

May- 2018



Approximately 50 million Americans have some level of hearing loss. Hearing loss can (and does) affect our physical and emotional health. Because we know we are going to miss much of the conversation, we often decide not to attend social events to avoid embarrassment and frustration.

We struggle in school because we can't understand the teacher. We sit in the front row and try to lip-read.

Hearing loss can lead to feelings of isolation, frustration and depression because of a lack of communication with friends, family and folks in the community. Hearing aids, cochlear implants and assistive listening devices can significantly improve the quality of life – yet only 1 in 5 actually use them.

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) has joined the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) in observing May as Better Hearing Month.

The NIDCD, ASHA and Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) support clinical research efforts to improve accessible and affordable hearing health care. Above all, the NIDCD, ASHA and HLAA encourage people who think they may have hearing loss to seek advice from a hearing care professional.

You do not need to face hearing loss alone. Contact your local chapter of HLAA where you will find support, education and advocacy from members and peer mentors.

TEAM - Together Everyone Achieves More!

April - 2018



I have loved this Easter joke for many years. The bunny with no ears says "what?".

I got to wondering if people can hear when they have no ears. I looked it up and found that children born with a missing or deformed ear, have a disease called microtia and cannot hear on that side, but manage well with the normal ear.

However, if your ears are cut (or bitten) off, you can still hear. As you know, we hear sounds through our inner ear, so people who lose their outer ear can still hear, but not as well as when they had two ears.

Most of us manage to retain our two ears. However, some of us do not retain our hearing. People cannot see that we can't hear because hearing loss is invisible. We have to be prepared to admit that we have hearing loss and to explain the best way to communicate with us. I know it's not easy to admit to hearing loss. I hid mine, or thought I was hiding it, until 2009. I realize now that people would have helped me if only they had known. How could I expect them to know? I had not told them.

I joined HLAA in 2009 and met so many people who had trouble hearing. I found I was not the only person in the world with hearing loss. At the first meeting, I noticed many of the members were wearing cochlear implants and, naturally, I wondered if they would work for me. Since joining HLAA and getting cochlear implants, my quality of life has improved tremendously.

You don't have to be alone with your hearing loss. Attend one of our chapter meetings, and you will find support, education and advocacy from the peer mentors and members.

TEAM - Together Everyone Achieves More!

Anne Taylor

President, Hearing Loss Association of America - Sarasota/Manatee

March - 2018



Rooting for your favorite basketball teams with friends and fellow sports fanatics is part the fun of March Madness. All that noise - yelling and screaming - also adds to the fun. The louder, the better. Some arenas even boast they are the loudest!

But, all that noise is not fun for your ears and may cause permanent hearing loss.

When you are exposed to noise levels of 80-90 decibels for long periods of time, your hearing may suffer. Many sports arenas regularly reach high levels of noise - especially during the excitement of close games.

When you know you will be in a loud arena, you can take steps to protect your hearing such as wearing earplugs, which may reduce the noise level by 15 to 35 decibels. This reduction should be enough to offer your ears some protection and relief.

You may choose to take out your hearing aids during games because they are not comfortable for you. If that is the case, then you can wear earplugs, which allow you to spend extra time in a noisy environment. If your hearing aids have ear molds, they can provide some protection from noise.

If you attend games regularly, it may be a good idea to have an audiologist check your hearing to make sure that there is no damage occurring in the inner ear.

The best way to prevent hearing loss is to protect your ears by wearing earplugs and limiting the time of exposure to loud noises.

TEAM - Together Everyone Achieves More.

February - 2018



Happy Valentine's Day!

The stores are decked out in pinks and reds, with displays of heart-shaped boxes of chocolates and roses. There are many reminders to treat our loved ones.

But, there are no reminders to focus on the day's true meaning - that of making that extra effort to reconnect with our significant others – especially, if our loved ones have hearing loss.

It is hard to be romantic if we are not hearing each other. So, let's plan accordingly.

Consider a nice evening at home where the background noise is less of a problem. We can make it easy by ordering in and buying a bottle of wine.

Agree to wear our hearing aids/cochlear implants. Our loved ones know we have a hearing loss and are not worried about how they look. Our loved ones would rather we hear them than having to be frequently asked for repeats. That's not very romantic at all.

Let's agree to focus on maintaining a healthy, happy relationship by working on our communication skills, doing what we need to do to make sure we understand each other.

January - 2018



On August 18th, 2017, President Trump signed into law the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017.

We look forward to 2018 with the hope that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will be able to make progress with the regulations required to ensure that Over-the-Counter (OTC) hearing devices meet the same high standards for safety, consumer labeling and manufacturing protections as current medically approved hearing aids. When finalized and approved, these FDA regulations would give consumers the option to purchase an OTC device at a lower cost and without a medical evaluation.

This new category of hearing devices could benefit some people who otherwise may not acknowledge their hearing loss. This new category of devices may help a mild to moderate hearing loss.

As you know, it takes 7-10 years for people to seek help with hearing loss for various reasons - cost, vanity and stigma.

If you know someone with untreated hearing loss and who prefers to wait until the regulations are approved, please try to encourage them to get their hearing checked soon. Gently, of course! Approval for these regulations may take up to two years and the OTC devices may not benefit their particular hearing loss.

We are a team and together we can reach out to the 145,000 people with hearing loss in the Sarasota/Manatee counties.

TEAM - Together Everyone Achieves More.

December- 2017



Hearing Loss Friends,

It is an exciting time of year. The stores sparkle with lights. People are going to parties and family events. People are cooking for friends and family.

While it is an exciting time, the holidays can be especially stressful for those of us with hearing loss. Parties and family gatherings are particularly challenging as there are many people talking at the same time and often music in the background.

Sometimes our hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assisted listening devices are not enough - we still miss things. Let's agree to focus on what we can do, not what we can't do. We won't let hearing loss hamper our holiday happiness.

The mission of Hearing Loss Association is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss through information, education, support, and advocacy.

As a team, we help each other live well with hearing loss, as well as try to reach out to the 145,000 people with hearing challenges in our two counties.

Happy Hearing and Happy Holidays!

Anne Taylor

Hearing Loss Association of America-Sarasota/Manatee

Website - <http://hlas.org>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/Hearing.Loss.Association.of.Sarasota>

November - 2017



Hello Everyone,

Hearing technology has come a long way in the last few years.

I, for one, am very thankful that we do not need to use the old trumpet-horn, which could not have been helpful. Do you remember the three-piece body aids which made

rustling noises? Many of us wore bulky analogue hearing aids which were somewhat helpful, but limited. They needed to be adjusted with a screw driver.

Now we are privileged to live in an age where digital hearing aids are smaller and work effectively for many of us. The digital hearing aids have many features such as multi-directional microphone systems, digital noise reduction, impulse noise reduction, feedback management systems, telecoil, FM compatibility, Bluetooth compatibility and can be computer-adjusted.

What can we say about the miracle of cochlear implants? Cochlear implants bypass the damaged portions of the ear and directly stimulate the auditory nerve. Signals generated by the implant are sent by way of the auditory nerve to the brain, which recognizes the signals as sound. Cochlear implants do not cure deafness, but - by giving a sense of hearing - have brought the profoundly deaf people back into the hearing world.

The mission of HLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss through education, support and advocacy.

Together, we members will continue to reach out to the 145,000 folks with hearing loss in our community.

We are a team. TEAM. Together Everyone Achieves More.

Anne Taylor

October - 2017

Today, I regretfully announce my resignation as President of the Hearing Loss Association of Sarasota/Manatee Chapter.

This was not an easy decision to make as my passion for the past years has been to advocate for and assist people with hearing loss. My life has taken a different direction, and it is time to move on to new opportunities and challenges.

The past few years have been very rewarding, and it has been a pleasure working with so many incredible board members and HLAA members. I am proud to have been part of such an outstanding team and I wish HLAA-S/M only the best in future endeavors. Our HLAA-S/M team is making hearing loss visible in Sarasota County!!

I intend to stay active in HLAA-S/M and I will attend as many meetings and activities as time permits. Anne Taylor, our Vice President, has stepped up and will take over the leadership role. Having known and worked with Anne for the past few years, I know she is ready for such a challenge and will make a terrific President. I intend to be there in a supporting role in the transition process.

Remember to advocate for yourself! HLAA-S/M provides adults and children with tools for self-help; sensitizes the general population about the special needs of people who

have hearing loss; and promotes understanding of the nature, causes, complications, and remedies of hearing loss.

OUR NEW PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JoAnne DeVries has devoted a lot of time and energy to the HLAA/Sarasota/Manatee chapter. She did an outstanding job of being the president and will be a hard act to follow.

As many of you know, she recently was appointed the chair of the Sarasota Democratic Party. She finds herself spread too thin and simply does not have the time to do both.

I am humbled and honored by the faith you have in me to act as your president. I know I can depend on all of you to take on one or more of the many necessary tasks. We need to work together as a team to keep this great chapter successful and able to follow its mission of opening the world of communication to people with hearing loss through education, support and advocacy.

TEAM – Together Everyone Achieves More.

I thank those members who have stepped up to the plate and have given generously of their valuable time to the chapter.

I hope JoAnne will accept our heart-felt thanks for her efforts to make this chapter as great as it is.

We wish her well in her future venture.

Anne Taylor, President
Hearing Loss Association of America-Sarasota/Manatee
Website - <http://hlas.org>
Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/Hearing.Loss.Association.of.Sarasota>

September - 2017

Dear Members and Friends,

The U.S. Senate passed the Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017. The bill was already passed by the House of Representatives on July 12. With this groundbreaking legislation, Congress has sent a message to America that people with hearing loss need – and deserve – more affordable and accessible hearing health care.

The Hearing Loss Association of America has been working diligently with lawmakers to have the consumer voice heard. Their heartfelt thanks to all Hearing Loss of America - Sarasota/Manatee members who were responsive to their requests when they needed help to push this bill forward. HLAA couldn't have done it without you!

The Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 would make certain types of hearing aids available over the counter to adults with mild to moderate hearing loss. In addition, the proposed legislation would require the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate this new category of OTC hearing aids to ensure they meet the same high standards for safety, consumer labeling and manufacturing protection that all other medical devices must meet. This will give consumers the option to purchase a safe, high-quality FDA-regulated device at lower cost.

Thank you to our membership for your work on this – and all the work you do day in and out for people with hearing loss!

July - August 2017

Dear Members and Friends,

And the winner is ..."The Hearing Loss Association of America - Sarasota/Manatee Chapter!" How sweet it was to hear those words and the resulting applause as our Chapter was announced as the recipient of the **Sarasota Chamber of Commerce Healthcare & Wellness Organization of the Year award**.

As board member Dave Donnelly stated, "The good does not come easily; numerous outreach events, farmers markets, monthly membership meetings both daytime and evenings; movie, theatre and book club activities."

As everyone knows, it is truly a team effort - the dedication of our board and volunteers made the difference that brought this outstanding achievement.

Organizations nominated for an award had to complete an application, describe who their workers are, and provide examples of contributions to and/or programs available to the local community. A panel of judges comprised of their peers interviewed the finalists.

Selected from among 3 finalists in one of six categories, the mission of the Hearing Loss Association of America-Sarasota/Manatee chapter is to empower the more than 145,000 locals with hearing loss to lead more active lives by providing information, education, advocacy and support.

HLAA-S/M launched locally in 1988, teaching members how to self-help and self-advocate for their hearing needs. HLAA-S/M continues to be instrumental in making hearing loss, often described as the "invisible condition", very visible in the community. Monthly chapter meetings offer emotional support to those impacted by hearing loss, including hearing family & friends, and provides information & techniques that enables individuals to function independently & productively despite communication challenges.

Hearing loss is a major public health issue that is the third most common physical condition after arthritis and heart disease. HLAA-S/M refuses to be "invisible" in its

determination to raise awareness and to help those impacted by hearing loss find solutions that will enable them to communicate better, hear better and live successfully with hearing loss.

We will continue our work and continue to keep the public informed about HLAA-S/M - we are making a difference! It's very gratifying for our organization to be recognized and rewarded by the Sarasota business community.