



Heard in Fort Worth

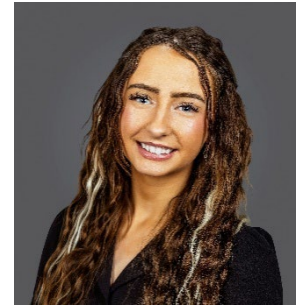
Hearing Loss Association of America – Fort Worth Chapter
April 2025

April 12 Program:

The #1 Most Modifiable Risk Factor for Preventing Dementia

Presenter: Skylar Gentry

Certified Dementia Practitioner
and licensed Audiology Assistant



The risk of developing dementia increases by 200-500% with each degree of hearing loss. Properly treating hearing loss and tinnitus is the most modifiable risk factor for preventing cognitive decline. Skylar Gentry, a certified dementia practitioner, will present on the relationship between cognitive function and hearing.

Skylar is an audiology assistant at the Hearing and Brain Centers of America-Weatherford. She has trained under and worked closely with Dr. Keith Darrow, the only Harvard and MIT-trained neuroscientist practicing audiology in America.

Hearing and Brain Centers focuses on preventing the risk of developing dementia through the proper medical treatment of hearing loss and tinnitus. As a member of the Excellence in Audiology network, Skylar has participated in research studying the relationship between tinnitus, hearing loss, and their correlation to cognitive decline.

Program for May 10

RESCHEDULED FROM JANUARY

DFW Airport Accessibility Services

Megan Bozarth Asst. VP of Customer Programs, DFW airport

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.

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

Happy Spring! It's a rainy day as I write this, but that's needed and has caused the trees to begin to green. It's such a beautiful time of the year.

The chapter has added a new sponsor to the newsletter sponsor page. Please take note. We are delighted when businesses want to advertise with the HLAA-Fort Worth chapter. Please consider asking your audiologist, provider, or other business if they would be willing to help the chapter by adding their business card to our advertising page. I have printed several letters and invoices and will have them available at our April meeting.

We are grateful to the Hearing and Brain Center of Weatherford for stepping up and providing a program when the planned presenter had to cancel for medical reasons. The topic is the same, just a different presenter. Thank you, Skylar Gentry.

I'm looking forward to this presentation, and I hope we will have a great turnout for April.

Joyfully,
Joyce Parlin
Chapter President

Chapter 35th Anniversary Celebration, March 8

Attendee Group Photo

Founding Members:
Judy Oetting, Dan White,
& Marsha McClean



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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

Join us at HLAA's 40th annual convention, June 11-14, 2025, in Indianapolis—
home of the famous Indy 500 race. Our yearly hearing accessible event brings together hundreds of people with hearing loss from around the U.S. to learn, discover and connect. Check out the latest technology and hear from health and industry experts during a series of empowering events designed to help you live your best life with hearing loss.

Advance registration available online through May 14.
Go to <https://www.hearingloss.org/get-involved/hlaa-2025-convention/>

UTD Offers SIARC 2025

Summer Intensive Auditory Revitalization Conference (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.

SIARC is a week-long program offered for couples who experience challenges associated with hearing loss. Because hearing impairment affects an individual's communication with others, the conference is specially designed for a participant and his or her communication partner, who may be a spouse, family member, friend or co-worker.

The conference will include group classes about coping with hearing loss, facilitating communication, and technological advances in the hearing industry. Participants will be able to try new digital hearing aids and use various assistive listening devices. Attendees also will receive hearing aid checks and complete audiological evaluations.

Special evening activities will utilize the skills learned and test some of the assistive listening devices in real-life situations. Participants will try out the latest hearing aids and various assistive listening devices in restaurants and other venues. These devices work with hearing aids or cochlear implants.

DATES: July 27 - 31, Sunday noon through Thursday noon, at the University of Texas at Dallas. For fees, further information, and registration, watch for the May issue of this newsletter or go to www.utdallas.edu/hhlab.

Dean Olson Offers “Living with Hearing Loss” at Ghost Ranch, NM

Dean Olson will present a four-day workshop on strategies for coping with hearing loss at Ghost Ranch, near Abiquiu, New Mexico, August 26-29, mornings, 8:30 to 12:00. Sessions will cover hearing loss basics, technology, and communication strategies as pioneered by hard-of-hearing psychologist Sam Trychin, Ph.D.

While attending the workshop, enjoy Ghost Ranch, which was the home of artist Georgia O'Keefe, among the multi-hued cliffs of Abiquiu,

Dean Olson is a former member of our chapter, now living in Washington state, where he advocates for the needs of people with hearing loss, including live captioning at sports events and facilities. He studied coping strategies under Sam and Janet Trychin, who previously taught at Ghost Ranch. Our own Judy Oetting also trained under Dr. Trychin and has taught many years using his methodology.

Go to <https://ghostranch.org/program/25050302> for more information and registration.

Read Speech-to-Text Captions on Eyeglasses

New England Low Vision and Blindness has launched **NuCaption**, an innovative wearable closed-captioning device designed to revolutionize communication for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and Deaf-Blind communities, the company says in its news release.

It converts spoken language into instant captions, displayed directly in the user's field of vision for more natural one-to-one communications.

According to the company, NuCaption offers highly accurate transcription, adapting to different accents, speech rates, and environments. This technology is compact, lightweight, and user-friendly.

The cell phone shown above is required to power the device and to provide the captions. It does not function as a regular mobile phone. The device does not fit over eyeglasses used for vision.

For more information on NuCaption, go to

<https://nelowvision.com/product/nucaption-real-time-solutions-for-the-deaf-blind-community/>.

Other applications, such as Live Transcribe, provide speech-to-text captioning on a handheld cell phone.





Watching and Working for You

HLAA Presents 2025 Advocacy Agenda

This new year brings many changes that HLAA is closely monitoring and advocating for. Advocacy at HLAA means maintaining our focus, staying committed to our mission and being responsive to the latest information. HLAA members and supporters can expect new advocacy tools to engage and advocate for access to the hearing world and more. Here is what is happening in Washington, the Nation's Capital, as we look at policy relating to people with hearing loss.

At the Department of Transportation (DOT), HLAA will be advocating for the issuance of accessibility regulations as promised in the recent Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act. The Advisory Board is tasked with assessing the existing and emerging disability-related access barriers for passengers with disabilities; evaluating the extent to which the department's programs and activities are eliminating disability-related access barriers; and recommending actions to improve the air travel experience of passengers with disabilities.

HLAA is a staunch supporter of the Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility (CVTA) Act of 2023, which updates the Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) of 2010. This legislation will ensure that people with disabilities have full access to the ever-expanding video programming options on television and the Internet. It will also guarantee that our community is included in all aspects of daily living through accessible communication technologies as these continue to evolve. In the House of Representatives, HLAA and its partner consumer and disability organizations will be advocating to reintroduce an updated version of this legislation in 2025.

The House Ways and Means Committee has jurisdiction over federal tax policy, including the funding and coverage of Medicaid and Medicare. Since tax legislation enacted under President Trump in 2017 is set to expire in 2025, Congress will need to consider whether to continue, modify, replace and/or enact new tax policies in 2025. In addition, legislation that would expand Medicare coverage of hearing aids and provide tax credits for hearing aid purchases is expected to be introduced in 2025. HLAA will be advocating for the passage of these bills.

Senate committees of interest to HLAA and its members include the Commerce Committee, the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) advocacy Committee, and the Finance Committee. The Commerce Committee, now led by Chairman Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Ranking Member Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), oversees the FCC.

The HELP Committee, now chaired by Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Ranking Member Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT), has jurisdiction over Medicare, Medicaid, and the FDA.

You Can Take Action with HLAA's New Advocacy Tool

In February 2025, HLAA launched a new legislative advocacy tool to expand our ability to engage members and direct their advocacy efforts. Integrated into our website, it enables HLAA members and supporters to easily view and act on policy and legislative issues happening before Congress, as well as state initiatives.

The tool will seamlessly list the issues and bills that HLAA is supporting or opposing, identify your U.S. representative and senators and provide model emails to send to them—complementing our “boots on the ground” advocacy before Congress and the administration in Washington, D.C. You can access it on our **Action Alerts page**: <https://www.hearingloss.org/advocacy-and-resources/action-alerts/>



March 8 Program Summary:

The Connection Between Balance & Hearing

Presenter: Amy Gonzalez, PT, DPT, CCVR

Summarized by Darlene Liesner from the meeting transcript from Cauthen & Associates

Dr. Amy Gonzalez is a vestibular physical therapist. She has a doctorate in physical therapy from Texas Woman's University and works at Texas Health Burleson.

Balance and hearing are closely related within the inner ear. The hearing side is the cochlea. The other side of the inner ear is the vestibular or balance portion. *Vestibular* refers to balance, dizziness, and vertigo. **Balance** is our ability to maintain our upright position, our stability, whether standing, sitting, or moving. With the inner ear, there is also the vestibular cochlear nerve. It connects all the input that is coming in for the balance and hearing portions to the brain and sends those signals, and the brain processes all of that information,

The three primary balance systems are *visual, vestibular, and proprioception*. We use *visual* cues for vertical and horizontal lines and to detect our position in relation to the horizon. The *vestibular* system, the balance part of the inner ear, is like a gyroscope. It senses rotation, nodding motions, and quick starts and stops. *Proprioception* is our body's positional awareness - feeling where we are, feeling solid ground under our feet. Neuropathy, numbness in your feet, may interfere with the proprioception system.

Hearing also helps with balance. It helps us tell where we are in space. We orient ourselves to the sounds around us. Studies show a connection between hearing and balance, depth perception, and the ability to orient and to stabilize. Postural sway decreased 54% when sound was used, compared to only vision to orient. Adults with hearing loss are 2.5 times more likely to fall. Fall risk increases with every 10db of hearing loss. Consistent use of cochlear implants, hearing aids, and other resources assists us during loss of vestibular function.

Some balance disorders affect hearing. *Meniere's Disease* comes with fluctuating low frequency hearing loss, tinnitus, dizziness, and ear fullness which progresses, usually in one ear but can be in both. Spells last between twenty minutes and twelve hours.

Labyrinthitis includes sudden hearing loss with dizziness lasting one to two days, usually with nausea and vomiting.

An *Acoustic Neuroma*, a benign tumor on the balance/hearing nerve, causes gradual hearing loss and tinnitus in one ear and a loss of balance.

A *Perilymphatic Fistula* comes with fluctuating hearing loss worsened with sudden pressure changes in the ear like coughing, sneezing, and bearing down.

Symptoms of *Superior Canal Dilation Syndrome* are intermittent hearing changes, dizziness, and hearing internal sounds (eyes moving, stomach growling, heartbeat, etc). Symptoms worsen with pressure or loud noises.

BPPV, Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo, is the most common type of vertigo and is unrelated to hearing. BPPV manifests with brief minute-or-less episodes of dizziness/vertigo. Position changes of the head, like rolling over in bed, looking up, bending over, and quick head turns, cause a spinning sensation. Your primary care physician or ear, nose, and throat doctor will usually refer you to a physical therapist.

Fall Risk. The CDC's fall risk screening includes questionnaires, balance assessments (tests), and intervention. If you answer "yes" to any of the questions, proceed to the balance tests. Some common balance tests are Timed Up and Go, Four Stage Balance Test, and 30 Second Chair Stand Test. A few brave audience members at the meeting participated in some of the balance tests.

Some fall risk factors are hearing loss, history of falls, fear of falling, muscle weakness, dizziness, depression, older age, vision problems, neuropathy, low blood pressure, dehydration, medication interactions or side effects, footwear, and environmental hazards (slick surfaces, clutter, poor lighting, etc.).

Improving balance, reducing fall risk, and staying safe and independent is possible. If you answered “yes” to a screening question or tested positive for fall risk, see someone - often a physical therapist. Community balance classes and programs like Silver Sneakers are good. Most physical therapy requires a referral.

For a list of vestibular physical therapists, go to <https://vestibular.org>. The Vestibular Disorders Association (VDA) has a provider directory. Dr. Gonzalez answered audience questions and left handouts.

Support your Fort Worth chapter

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

The list is updated monthly. 2025 Gifts:

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

**Silver: Anonymous, Sharon Huber, Dao Ly
Bronze: Patricia Hindman. Friend: Darlene Liesner**

**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 donations to the monthly meeting or mail to:

HLAA - Fort Worth, PO Box 1310, Euless TX 76039.

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