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Email: info@hearinglossrochester.org

Website: https://www.hearinglossrochester.org

Volume 38, Number 10



June 2025

Featured Presentation

TUESDAY, JUNE 3

NOON - 1:00 PM AT ST PAUL'S PARISH HALL AND ON ZOOM: Dr. ALESIA ALLEN

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion...and Hearing Loss?

Learn more about "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion...and Hearing Loss?" - with Dr. Alesia Allen, Ph.D. Dr. Allen is Assistant Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion at National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT).



In this role, she monitors diversity, inclusion, equal opportunity/access regulations and issues in higher education and then acts as adviser to the university president on these matters. With 15 years of professional, clinical, and teaching experience, Dr. Allen's worked on several initiatives to promote system changes that impact deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals who come from diverse backgrounds. She has also held several roles that include providing therapy and assessments to deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, clinical consultations, teaching, and advocating for better mental health services for this population.

Leader's Letter

Dear Friends,

My last "Leader's Letter" to you was written in September 2024 – as your President for the 2024-2025 program year – the 41st year of this Chapter's existence! That letter reflected all the promise that the new year held for us, with a new organization-



al structure, new programs and plans for the year. I am pleased to say (and I hope many of you will agree..)

(Continued on page 4)



In memory of Al Suffredini See Page 5

JUNE CALENDAR & PROGRAMS

Additional June Meetings and Programs

TUESDAY, JUNE 3

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM IN PERSON, ST PAUL'S VESTRY ROOM: HOPE Session: 'Hearing Other People's Experiences': Joe Kozelsky CCC/A: Prospective, new, or experienced hearing aid users informally share their experiences, questions, and hearing loss journeys.

11:00 AM - 11:30 AM AT ST PAUL'S PARISH HALL: Conversation and LIGHT refreshments.

11:30 AM - NOON AT ST PAUL'S PARISH HALL: Chapter announcements and BUSINESS meeting

TUESDAY, JUNE 10

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM ON ZOOM: BOARD of Directors Meeting

TUESDAY, JUNE 17

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM ON ZOOM: HLAA Rochester Chapter annual Program Planning MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM ON ZOOM: **HOPE in the** Evening

THURSDAY, JUNE 19

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM: AT LIFESPAN, 1900 CLINTON AVE.: Assistive-Listening Devices Demo Center

The Assistive Device Demo Center session has been cancelled for June 19th because the Lifespan facility will be closed for the observance of Juneteenth.

Please check our Chapter Website hearinglossrochester.org for any changes

Thank you to our members who are bringing refreshments to our June meeting: Nancy and Doug Meyer, Sue Miller, Truda and Bob Slocum, Ron Smith, and Dan Wolf.

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AWARDS PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL DINNER

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AWARD

HLAA Rochester has long fostered a strong, collaborative relationship with Nazareth University, working together to advance



the mission of our Chapter. This year was no exception, as we partnered once again with Dr. Betsy Runnion, now Head of Audiology in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, to achieve meaningful progress.

Shortly after joining our PAC, Dr. Runnion expressed interest in supporting our Hospital Task Force initiatives. In discussions with Art Maurer, she explored ways to involve Nazareth University students and determined that researching the value of effective communication in medical settings would be beneficial. Dr.

Runnion engaged five students in this research and encouraged them to develop a video to highlight their findings. By the end of the spring semester, the students had successfully completed their research and produced a compelling video, now available on our website and YouTube—all at no cost to HLAA.

The video underscores the critical communication needs of individuals with hearing loss in hospitals and medical environments, providing valuable insights and awareness.

Dr. Runnion also took the lead in bringing her students to the Demo Center at LifeSpan, where they had the opportunity to engage directly with individuals experiencing hearing loss. In doing so, she demonstrated

(Continued on page 3)

COMMUNITY PERSON AWARD

Diana Palotas is Director of Development at Lifespan of Greater Rochester. Lifespan serves over 30,000 seniors with programs in 17 categories. A challenge demanding creativity and flexibility.



Diana's passion is to help nonprofits like Lifespan live their mission and reach their goals. A major accomplishment is her coordination of Lifespan's annual Celebration of Aging - 1400 attended in March.

Lifespan graciously accommodates our monthly HLAA Demo Center. About a year ago a fire drill drove everyone out of the building. Diana happened to be standing on the sidewalk next to Sue Miller. Sue commented on a compelling letter Diana had recently written for Lifespan, and she jokingly said, "Please let us know if you would ever be willing to do any volunteer work for our chapter", she immediately responded with a wonderfully enthusiastic smile, "I'd love to!" And bingo, we had the creative new PR person we were searching for!

Diana has been doing a great job preparing our monthly press releases which are on page 1 of our newsletter and sent to various penny savers and local weekly newspapers. Even when waiting for input from various sources as deadlines are approaching. She also has greatly improved other documents such as our member letter upgrading it from stilted 'institutional' text into the realm of creative writing.

CHAPTER AWARD



Eric Matson has been an invaluable asset to the Rochester chapter and the broader community, dedicating his time and expertise in numerous ways.

As a contributor to the chapter's newsletter, he consistently provides insightful articles. His involvement extends to various health fairs and sub-committees, and he plays a key role on the Board of Directors.

A standout member of our "Tech Team Extraordinaire," Eric actively participates in the Demo Center each month, offering hearing evaluations to visitors. He also leads group presentations at Lifespan, public libraries, and senior residences, utilizing the hearing check kiosk at each location. His technical expertise is evident in his setup of the induction loop for HOPE sessions, as well as his willingness to step in for Joe Kolzelsky during the winter months.

Beyond the chapter, Eric serves as a trusted resource for assistive listening devices and systems,

(Continued on page 3)

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COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AWARD (NAZARETH)

(Continued from page 2)

Nazareth University's dedication to fostering meaningful connections between aspiring hearing healthcare professionals and the communities they will serve.

We deeply appreciate the expertise, dedication, and hard work that Dr. Runnion, her students, and the Nazareth University Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders contribute to improving the lives of individuals with hearing loss. Their commitment makes a lasting impact on both HLAA Rochester and the broader community.

COMMUNITY PERSON AWARD (DIANA PALOTAS)

(Continued from page 2)

She takes text that is flat (and boring) and brings it to life; making it more personable and easier to read.

In her own words: 'Help make the world a better place? Yes, please! That's why I'm here... Tell me your story. Let's see how we can work together!'

We thank Diana for all she is doing for our community and to improve our communications at HLAA.

CHAPTER AWARD (ERIC MATSON)

(Continued from page 2)

responding to inquiries and contributing to the NYS HLAA Chapter sub-committee on over-the-counter hearing aids. As our chapter's ADA liaison, he ensures accessibility remains a priority.

His commitment to outreach extends further—he offers temporary hearing loops and listening devices to churches and organizations considering permanent installation, helping them experience the benefits firsthand.

Eric also upholds the legacy of Fred Altrieth. Like Fred, he diligently researches new assistive listening technologies, tests them, and shares his insights with the chapter. His engaging "tech talks" are a staple of our monthly meetings, ensuring members stay informed.

For his tireless dedication to HLAA and the community, we are honored to present Eric with the Chapter Award.

Since 1996, to date, the HLAA Rochester Chapter has awarded \$126,500 in scholarships to 142 students.

Captioned Entertainment Around Rochester

JCC Center Stage - Tickets and information are available at www.jcccenterstage.org or (585) 461-2000. Please specify "Captioned Area". Tickets are \$35-40 with discounts for JCC members, full time students and seasonal subscribers. All captioned performances are on Sundays at 2 pm.

The Little - The Little Theatre provides options for people with hearing loss, including hearing amplification headphones in all theaters. The hearing amplification headphones can also be used for descriptive listening.

Theatres 1, 2, 4, and 5, are equipped with Hearing Loop Systems. Personal captioning devices are available for all theaters. Please inquire at the box office.

The Little offers open caption screenings when available. Open captions mean captions are visible to everyone, and cannot be turned off. Open caption screenings are currently shown on Thursdays, along with the first matinees on Sundays (please note some films do not have an open caption version). You can find Open Caption shows via **thelittle.org** (listed in the showtimes on each film page), and on social media.

The REV (Merry-go-Round) Theatre in Auburn has a state-of-the-art Assistive Listening System, which makes use of FM to transmit sound over radio frequency directly to the listener's ear. While the overall system is FM, they also have individual induction loops for each device. For information about the REV Theatre's productions, see https://therevtheatre.com/

GEVA Theatre Center - Open Captioning for patrons with hearing loss is provided during the 1st Saturday matinee and both performances of the final Wednesday of each Wilson Stage Series production, and the first Saturday matinee of each Fielding Stage Series production.

duction. When booking your seats, mention your interest in open captioning in order to secure the most advantageous view of the display on the right of the stage.

RBTL Live Theater - Open Captioning, made possible by HLAA, is offered during most 1 pm Sunday matinee subscription performances of the Broadway Season, and select other performances. A text display scrolls words in synchronization with the dialogue and lyrics of the show. Reserve seating in view of the captioning screen in advance or request open captioning for unlisted events, 585.222.5000 or mail@rbtl.org.

Roc Cinema has a hearing loop and some Saturday matinee movies are open-captioned.

OFC Creations Theatre at Winton Place has an M system and receivers with hearing loops for T-coils.

Other Theaters - Regal Theatres, Cinemark Theaters, AMC Theaters, and Movie 10 all indicate on their websites that they have closed captioning devices available by asking at the box office. The Strand Theater in Brockport, has individual displays on goosenecks available .

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Leader's Letter

(Continued from page 1)

that much of this promise has come to fruition over these last 9 months.

Our first challenge was operating under a new **organizational structure**. Instead of utilizing just a few select individuals to do the 'lion's share' of the monthly work, we spread out and re-delegated duties so that we all had the opportunity to be leaders and make more of a mark on the work we do together. This has certainly been a learning process (which we are still getting used to!), but has generally had a positive effect on our work — more folks have taken leadership roles, more voices heard, and more great ideas and information has been shared. I personally hope that this model continues to be one that the Chapter uses as we move forward into next year.

Despite recent organizational changes, our Chapter continues to thrive and make a significant impact in the community. We are thrilled to congratulate our Demonstration Center/Tech team, who will receive the HLAA National 'Chapter on a Mission' award at the June 2025 Convention in Indianapolis, IN. Their monthly 'Demo Center' sessions at LifeSpan are well-attended and provide invaluable opportunities for community members to explore the latest assistive listening technology before making a purchase. We take great pride in the resources they offer to the Rochester area!

Our **Book Club** has flourished this year, bringing together enthusiastic readers eager to explore and discuss stories centered on life with hearing loss. To broaden awareness, **we continue donating books and monthly newsletters to area libraries**, ensuring a diverse audience has access to valuable information about hearing loss and the support our Chapter provides. Additionally, we have expanded our community brochures and resources to include **Spanish versions**, allowing us to reach even more individuals in need.

We are making meaningful strides in the City of Rochester, working towards providing hearing loop technology in churches and houses of worship so that entire congregations can benefit from assistive listening tools. Our 'Hear Together' support group remains a vital resource, offering education and assistance to parents of children with hearing loss.

Our beautiful newly designed **Chapter website** is not only user-friendly but also features convenient online payment options for membership dues and community events, such as our much-anticipated **Summer Picnic** and **Annual Dinner**. Beyond our local efforts, we are committed to **advancing hearing access globally**, sup-

porting initiatives in Ethiopia and Zambia, where assessment, treatment, and education for hearing loss remain scarce.

The contributions of our invaluable **Professional Advisors** and Stellar **Supporters**, dedicated volunteers—treasurers, website and social media managers, phone support, newsletter teams, correspondents, advertisers, and more—continue to be instrumental in our success. Their time, expertise, and generosity bolster our mission in ways that are truly irreplaceable.

With all these efforts, it's no surprise that our **member-ship has grown to over 300 strong**—a true testament to the trust and recognition our community has for the meaningful work we do every day!

And our work does not stop...This Summer/Fall, many active folks in our organization will gather for a **retreat** - dedicated time together to discuss ideas, thoughts and dreams for our successful future.

As we reflect on the course of this 41st year, I feel it has been yet another successful one, despite some of the challenges we took on at its onset. I would like to personally thank each and every one who continues to support the work that our Chapter does in our community and beyond and wish all a pleasant summer. ...Looking forward to seeing you in the Fall!

Suzanne E. Johnston President, HLAA Rochester

Annual Program Planning Meeting

By Sue Miller

Please plan to attend our annual Program Planning meeting on Tuesday, June 17, from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. via Zoom. We need all the creative ideas possible to come up with a schedule of outstanding speakers for our monthly Daytime meetings. This is the ideal brainstorming session, where one person's suggestion suddenly gives another person that 'Aha" moment! What fun it will be to come up with ten amazing programs for the new program year...and the sky is the limit'. So please start thinking of a presenter you would enjoy seeing at one of our monthly meetings. Looking forward to seeing you on the 17th at 7:00 p.m.!

Buy Hearing Aid Batteries from HLAA Our chapter offers hearing aid batteries at our monthly program meetings. You may purchase a pack of six for \$1.50, or an entire box (60 batteries) for \$15.00.

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"HOWALS" Project

Houses Of Worship with Assistive Listening Systems
By Cathy Battaglia

St Catherine of Siena Catholic Church is located at 26 Mendon Ionia Road in Mendon, NY. They strive to make everyone's faith journey inclusive in a place where "All are Welcome".



The entire Parish Campus is handicap accessible. The church has a Hearing Loop which tends to work best in the center pews.

The Sunday 10:45 am Mass is live streamed and available on YouTube. An ASL interpreter is also available for the 10:45 Mass.

Notify Holly Jentsch at hdegloma@gmail.com if interpreting services are needed. Much of the Mass is projected on a large screen, which is also helpful to those with hearing and visual needs.



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In memory of Al Suffredini by Sue Miller Target Employees Donation

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Assistive Device Demo Center

Our chapter proudly sponsors the Assistive Device Demo Center, offering members and the public a chance to explore the latest devices designed to ease



hearing loss challenges. At our demo sessions, you'll find Signaling-alerting devices, Captioned telephones, and Personal assistive listening devices, with special focus on TV listening and noisy envi-

ronments. Knowledgeable chapter members will be available to answer any questions.

Join us on the 3rd Thursday of each month! The next session is **Thursday, September 18**th, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at Lifespan, 1900 S. Clinton Ave. Sessions are free and open to everyone. We look forward to seeing you there!

In Loving Memory of Al Suffredini

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of Al Suffredini on May 12th, a man whose unwavering



dedication to accessibility and community service made a profound impact on Ontario County and beyond.

Al's contributions were recognized by our HLAA chapter, which honored him with the Community Person Award in 2012 for his outstanding efforts in improving

hearing accessibility. His work on the **Technology Committee** helped install vital hearing assistance systems across various organizations, ensuring that individuals with hearing loss could fully participate in their communities.

His advocacy extended far beyond our chapter—Al was a driving force in accessibility initiatives for AARP, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Veterans Administration, FL Community College, CMAC Theatre, and the NYS Wine & Culinary Center. His dedication earned him numerous accolades, including the Outstanding Merit Award for 8,750 hours of service to veterans and the President's Call to Service Award from President George W. Bush.

Al's generosity was boundless. Whether he was baking **Christmas cookies** for chapter meetings, preparing **lasagna** for the VFW, tending to his **lush garden**, or capturing life's beauty through **photography**, he infused everything he did with kindness and passion.

When asked what he aspired to be upon graduating college, he simply said: "A good person." And that, he truly was—one of the best.

Al will be deeply missed, but his legacy lives on in the lives he touched, the accessibility he championed, and the warmth he brought to every interaction.

Rest in peace, Al. Your impact will never be forgotten.

0000 000000000

Happy Birthday in June to:

6 Mary Ann Nemcek

7 Lori Gattie

12 Lorin Gallistel

14 Doug Meyer

18 Eric Matson

26 Tom Corteville

30 Darlene Jones

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"A Silent Ticking Bomb among us People with Hearing Loss"

by: Dan Brooks



I am writing to share a recent concern I have after attending one of the many councils that I sit on, and was informed of an unknown problem that may affect people with hearing loss.

Have you seen one of these wall units in a school, park lodge, or other public space? They are called AEDs. AED stands for Automated External Defibrillator. This is a life-saving device to help people experiencing sudden cardiac arrest, a medical condition where the heart suddenly stops beating. They have

become more and more prevalent ever since Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin had his incident and advocated for the HEART Act to increase the availability of AEDs in schools and improve CPR training.



Okay, let me get to why I am writing... Recently, a group of other students at RIT attended a CPR training class to get certified in CPR. There were a handful of students who were deaf and hard of hearing among the students who could hear fine. All the "hearing" students got certified, but none of the deaf or hard-of-hearing students passed. Why? Because they could not follow the audio-only instructions of the AED unit they were using. The same units that line the walls of their campus are in strategic spots.

The AED units give commands/instructions through an audio speaker only. There were no visual cues or captioned instructions for the deaf and hard-of-hearing students to follow. So as a result, none of the students were able to get certified in CPR. Isn't that unacceptable, especially in a school that has so many students who are deaf or hard of hearing attending?! As a result of this incident, they have implemented the purchase of new AEDs that are more accessible in highly concentrated areas of deaf and hard-of-hearing students and hope to replace all the remaining AEDs throughout NTID & RIT as they expire or need replacing within the next few years.

From quick Google searches, I was able to learn that there are about 7 companies that produce AED units. Of the 7 companies, there are about 33 different styles to choose from. Of the 33 choices, there are only 3 AED units that are remotely accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Meaning they have captions

and visual cues to follow along to be able to perform CPR properly on someone suffering from cardiac arrest. Of the three that are somewhat accessible, one

brand or style stands out the most. It is the **Zoll AED 3**. They cost approximately \$2500 each. They also have a shelf life of 2 to 5 years. The pads last about two years, and the batteries last about five. Depending on the protocol maintenance schedule of each building or location, they will need to be replaced every so often.



I recently rented a lodge for my granddaughter's 1st birthday party, and before everyone came, I noticed an AED unit on the wall in the lodge. I thought to myself, what if someone collapsed and I was the only one to save them, would I be able to? Wouldn't it be awful if this were to happen and I could not understand the instructions of the AED unit because I could not hear what it was telling me to do? People who are deaf or hard of hearing are very capable, and they are all around our community. More so than people realize. With good proper accessibility, we too can do all the things a normal "hearing" person can.

So, if you are a person who makes the decisions or knows a person who does, please encourage them to purchase the AED unit I recommend. Not only does it give visual instructions and captions it also has lights that gradually build up as you do the chest compressions and let you know when to start releasing your pressure for proper chest compressions. At the very least, when it comes to replacing a unit, replace it with a more accessible one. It is time we got the word out so none of us are in the predicament I described earlier.

Perhaps the chapter could purchase one of these accessible AED units and partner with a local certified CPR trainer. We could also help host accessible CPR training classes for people with hearing loss so they, too, can be certified. There are so many things running through my mind on what we can do as a chapter about this unacceptable situation. We can accomplish a lot when we come together. If anyone has ideas or is interested in pursuing this more, please reach out to me. I can only do so much...but hoping at the very least, by writing this article, the silent ticking is not so silent anymore.

HLAA ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC

Food prepared by Wegmans Hamburgers, Veggie Burgers, Zweigle Hots Salad, Baked Beans, Dessert

1 PM - 6 PM at the Lodge at Perinton Park Kids under 18 Free

\$10 per person



Setup and Cleanup Volunteers Needed Questions? Mary Chizuk, 315-310-0776 Mcchiz70@gmail.com

- (HLAA Chapter Summer Picnic - August 10, 2025 Reservation Form
Name:	
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Phone and/or Email	
Adults @ \$10	How many veggie burgers (if any) will your family need?
Kids under 18 free	
otal: \$	
Please	Picnic reservations are due Sunday, August 3FIRM DATE! return this form (or same information) with checks payable to HLAA Rocheste
	to: Mr. & Mrs. Doug Meyer / 5275 Rosebrugh Rd. / Geneseo NY 14454
	We cannot accept reservations after August 3rd

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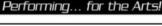
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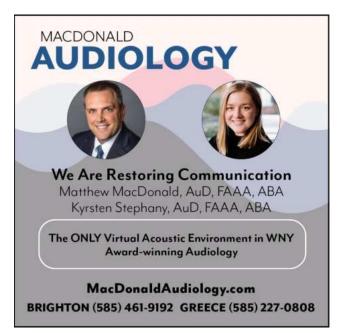


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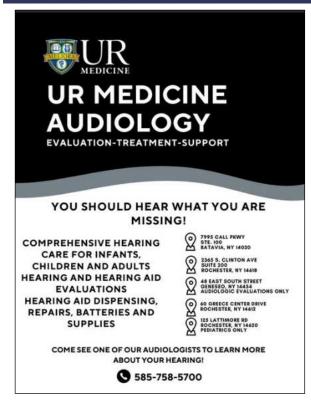
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HLAA Membership Information

Hearing Loss Association (HLAA) Rochester Chapter, Inc., a tax exempt and volunteer group, is a chapter of a national, nonprofit, nonsectarian, educational organization devoted to the welfare and interests of those who cannot hear well.

We are currently meeting in person and online via Zoom. See our website

at hearinglossrochester.org

to register for the online access.

While our primary focus is directed toward people with hearing loss, we welcome everyone to our chapter meetings whatever their hearing ability.

For more information, call

585 266 7890 or see hearinglossrochester.org

Professional Advisors

Sue Miller, Chair

2023-2025:

Jeff Klein Jennifer Popovich Korin Reynolds Betsy Runnion, Ph.D.

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<u>Newsletter</u>

^^^^^

Newsletter deadline: first day of the month preceding the issue month.

Bruce & Candi Nelson, Editors 120 Cobblestone Dr. Rochester, NY 14623 585-334-5513 editor@hearinglossrochester.org

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https://www.hearingloss.org/make-an-impact/hlaa-membership

or send your donation, with your name, address, phone number, and email address (if any) to 6116 Executive Blvd, Suite 320, Rockville, MD 20852

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP FORM HLAA-ROCHESTER Membership year: July 1 - June 30

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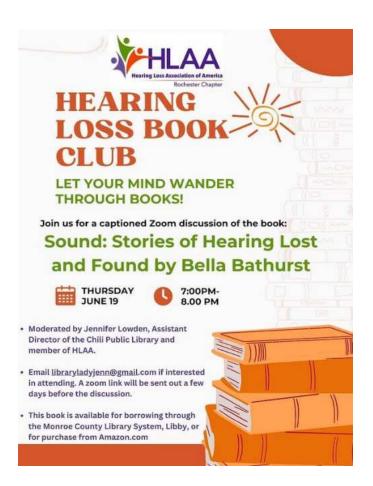


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Our Meetings are Hearing Accessible

We meet in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, East Ave. and Westminster Rd., across from the George Eastman Museum. Parking is available at the George Eastman Museum, if needed.

All meetings are <u>audio looped and captioned</u>. Our chapter meetings will also be streamed on Zoom, with captioning. See our website at **hearinglossrochester.org** to sign up for access to all future meetings. Please register at least 24 hours before the first meeting you wish to attend, so that you will receive the link by email.

Everyone, with or without a hearing loss, is welcome to join our meetings online or in person.