



Heard in Fort Worth

Hearing Loss Association of America – Fort Worth Chapter
June 2025

June 14 Program

Hear, See, Connect: Assistive Tech for All

**Presented by Erineka Alexander, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Technology Specialist
with Texas Health and Human Services**



"I am a dedicated Deaf and Hard of Hearing Technology Specialist in Fort Worth, serving region 3B with a solid foundation in audiology and credentials in hearing instrument science. For 2 ½ years, I've dedicated my passion to helping individuals with hearing loss by educating them on day-to-day communication tools, counseling individuals relating to device troubleshooting and personally sharing my own experience as a Cochlear Implant individual living with hearing loss.

"I've successfully broken communication barriers not only for individuals but also for families and educating audiologists on communication tools for their patients in medical settings. I look forward to bringing more smiles than frowns in future opportunities where I can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of individuals by delivering expert care and state-of-the-art technological solutions."

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.
Snacks and mingle at 9:30 a.m. and meeting at 10:00. Please join us and bring a friend!
*We offer real time captioning and assistive listening systems for communication accessibility.
Captioning is provided courtesy of Cauthen & Associates Court Reporting and CART Services.*

Future Programs

- July: Ear and Brain Workouts: Auditory and Listening Training
presented by Carol Cokely, PhD, Clinical Professor and AuD Program Head,
School of Behavioral & Brain Sciences at the University of Texas at Dallas
- August: Joyce will speak about the HLAA national convention in Indianapolis
- September: Cochlear Corporation Representative Ali Castillo
- October: Med El Corporation Representative Janet Lane
-

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

My dear friends,

Many of you may have heard of the passing of our great friend Kevin Medlin. He was loved here at our chapter and at HLAA National. Dan wrote a wonderful memorial piece about Kevin. Thank you, Dan.

At the memorial service I learned much more about him. Several friends, his daughter and two of his pastor friends shared stories of his willingness to help others at any time for any reason. Over his lifetime he had given 37 gallons of O negative blood. That's a lot of blood!

He graduated from Paschal High School and UT; he remained friends with many classmates. His wife Pam was his high school sweetheart. He was a dedicated coach for his daughters' teams and was called Papa by his grandchildren. And when his hearing was gone, he helped many understand the challenges he faced.

Often, I've learned so much about a person at their funeral or memorial service. Then I'm saddened that I didn't know more about the person while they were living. At our chapter meetings we know the person has a hearing loss of some kind, but we each are so much more than our hearing loss. Let's learn more about each other.

Grateful for the years I knew Kevin,
Joyce Parlin
Chapter President

IN MEMORIAM

Lois Johnson, July 10, 1948 – May 7, 2025

Lois Johnson, of Houston, was State Coordinator for HLAA for decades. She was active as a leader when the organization was called Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH), before its name change to Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA).
Lois was highly influential in Texas until her passing.

2025 Chapter Board of Directors

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Heard In Fort Worth

This newsletter is published by the
**Fort Worth Chapter of the
Hearing Loss Association of America**
Website: www.hearinglossfortworth.com
Email: fortworthHLAA@gmail.com
Mailing address: Box 1310, Euless TX 76039
Telephone: 817-966-1947 or 817-228-8041



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.

IN MEMORIAM

KEVIN BLAKE MEDLIN

August 9, 1960 - May 11, 2025



Kevin Medlin made his mark in our HLAA chapter, in the city of Fort Worth, and wherever he went. He served our chapter effectively as vice president, including arranging for our meeting location and for various programs and events. His focus in the past year was to expand HLAA's outreach through developing new chapters in Texas.

Kevin also served for several years on the Fort Worth Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities. In all these ways he served with distinction and made a significant impact.

Kevin had normal hearing until June 2017, when he suffered an autoimmune disease which brought a sudden and complete hearing loss. His audiologist referred him to our chapter. Kevin went all in, obtained cochlear implants, learned sign language, and developed skills in lip reading and using the best of technology. He became a role model for many others.

His inspirational blog, "My Silent Pew," related some of his experiences and insights in dealing with a sudden total hearing loss in later life. He introduced his blog with these words:

My silent pew is likely the first pew in any sanctuary. Conveniently, this pew is typically empty because... Who wants to sit on the first row at church? But it is here where the minister's lips can be read, where facial expressions can be interpreted, and where the vibrations from the choir may be felt. Moreover, it is here where life seems to reflect more clearly. You should try it sometime....

Never shy about asking for accommodations, Kevin asked his pastor to send him an advance copy of his sermon manuscript for each Sunday. He then sat in the front pew with his iPad, following along with the minister's spoken words during the service.

At Mayor's Committee meetings or other public functions, Kevin requested and received captioning services so he could participate fully and offer his comments as appropriate. His insights and suggestions were always relevant and helpful. His public service made a difference in the lives of people with disabilities of all kinds.

Kevin's Celebration of Life was held on May 16 at University Christian Church, Fort Worth. Friends and family members recalled his willingness to help anyone any time, his leadership with the Paschal High School and the University of Texas alumni associations, his support for athletic teams and events, and his church and family engagement. He was "everyone's best friend" and was much loved and highly respected.

He is survived by his wife Pam, daughters Elizabeth Cox and Katherine Black and their husbands and children, and by his mother Elois Medlin.

"In lieu of flowers, donations in his name may be made to the Humane Society of North Texas, the American Red Cross, or the Hearing Loss Association of America."



May 10 Program Summary:

DFW Airport Accessibility Services

Presenter: Megan Bozarth, Asst. VP of Customer Programs, DFW Airport

*Summarized by Darlene Liesner from the meeting transcript
provided by Brandy Walthall of Cauthen & Associates Court Reporting and CART Services*

Megan Bozarth, the Assistant Vice President of Customer Programs for DFW International Airport, spoke at the May 10 meeting. With 20+ years of distinguished performance, she oversees new customer programs to provide the best possible experience for DFW customers.

DFW International Airport is the third busiest airport in the world in terms of passengers and airplanes coming and going. Eighty-eight million people flew in and out in 2024. The airport expects 100 million people in 2030. The Airport serves 190 destinations.

The airport is renovating, adding, and expanding. More gates, more growth, and a new Terminal F. The aging infrastructure requires new bridges and roadways. Before you fly, check out the DFW Airport Construction website - dfwairport.com/construction.

The DFW International Airport vision statement is: "Travel Transformed." Its Mission Statement is always to show new ways that DFW International Airport:

1. Cares for its customers.
2. Inspires employees.
3. Strengthens its communities.
4. Builds an exceptional airport experience every day.

One strategic initiative is customer accessibility, including multi-languages. The airport intends to make the journey better for customers with disabilities. The Inclusion and Accessibility Committee has members representing the hearing loss community, those with visual impairment, the neurodiverse (autism spectrum), the mobility impaired, and the dwarfism community.

DFW International Airport is a government entity federally funded through the Federal Aviation Association. The airport's compliance strategy assures that it is accessible to everyone. The FAA requires a self-assessment report every three years. The airport is subject to periodic American Disability Act (ADA) audits.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Program is free and voluntary. The lanyard design informs airport employees that a neurodivergent traveler may need extra assistance. <https://dfwairport.com/sunflower>.

Terminal B has some new, huge digital signs at the gates, across the ceilings, and down the floor with boarding information. Over the next few years, newly designed 75" flight information screens will replace the current 40" screens. Thirty-five stand-alone kiosks will have bigger, brighter, touch screens with flight information and maps for getting around in the airport in seven languages. If you need to reach someone in an emergency, call the Airport Integrated Operational Center, 1-972-973-3112, to request visual paging. Each terminal has approximately twelve visual paging screens - one every 3-4 gates. Info Nodes (screens) of the Future include multi-lingual and accessibility features. The D-Pad allows mouse-like control for full screen accessibility within reach for wheelchair or dwarf travelers.

Allways is a paid meet and greet service. They guide you from your car through the gate, security, and customs. Escorts can be arranged in terminals to an airport/airline lounge, shops, and restaurants. Make reservations in advance.

Every terminal will have a sensory room. The first one will be in Terminal D in 2026. Several more will open before the 2026 FIFA World Cup in Arlington. Sensory rooms help neurodivergent individuals. The design team got feedback and advice from the community. Calming? Interactive? A combination?

One family restroom per terminal will be larger and have an adult changing table.

The Inclusion Committee is evaluating Convo Access for on-demand American Sign Language interpreting. The deaf customer scans one of the Convo QR codes around the airport and connects to a live interpreter. The service is free and does not require an app or an account.

Megan answered audience questions and left a hand-out on inclusion efforts at DFW International Airport.

Hearing Loss Affects More Than Your Ears

HLAA Communications/May 29, 2025/Hear This BLOG

The following is an excerpt from www.hearingloss.org/hearing-loss-affects-more-than-your-ears/

It is offered here in the hope that you will go online and read the original article in its entirety for the help it may provide for self-understanding and learning to cope more effectively with hearing loss and to advocate for yourself and others.

Alison Freeman, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist who works half-time at California State University at Northridge (CSUN) counseling students with and without hearing loss. She has had severe hearing loss since early childhood, was orally trained and is a long-time member of HLAA. Dr. Freeman has developed mental health service programs in several counties and did her post-doctorate fellowship at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Center on Deafness.

As a psychologist with severe hearing loss, I often find myself reflecting on how it has impacted both my own life and the lives of my clients. Often, people erroneously assume that hearing loss is purely a medical diagnosis that only affects the ears. Actually, hearing loss is a complex interplay of social, cognitive and emotional factors that can significantly impact a person's quality of life.

In the United States, hearing loss is the **third most common chronic health condition**, twice as prevalent as diabetes or cancer. Like many other conditions, hearing loss is on a spectrum that can range from mild to profoundly deaf—and affects every person differently. Even a mild hearing loss can have an impact and often progressively worsens over time. Whether from birth or acquired later, having a hearing loss requires learning new ways to adapt personally and navigate the hearing landscape.

Mental Health, Self-Identity and Hearing Loss

Many doctors and audiologists may only address the physical aspect of hearing loss without recognizing its psychological impact. However, hearing loss is primarily a *communication disability* that affects every aspect of personality, mental health and interactions with family, friends, relationships, co-workers and society at large. The daily effort to understand conversations, music, or professional meetings can lead to a constant state of stress—from the frustration of asking people to repeat themselves, to the embarrassment of misunderstanding conversations, to the fear of missing out (FOMO) on the punchline or important information.

Due to such communication challenges, hearing loss is often associated with a higher risk of anxiety, depression, withdrawal and isolation, **particularly in older adults**. Many people with this invisible disability also find themselves “in between” the hearing and non-hearing worlds, which leads to a sense of not belonging....

People who lose their hearing as adults typically experience an identity crisis as their sense of competence and self-esteem plummet.

READ MORE AT <https://www.hearingloss.org/hearing-loss-affects-more-than-your-ears/>

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

The list is updated monthly.

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

Gold: Sharon Huber

Silver: Anonymous, Kris & Linda Dorasami, Patricia Hindman, Dao Ly

Friend: Darlene Liesner

GIFTS IN MEMORY OF KEVIN MEDLIN

Lanny and Jill DeMoss, Patricia Hindman

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

Hearing Loss Association of America - Fort Worth Chapter

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Make checks payable to: HLAA - Fort Worth Chapter

Bring donations to the monthly meeting or mail to:

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Heather Dean, Au.D., FAAA, CCC-A
Doctor of Audiology
Board Certified in Audiology

121 NW Ellison St. Ste. 101
Burleson, TX 76028
PH: 817.764.3077
FAX: 817.754.1923

Heather.Dean@BurlesonAudiology.com
www.BurlesonAudiology.com



Robin Carson, Au.D.
Doctor of Audiology

5104 Camp Bowie Blvd.
Fort Worth, Texas 76107
Tel: 817-737-4327
Fax: 817-737-4328

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