

Register at walk4hearing.org today!



It's Time to Walk4Hearing with Joss!

BY WALK4HEARING STAFF

American Girl's 2020 Doll of the Year, Joss Kendrick, is a fierce athlete born with hearing loss and a passion for surfing and competitive cheer. Joss wears a hearing aid and is the newest doll in American Girl's collection of inspirational characters who impart lessons to help kids grow with confidence. To celebrate her arrival, American Girl teamed up with Caroline Marks, a 17-year-old surfing prodigy and member of the first U.S. Women's Olympic surfing team. "This is a chance for me to show girls that it's possible to achieve your goals," says Caroline, "no matter how high they may be, if you are passionate and willing to work hard." Caroline and Joss show us that kids can do anything!

Celebrate Walk4Hearing Days Online

Walk4Hearing begins its 15th anniversary online. With the support of sponsors, alliances, and local walk committees, plans were altered to conduct a new type of Walk Day that allows us to remain connected in the midst of the pandemic.

Beginning May 2 at Westchester/Rockland, walkers are giving their shoes a rest and signing on with their computers and smartphones for Walk Day. During a 30-minute online program, we will share stories, learn more about HLAA's important work, be entertained, hear from a special guest or two, and have fun like we always do.

Keep the Spirit of the Walk4Hearing Going

While the spring Walk Days have had to shift to virtual events, the spirit and commitment to hearing health and helping people with hearing loss is stronger than ever. The Walk4Hearing is proud to partner with HLAA Chapters, 16 national alliances, and numerous local nonprofits, whose programs count on receiving 40% of the funds they raise.

Keeping our community together through the Walk4Hearing is not only important to stay focused on our mission, but also to provide comfort to each other and support those with hearing loss who are struggling with the added isolation and challenges created.



2020 Walk Days

On the day of each spring walk, there will be an online celebration.

Visit walk4hearing.org for details.



SPRING

Westchester/Rockland, NY – May 2

Milwaukee, WI – May 9

Milford, MI – May 16

Nashville, TN – May 16

Salt Lake City, UT – May 16

Alameda, CA – May 30

Long Beach, CA – May 31

Hartford, CT – June 13

All Spring Walks are Virtual Events.

FALL

Louisville, KY – September 19

New York City – September 20

Buffalo, NY – September 26

Chicago, IL – September 26

San Diego, CA – October 10

Cary, North CA – October 11

West Windsor, NJ – October 11

Washington, DC – October 17

Philadelphia, PA – October 18

Brighton, MA – October 25

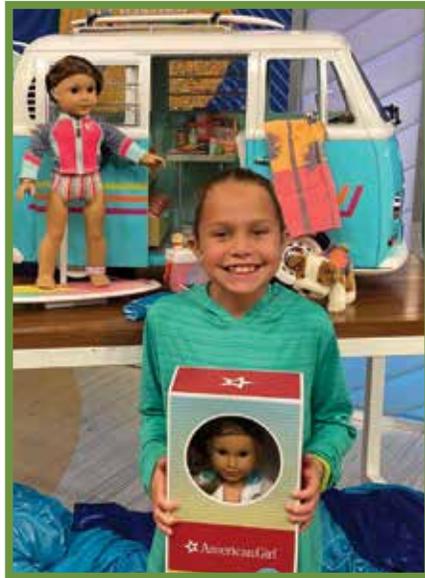
Mesa, AZ – November 7

Houston, TX – TBD

HLAA on Good Morning America

On New Year's Eve, American Girl revealed its 2020 Doll of the Year, Joss Kendrick, on *Good Morning America* (GMA). Three young girls from the Walk4Hearing family were among the lucky kids who welcomed Joss on national television. In sharing their experiences with hearing loss, it is clear that Joss has a profound impact on these girls. Joss is a role model that inspires them to work hard and pursue their dreams.

2020 EDUCATIONAL PARTNER



"Something I've learned from my daughter Nikki is that people who get challenged in life are the ones who can overcome those challenges. When people see Nikki and hear her speak on TV, hopefully they see the sky is the limit for anyone born with hearing loss. Nikki sees Joss as a girl exactly like her trying and achieving anything she wants in life, and this will continue to reinforce the fact that she has no limitations."

– Dave, father of Nikki Kramer

"Mila likes Joss because "she can do what people with hearing loss can do, whatever they want." Mila truly feels that being deaf is just another thing in life, and it will not affect what she can do in her future. Mila is going to bring Joss with her everywhere she goes this year!"

– Sarah, mother of Mila Durlacher



"It was and is Lily's most cherished memory. Hearing Lily describe Joss as athletic, strong and competitive, just like her, was even more exciting. As we left the studio, Lily was recognized as one of the girls who was just on *Good Morning America*, and that made the day even more special. When she returned to school, her teacher played the video for the class and the principal announced over the school's loudspeaker about Lily's experience. Thank you for this wonderful experience."

– Randi, mother of Lily Lieberman



Walk with Joss Kids Contest

Children, ages 5-12, who register for the Walk4Hearing, can enter the contest for a chance to win a Joss Kendrick doll and accessory package. One child from each Walk4Hearing location will win! Visit walk4hearing.org to enter.

Joss Kendrick Launch Parties

HLAA local chapter members participated in launch parties that presented Joss Kendrick to the public at American Girl stores across the country. It was clear by the joy expressed on the faces of kids and adults alike that meeting Joss was more than just seeing a new doll. Joss has a hearing loss and wears a hearing aid. Thank you to these members for visiting the stores on behalf of HLAA!

"It was an amazing experience! You would think seeing Joss with the hearing aid would be the best part, but the best part of the experience was seeing the kids with hearing aids and cochlear implants getting Joss! Even though I am 40 years old, I had to get Joss. She looks just like me and reminds me to never forget that I can do anything!"
– Deirdre Keane, Chicago Walk4Hearing



"Growing up, I always wanted an American Girl doll. The highlight of that day was meeting the store's manager, Glenn. I learned that his father has a severe hearing loss. I jumped on the opportunity to educate Glenn about HLAA, its mission, programs and services, and how HLAA changed my life. Because of this experience, I joined the Bay Area Walk4Hearing as a Walk Chair. I am excited to share HLAA with others to help make a positive impact on their lives."
– Sally Edwards, Bay Area Walk4Hearing



"Kalia was born hearing, then became profoundly deaf by age three and has cochlear implants. Sendie, Kalia's mom, has slowly lost her hearing as well.

It was wonderful to see a doll who has hearing loss just like us, something I certainly never had growing up. Girls can do and be anything they want to be, even with a hearing loss. Thank you, American Girl!"
– Debbie Mohny, president, HLAA Boulder Chapter



Even if you aren't in a Walk4Hearing city, you can join the spring Walk Day celebrations online from anywhere!

Questions? Contact our national Walk4Hearing managers:

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Celebrating 15 years of Walk4Hearing!

In 2006, when the first six Walk4Hearing events were held, HLAA envisioned an event where people in local communities could gather to share their experiences living with hearing loss and to see that they were not alone on their journey. Fast forward 15 years—with 20 walks this year, the Walk4Hearing has continued to expand across the country with the support of more than 105,000 walkers and 9,200 dedicated teams! It is evident that raising awareness about hearing loss is very important to a lot of people. Through the efforts of our walkers and teams over the years, the Walk4Hearing has raised nearly \$16 million to help support local services for people with hearing loss, as well as national resources and advocacy work.

We've chosen a few team stories to share which help convey how meaningful the Walk4Hearing is and what it means to those who continue to return year after year.

For more information, or to find a Walk4Hearing in your area, please visit walk4hearing.org.



WALK4 HEARING
Hearing Loss Association of America
15 YEARS 2006 - 2020

2006	Walk4Hearing begins in six cities
2007	National sponsors provide support
2008	Alliance program started
2009	Hit \$1 million fundraising goal
2010	Record year with four business team chairs
2011	Both New York City and Chicago Walks welcome more than 1,000 walkers each
2012	Christopher J. Artinian, president and CEO of Morton's The Steakhouse, named HLAA national spokesperson and heads a team in Chicago
2013	More than 10,000 walkers across the nation
2014	Just eight years old, Katherine Pawlowski is named first Walk4Hearing Ambassador
2015	HLAA celebrates 10 years of Walk4Hearing
2016	First call to action introduced: #CommAccess
2017	First Convention Walk4Hearing held in Minneapolis
2018	New call to action: #screenURhearing
2019	217 national and local alliances participated; Nashville and Salt Lake City added
2020	15th anniversary; Bay Area Walk added; American Girl joins as first educational partner

WHY WE WALK

"I started team Cutie PIES because, as an educator for the deaf and people with hearing loss, I wanted the children and families I work with to feel a sense of community and know that they are not the only ones walking this journey. It's a wonderful opportunity to raise awareness for hearing loss and bring people together. What I enjoy most about Walk Day is reconnecting with those families and students who have left my program.

Walking alongside adults and children with various types of hearing loss means community, camaraderie, and intertwining of lives and experiences. Not only am I an educator, but I am now a mom with an adorable six-year-old boy with hearing loss. The Walk became extra special last year as he joined our team. We proudly walk in support of Ear Community, a national alliance of the Walk4Hearing."

– Elizabeth Desloge, Team Cutie PIES, Long Beach Walk4Hearing



"Gilbert Public Schools has been a proud participant and alliance with the HLAA Walk in Arizona for the past few years. We are thrilled to come together to show our district's support for individuals—especially students—who are deaf or have hearing loss.

We adore being a part of this important event to show that communication is not about modality, but about access, language, and connection. Together we are creating a stronger, more aware community that allows for greater universal design for everyone—those with and without hearing loss."

– Dana Leonardo, Team Gilbert Public Schools, Arizona Walk4Hearing

"We first discovered the New Jersey Walk4Hearing in 2016 after our daughter, Nadia, was diagnosed at birth with bilateral sensorineural loss. I rallied our friends and family together, created a team name, developed a logo, purchased t-shirts, and we were ready to walk! I never imagined what that first walk would mean to me and the lifelong relationships that would be created that day.

The Walk4Hearing is beautifully and emotionally overwhelming. This will be our fourth year participating and watching all the families arrive in support of one another is always so humbling.

We walk because we want Nadia to be happy, confident, independent and to love the life she was given. She is not different. She is not a stereotype. She will make waves and she will fight for her rights. She will overcome and we will be right there with her." – Valerie Cruz, Team Nadia's Cruzers, New Jersey Walk4Hearing



WHY WE WALK

"For Keegan's Super"hear"os, the Walk4Hearing means we are supporting my son Keegan, who is single-sided deaf and has a cochlear implant. The world is more challenging for him and participating in the Walk shows we support him and believe in him.

The Walk opened Keegan's eyes to the fact that there are other people in the world just like him. We live in a small community where there are only two other children in the school district with hearing loss, so he often feels like he's the only one. It has opened some of my family members' eyes to see that those with hearing loss are capable of doing the same things that people with normal hearing can do."

– Jennifer Violette, Team Keegan's Super"hear"os, Connecticut Walk4Hearing



"The Los Angeles Chapter of HLAA has been an active participant in the Long Beach Walk4Hearing for over a decade. One of our captains, Katherine Burns, named our team the LA Stars. We enjoy the beautiful beach location, socializing, getting some exercise, raising awareness about hearing loss, and raising funds for HLAA and the Chapter.

The LA Stars have consistently been the top fundraisers for the Long Beach Walk. I am so happy and proud to say that the LA Stars raised more than \$10,000 and that the Long Beach Walk4Hearing raised about \$50,000."

– Wendi Washington, Team LA Stars, Long Beach Walk4Hearing

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EDUCATIONAL PARTNER

