



Heard in Fort Worth

Hearing Loss Association of America – Fort Worth Chapter
June 2026

June 13 Program: Captioned Telephones & Other Free Specialized Telecommunications Devices

Presented by Ann Mannon and Elma Torrez



For the past three years, Ann Mannon has been making a difference in her community through her work with Outreach, Education, and Installations (OEI) for CapTel Captioned Telephones. Passionate about helping people with hearing loss stay connected, Ann works one-on-one with individuals and organizations to find the captioned telephone solutions that best fit their needs. She also enjoys sharing information about CapTel at community events and presentations, helping raise awareness about tools that make everyday communication easier. From coordinating home installations to providing education and training on CapTel products, Ann is dedicated to helping others feel informed, supported, and connected. She also leads a local team of outreach installers who share her commitment to serving the community.

Elma Torrez has been a vendor for the Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP) for over 17 years. STAP is a state-funded program that helps Texas residents with a qualifying disability obtain free telecommunication devices such as iPads, tablets, or smartphones. Qualification is not based on income or insurance, but recipients must be at least five years old.

HLAA - Fort Worth meets on the Second Saturday of each month

in the fellowship hall of Central Christian Church, 3205 Hamilton Avenue, Fort Worth, TX 76107.

We have snacks and mingle at 9:30 a.m. and meet at 10:00. Please join us and bring a friend!

We offer real time captioning and assistive listening systems for communication accessibility.

JULY PROGRAM

July 11 - HLAA National Convention Report by Chapter Officer Attendees

Joyce Parlin (president), Ann Marie Flint (secretary), and Patricia Hindman (treasurer)

The DALLAS Chapter of HLAA meets on the THIRD Saturday of each month

in room A120 (auditorium) at the Medical City Dallas Heart Hospital
at 11970 North Central Expressway, Dallas, TX 75243.

For information, contact Jason Taylor at jmironotaylor@gmail.com

Photo Credit: *The photograph of The Fort Worth Herd on our Heard In Fort Worth banner is used by permission of The Fort Worth Herd and its sponsor, the City of Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department.*

Joyce's Jargon

Good Day,

A great big **thank you** to Elsa Vargas, Andy Yberra, and Patricia Ybarra for supporting the chapter by volunteering for the 3rd annual Si Se Puede Senior & Resource Expo at the Wesley United Community Center.

The challenge began with trying to find any literature about hearing loss in Spanish! National HLAA had nothing in Spanish. Some information translated into Spanish was found on the American Speech and Hearing Association website. And to save the day, Elsa took some of the basic information we have and did the translation for us, and Sharon found (through Callier) an audiogram in Spanish. We were prepared.

Unfortunately, the turnout was small, but the four of us got to know each other better, and now we are prepared when other opportunities to talk to Spanish speaking people come our way. It will also be something that I will bring up at the National conference soon.

Joyfully,

Joyce Parlin
Chapter President

2025 Chapter Board of Directors

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Heard In Fort Worth

This newsletter is published by the
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The Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) is the leading voice of the growing number of people with—and at risk of—hearing loss in the U.S. We advocate to increase access to care and treatment, break down stigmas through education and awareness, and empower people with hearing loss through a nationwide community of support.

Our work impacts millions, improving the lives of people with hearing loss, and elevating the importance of hearing health and accessible communication through national legislation and public policy and a network of chapters, state organizations, and grassroots efforts.

Child Proof or Granny Proof?



It seemed like a good idea at the time. To keep little kids from accidentally swallowing small hearing aid batteries, make the packages child resistant. So, in 2024, that became a law, called Reese's Law.

The problem is that the packages are too hard even for adults to open them. The zinc air batteries come in hard plastic circular holders that require heavy duty scissors and real hand strength to remove each battery.

Good news: An HLAA blog reports that consumers complained so much that some manufacturers have begun trying to address this issue. At the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) convention in April, Energizer's Rayovac brand showcased new hearing aid battery packaging designed to be "senior-friendly." Although cutting is still required, the result shows that manufacturers and companies respond when customers speak up.

For details and practical advice, go to: <https://www.hearingloss.org/media-and-publications/hear-this-blog/> and scroll down to "A Step Forward for Hearing Aid Battery Packaging."



SIARC Returns for 2026

SIARC, UTD's annual Summer Intensive Auditory Revitalization Conference, will be offered July 26-30 at the Callier Clinical Research Center in Richardson.

SIARC "is a unique opportunity for adults with hearing impairment and their communication partners to strengthen their communication abilities and experience assistive listening technology in real-world scenarios."

Participants receive a thorough hearing evaluation, try different types of hearing aids, and use various assistive listening devices that work with hearing aids or cochlear implants.

Classes offer coping skills, communication strategies, and new listening technologies. Special evening activities allow participants to practice their new skills and experience some of the assistive devices in real life situations.

Since hearing loss affects a person's communication with others, SIARC is designed for a participant with a hearing loss and his/her communication partner (spouse, family member, friend, or co-worker).

Several of our chapter members have attended SIARC in the past and recommend it enthusiastically. For complete information, registration and fees, go to <https://labs.utdallas.edu/hhlab/rehabilitation-programs/siarc/>. Scholarships may be available.

Audiology students from UT Dallas may be present at our HLAA chapter meeting to offer more information.

New HLAA Resource Helps Families Talk About Hearing Loss

Everyone's hearing loss story is different. That's why HLAA is excited to expand its Hearing Loss 101 Toolkit with a family-focused component to support children with hearing loss and their parents.

This new resource encourages kids to express their feelings about hearing loss through five simple questions. Whether they're relieved, worried, curious, or confident, children will appreciate having control of their story.

The toolkit includes guidance for how grownups can facilitate the conversation and share what they learn with other supporting figures in a child's life. Share the Hearing Loss 101 Toolkit with any families you know! Go to: <https://www.hearingloss.org/understanding-hearing-loss/hearing-loss-101/hearing-loss-101-toolkit-families/>.

Si Se Puede Senior Expo: *We Were There!*



Community organizer Johnnie Gonzales invited us to have an information table at his 3rd Annual Si Se Puede Senior Resource Expo on the Northside. We said **YES WE CAN**.

Spanish speaking members Elsa Vargas, Andy Ybarra, and Patricia Ybarra joined Joyce Parlin to staff the table. As Joyce noted in her column, HLAA doesn't have hearing loss materials in Spanish, but she found some from another organization to display with our handouts. The event was held on Wednesday, May 13 at the Wesleyan Community Center.

HOT DOG!

SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, AUGUST 1

Atwood's ranch and home general store on Jacksboro Hwy. has invited us to return this year and hold another fund-raising HOT DOG SALE. Atwoods will GIVE us the hotdogs, buns, and drinks **FREE!**

Each customer gets two hotdogs and buns and a drink. We sell them for just one dollar, and we get to keep the dollar. *It's free money!* And we can sell other goodies. It's a wonderful fundraising opportunity for our chapter.

We will need volunteers for morning and afternoon shifts. It will be hot, but we will be in the shade. Last year we had good helpers and had a lot of fun. Sales receipts and donations came to \$343.79, and Atwoods donated \$100.

Look for details in the July issue of this newsletter.



Summary of May 9 presentation

Stories from Our Board

Presented by Joyce Parlin, Sharon Huber, Melissa Forsyth, Patricia Hindman, & Dan White

Summarized by Darlene Liesner from the meeting transcript by Carrie Gibson, CSR

At the May 9th meeting, Chapter President Joyce Parlin asked Vice President Sharon Huber, Treasurer Patricia Hindman, Newsletter Editor Dan White, and Program Chair Melissa Forsythe the questions about their hearing loss journeys. The audience participated. Below are a few of the panelists' answers.

Briefly tell us about your hearing loss journey.

Melissa, a teacher, realized at about age thirty-five that she was not understanding children in the classroom. She went to an audiologist, got hearing aids, and wore them for years. She got her first cochlear implant in 2019 and her second in 2024. Hearing loss Facebook groups were a big help.

An audiology test in grade school revealed Sharon's hearing loss. Her hearing continued to worsen, but an audiologist and a doctor told her nothing could be done about it. Finally in 1995, a doctor said she could be fitted for hearing aids, which the former Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services (DARS) paid for. Sharon now wears two cochlear implants. Her first implant took three surgeries. Adopted, Sharon was fifty years old before she found out that many members of her birth family had hearing loss.

Tell us your funniest experience with hearing loss.

On the way home in the car after dark, Patricia's friends discussed the seminar they had just attended. Patricia said, "I need a light. I can't see what you're saying."

In McDonald's, a little Asian woman asked about Sharon's cochlear implant and said she wanted one. It took Sharon thirty minutes to convince the woman she did not need a cochlear implant and that she should see an audiologist.

Joyce thought the 1960s song, "Poetry in Motion" was "Oh, a Tree in Motion."

What made you decide to do something about your hearing loss?

Patricia wore a body aid until her thirties and then a behind-the-ear aid. In 2006 a gentleman in church noticed Patricia lip reading. He introduced her to HLAA chapter president Karen Moulder. Karen referred her to a cochlear implant surgeon. Patricia got her first cochlear implant in 2007.

Working at the Goodrich Center for the Deaf in Fort Worth, Dan was aware of the conditions and signs of hearing loss. He then realized he needed to have his hearing tested. Texas Workforce Solutions - Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) provides hearing aids and other accommodations for people who need help keeping their job or getting a job. TWS-VRS has paid for Dan's hearing aids twice.

What would you say to someone who doesn't want to wear their hearing aids or is afraid of a cochlear implant?

Dan tells them everybody is wearing things in their ears nowadays.

Sharon encourages people to go back to their audiologist to adjust their hearing aids and reminds them of the correlation between hearing loss and dementia.

What can you hear now that you could not hear before that makes you happy?

For Dan the greatest benefit is being able to hear clearly in conversation and to better enjoy the range of music.

Living in the country, Sharon feeds the deer. She can hear them cracking corn with their teeth.

What helped you adjust the most to your hearing loss journey?

All the panelists said HLAA.

Friends and family who are patient now say Melissa's name to get her attention before speaking to her.

Holding a mini mic lets Sharon hear her daughter from another room.

At age sixty-five Joyce began working part-time at an audiology office.

Was there any follow up about auditory training and listening skills after they implanted you?

Melissa did auditory training on the Advanced Bionics website. She did six weeks of auditory training with Dr. Denise Gage, Speech Language Pathologist in Arlington. She read along with audio books. Auditory training is essential.

Sharon got very little auditory training help from her audiologist or implant surgeon. Then Dr. Cornetta Mosley's six-week ARR-O (Auditory Rehabilitation to Reconnect - Online Version) program helped. Dr. Mosley gave Sharon other helpful websites and online programs.

Support your Fort Worth chapter

We will gratefully acknowledge your donations in each issue of the newsletter.

The list is updated monthly, starting with the new year.

Platinum = \$400+; **Gold** = \$200 to \$399; **Silver** = \$100 to \$199

Bronze = \$50 to \$99; **Friend** = Up to \$49

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Silver: Anonymous, Yolanda Thursby, Andy Ybarra

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The Fort Worth Chapter is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.
All contributions are tax-deductible.

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Make checks payable to: **HAAA - Fort Worth Chapter**

Bring donations to the monthly meeting or mail to:

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