

Some Things Never Change



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Message from the Executive Director

HLAA remains the one organization that is the voice of consumers with hearing loss who want to stay in the hearing world. We use amplification, technology and do everything we can to make it (with optimism) through the day. Our organization is based on self help—find out all you can about your hearing loss, make choices that keep you optimistic and, in turn, help others do the same.

Some people embrace change and thrive on it. Spring and its burst of color is a change from the dull gray of winter. A new baby added to the family photo brings hope with the new life. But, when our hearing loss changes for the worse, whether suddenly or over time, that is not a welcome change. It's one we fight against; we struggle with it and sometimes deny there is anything wrong.

Back in 1988 when I first came to this organization, then known as Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH), I was the editor of the magazine, the *Shhh Journal*. I knew I had a daunting job, but I didn't fully understand the magnitude of the work or the impact of the printed word until I received one particular letter from a member. She said if it weren't for the magazine coming to her house every other month, she would have taken her own life. This was a serious letter and I sobered up while I digested what she wrote and realized the responsibility before me and the organization.

This woman had lost all hope. These were the days before the Internet, Facebook and other online forums where people found support and information. It certainly was before the Americans with Disabilities Act, which put people with hearing loss on an even playing field at work and in public places. Our organization and this magazine were her lifeline.

The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) is still a lifeline. You are not alone with your hearing loss. We know that people can easily get information

about hearing loss on the Internet, especially on our website, hearingloss.org. We know that sometimes people get what they need from us and we never hear from them again. We couldn't be happier if we can help people that way.

Yet, there are many who stay connected with HLAA either as members or supporters because we give them hope. Along with the hope that things will get better in the future, we are optimistic. We have optimism because of the

technological advances in hearing aids, cochlear implants and hearing assistive technology. We look to the future as we work to ensure communication access through our advocacy efforts to change laws and help enforce regulations. We meet in HLAA Chapters where we lean on each other, learn about how to be our own advocates and ask for what we need in classrooms, the workplace and in public places when we want to understand what is going on just like everyone else does. We find mutual support and use solid information to back us up when we advocate for ourselves or make choices on how to best live with hearing loss.

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Some things do change as HLAA moves in to its 37th year. Technology plays a much bigger role than it did in 1979 when we were founded. Lise Hamlin writes about the N-CHAT program on page 19 which is based on training people to go out and train others about hearing assistive technology. Over the span of five years, HLAA technology trainers will be a force multiplier.

Nancy Macklin invites you to the HLAA Convention 2016 on page 33. If you are able to come to Washington, D.C. this summer, you will see so much optimism and hope in one venue it will transform you into someone who can take on the world, hearing loss or no hearing loss. You will go home armed with information on cutting-edge research, new technology and new friends.

In the pages of *Hearing Loss Magazine*, the articles compiled by our publications editor, Dave Hutcheson, and graphic designer Cindy Dyer, might just be the best form of continuing education on hearing loss you can get anywhere. And, on page 29, Valerie Stafford-Mallis invites you to find an HLAA Chapter where it's okay not to hear well. On page 39, Ronnie Adler provides the locations and dates of the 2016 Walk4Hearing series, which brings families together where parents share success stories and hope for the future of their children. Kids meet other kids with hearing loss, sometimes for the first time in their lives. The Walks are a call to take action and advocate. We will also gladly take your call here at the national office and one of our staff will get you what you need.

There's still a lot of work to be done, but we have hope and optimism—that is something that never changes at HLAA. **HLM**

Barbara Kelley is executive director of HLAA. She can be reached at bkelly@hearingloss.org. Follow her on Twitter @BKelley_HLAA.

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Online Learning

Registration is open for the HLAA Hearing Loss Support Specialist Training (HLSST)

HLSST is an online, self-paced training program which provides core knowledge for individuals who work with people with hearing loss. The training consists of four classes with as many as fourteen lessons in each class. Lessons are composed of multiple readings and captioned videos. The classes are:

Class I: Hearing Loss: The Basics

Class II: Coping with Hearing Loss

Class III: Hearing Assistive Technology and Services

Class IV: Advocacy, Resources and the Law

You may register for one class at a time or register for the entire program at once for the discounted price of \$225. For complete details, table of contents, and registration information, visit hearingloss.org/content/hlsst.

Questions? Email Nancy Macklin at nmacklin@hearingloss.org.

