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2015
Program Accomplishments
Hearing Loss Association of America
Celebrates its 35th Anniversary of its Founding in 1979

Top Five Advocacy Initiatives of 2015

1. Affordability and accessibility of hearing technology

- Affordability and accessibility of hearing aids and hearing health care was our number one priority in 2015. From sponsoring the Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine consensus study on the affordability and accessibility of hearing aids, to supporting the Report of the President's Council on Science and Technology, HLAA was there to provide the perspective of the consumer.
- HLAA also came out in support of Congressional legislation that would provide greater financial support: H.R.1653 and H.R.2748, both of which if enacted would provide Medicare coverage of hearing aids; and H.R.1882 and S.315 which if enacted would provide a tax credit for hearing aids. HLAA has also filed comments both with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and with states to support coverage of hearing aids in health plans offered through the exchanges established by the Affordable Care Act.

2. Telecommunications

- HLAA's leadership on hearing-aid-compatible phones
- HLAA joined the Federal Communications Commission's New Disability Advisory Committee
- HLAA weighed in on the FCC's Captioning Quality Proceeding and provided comments on electronic newsroom captioning.

3. Employment

- One of HLAA's most high-profile employment cases came to a successful conclusion. Police Officer Dan Carione came to HLAA for support and guidance when the New York City Police Department forced him to resign when he started wearing hearing aids. The settlement ensures that New York City will not discriminate against hearing aid users again.



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4. Transportation

- HLAA was a member of the Access Board's two-day meeting of the Rail Vehicle Access Advisory Committee (RVAAC). HLAA's role was to ensure rail cars of the future are accessible to people with hearing loss.

5. Access to 9-1-1 in an Emergency

HLAA always keeps an eye on emergency preparedness for people with hearing loss. This year we signed comments urging the FCC to begin the process of protecting wireless callers indoors as well as they do outdoors by supporting efforts by the wireless industry to locate 9-1-1 callers where they are in a building. HLAA is a member of the advisory committee on location accuracy hosted by CTIA.

2015 Convention in St. Louis, Missouri - June 23-26

About 1,000 attendees came together for a communication-accessible event to experience an Exhibit Hall full of the latest in technology for people with hearing loss and to attend workshops for consumers.

- Symposium on employment Issues for people with hearing loss
- Senator Tom Harkin was awarded the HLAA Advocacy Hall of Fame Award
- Attendees from All Japan Association of Hard of Hearing People were able to receive a stream text link, then select their language to read Japanese captioning on their devices
- The employees of the St. Louis Union Station Hotel, convention site, were so impressed by the improved communication provided by an installed portable loop, that they purchased and installed a permanent loop
- A veteran found a long-lost sister through Facebook and reunited at the Convention
- Provided scholarships to veterans to attend
- Two start-up companies connected in the Exhibit Hall and began a collaboration on a new product
- All-Leaders workshop draws 109 HLAA leaders
- Young adult roundtable lead to Young Adult Advisory Board formed to develop initiatives for future Conventions

2015 Walk4Hearing

The Walk4Hearing celebrated its 10-year anniversary

- 12,000 total walkers
- 850 teams
- Held in 21 cities
- Funds used to raise awareness of hearing loss and provide for national and local programs benefitting the hearing loss community



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Policy Statements

The HLAA Board of Trustees approved policy statements to articulate HLAA positions on:

- Wider Access to the Full Spectrum of Hearing Technology Benefiting People with Hearing Loss
- Voted for by full Board
- Medicare and insurance reimbursement for hearing aids and aural rehabilitation
- Wider Access to the Full Spectrum of Hearing Technology Benefiting People with Hearing Loss
- Improve access and elimination barriers to emerging technology
- Need for hearing loss to be an important part of primary care
- Charitable gift acceptance policy and guidelines
- Business and for-profit policy and guidelines

Get in the Hearing Loop Campaign

HLAA hearing loop advocate and educator, Juliëtte Sterkens, Au.D., travels the country educating people, facilities, and more about the benefits of hearing loop technology for assistive listening.

Get in the Hearing Loop Task Force continues its work promoting installations of hearing loops.

HLAA Chapters

HLAA Chapters provide peer support and programs in 150 locations across the country. Chapters nationwide plan activities to celebrate the 35th anniversary of HLAA.

- Los Angeles launched a "Box Office" feature on its website of theaters with captioned performances
- Western Colorado introduced Text-to-911 emergency support
- Sarasota and Manatee hosted a half-day symposium for veterans
- Sarasota and Manatee held a Hearing Tech Expo
- Sarasota and Manatee hosted summer rap sessions to keep members involved
- Lakeland hosted a Hearing Health Expo
- Lakeland starts a recycle hearing aids program
- Essex County held its inaugural meeting
- New York City organized free guided tour of MOMA and arranged for discounted tickets to Broadway shows
- New York City hosted its Annual Scholarship and Award Reception
- Asheville held its inaugural meeting stressing advantages of looping
- Boston has its own Quiet Restaurant Meetups listing



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- Kentucky partners with KY Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing on regional conference
- St. Louis selected as April "Charity of the Month" by KMOV-TV
- Austin has a program to support seniors with hearing loss
- Virginia's four chapters participated in a joint Chapter Building Workshop
- DC hosted an evening meeting for young adults at Gallaudet University
- Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; Pocatello, Idaho and Patterson, New Jersey forming new chapters
- Central Coast has Glitter, a canine listener, helping to gain national awareness
- Fox Valley celebrated HLAA's 35th anniversary with a dance and dinner
- Florida held an open house for state leaders of all hearing loss organizations

Hearing Loss Magazine

The bimonthly publication is a benefit with HLAA membership. Readers look to *Hearing Loss Magazine* to provide them with the latest information on products, services, research, and technology in the hearing health care field. They also look for personal stories of people with hearing loss to find encouragement, and give them the feeling that they are not alone in living with a hearing loss. They look for practical and useful information. *Hearing Loss Magazine* readers view this publication as a "lifeline" to help them help themselves and live well with hearing loss.

In the pages of the 2015 issues, topics included were:

- Celebration of the 25th anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the role HLAA played in writing its provisions
- Articles about veterans with hearing loss, technology, stigma, living well with hearing loss, workplace and employment issues, hearing aids and cochlear implants, and more.