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 Friend us at Hearing Loss Association
Chapter-Rochester, NY

10.23



Four Decades of
Support
Education
Advocacy

1983 – 1987

November 1, 1983 was the first meeting of our Rochester chapter, just four years after Rocky Stone founded the national SHHH: Self Help for Hard of Hearing People. Charter members were Harriet Adams, Bob Call, Mark Hargrave, Bob Henning, Jeannette Kanter, Sue Miller, Bill Rae, Dot Schieven, Char Stio and Vern Thayer.

Starting with an emphasis on Support of folks with hearing loss, socialization has been a major aspect of HLAA-Rochester over the decades with gatherings, dinners and picnics continuing through the years. Early events in homes have been moved into much larger venues as HLAA-Rochester has expanded.

The PAC, Professional Advisors Committee, was established in 1984 with four members. It has since been expanded to eight, each with a two-year term. In recent years, PAC advisors with backgrounds in many professions have led to impact on our involvement with the courts, theaters, airport, veterans ... to name just a few.

The Chapter Newsletter went into publication in 1984 with Harriet Thayer Adams editor. Editors since: Joan Ewing, Gwen Cheney, Debby Taylor, Ginger Graham, and, currently, Bruce Nelson. It received National's Outstanding Newspaper Award in 1994 and 2011.

Mark Hargrave is considered a pioneer in induction loops in greater Rochester; he expedited the first installation in St. Paul's Church.

1988 – 1992

The Rochester Chapter hosted the third SHHH National Convention in 1988; in 2019 Rochester hosted again.

Dr. Paul Dutcher, MD presented a program on tinnitus to an attendance of 102 — the highest ever. He continues to serve as our medical consultant.

Hal Hood was our first 'official' photographer; and served as treasurer for 20 years.

Hears to the ADA — a video was produced in 1992 with the help of Gertrude Houston, later a member of Professional Advisory Committee.

1993 – 1997

The Scholarship Award Program started in 1996 by Sue Miller with a contribution from her parents. To date \$140,500 has been awarded to 156 graduating high school seniors with donations from chapter members, the MacDonald Fund, and Walk4Hearing.

An active parent support group was organized by Noreen Conte in the 1990s. Currently, a new parent support group, "Hear Together", meets monthly on Zoom.

In 1997, Library Liftoff — Harriet Adams began a nationally sponsored project to improve library resources for and enhance communication of people with hearing loss.

1998 – 2002

During the 1990s, advocacy for inductive loops led to compilation of a list of Houses of Worship — still updated and in use. In 1998, the Technology Committee initiated "Tech Talks" at our monthly Chapter meetings.

Under the guidance of chapter member Judge Arthur Curran, Assistive Listening Devices became available in 1998 in Ontario and Yates County courthouses as well as Federal courthouses in Buffalo and Rochester. Currently, Charlie Johnstone consults with the Unified Courts System across New York State.

HLAA-Rochester's first website was implemented by Paul Pakusch in 2000. In recent years our updated website at HearingLossRochester.org has been designed and expertly maintained by our talented webmaster Michelle Gross.

SHHH changed its name to HLAA in 2006.

2003 – 2007

First Walk4Hearing was held by six chapters in 2006. Rochester continued over the next 11 years.

Rear-window captioning introduced in Webster AMC theater in 2007.

In December 2008, *Mama Mia* became Rochester's first live captioned play. Since, every Broadway production at the Auditorium Theater has offered one live captioned performance.

2008 – 2012

HLAA-Rochester Chapter became listed as a recipient for donations to the United Way in 2009.

In 2010, Peter Fackler became president of the Board of Trustees for HLAA National.

Sorenson Communications began providing live captioning at chapter meetings in 2011, continuing until 2021. Now local captioners and voice recognition captions from Zoom are used.

In April 2012, the first Featured Speaker Program highlighted psychologist Sam Trychin, Ph.D.; followed by others including author Gael Hannon, Juliette Sterkins, Au.D, and Dr. Debra Tucci.

In December 2012 HLAA-Rochester established a presence on Facebook.

2013 – 2017

Since 2013 funding and consultation has been provided for the installation of induction loops, and/or assistive listening devices and captioning at:

Geva Theatre
Dryden Theater at the Eastman House
Rochester Academy of Medicine to loop their auditorium & library
Rochester Broadway Theater League at the Auditorium Theater
Al Sigi Center large conference room
The Little Theater
Jewish Community Center
Susan B Anthony Carriage House
Regal Theaters

PAC member Mike Giardino, Director of Aviation of the ROC airport, initiated improvements for hearing accessibility throughout the facility renovation beginning in 2013, leading our airport to become a national model. Bill Johnson, husband of member Suzanne, continues to support this effort.

The very successful HOPE sessions (Hearing Other Peoples Experiences), chaired by Joe Kozelsky, CCC/A, started in 2016.

Health Fairs have proven to be an excellent introduction to new people over the years. Coordinated by Trish Prosser, Laura Arney, and now Gayle Carini.

2018 – Present

After initial groundwork by Fred Altreith and Al Suffredini, the Rochester-HLAA Assistive Device Demo Center was started by Charlie Johnstone and the Tech Team in 2017. It allows individuals to try some of the latest devices available to help people cope with difficulties associated with hearing loss. Available monthly at Lifespan. Classes from nearby colleges have attended special training sessions. Also, Lorin Gallistel created a website housing all device information.

In 2018 HLAA-Rochester continued providing input on installation of loops being installed at ROC airport.

Wegmans partnered with HLAA to help them test implementation of induction loops at checkout aisles, pharmacies, and customer service desks in 2018.

Four annual Days of Hearing were held at Lifespan and Nazareth College between 2014-2017. All proved to be well attended and very instructive.

Chapter began offering Free Lifetime Membership to Veterans with hearing loss in 2020. To date we have 38 veteran members.

In March 2020, the Covid shutdown challenged us to shift all programs and meetings away from in person gatherings. The Tech Team immediately introduced using Zoom and all meetings went on-line including monthly Chapter Presentations in September. Starting in September 2022, monthly in person meetings with socialization and refreshments again became feasible — the Tech Team made them 'hybrid'— in person and on Zoom. A recording for each hour-long presentation is placed on YouTube — accessible through our website.

The Express Hearing Check Kiosk was purchased by our chapter in 2021 as the result of research by Lorin Gallistel. It is one of a few in the nation. It is used to check people's hearing at our HLAA Demo Center, at library presentations, and chapter meetings.

In March 2021, our Health Care Appointment Communication Guide for people with hearing loss was published in the Newsletter.

A branding campaign was launched with new brochures, Tip Cards, media ads and related materials in 2021.

The Stellar Supporters Group was established of over 50 HLAA members to dialog and garner feedback from the volunteers who are the bedrock of our Chapter functioning and keeping on track. The group meets to brainstorm and dialog three times a year via Zoom.

Our Cochlear Implant User Group meets three times a year, chaired by Peter Fackler.

Presentations to libraries of the Monroe County Library System began in 2022; Lorin Gallistel, Eric Maston, and Art Maurer have 17 completed to date.

In 2022, collaboration began with the Monroe County Sheriff's Department to enhance communication between deputies and people with hearing loss.

Tips for consumers regarding purchase of Over-the-Counter hearing aids were published in October 2022.

2023 –

Chapter Meetings are now hybrid in person and on Zoom. Plans are to stay hybrid for convenience of many and to reach those beyond greater Rochester.

Continuing advocacy for induction loops has led Rochester to enjoy over 150 equipped locations

Presentations to libraries and participation at Health Fairs continue. Plus, new emphasis is being placed on offering presentations to Adult Living Residences.

The Healthcare Task Force is renewing focus on hospitals to improve communication between patients, doctors and medical staff. The project is divided into four segments, each targeting a specific user base: Administrators, Patients, Medical Staff including doctors, and Technology.

Daytime HOPE sessions are held in person. HOPE in the Evening sessions are being introduced on Zoom.

40 Years of Achievement

Our list is long, providing Support, Education and Advocacy over the decades. Sincere thanks to all the dedicated member volunteers for making it all possible. With expansion into new initiatives, we'll strive to make an even greater impact in the years ahead. Facing new challenges in our fast-changing times, perhaps you can make a difference through volunteering to assist in all the great things HLAA-Rochester has the potential to do.

Thank You
for all your support!



Better Hearing = Better Living