**

## Behavioral Health Initiative Wellness Day 2023

May 20, 2023 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

[Holiday Inn Convention Center](#)

1001 Amber Avenue, Stevens Point, WI 54482

Join the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) for our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Wellness Day for learning opportunities & activities. Workshops for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing, & also for behavioral & mental health clinicians.

Robert Pollard, PhD., nationally recognized psychologist & specialist in working with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, is the keynote speaker.

Learn at a variety of workshops & exhibits. Engage with representatives from a variety of agencies & organizations. Members of HLAA will participate on a panel.

**No fee to attend. Register by May 10.**

[BHI Wellness Day Registration - 2023 \(alchemer.com\)](#) Link includes further information on the event.

**Communication access will be provided.**

## The Value of Hospital Kits

Submitted by Jerry Lapidakis



There is a very useful and underused resource on the HLAA Wisconsin website (<https://www.hlaawi.org/hospital-kits.html>) that is very helpful for medical appointments and hospital stays. Going to the hospital can be nerve-racking enough with the added pressure of making sure you are understanding the medical staff and they are communicating with you. A visit to your doctor's office can also put those with hearing loss under stress to communicate.

HLAA-WI assembled a downloadable "Hospital Kit" that is very helpful. The kit includes information that helps staff know how to communicate with you. **The downloads include a variety of materials that help identify your unique needs. They are:**

1. Hard of Hearing Information page,
2. Communicating and Planning Your Stay (Planning and preparing for your visit)
3. Without my aids I can't hear you (check off note sheet specifying your needs)
4. Communication tips,
5. Communication access plan
6. Doctor and dentist visit (Instructions on your needs.)

This kit was originally a physical kit in a bag developed & assembled by Chris Prust in 2018. Quantities were offered to HLAA chapters to sell at their meetings for \$5 each, but it was difficult to physically deliver the bags in quantity to chapters & members. Also, Chris was doing all the work by herself.

A year or so later, Peggy Troller, an RN and a member of the HLAA Madison Chapter, retooled the kit into an online resource. The Hospital Kit page was added to the website where it resides today. It is an excellent resource that I have personally used several times. Especially useful to me was the communication access plan and the "I Am Hard of Hearing" small poster that can be given to medical staff or posted on a hospital room door or wall.

I urge you to take advantage of these tools to make your next doctor, dentist, clinic, or hospital visits less stressful and possibly more enjoyable.

Note: Peggy Troller (DNP, MSMFT, RN-BC) has been a nurse for over 35 years. She has also created an important program for hearing impaired patients that is very important and quite personal to her. Peggy has used hearing aids, herself, for over 25 years.

# HLAA Wisconsin Board & Off Board Leaders



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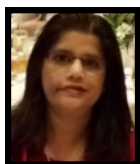
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You are welcome to submit information, suggestions, & articles for publication in our newsletter. Positive Stories about living well with hearing loss are encouraged.

(We reserve the right to edit submissions, and to reject articles that do not agree with our mission.)

Breaking News.....Just In!!

## HLAAWI Scholarship Awarded!

HLAAWI is pleased to announce that the 5th annual HLAWI state scholarship has been awarded to Marin Bragg, a high school senior from Waterford. Marin plans to pursue a degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from UW-Stevens Point!

Look for more details in the near future on the HLAWI website and FB page. We wish Marin and all of the applicants the best as they pursue their career goals!



Marin Bragg



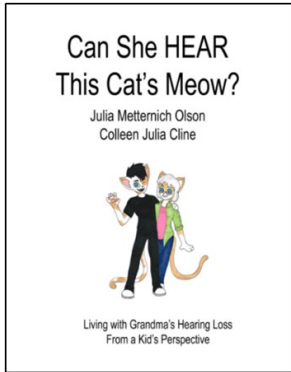
Thank you to the people pictured above and to all the unpictured chapter members who work hard to keep HLAA active in Wisconsin. Because of you, we have had great success in getting 'communication access' in so many places. Our state association is one of the oldest in the country! You are SPECIAL!

**If you would like to volunteer for people with hearing loss through active involvement in HLAA. Please let us know.**

Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.

# A "Purrfectly" Delightful Tale

Book Review Submitted by Christine Klessig



Readers of all ages will enjoy a new book co-authored by longtime HLAA enthusiast, Julie Olson. Together with her granddaughter Colleen Cline, the pair tell the story of living with hearing loss from a kid's perspective. A recent meeting with them shed light on how "*Can She HEAR This Cat's Meow?*" happened.

**Julie:** "The idea to write this book began years ago when my co-author and illustrator was five years old. Hearing loss affects all relationships, but it's different with small children. They figure out they have to get our attention to interact with us, and it's perfectly normal."

**Colleen:** "Grandma was different than Mom, but it didn't matter. Simple things worked, like getting her attention before talking, making sure my hair was out of my face or gently nudging her to make sure she knew it was time to listen."



The authors adopted feline personas created by Colleen, to make their story appealing to children as well as to adults. Julie & Colleen resemble super heroes (think Cat Women), as they combat the Background Noise Monster & Auditory Fatigue Foe. Hearing assistive technology & coping strategies are cleverly illustrated by both of these cool cats.

The focus of this book is on the joy of remaining in the hearing mainstream, along with sharing ideas and resources that are helpful. It documents the authors' journey and continuing close relationship. It shares an upbeat message of hope for the hard of hearing population.

Julie & Colleen are headed to the 2023 HLAA National Convention in New Orleans this summer for a book signing. !!!



We predict they will have a "purrfectly" delightful time!

*"Can She HEAR This Cat's Meow?"*  
is available on Amazon.

[Amazon.com : can she hear this cats meow](https://www.amazon.com/can-she-hear-this-cats-meow/dp/1668800000/)



## 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).

ICAAT comes at a key time when technological advances have the potential to enable more and better access for all, including people with hearing loss. "We know that technology can help people with hearing loss stay engaged and connected on the job, with their families and in life," says Barbara Kelley, executive director of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). "HLAA represents consumers, and we work with industry, so a program like ICAAT that brings both sides together is a win-win that will enhance innovation and change the lives of millions of people with hearing loss."

SOURCE Hearing Loss Assn. of America

## Did Researchers just Cure Tinnitus?

Doctor Cliff Olson, Audiologist and founder of Applied Hearing Solutions in Phoenix Arizona, discusses the recent news about the Lenire tinnitus treatment from Neuromod that got FDA NeNovo Approval, by using bimodal neuromodulation to significantly reduce tinnitus symptoms.



[Did Researchers just Cure Tinnitus? | Lenire by Neuromod - YouTube](#) Note: Tinnitus research is ongoing. Stay tuned. It's good to hear the word 'cure'. Let us be hopeful!





HLAA, the leading voice for the growing number of Americans with hearing loss, is often asked to comment on hearing health issues in the media. Here are a few recent places where HLAA has been asked to comment in recent months.

Related articles are posted at: [HLAA in the News - Hearing Loss Association of America](#)

May 23<sup>rd</sup> Prevention Magazine  
 April 4<sup>th</sup> The Philadelphia Inquirer  
 March 5<sup>th</sup> Scripps National News  
 March 3<sup>rd</sup> US News & World Report  
 March 3<sup>rd</sup> Fox 5 Washington D.C.  
 March 3<sup>rd</sup> AARP  
 February 28<sup>th</sup> Hearing Tracker  
 December 22<sup>nd</sup> The Washington Post  
 December 4<sup>th</sup> AP News  
 December 1<sup>st</sup> Consumers Affairs Organization

#### HLAA Media Contact

Meredith Resnick, Director- Strategic Communications  
[mresnick@hearingloss.org](mailto:mresnick@hearingloss.org)  
 202.549.0807 (cell)

#### 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, and 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.



## HLAA Matters, Here's Why!

HLAA develops position papers to lead public dialogue, respond to urgent issues affecting people with hearing loss, advocate for support for people with hearing loss, and ensure the voices of people with hearing loss are heard in the public sphere.

The papers listed below give context and background information on topic important to people with hearing loss. HLAA position papers are available to the public and are used by individuals and HLAA Chapters and State Organizations when talking to legislators, media, industry and others who are interested in HLAA views. Know your organization!

- [Free Access to High-Quality Captioning in Electronic Communications Platforms for People with Hearing Loss](#)
- [International Standards of Care for Cochlear Implants](#)
- [Medicare Coverage of the Cost of Hearing Aids and Hearing Health Services.](#)
- [Insurance Coverage for Hearing Aids](#)
- [Aural Rehabilitation](#)
- [Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids](#)
- [Screening for Hearing Loss in Primary Health Care Settings](#)
- [Telecoils and Hearing Loops](#)
- [Wider Access to the Full Spectrum of Hearing Technology Benefiting People with Hearing Loss](#)
- [The National Academies \(NASEM\) Report](#)
- [Job Qualification Testing](#)

If these topics strike you as important, we hope you'll join HLAA to add your name to the rolls. Membership is not required to participate in state and local events, but **Membership Numbers Matter** if we want to push positive change for the 40 million Americans who live with hearing loss. Join HLAA at the link below. [Become a Member/Renew - Hearing Loss Association of America](#)

## HLAA Madison Chapter

Madison continues to try and rebuild its chapter. We recently sent out a newsletter seeking feedback by asking what people would like the chapter to focus on. Of course we need people's volunteer assistance to make those ideas happen.

Board members have been meeting and discussing ways to revamp the chapter. COVID took a hit on a lot of organizations, but we believe in what HLAA does, and want very much to keep going.

There will be a chapter leaders meeting at the New Orleans Convention in June. Final decisions regarding the Madison chapter will not be made until we have had a chance to gain some insight and ideas regarding how to proceed.

*Jack Spear*, Chapter President

**PS:** There are definite rewards to be had by becoming involved. There are no requirements other than a desire to live well with hearing loss, along with a desire to help others do the same. Please say "Yes!" Connect at: [information@hlaamadison.org](mailto:information@hlaamadison.org)  
We'd like to hear from you!

**Editors Note:** HLAA Madison expended a ton of energy to organize and host the successful 2022 HLAAMI conference last fall. The same people cannot do everything all the time. They need YOU!



## HLAA Fox Valley Chapter

The chapter meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 6:30 PM. Except in January and August. We hold social events in July and December. Regular meetings are held at the Bordini Center in Appleton, where we have access to hybrid tech that allows us to include people via Zoom. It's challenging, but it's working! You're welcome to join us!

We publish a monthly newsletter/meeting notice 10 times a year. Join our distribution list at: [hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com](mailto:hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com)

No website, but we post 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 Cli group is non-brand specific.

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

The newsletter has all the information you need to know to join us. It can be received online or in print. Let us know your preference. We'll add you to our distribution list. [hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com](mailto:hlaafoxvalley@gmail.com)

## HLAA Metro Milwaukee

This chapter is currently in hiatus. You'll find an article about Milwaukee activities on Page 3. Contact:

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.



The Southwest Wisconsin Chapter of HLAA meets in Platteville from 10 AM – 11:30 AM the last Wednesday of the month at the Platteville Senior Center. We're working to rebuild the

chapter back to the robust attendance we had prior to the COVID pandemic. Elections were held recently. Officers who will serve 2 year terms are: Mike Mair, President; Jackie Mihelcic, Vice President; Connie Gronemus, Treasurer, & Bill Ericson, Secretary. The Senior Center is moving to the Platteville City Hall. Current remodeling there will accommodate the area's senior citizens. For us that meant moving sound equipment and hearing assistive technology to the new location. Chapter president, Mike Mair, recruited HLAA members and other skilled retirees who graciously offered their time to install and calibrate all AV equipment, including a new hearing loop. The chapter donated 100% of the funding for materials and installation. HLAASWC has developed an informative rack card that shares information about the chapter and about HLAA in general. It has been distributed to healthcare professional's offices, libraries, and other businesses for display and handout. The chapter is planning a large garage sale to raise funds to help cover the chapter's expenses. Thanks to all the volunteers!

Look for the SW Wisconsin HLAA Chapter on Facebook!

For more information about the HLAA SW Chapter, call Jackie at (608) 642-0008, or e-mail: [hlaaswwi@gmail.com](mailto:hlaaswwi@gmail.com)  
You can e-mail Mike at: [mmair@centurylink.net](mailto:mmair@centurylink.net) or find more chapter info at [www.hlaawi.org/chapters](http://www.hlaawi.org/chapters)





## Bits and Pieces from Other Places...



Listening is a monthly newsletter with information on cochlear implants and hearing loss relevant to hearing healthcare providers, adult CI recipients (and those exploring CI), parents and family members interested in CI, educators who work with deaf and hard of hearing children, and anyone wanting to learn more about cochlear implants. We encourage you to share sign-up details for this free e-newsletter with patients, family members, colleagues or anyone who may be interested.

[American Cochlear Implant Alliance \(acialliance.org\)](https://www.acialliance.org)

### 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. HLAA members often share information on MCC. Information can be shared anonymously.

Might you have experiences to share, or questions to ask? <https://www.mayoclinic.org/mayoconnect>

### Over the Counter Hearing Aids Arrive

Over-the-Counter (OTC) hearing aids are now available to consumers, without a prescription. The FDA released its final rule, clearing the way for this new class of devices to hit the market.

**OTC hearing aids are ONLY for adults with mild to moderate hearing loss; not for children.**

#### Could OTC hearing aids help you?

HLAA provides 2 checklists. One to see if you would qualify for an OTC product; the other a 'shopping list' that explains what is out there. Before you buy this way, you will want to know more. <https://www.hearingloss.org/hearing-help/technology/otc-hearing-aids/>

**If you go this route, we'd like to hear your story!**



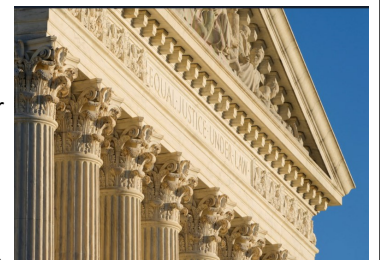
### Better Hearing & Speech Month—May 2023

Better Hearing & Speech Month (BHSM) is observed each May to increase awareness of hearing loss and other communication issues. It was created in 1927 by what is known today as the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)—a professional organization for health professionals including audiologists and speech-language pathologists. The theme for 2023 is [\*Building a Strong Foundation\*](#). HLAA joins ASHA's campaign to share information about the importance of seeking help for hearing loss.

## Supreme Court unanimously rules for deaf student in education case

Mar 21, 2023 2:17 PM EDT

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court ruled unanimously Tuesday for a deaf student who sued his public school system for providing an inadequate education. The case is significant for other disabled students who allege they were failed by school officials. You'll find more information on this story at the link below.



[Supreme Court unanimously rules for deaf student in education case | PBS NewsHour](#)



It always pays  
to get good advice

Our enlightening 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 in a fun way by sharing our experiences. Can you help her do it?

Here is the latest communication from our advice columnist. Just in time for camping season.

**Here's the question:** I'm a solo camper with cochlear implants. For safety reasons, I'm searching for a solution to be able to connect to implants while sleeping without wearing my behind-the-ear processors. I wonder if anyone has solved this issue.

Diane put the question out to several people with CI's.

**Here's what Rhonda said:** "Call the manufacturer of your cochlear implant to see what they suggest.

Note: Cochlear has issued warnings that you should not wear processors at night because the magnet could eventually cause the skin to become very tender".

Rhonda suggests that possibly a baby monitor set to visual or vibration mode could work. Still, for her, she would need to put it right by her face so that the light, activated by the noise, would wake her up. Obviously, vibration would have to be where she could sense it. That would clue her into putting her CI processor on.

Send any additional ideas for this camper to Diane at [koolake@gmail.com](mailto:koolake@gmail.com).

And send your questions or problems to Diane. Let's learn from responses from other HOHAs (Hard of Hearing Allies).

If you find problem-solving input from other HOHA's helpful, tell Diane what's bothering you, and she'll put the word out to other HOHAs for suggestions. Let's hear from YOU! We know that if you are a HOHA, you have something to share!

*Several webinars that have been sponsored by HLAA at different levels are available on the HLAA website. This [LINK](#) will take you to many interesting learning experiences.*

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### ***Imperfect Catch*** by Ruth Walworth

In this ocean  
of sounds  
I go fishing  
but the catch is small.

The sea of words crashes around me  
hurling its discordant sounds,  
but these broken ears are no match.  
I cast my net  
hoping for a bigger catch  
but it's only a word here,  
a fragment there.

I arrange and rearrange my catch  
trying to make sense of it all,  
but too many pieces are missing  
I search for an expression --  
a smile, a frown, a raising of the brow.

What is the value of this catch?  
Is it worth all this effort to snare?  
Is it life and death hanging in the balance,  
or some meaningless drivel  
that I'd be happier without?

Look me in the eye.  
I want to know.

(Shared by Diane Koosed)