

# 20 Walk4Hearing Celebrates 20 Years of Inspiration



"Whether you're just starting to explore treatment options or have been navigating hearing loss for years, Walk4Hearing is a space where you'll feel welcomed and understood and get important resources."

*Katherine Lu, Westchester/Rockland Walk4Hearing*

## HLAA's Nationwide Empowerment Tour

As the number of Americans with, and at risk of, hearing loss continues to grow, education and support are critical. One of the best ways The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) supports people and families impacted by this growing public health crisis is through our annual Walk4Hearing awareness and fundraising events in 20 cities across the U.S. The first Walk4Hearing was held in 2006, making this its 20th year.

Two decades later, the HLAA Walk4Hearing continues to meet people where they live, work and go to school. Walks bring hope to hometowns across the country, inspiring people of all ages to thrive with hearing loss. These events educate thousands each year about the importance of hearing health, bring communities together and empower families facing hearing loss.

The Walk4Hearing is often the first place people with hearing loss report feeling accepted and part of a community of others facing the same challenges. Many participants become inspired to seek treatment and help others.

## Walk4Hearing Inspired Stories

College freshman **Katherine Lu** says she felt an "amazing sense of unity and hope in the air" at the Walk4Hearing. After her grandmother was diagnosed with hearing loss two years ago, the Walk gave her a way to work towards change and help others. Katherine has served as a team captain and on the planning committee for the Westchester/Rockland Walk in New York since the diagnosis, and she co-founded the Deaf Culture and Awareness Club at her school.



*Team Katherine Lu*



*Griffin Polaske*

**Chelsea Polaske** is excited to lead a team for one of the newest walks in Madison, Wisconsin. Her son, Griffin, has Usher Syndrome Type 2A—after reading Mackenzie's similar story on HLAA's website, she wanted to connect and raise awareness about this rare condition. Now over a year old, Griffin was diagnosed with mild-to-moderate bilateral sensorineural hearing loss at six weeks of age. Chelsea and her family are focused on creating a future where Griffin feels empowered and part of a caring community at every stage. She says Walk4Hearing is a great step toward building that future for Griffin.



Brenda Lopez, bilingual engagement manager, Cochlear, and David Espiritu at the 2024 San Diego Walk4Hearing.

**David Espiritu**, a production coordinator for the University of California, San Diego music department, experienced sudden hearing loss and became a recent bilateral cochlear implant recipient before attending the San Diego Walk4Hearing in 2024. “As soon as I heard about the event, I was excited to go,” he says. “It was surprising to see how many people and teams showed up, and it inspired me to continue connecting with and supporting others with hearing loss. I want to be a resource to those who have lost their hearing like me, by sharing my experience and helping them through a very difficult, life-changing time.”

### Be Part of Walk4Hearing

Join us and celebrate, inspire and empower your local community! Register or donate to a Walk4Hearing event today. **HL**

## FALL WALKS

Kentucky	Sunday, September 14
New York City	Sunday, September 21
Chicago	Sunday, September 28
Boston	Sunday, October 5
North Carolina	Sunday, October 12
New Jersey	Sunday, October 12
Washington, DC	Sunday, October 19
Pennsylvania	Sunday, October 19
Arizona	Saturday, November 1
Houston	Saturday, November 1
Nashville	Saturday, November 8

Scan the QR code to  
find a Walk near you!

[Walk4Hearing.org/find-a-walk](https://Walk4Hearing.org/find-a-walk)



(Above) A team at the Long Beach Walk4Hearing on May 31, 2025. (Left) The Walk4Hearing in Houston began in 2006 and is now the oldest continuous Walk event. This team is the Wathen Walkers from 2009.