

# Where the Rubber Hits the Road

BY BARBARA KELLEY

The idiom “where the rubber meets the road” is a common one meaning when a plan is put in motion, we will really know how good it is.

But, I am talking literally about when my rubber jogging shoes hit the road at an HLAA Walk4Hearing. Last year, I attended more Walk4Hearing sites than ever, and frankly, I love it! Correction, I love *you!* Walk day is like none other. It’s a day where people of all ages with



the common interest of hearing loss or hearing health come together for some fun. Fun takes many forms at a Walk4Hearing. It can mean children with hearing loss playing with each other along the route and their parents sharing stories. In San Diego I walked with a grandmother who is a “walkathon” pro who participates in any walk

with a cause that affects her grandchildren—juvenile diabetes, autism and hearing loss (but not all the same grandchild). This grandma’s rubber soles were faster than mine!

Tucked in amidst the fun is our mission of opening the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support and advocacy. You can find it if you look carefully. We offered free hearing screenings at many of the Walks last year where people lined up to see if they might have a hearing loss—and in some cases, a loved one encouraged another to get in line! Support for one another rules the day. The message is clear: You are not alone with your hearing loss. Does this sound like something you want to be part of? Read how in this issue. I hope to meet you along the route.

## What Are My Options?

I realize not everyone reading this has a chance to attend a Walk4Hearing, but HLAA has something for everyone along your hearing journey.

The HLAA2019 Convention this year is in Rochester, New York (June 20–23). See if you can carve out the

time and budget to attend. We offer a rich program along with fun events, all in a hearing-friendly place with realtime captioning and hearing loops in every session. This year’s Research Symposium is *The Latest on Genetics and Hearing Loss*, featuring the top researchers in the world and an all-new format that will be engaging and informative. There will even be a mini HLAA2019 Convention Walk4Hearing to get your body moving, and again, have some fun. Bring those rubber-soled shoes not only for the Walk but to be traversing the Exhibit Hall and workshops. I hope to meet you along the way.

HLAA Chapters are another option if you want the camaraderie of being with others just like you. Our chapters offer rich educational programs and mutual support and there is some fun thrown in from time to time. Go to [hearingloss.org/chapters-state-orgs](http://hearingloss.org/chapters-state-orgs) to find an HLAA Chapter near you.

Plan a DIY (that’s a “do-it-yourself”) event where the HLAA mission can come alive on your terms. See the next page on what this could mean for you.

If you are reading this you likely are an HLAA Member or some variety of supporter. If you like what *Hearing Life* offers, encourage someone to join HLAA and receive the magazine. Or give it as a gift that keeps on giving six times a year.

## Who Are We After 40 Years?

HLAA celebrates its 40-year anniversary this year. The more I dive into the history of nonprofits in the United States, I learn how amazing it is to have such a long history for an organization that would be considered small next to the big ones such as United Way. We want reliable information and support along our hearing journey. People who want to be part of HLAA are those who want to stay in the hearing world with technology. And, the technology only gets better with more options.

Speaking of technology, this January I attended the CES (Consumer Electronics Show) produced by the Consumer Technology Association. I was part of the Hearing Access Group, along with an all-star cast, appearing here in alphabetical order: Brenda Battat, former HLAA executive director and consumer advocate;

Debra Berlyn, CEO, Consumer Policy Solutions, Project GOAL; Richard Einhorn, HLAA Board vice chair, sound expert and composer; Linda Kozma-Spytek, research audiologist from Gallaudet University and HLAA technology advisor; KR Liu, former HLAA Board member and CTA Foundation Board member; and Nancy Macklin, HLAA director of external affairs.

We attended CES through the generosity of the Consumer Technology Association Foundation, who brings together experts from the hearing and vision worlds to interact with industry to make products accessible. Making ourselves known to everyone we could, we saw a lot of “hearables” driving home the notion that new technology for people who want to hear better is looming, due in part to innovation and a new category to be opened in 2020 by the Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter hearing devices for adults with mild to moderate hearing loss. HLAA also took center stage when I was interviewed by Steve Ewell, CTA Foundation executive director, about the video project we are working on for older adults and

technology, funded by the CTA Foundation. Any time we introduce new people to HLAA, it’s a great day, and the CTA Foundation gave us this opportunity. Thank you, CTA Foundation.

## In Conclusion

I realize as I write this that I started out by talking literally about the rubber hitting the road with my shoes on the path. But, the figurative idiom rings true. HLAA in many ways has hit the road with its mission, with volunteers across the country, and after 40 years, the plan has worked. Thank you to all of you who have made it happen. **HL**

*Barbara Kelley is executive director of the Hearing Loss Association of America and has been with HLAA since April 1988, 31 years of its 40-year existence during which time she has worn out hundreds of pairs of shoes. She can be reached at [bkelley@hearingloss.org](mailto:bkelley@hearingloss.org) and on Twitter @Bkelley\_HLAA.*

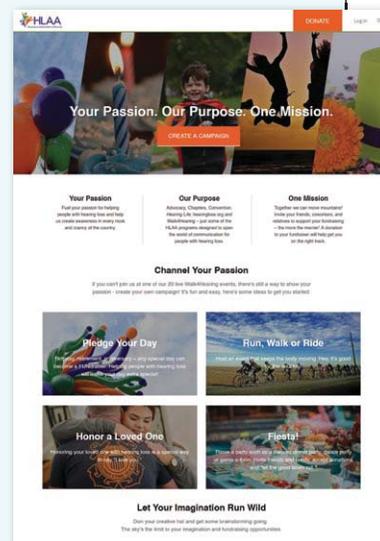
# HLAA Introduces DIY (Do-It Yourself) Fundraising

Advocacy, Chapters, the HLAA Convention, *Hearing Life*, [hearingloss.org](http://hearingloss.org) and Walk4Hearing—just some of the ways HLAA opens the world of communication for people with hearing loss. And now, we’re introducing a new way to fuel your passion for helping people with hearing loss and help us create awareness in every nook and cranny of the country: DIY fundraising.

While we would love for you to join us at one of our live Walk4Hearing events, we know that’s not always possible. If that’s the case, but you still want to “walk” with us, holding a DIY fundraiser might be answer. Thanks to our new page on Crowdrise, anyone can now “hold” their own fundraiser online. It can be set up quickly and easily, and all

the proceeds will benefit those with hearing loss. And did we mention—it’s fun!

You can share your fundraising campaign with friends and family on social media, email, or any other way you reach people online. What kind of campaign? Almost anything - the number of ideas are limited only by your imagination! (For a few **suggestions visit [crowdrise.com/HLAA](http://crowdrise.com/HLAA)**.)



**Get started today at [crowdrise.com/HLAA](http://crowdrise.com/HLAA) or text HLAADIY to 41411.**