

No Longer Will We Be a “Best Kept Secret” in Our Local Communities



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President's Message



Are You A Federal, Civilian, Postal or Military Employee?

If so, designate #11376

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign. Pledges made by federal civilian, postal and military donors during the campaign season (September 1–December 15) support eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world.

The Hearing Loss Association of America participates in the CFC. So, please, consider designating HLAA as your charity in this year's campaign. Thank you.

In summer 2005 as the convention wound down, Anne Pope, former Board president (2005–2008), gathered a small band of intrepid dreamers in a hotel room at the Omni Shoreham in Washington, D.C. The topic at hand this late afternoon was whether to proceed with a new project, a national walkathon of, by, and for people with hearing loss.

The reasoning was straightforward enough. Here was a way for people from all walks of life to participate in our cause, to help raise funding to sustain our national efforts in advocacy, education, and support while extending our reach in local communities across the country. The determination of the group was unanimous: **let's give it a try.**

Now, five years into what has become a vibrant, nationally-branded program—the Walk4Hearing—we will have raised a cumulative five-year total up to \$3.8 million in support for HLAA when the final numbers are tallied for 2010. In 2011, we are shooting at a record annual goal of \$1.5 million.

What we have accomplished in the space of five years is impressive by any standard. But, think about this: we have reached this point with the vast majority of the donations supporting the Walk4Hearing being in small amounts less than \$1,000. What we are seeing is the power that large numbers of gifts can bring and the power of dedicated volunteers working for a cause that matters.

The importance of the Walk4Hearing transcends the financial numbers, however. For Hearing Loss Association and its chapters and communities across the country, money is a means to our ends, not an end in itself. Walk4Hearing funding helps us to expand our efforts to make the world a better place for people with hearing loss and enables us to raise awareness of what we seek to achieve. Perhaps most important of all, the Walk4Hearing has attracted thousands of volunteers to our cause, making new friends for HLAA.

For our national office presence in Washington, D.C., the Walk4Hearing provides important added resources that enable us to shore up ongoing programs and to expand our efforts in critical areas. For people with hearing loss, profound access issues remain in places of employment, in classrooms, in public places of all types, and indeed, in the home and family relationships. We read about a younger generation with increasing rates of hearing loss and many returning veterans with war-related injuries that have damaged their hearing. Clearly, the call for the advocacy and support that are the stock in trade of HLAA will continue to grow.

Noteworthy initiatives have included development of a set of captioned informational videos about the basics of hearing loss, expanded veterans outreach, development of an informational Wiki for parents of children with hearing loss, development of a consumer checklist for hearing aid buyers, ongoing efforts to upgrade the national website, and a wide ranging set of advocacy efforts touching areas as disparate as classroom acoustics, hearing aid tax credit, a national broadband plan to assure access for people with hearing loss, and captioned telephone mandates to name but a few.

By agreement between the chapters and national office, Walk4Hearing proceeds are split 50/50 between local and national budgets. Chapters report a rich and varied tapestry of outreach efforts made possible by new funding from the Walk. The list includes after-school tutoring for children with hearing loss, scholarships for graduating high school seniors, funding for captioned live theater productions, advocacy efforts directed at senior centers, Amtrak, and public conferences (captioning), development of a workplace toolkit for the national HLAA website, and expanded CART and other assistive systems resources for chapter meetings.

More broadly, we hear continuing reports of how the Walk4Hearing has increased awareness of HLAA and the challenges for people with hearing loss in our society. No longer will we be a "best kept secret" in our local communities.

As we think about the Walk4Hearing and how it has become such an important part of who we are and what we do, we can see a direct tie to Rocky Stone's seminal self-help approach to the challenges we face. We depend on our own initiative to take us forward in the fight to make the world a better place for people with hearing loss. We do not depend on government funding to make our way. There will be no help for us but our own efforts and determination.

So, let's take a moment to celebrate the terrific job we have done. And, let's re-dedicate ourselves to continuing support of our beloved HLAA and of the Walk4Hearing.

As always, I look forward to hearing from you at 41 Avondale Park, Rochester, NY 14620 or at pcf.hlaa@yahoo.com. 



2010 Walk4Hearing a Huge Success

Thousands of people stepped up for people with hearing loss and created awareness in cities coast to coast. Congratulations to all the 2010 Walk4Hearing sites. Thank you to all national and local sponsors, volunteers, team captains, walkers, donors, and alliance groups for your continuous support and dedication. We hope to see you all next year! For more information about the Walk4Hearing visit www.walk4hearing.org or contact Ronnie Adler, national Walk4Hearing manager, at radler@hearingloss.org.

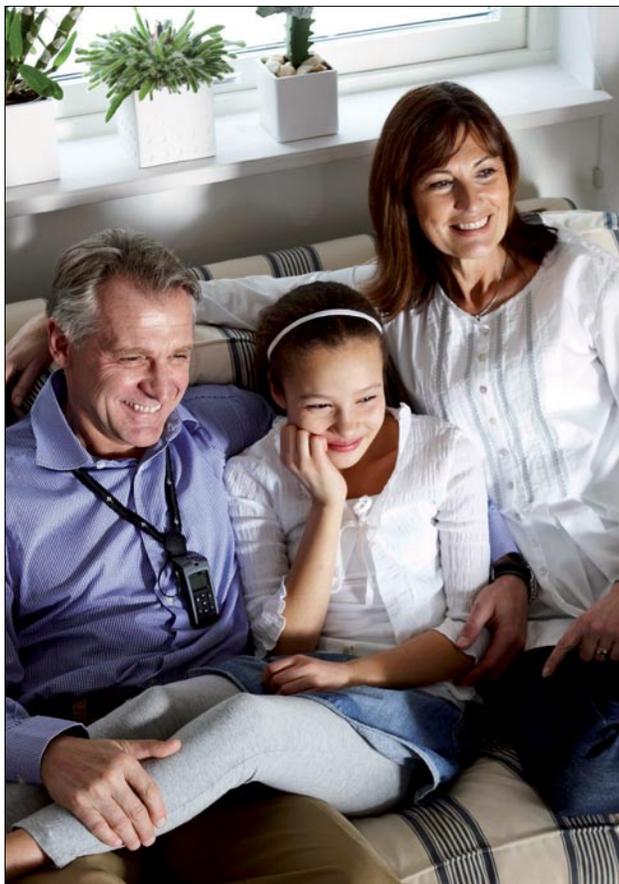
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