



There must be hundreds more like Young Man living in my ZIP code, so we've formed HLAA Young Adults Hear (YAH), a committee of volunteers tasked with addressing the needs of young people who are moving along from high school to college and/or the workplace.

Meet Young Man

BY BARBARA KELLEY

once upon a time,

before COVID-19, people gathered, chatted, and discovered interesting things about people along the way. Here's a story that took place last fall, but has been on my mind ever since.

The good-looking young man at the pharmacy counter at my neighborhood CVS is probably around the age of 22. He's perfect for that position. He's just friendly enough, without crossing the line. He keeps my prescriptions and

personal information confidential, understands the lingo and keeps the line moving. He knows my full name, date of birth, where I live, insurance company, copays, prescriptions and probably more.

"Young Man" also happens to wear hearing aids. When there's a little time, we chat. He might notice that I always look at him when I talk to him—clearly, not loudly—and that I wait until he is facing me to do that. Or he might just know that I am easy to talk to because our conversations over the counter flow so easily.

However, a few days after seeing him at CVS, when I stopped at a noisy, busy, trendy, little coffee bar that's also in my neighborhood, I was surprised to see Young Man behind the counter taking orders. As I waited in line to order my coffee, I observed that he was obviously struggling to understand a customer. "You want just milk?" he asked. "No," said the customer, "I want coffee with just milk." "So, you want just milk?" Young Man repeated. Young Man was good at repeating the orders to make sure he got them right and was just as pleasant as he is at CVS. I noticed that he was *not* wearing his hearing aids that day, though.

I stepped up to the counter and said, "Hi, you work here, too?" He responded with a smile and said, "Hi, Ms. Kelley." (He remembered my name!) "Yeah, I also work at Crunch Fitness early in the morning, and then I come here, and then I work most weekdays at CVS." Then I quietly said, "You're not wearing your hearing aids."

He quickly shook his head as if to brush me off. "No, that's why I repeat everyone's order," he explained briskly, obviously wanting to move on. I think maybe I made him a little uncomfortable, but talking about hearing loss is second nature to me. Apparently, Young Man has figured out a strategy for managing his hearing loss: he simply prefers not to discuss it, and it seems he might wear his hearing aids only in certain situations.

Today

I haven't been to my CVS pharmacy counter during COVID-19, but I'm wondering how Young Man is doing with the customers who wear face masks. What will happen when the coffee bar and the fitness club opens again? More face masks, more barriers, and maybe failures at job performance?

There must be hundreds more like Young Man living in my ZIP code, so we've formed HLAA Young Adults Hear (YAH), a committee of volunteers tasked with addressing the needs of young people who are moving along from high

HLAA Young Adults Hear initiatives include resources on transitioning into the workplace, educating colleges on accommodations for students with hearing loss, and more.

school to college and/or the workplace. YAH's initiatives include resources on transitioning into the workplace, educating colleges on accommodations for students with hearing loss, and more. All this information will be found on hearingloss.org>Hearing Help>Communities.

As for Young Man, I *will* let him know about HLAA. I might have to remove my mask or wear a clear one. Can you also introduce a few people to HLAA? They'll be glad you did. **HL**

Barbara Kelley is executive director of HLAA. Reach her at bkelly@hearingloss.org. Follow her on Twitter @Bkelley_HLAA.

ADA Celebrates 30 Years this July

And some of you were there! The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is the landmark civil rights bill that provided equal opportunity to people with disabilities. It was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush.

Our Founder Rocky Stone served on the Access Board that wrote the regulations for people with hearing loss. Some of you might remember that in this magazine we included a chart for you to fill out where you needed hearing access and what you preferred. Rocky took all of your input and carried them to Access Board meetings. If it weren't for HLAA, technology might not have been included in hearing accommodations, leaving only sign language as a reasonable accommodation.

As Rocky said at the time: "The law [ADA] is a tool which we must be prepared to use in asserting our rights within its framework. Without our action, this landmark legislation will be of little value to people with hearing loss."

Our HLAA community fights for hearing access in public places—whether it's from our national office, or your efforts through HLAA Chapter and State Organizations, or from you advocating on your own behalf. Whatever it is, when you get the access you need, post your accomplishments on Twitter and use [#CommAccess@HLAA](https://twitter.com/CommAccess@HLAA).

For more about the ADA, go to ada.gov. **HL**



President Bush signs the ADA into law on July 26, 1990.

Shout it Out! [#CommAccess@HLAA](https://twitter.com/CommAccess@HLAA)