



Heard in Fort Worth

Hearing Loss Association of America – Fort Worth Chapter
February 2024

FEBRUARY 10 PROGRAM:

Area Agency on Aging Benefits Counseling Services

Presented by

Diana Vasquez-Spangler

Senior Benefits Counselor, Area Agency on Aging of Tarrant County

Diana Vazquez-Spangler has been a Benefits Counselor for the Tarrant County Area Agency on Aging for over nine years. She holds a microbiology degree and has worked for 17 years for Johnson & Johnson and Allergan America as an environmental and clean rooms supervisor. She also holds a science, Spanish teacher, and Interpreter licenses from Illinois and Pennsylvania. She loves to help people in need, and with her job as benefits counselor; she is able to put together her knowledge, passion, and her bilingual skills. As part of her responsibilities, she helps individuals gain a better understanding of Medicare, health plans, Medicaid, and other questions related to these fields.

She may also cover various kinds of scams and how to avoid them.

March 9 Program:

Communication Strategies for People with Hearing Loss

Presented by Judy Oetting, M.S., Speech Pathologist

Judy is one of our chapter founders. She has taught lip reading and other communication skills for 40 years. She uses the hard-of-hearing communication strategies developed by psychologist Dr. Sam Trychin, who has a hearing loss himself. Judy has her B.S. degree from Northwestern University and her M.S. from TCU.

We welcome a new sponsor for our newsletter: Realtor Melissa Forsythe. See her ad on our Sponsor page.

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 realtime captioning and assistive listening systems for communication accessibility.

Captioning is provided courtesy of Cauthen & Associates Court Reporting and CART Services.

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

Hi, everyone,

In the winter 2024 issue of *Hearing Health*, a publication of the Hearing Health Foundation, there was an interesting article. "Cochlear Implants on the Court" was written by Antonio Anderson, a basketball player for the University of Memphis who holds many basketball records from his university. He had an eye injury that sidelined his professional career for a time. Then while on a flight to see his agent to get back into professional basketball, he lost his hearing.

He thought he could fight through it. It didn't work for long. He went to his doctor with Mass Ear and Eye. He had total hearing loss in both ears, and it was suggested he have bilateral cochlear implants. His dream of playing pro ball was gone. He says, "I went to a dark place."

He did get the CI's. A friend asked him to help with a youth team and he was not interested. He didn't want to answer all the questions about "What's on your head?" But he did go and fell back in love with basketball. He coached and mentored kids, and his teams went on to win state championships.

I found his story so inspiring. The kids adapted to his disabilities, were kind and willing to work with him. And the most interesting sentence was this one. "I now know life doesn't always go the way you plan; you have to adjust to life's changes, or it will leave you behind."

Haven't we all felt like that - adjusting to life's changes and challenges? All of you in HLAA-FW help each other out in those times of change and challenge. Thank you!

Happy Valentine's Day! See you February 10th

Joyce Parlin
Chapter President



2024 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), founded in 1979 by Howard E. "Rocky" Stone, is the nation's leading organization representing consumers with hearing loss. The mission of HLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support, and advocacy.



Hearing Loss Association of America
6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320
Rockville, MD 20852. 301-657-2248.

Membership has its benefits. Please join or renew. Go to www.hearingloss.org and click on "Membership" to join.

HLAA Online Member Benefits and Services

HLAA members can access online the latest **quarterly issue** of *Hearing Life* – a magazine for people living with hearing loss. You won't get this type of information anywhere else, all in one popular magazine. We print articles for you—people with hearing loss who want the latest and credible information to live successfully with hearing loss. Your hard copy will be delivered in the next quarterly mailing.

We also offer the following to our members to keep you informed, educated, and to offer support:

- **Hearing Life e-News** – Subscribe to our digital e-newsletter that features current information on hearing loss and HLAA events. *Hearing Life e-News* is delivered to your inbox twice per month. See the latest **edition**.
- **Facebook Official Community & Support** group and **HLAA Online Community** – Join our online community and special interest groups where you will connect to a nationwide community for support and sharing of ideas
- **Calendar** – Find out more about HLAA national and local events.
- **HLAA News** – Subscribe to our RSS feed to receive HLAA updates and news. See the latest news **here**.
- **Chapters** – Chapter and state organizations offer local support for people living with hearing loss.
- **Educational Webinars** and **Virtual Meetings** – See recordings of past webinars and meetings for more resources and support.
- **Hearing Help** – See the educational resources we have to help people living with hearing loss.
- **Advocacy** - See the latest updates on issues and advocacy efforts that affect people living with hearing loss.
- **Hearing Loss and COVID-19 Resources** and **Communities** – See current COVID-19 resources and various community resources.

Over the Counter Hearing Aids Webinar

OTC 101: Ask the Experts Webinar #2
Tuesday, February 20, 2024, 2-3 p.m. ET

Register at https://hearingloss.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4t2HK8yQQj-6kv1zH3gIVw#/registration

Join HLAA for the second event in its **OTC 101: Ask the Experts Webinar Series** sharing important information about over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids. This exciting new class of products may provide another pathway to treatment for some adults with mild-to-moderate hearing loss. In 2022, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) finalized its rule permitting the sale of OTC hearing aids directly to consumers over 18, which are now available from a variety of retail and online stores. We're presenting a series of four webinars through spring 2024, designed to answer your questions and clear up confusion.

This webinar features Charlotte S. Yeh, M.D., chief medical officer for AARP Services, Inc. and Kelly King, Au.D., Ph.D., audiologist and program officer at the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on a panel moderated by HLAA Executive Director Barbara Kelley. Read about the panelists below and send questions in advance using the form provided.

This complimentary event is open to the public and will be live captioned and recorded.

HLAA Webinar:

Enhancing Workplace Effectiveness: Technologies for People with Hearing Loss

Tuesday, February 27, 2024, 12-1 p.m. ET

Register at https://hearingloss.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_N8YguIMLRd2SmEO913jNfQ#/registration

Those of us with hearing loss know that it can be difficult to operate in workplaces where everyone assumes normal hearing. Join us for an insightful webinar exploring new technologies that can help even the playing field. We will be discussing assistive listening devices, captioning, video conferencing, and other tools that the presenters - all with hearing loss - have found most useful in a range of workplace situations, including office, travel, restaurant, classroom, and factory floor.

Learning objectives:

- Learn the technologies people with hearing loss have found most effective in the workplace.
- Learn strategies to gracefully inform co-workers of hearing loss and get their help in communication.
- Connect with the host of other resources available.

January 13 Meeting Summary

New Year, New Ears: Embracing Hearing Solutions for a Fresh Start

Presented by

Jason Taylor, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist with Sorenson

Sheila G. Grady, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Access Specialist with Deaf Action Center

*Program summary edited by Darlene Liesner from a transcript by caption writer
Carrie Gibson, CSR, of Cauthen & Associates, Court Reporting & CART Service*

Sheila Grady: Born profoundly deaf, Sheila Grady attended the Clarke School for the Deaf, a strictly oral deaf school. She went on to attend the Rochester Institute of Technology majoring in Social Work with a minor in communication design. Ashley, a sign language interpreter, voiced for Sheila at the meeting.



A case manager for deaf and hard of hearing for thirty years, Sheila now works for the Deaf Action Center (DAC) as a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Access Specialist. DAC Deaf and Hard of Hearing Access Specialists are contracted with Texas Health and Human Services Commission - Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. Sheila serves Cooke, Denton, Erath, Hood, Johnson, Palo Pinto, Parker, Somervell, Tarrant, and Wise Counties.

Sheila educates the deaf and hard of hearing about their rights through the American Disabilities Act (ADA), available resources, self-advocacy skills, and more. She also trains businesses, government agencies, and the public on how to interact with and accommodate the deaf and hard of hearing.

The ADA protects people with disabilities from discrimination and from being required to pay for accommodations. The ADA is divided into 5 titles:

1. Employment - employer's and employee's rights
2. Public Service (government agencies)
3. Public Accommodations
4. Telecommunications
5. Miscellaneous

Communication in social, educational, and professional settings is so important. The law says to “provide the most effective way to communicate.” In medical, legal, or other situations a sign language interpreter must be familiar with the vocabulary. If a person has a learning disability, the sign language interpreter may have to use shorter, simpler words.

The deaf or hard of hearing employee may need to educate the employer or provider. Disabled persons should know their rights and how to explain them. Hospitals and doctors’ offices must provide accommodations. For example, with Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), the interpreter is on a screen in the examination room with the doctor and patient.

Video Relay Services (VRS), a telephone line, is regulated by the FCC. The deaf or hard of hearing caller on a television or a computer with a video camera and high-speed internet, contacts a VRS communication assistant (CA). They communicate in sign language. The CA then telephones the party the VRS user wishes to call. The VRS CA relays the conversation between parties. By requesting accommodations, a person is teaching the person they’re requesting it from. The more the disabled educate the community, the better access will become.

Contact Sheila Grady at access3b@dactexas.org.

Jason Taylor:

Jason grew up with lifelong hearing loss. He had twelve years of deaf education with sign language. In mainstream classes he had an interpreter. He has ten plus years of professional experience in vocational rehabilitation. He worked for the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services (DARS) and now for Sorenson Communications.

Sorenson is a 2024 Texas Department of Human Services contractor. Sorenson is a global language services provider combining technology and human services to connect people across signed and spoken languages through interpreting and captioning. Caption Call captioned phones are a part of Sorenson. Olelo, a smart phone app for captioning calls, is now Caption Call Mobile. Sorenson offers Caption Calls services, Video Relay services, Business services (Interpreting), and Industry services.

Jason is a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Technology Specialist. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Technology Specialists promote quality of life for the deaf and hard of hearing through technology and managing hearing loss. They give assistive technology demonstrations and assessment. They consult and train on communication strategies. They provide referrals to community resources for support for hearing loss. They visit a person’s workplace to assess their environmental needs. They do one-on-one counseling.

The Texas Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP) helps people with a disability that interferes with their access to telephone networks. The STAP application needs to be certified by a hearing health professional. Receiving the STAP voucher generally takes approximately eight months from the time the State gets the application. The applicant then exchanges the voucher for a piece of equipment. For a two-way texting device, for example, Jason has the list of vendors a person can use to exchange their voucher for a smart phone.

A smart phone voucher’s value is approximately \$537. If a smart phone costs more, the person must pay the difference. To get a STAP device a person needs to meet certain requirements. There are no income restrictions. A person must be a Texas resident. A Texas driver’s license is the most common form of identification. A person must be at least five years old and have a disability.

The state also provides driver identification visor cards - one for the deaf and one for hard of hearing. Place the card above the vehicle visor. If stopped by law enforcement, show the card, your TDL, and car insurance. Someone with an S restriction code on their driver’s license simply sends in a copy of their license with the visor card application. The S restriction code indicates a special outside rear view mirror or hearing aids. For people without an S restriction, Jason, an audiologist, primary care physician, or an advanced registered nurse must sign the application.

Jason has a ton of resources. He brought STAP and visor card applications, communication tip sheets, a Teltex catalog of assistive listening devices, and a list of caption phone providers. He has all kinds of smart phone apps. Big Text is a free real time speech to large text iPhone app.

Jason Taylor can be reached at 945-208-2271 Text/V; JAYTALYOR5@Sorenson.com

Support your Fort Worth chapter

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

The list is updated monthly.

2024 Gifts:

Platinum = \$400+; **Gold** = \$200 to \$399; **Silver** = \$100 to \$199;
Bronze = \$50 to \$99; **Friends** = Up to \$49

Platinum: *Cauthen & Associates Court Reporting and CART Services (in kind)*

Silver: Patricia Hindman, Leslie Kilton, Ken Parlin

Bronze: Grace Cromwell, Mariam Gore

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**GIFTS IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM HETREED,
Husband of Dr. Shirley Molenich,
Given by Dr. Marie Kelly**

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

Hearing Loss Association of America - Fort Worth Chapter

2024 CHAPTER DONATION FORM

Make checks payable to: HLAA - Fort Worth Chapter

Bring to the monthly meeting or mail to: HLAA - Fort Worth, PO Box 1310, Euless TX 76039.

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Cauthen & Associates, Inc. is a woman-owned business, founded by Lisa Cauthen in 1998, and incorporated in 1999. Cauthen & Associates has provided the DFW Metroplex with **captioning, communication access real-time translation (CART), and court reporting services** for over 20 years. It provides CART services for our meetings

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Southern Star Technology provides the assistive listening systems for our HLAA chapter meetings.



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