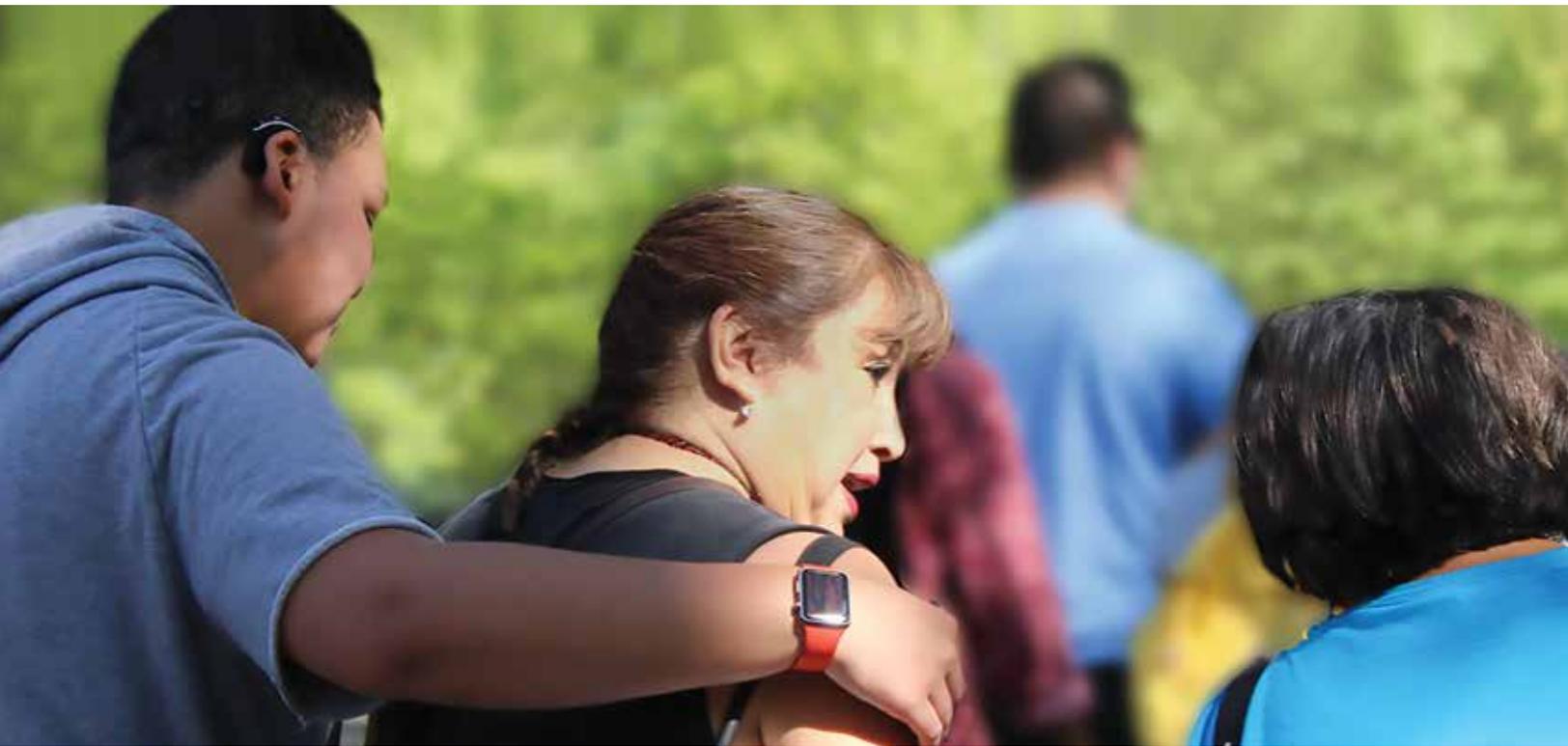


Hearing Loss Association of America  
Annual Report  
Fiscal year ending August 31, 2020

# Ensuring Our Future, Together



# Our Leadership

## Board of Directors

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Carrie Johnson, *Director of Communications*

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Ann Rancourt, *Walk4Hearing Manager*

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Carla Beyer-Smolin, *Chapter and Membership  
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Amanda Watson, *Meeting Planner*

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and Web Specialist*

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## Message from the Executive Director

**W**e still carry the weight of what happened in 2020 with the global pandemic. Together, we saw the importance of human connections and how essential they are to our wellbeing and to our physical and mental health.

We began the year with an ambitious national policy agenda, including implementation of the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act, and expansion of Medicare coverage for hearing aids and other hearing health care services. While some of our initiatives were put on pause, new and urgent concerns emerged. We made it our priority to serve, support and empower people with hearing loss through some of the most difficult times.

Communication barriers, lack of access to hearing health care, depression and increased isolation rippled from stay-at-home orders, social distancing and the use of masks. HLAA stepped up to educate, provide guidance and ensure that people with hearing loss could be heard and could communicate.

We adapted without delay to an online format and technology became more important than ever. We met online for support meetings and Walk4Hearing celebrations, reshaped our convention into a virtual conference and hosted a series of webinars to help people navigate new obstacles. We did everything we could to keep our community together and thriving.

None of this could have been accomplished if not for our ability to learn, adapt and be creative. I am so grateful for our Board, staff, chapter leaders and volunteers for their selfless and tenacious efforts. And to our members, partners and friends for supporting HLAA.

Of course, our work is far from done. Hearing loss is a primary health concern in the United States with one in seven people having some level of hearing loss. Educating people about hearing health, hearing screenings and how to protect their hearing is of the utmost importance.

I am humbled by the outpouring of support and assistance we have received over the past year, and I am more optimistic than ever about our future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Kelley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara Kelley  
Executive Director  
Twitter @HLAA\_Bkelley

**Our mission is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.**

# Ensuring Communication Access

**A** year ago, the world changed in a way we couldn't predict. New challenges arose for people with hearing loss, many of them almost overnight. HLAA responded without delay, addressing barriers to communication resulting from social distancing, stay-at-home orders and the spread of COVID-19.

Working with partner organizations, we developed guidance on how to communicate and advocate for access in emergency situations and educated doctors, nurses and health care workers on ways to communicate with people with hearing loss. We created desperately needed resources on telework, telehealth and medical situations and advocated for access to hearing care and video-based physician visits.

We connected people with captioned telephone and internet service providers and educated them on how captioning can be a lifeline. And we worked with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to inform local television stations of the need for readable, quality captioning of news broadcasts.

We informed people of their rights and supported free captioning on platforms like Zoom, Google Meet and Microsoft Teams.

When face masks became ubiquitous, some could no longer rely on lipreading to communicate. HLAA asked the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to include clear face masks as an option for the public. We also teamed with clear face mask crafters to distribute masks to those in need. To further aid



accessibility, HLAA advocated for the use of assistive listening devices and speech-to-text apps.

From the start of the pandemic, we have been in touch with policymakers on all levels about regulations and guidance to ensure access, while providing people the information needed to advocate for themselves. Side by side these efforts, we continued ongoing programs.

### **Get in the Hearing Loop**

Through the strength of our volunteer network, we support access to public places using hearing loops and other accessible technology. In 2020, we advocated for hearing loops in rail cars, and access at COVID-19 vaccination sites.

### **Industry-Consumer Alliance for Accessible Technology**

As a partner with Gallaudet University on a five-year U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant, HLAA is bringing consumers and industry together to collaborate on accessible technology, including an interactive web portal on hearingloss.org.

### **Medicare Coverage of Hearing Aids**

In December 2019, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to expand Medicare to cover hearing aids and related hearing care services. While the bill did not make it onto the Senate floor, HLAA continues to advocate for passage of this important legislation.

### **Coalitions Amplify Our Voice**

HLAA works with government, industry and other nonprofits to promote our agenda. Here are some examples:

- Consumer and Professional Advocacy Committee on Standards of Care for Cochlear Implants
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Alliance
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network
- FCC Disability Advisory Committee
- Friends of the Congressional Hearing Health Caucus
- Hearing Aid Compatibility Task Force
- AT&T Advisory Panel on Access & Aging
- LG Electronics Accessibility Advisory Board
- Ida Institute Advisory Board and Person-Centered Hearing Network
- Teach Access

### **HLAA Educational Webinar Series**

We increased webinar offerings and introduced a series of online support gatherings, all free and captioned, to keep people connected and informed. Here are some of the timely topics covered:

- Advocacy During the Pandemic
- Audiological Care and COVID-19
- Coping with the Coronavirus and Isolation
- Face Masks and Hearing Loss: Practical Tips and Strategies
- FCC Accessibility Updates for People with Hearing Loss
- Hearing Assistive Technology at Home
- How Hearing Better Leads to Living Better

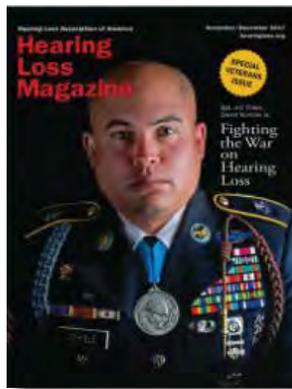
# A Strong and Supportive Community

With 120+ local chapters and 13+ state organizations, HLAA's network is out front providing people with hearing loss the information, resources and support they need to communicate well.

While HLAA Chapters were forced to put in-person meetings and programs on hold, still, these chapters, led by volunteers, provided connections through online meetings and by taking advantage of nationally sponsored virtual gatherings.

## Veterans Across America Virtual Chapter

This chapter offers support to veterans while helping them advocate for their rights. Thanks to dedicated support from Starkey Hearing Technologies, the chapter met monthly with special guests and topics including how to navigate the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to secure hearing care and technology, insights on the psychological and social impacts unique to veterans and treatment options.



## Chapters are the Heart of HLAA

The Indianapolis Chapter continued to help members and friends connect and support each other. With the leadership of President Teresa Gonzalez, the chapter offered weekly meetings and was there for those in need, providing clear window face masks and hospital kits.

Teresa, who was born with hearing loss, knows first hand the essential support this community provides.



## Making Connections Virtually

In 2020, Lynn Johnson of Pennsylvania realized that her hearing loss was beginning to affect interactions with family. Feeling withdrawn, she searched for help and found HLAA through our website.

She noticed that HLAA was having a virtual meeting and gave it a try. "I immediately felt the connection and identified with what they were talking about," said Lynn. "They discussed the very issues I was dealing with."

Lynn connected with a local chapter and participated in the Walk4Hearing. She even joined an online chapter game night. "I must thank HLAA, and the people involved, for showing me it's still possible to have fun amid everything I'm going through. There is still joy in life."



“ HLAA gives me the tools and confidence I need to face my daily hearing challenges. ”

*Teresa Gonzalez, Indianapolis Chapter*

## Experience HLAA

To deliver important information and research, HLAA took its annual convention online for a two-day interactive event, *Experience HLAA*.

Presented by CapTel Captioned Telephone, the event was offered free to the public and attracted a broad audience. Sessions included captioned workshops on regenerative medicine, workplace advocacy, and the annual Research Symposium on Tinnitus, supported by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, National Institutes of Health, and sponsored by Cochlear Americas.

## Thank You to Our Sponsors

### PRESENTING SPONSOR

CapTel Captioned Telephone

### PLATINUM

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CTIA | Starkey

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Consumer Technology Association Foundation  
Hearing Industries Association  
Frequency Therapeutics | Verizon

### FRIENDS

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“ During a time when many events were canceled, HLAA came through. We were able to learn about the latest developments in hearing technologies, research and advocacy right from our homes. HLAA did it with style. ”

*Barry Forst*

*Sun Lakes Arizona Chapter*



# Walk4Hearing Keeps Us Together

Despite challenges that prevented many events from taking place, Walk4Hearing, celebrating its 15th year, stayed focused on creating awareness and keeping communities engaged. With the help of local volunteers, Walk Days were adapted to online celebrations and participants gathered safely to walk in their neighborhoods.

More than 3,400 people and 510 teams took part in 20 events, raising \$805,000 to support national programs, HLAA Chapters and alliance organizations. Corporate partners led the way with their support and participation.



Hearing loss advocate and comedian Gael Hannan (upper left), "America's Got Talent" star Mandy Harvey (above), and award-winning composer and musical director of "Hamilton" Alex Lacamoire (left) participated.

## Alliances Extend Our Mission

Through a revenue sharing program, HLAA Chapters and nonprofits such as schools, hospitals, universities, and service organizations, partner with local Walks to generate funds for their own organizations. We are proud to unite with more than 1,750 Walk4Hearing alliances across the country that are educating communities and providing vital assistance to people with hearing loss.



Team Brody Monsters walks to support the Usher Syndrome Coalition at the Kentucky Walk4Hearing

The Usher Syndrome Coalition has been a Walk4Hearing alliance since 2016 and has received more than \$8,000 through the program to help further its work. The Coalition supports an estimated 400,000+ people living with Usher syndrome worldwide through an annual conference, video podcasts, volunteer training and the USH Trust, the largest international registry of individuals living with Usher syndrome.

“ I could not help but think how many more people would benefit from this celebration. I wish I would have found you sooner, HLAA! I want to continue to spread the word for an organization that works tirelessly to champion the fight for those of us with hearing loss. ”

Christine Rudolph  
Chicago Walk4Hearing

## Let's Hear Now and Be Well

Hearing is an important part of our overall health and by being active, engaged and making hearing health a priority, people with hearing loss can live well. Partners, walkers and supporters spread the word by sharing tips on how people can care for their hearing, utilize assistive technology, and communicate better.



## HAAA and American Girl Celebrate Inclusion

HAAA partnered with Mattel's American Girl doll company in honor of their 2020 Girl of the Year, Joss Kendrick. The inspirational doll is an athlete with a passion for surfing and competitive cheer who was born with hearing loss.

By teaming together, we highlighted hearing loss and hearing health to a broader audience and encouraged kids, whether they have hearing loss or not, to overcome obstacles and push past stereotypes. American Girl collected customer donations in stores and online, and even with stores closed for a good part of the year, generated \$68,000 for HAAA educational initiatives.



December 31, 2019–NYC Walk4Hearing participants Lily L., Nikki K. and Mila D. at "Good Morning America" for the reveal of Joss Kendrick.

## Thank You to Our Sponsors

### CAPITAL SPONSOR

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### SILVER

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### EDUCATIONAL PARTNER

American Girl



Casey D., age 10, was one of 20 lucky children to take home a Joss doll on Walk Day. "I was so happy when I realized I won! Joss inspires kids like me," she said. "We can do anything we put our minds to, just like Joss."

# Our Financial Performance

**B**ecause of the support of generous donors and partners we were able to fulfill our mission in a year with unexpected challenges. Complete audited financial statements are available at [hearingloss.org](http://hearingloss.org) under the About HLAA section.

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES as audited for fiscal year ending Aug. 31, 2020

### Support and revenue

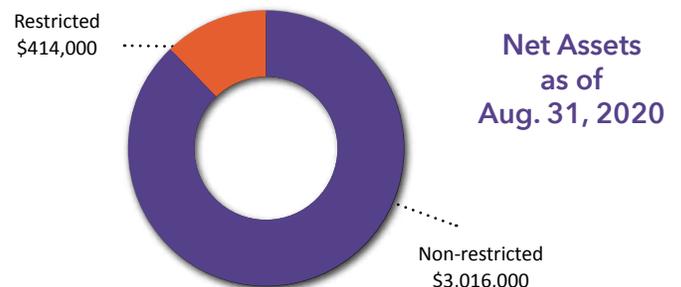
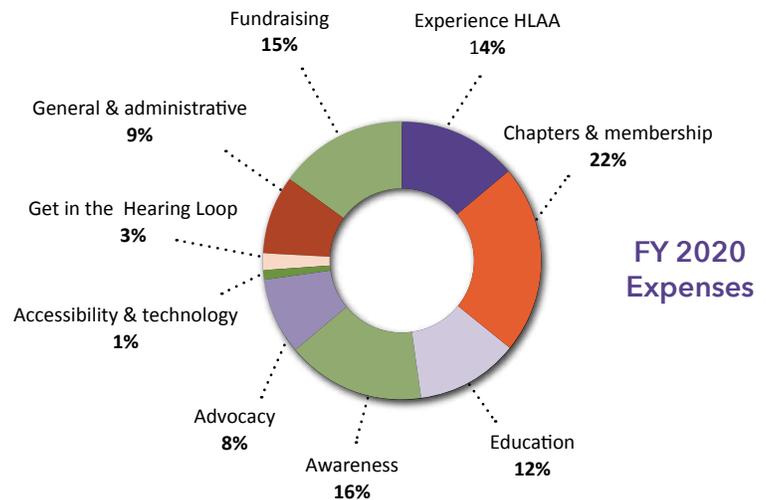
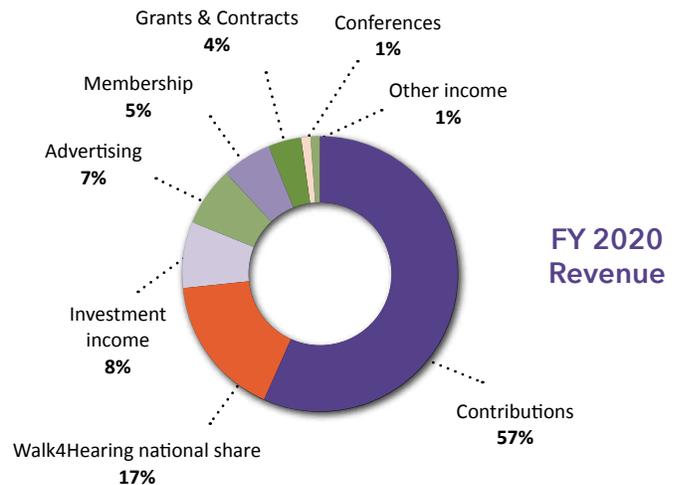
Contributions	\$1,418,278
Walk4Hearing national share	410,921
Investment income	187,871
Advertising	165,362
Membership	135,895
Grants and contracts	88,300
Conferences	32,070
Other income	28,275
<b>Total support and revenue</b>	<b>2,466,972</b>

### Expenses

Program	1,332,579
Fundraising	266,889
Management and general	154,205
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>1,753,673</b>

### Change in net assets

	713,299
Net assets, Aug. 31, 2019	2,716,849
Net assets, Aug. 31, 2020	3,430,148



### FOR EVERY \$1 SPENT

- **76¢** goes to programming
- **9¢** goes to operations
- **15¢** goes to fundraising

Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) is a tax-exempt, charitable organization and is eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions under IRS Code 501(c)(3).

# Meeting the Challenge

In November 2020, we launched the HLAA Giving Challenge to sustain our organization and make important investments in our future. We saw our supporters dig deeper, our corporate sponsors reinforce their commitment, and our board of directors and volunteers roll up their sleeves to help.



With the generosity of 838 supporters, we raised a remarkable \$781,000, far exceeding our goal of \$500,000.

Funds generated by the Challenge will help deliver more educational workshops and online webinars featuring top experts, and train HLAA Chapters on leadership, virtual meeting techniques, and ways to reach more people who need our help.

The Giving Challenge was about much more than raising funds. It was an effort to secure the future of HLAA and build our capacity as an organization to better help those determined to live their best lives with hearing loss.

## A Legacy that Lasts

Longtime member Harry Reyburn made a generous gift of \$100,000 to honor his late wife, Marian. Marian was the first president of the Greater Omaha Chapter, and an active member and supporter of HLAA.

"Marian was so committed and enthusiastic about HLAA and worked to form chapters throughout Nebraska," said Harry. In making his gift, Harry honors the many contributions his wife of 58 years made to the community, and acknowledges Founder Rocky Stone, who encouraged Marian's work.



# Become Involved

**W**e are grateful for the support of our volunteers, donors, sponsors and partners who believe in our mission as strongly as we do. Here are some ways you can become involved:

- **Volunteer.** Connect with one of our 120+ HLAA Chapters or Walk4Hearing events across the country. Our volunteer network is passionate about helping people with hearing loss.
- **Become a partner.** Partnership opportunities allow companies to extend their reach to the many diverse populations we serve. We are committed to building meaningful relationships that increase our impact.
- **Join Walk4Hearing.** Walk4Hearing educates people about hearing health and raises funds to support programs and services in local communities. Visit [walk4hearing.org](http://walk4hearing.org) to learn more.
- **Donate.** Make a gift to help HLAA advocate for communication access, provide support through our chapter network, and inform the public about the tools and resources available to live successfully with hearing loss.
- **Join the Mission Circle.** This distinctive group provides ongoing support for our work by giving monthly. This is a convenient way to donate and fuels our mission throughout the year.
- **Leave a legacy.** Making a planned gift extends your generosity and ensures positive change for generations to come. By informing us that you have included HLAA in your will or estate plan, you will be honored in our Legacy Circle.
- **Become an advocate.** Help make hearing health part of the conversation. Inform people about the importance of hearing screenings, encourage them to protect their hearing, and direct them to resources and technology that will improve their hearing. Join our Get in the Hearing Loop program to promote communication access in public spaces.
- **Engage with us.** Use the power of social media to connect with us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to show your support for people with hearing loss.

For more information, email [development@hearingloss.org](mailto:development@hearingloss.org) or call us at 301.657.2248. To find an HLAA Chapter or State Organization near you, visit our website.



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