

# HLAA Twin Cities

Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter February 2010

~~Next meeting is Feb 20th~~

## Where Do We Meet?

**Courage Center** - 3915 Golden Valley Road  
Golden Valley, MN 55422

**When:** September through May

**Time:** 9:30 AM – Noon

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month  
(No meetings - June, July and August)

2010

**February 20, 2010** - Rich Diedrichsen, technology for the HOH person, including cell phones, text messaging, communication devices. Bring along your communication devices to the meeting for Rich to look over.

**March 20, 2010** - Light Rail Safety – tentative

**April 14, 2010** - **Steak Fry**

**April 17, 2010** - Pharmacist **Monique Hammond** speaks on Ototoxic Drugs

**June 17 – 20, 2010** - **National Convention** in Milwaukee, WI at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center



*The Mission of HLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.*

- **HLAA TC Website**  
[www.hlaatc.org](http://www.hlaatc.org)
- **HLAA National**  
[www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)
- **MN Contact Information**  
[info@hlaatc.org](mailto:info@hlaatc.org)

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- **Steak Fry tickets available at the February meeting.**

Steak Fry – Where: Crystal VFW Post 494  
Address: 5222 Bass Lake Road  
Date: April 14, 2010  
Time: 5 PM to 7 PM  
Dinner includes: Steak, baked potato, cole slaw, garlic bread, toast, coffee  
Cost: \$10

# FROM THE PRESIDENT



**Linda Miller**

Grief is an intense emotional suffering caused by a significant loss in our lives. We value our hearing and it is natural to grieve its loss. I can remember my own feelings of fear, loneliness, and helplessness. Four areas that helped me to adjust to my own hearing loss were to accept the reality, to experience the pain, accept and readjust to my new level of hearing and to achieve new goals in my life. I also realized that each new change in my hearing loss triggered a renewed grief cycle such as when I knew I could no longer enjoy the movie theater and follow the dialog.

Another important requirement to moving through our grief is the strength of our support groups. This is where our HLAA TC chapter has been very helpful. We need a safe place to grieve. We need safe people around us who also understand our sense of loss and grief. We need community. When we identify with a group, we reduce our real or perceived inadequacies as we identify with the achievement of the group. This way we offset some of our negative feelings with feelings of self worth.

I finally knew I had reached the acceptance stage when I could say, “I don’t want to miss out on things any more.” Of course I still have a few bad days from time to time, but instead of focusing on my shortcoming, I focus on my strengths.

Another grieving period for all of us is the loss of our good friend, Ralph. This man could literally light up the room when he arrived. He was such an inspiration to all of us. I will truly miss Ralph’s good sense of humor and his incredible ability to make fun of you as he jabbed you in the arm. He will truly be missed. Love to you dear friend. You will not be forgotten in our hearts.

## January Speaker Cynthia Weitzel

Cynthia Weitzel, Public Policy Coordinator for the Minnesota Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing spoke to us in January in Mary Hartnett’s absence.

Cynthia was born hard of hearing, her dad was born deaf and her mom was born hard of hearing. She understands many of the frustrations we experience and works to make our lives better. The MCDHH work plan (available on the internet) encompasses these major areas: education, employment, access to communication and services, increasing deaf and hard of hearing influence in public policy, and administrative.

Various issues on the legislative agenda are: emergency preparedness in schools, eligibility requirements for Part B services for children who are deaf/hard of hearing (ages 4-21) and Part C services for children (birth to 3 years old); Metro Deaf School and Minnesota North Star Academy proposal, defending existing deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind programs from cuts, and selection of a response team of volunteers willing to testify during the legislative session to deal with lobbyists, game plans, opportunities, and crisis situations. Board representatives are also needed from the entire population of deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing.

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services provide direct services and oversees the telephone equipment distribution program (TED).

The legislature will need to trim the budget by \$1.2 billion this year. We need to band together to make sure our programs and services provide communication access to employment, education, facilities, and civic engagement are protected. There is much at risk.

The 2010 state precinct caucuses are February 2. State law requires that the state office of each political party must provide interpreters or CART (if available) for local caucuses upon advanced written request. For more information on precinct caucuses, go to: <http://www.sos.state.mn.us>.

The date for the 2010 session line-up and Capitol Lab is February 5. This is an event primarily organized and sponsored by the MN Council of Non-Profits where you can hear from the legislators themselves. The afternoon Capitol Lab gives advocates a chance to hear legislative staff explain their roles. The day ends up with a walking tour of the capitol and state office building.

The MCDHH also holds a bi-annual Deaf, Deafblind, and Hard-of\_Hearing Lobby Day, with training in the morning and a rally in the afternoon. The next one will be in 2011. The new two-year budget plan begins in July 2010.

Cynthia discussed the hard of hearing history project which has been discussed, and now funding must be secured. We need organized and documented information beyond fifty years ago on contributions made by hard of hearing individuals and chapters in our state.



Submitted by Carole Blowers, Vice President

## **Best of Both Worlds, or Did You Know?**

**By Rubin Latz**

Minnesota's Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) - in collaboration with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division (DHHSD) - is trying something new in response to stakeholder input, a shared effort to serve you and your employer better by supporting your job retention and job advancement opportunities.

**Rapid Response Interventions Services:** Hearing Loss & Workplace Solutions offers individualized, case-by-case assessment of workplace issues to working persons who experience the full range of hearing loss, and to businesses employing you. Offering onsite consultations, we can help demonstrate effectiveness of such strategies as facilitated problem-solving, use of assistive technologies, job coaching or provision of sign language interpreter and / or CART services.

One key feature to consider is that this new approach serves persons who are already employed, and does not require that you be active in an Employment Plan with a rehabilitation counselor, or be active with one of the regional center staff consultants. In addition to dealing with the immediate workplace issues that put one's job retention or advancement at risk, the individualized assessment may also result in referral to programs and services such as

- \*Intensive Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- \*Independent Living Center services
- \*Mental Health services
- \*Adult Basic Education
- \*Professional development / career re-training
- \*Postsecondary training

Rubin Latz has been reassigned from his previous state coordinator duties to the role of Rapid Response Consultant. Working closely with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Consultants statewide, the collaborative foundation allows staff to share content expertise across agency lines; it also provides easy access to equipment housed in the regional centers, as well as funding for interpreter & CART services, while taking advantage of local community relationships.

In the first calendar quarter of operation, this new initiative provided interventions and assessments to eight employers (including community non-profit agencies, small businesses, departments of state government, a federal agency and Fortune 500 corporations). More than 80 persons (including individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and training event participants) have benefitted directly from these rapid responses. Initial returns of consumer satisfaction surveys demonstrate that both consumers' and employers' needs are being met.

As you may suspect, common issues have been communication, communication & communication! Less commonly, some need to provide specific coaching toward

improving supervisor / subordinate relationships, clarification of workplace responsibilities and lines of authority, and coaching / direction on self-assertion skills. Self-referrals are welcome, and may also come from employers, co-workers, vocational rehabilitation and human services professionals, mental health professionals, family members and friends. Several referrals have resulted in re-connecting individuals with their existing, or previous vocational rehabilitation counselor. In the current economy, I think you'll agree that job retention and advancement efforts are critical. If you believe your job retention or advancement is at risk because of your hearing loss, please contact me.

**For more information contact:**

Rubin Latz

Rapid Response Consultant

Hearing Loss & Workplace Solutions

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### **Consumer & Colleague FAQs**

*Are the new Vocational Rehabilitation Services' (VRS) Rapid Response Interventions services limited to supporting active VRS consumers?*

No, Rapid Response Interventions services and supports are intended to respond to any employee (working person) in Minnesota whose **job retention or promotion is jeopardized by hearing loss** & corresponding communication issues

*How do I request Rapid Response Interventions services?*

Call or write the consultant

*I work nights & weekends; can I get help too?*

Yes, contact the consultant to make an appointment (be sure to identify the best time to contact you!); you will be contacted promptly

*I live in Thief River Falls; can I get help, too?*

Yes; the consultant will respond to people and businesses in Greater Minnesota, and will work with you to find solutions

*I just need an interpreter for my work meetings; will the consultant take care of this?*

The consultant will address communication issues, and will work with you, and with your company to advocate for an interpreter; other communication supports may be recommended

*Will my company be forced to pay for the interpreter?*

The consultant will help figure out who pays; if you have an active Employment Plan with VRS, your VRS counselor may pay; the employer may pay; some emergency funds are available from Pathways To Employment, and managed by Dep't of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division staff

*I'm having trouble hearing in meetings, and on the telephone - even with my hearing aids.*

The consultant will work with you, to assess your listening needs at your workplace, including in your meeting rooms and on your telephone; and can demonstrate, and loan different assistive technologies for you and for your employer to try out; prospective funding sources will be identified

*I need financial help to replace my hearing aids; will the Rapid Response Interventions consultant take care of this?*

This will depend on your individual situation; the consultant cannot pay for hearing aids; what the rapid response can provide you is information identifying other possible financial resources; you may be encouraged to apply for Vocational Rehabilitation Services, if you need more intensive employment assistance

*I'm already working with a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Divisions Consultant (or Regional Manager); how will this be different?*

Rapid Response Interventions services are employment-specific, and represent an inter-agency collaboration; the new consultant will honor your existing relationships, and will request your permission to share information and / or create a joint service plan

*My boss doesn't trust government agencies.*

Tell your boss (politely) that Rapid Response Interventions also supports, and serves needs of business; provide the consultant's contact information, and suggest that the boss call, to discuss the situation

*How much will this cost?*

There is no fee for Rapid Response Interventions services

## A Ralph Katz Retrospective

Unbelievable as it sounds, it's true Ralph Maynard Katz Sr. is no longer with us, physically that is! In humor, spirit, or heckling he is certainly still amongst us. In this story are some clips that he wrote for the paper, things he told Bob and I, and remembrances from his friends.

Back in Jan. 2002 when Ralph was returning from Copenhagen, Merrilee wrote him in a letter...."Hey, people are asking about you at SHHH, wondering if you are sick or something. I just tell them you are traveling around the countryside. They still keep asking. Jodi said she really misses you not being there. Must make you pleased as punch to know you are missed so much."

He wrote a member spotlight on himself for the Nov. 2002 paper.

*I know that I am the only one in our group that went to one of the best educational institutes for the hard-of-hearing and the deaf. It is in St. Louis, Missouri. It teaches lip-reading and speaking. You see. I am congenitally hard-of-hearing and my parents, after talking to doctors and experts, sent me to that institute. The name is "Central Institute for the Deaf." I went there when I was 3 years old and kept going there until I was 10 years old. From that time on I mixed with the hearing society, not the deaf society. Because I was not taught the sign language as that was prohibited by that school.*

*From that time on I went to a regular public school, grade school throughout high school. My ability to read lips and speak stood up for me, as you can see where I am today. Starting in junior high I participated in athletics, mostly football and swimming. And in high school made the varsity teams from 10<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In my senior year the football team was the second best team in Iowa, as I grew up in Des Moines, Iowa. In that same year, in the winter season, our swimming team was the best, both in city and state. By the way the swimming relay team (4 of us) that I was on broke the national swimming relay record.*

*From there I went to the U. of Iowa (Big Ten Conference). Earned a degree in Economics. Did play football and was a member of the swimming team my first two years, but was forced to quit the sports because since I was hard-of-hearing, it was getting more difficult to get my college education and needed more time to study. It was worth it. Still have plenty of memories of those 4 years at the U. of Iowa (years 1944 to 1948).*

*After college I was hired by an uncle to work for him here in Minneapolis. He was the director of the G & K Laundry and Dry Cleaners. He knew what it was like to be on other side of the fence as far as hearing and deafness was like. Worked for him 23 yrs. During that time I got married and fathered two sons and one daughter. Unfortunately the marriage didn't work out. After the divorce a woman that I knew from years ago came into my life, hence I moved to California and married her. Had my own landscape care service for several years, before going to work for the US Navy, as a civilian worker. She died after 22 yrs. of a wonderful married life. Several years later because of my love for the lakes of Minnesota, I moved back to Minneapolis after retiring from working for the US Navy.*

*Now it has been five years since I came back and am happy with the way my life is going. Go fishing and go traveling to other countries. These places are: Morocco, Denmark, Iceland, Alaska, Israel and Tanzania, Africa. My next trip will be to the Antarctic next January (summertime down there).*

*That wraps basically what my life has been like and couldn't ask for a better way to live. I'm glad that I learned to lip-read and speak. I honestly believe that because of this, I have lived in a bigger world than the*

average totally deaf person. Am totally grateful and thankful for the decisions that my parents made to send me to Central Institute for the Deaf.

**Merrilee remembers:** It was my second mtg. at SHHH (now called HLAA TC) when he walked in the room and over to the chair next to me asking, “is this chair taken?” I told him no and this was the beginning of a lovely friendship. We sat together for many years. Then once when he was away on one of his adventures, Joe O’Brien asked me if I would be interested in becoming the secretary for SHHH. ” I told ole Ralph he was to blame for me not being able to sit with him anymore as he was away in Israel or Africa, and I was left on my own. That started my real connection with SHHH, and it continues to this day. Anyhow he got a chuckle out of that.

He had a dog that he loved very much that he brought back to MN from CA; it was not a “service dog” per se, but he was certainly atoned to Ralph’s wants and needs. He was heartbroken when the dog passed away.

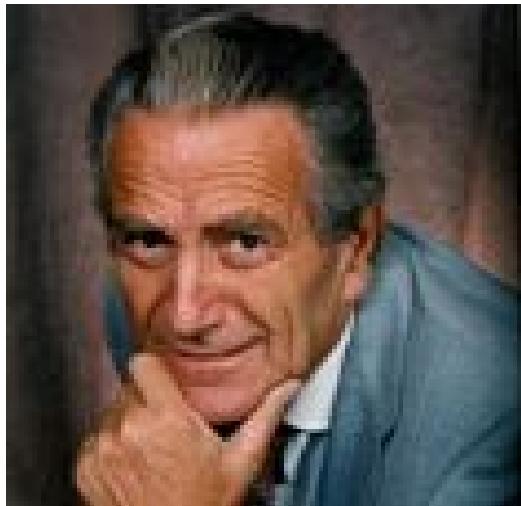
When we went out to eat he always told the waitress right up front that he was hard of hearing and she/he needed to face him when speaking. His hearing loss never defined who he was.

I guess in closing I would like to say that each of us are different things to different people. Some may say good, bad or indifferent things about each of us when we pass, but each one of us has played an important part in the others lives. He certainly played an important part in my life, I bet he did in yours too.



-- by Merrilee Knoll

# Remembering Ralph



Katz, Ralph Sr. Age 83, of Plymouth, died Jan. 6th. Preceded in death by his wife, Ruth Koenig; his brother, Robert Katz and a grandson. He is survived by his children, Ralph Katz, Jr., David Katz, Elissa Katz; his step-children, Leslie Sikes, Ted Gostin, Deborah Gostin; 5 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren; his cousins, Dick Fink and Sandra Mendel; his niece and nephew. Funeral services held SUNDAY, JANUARY 10TH at 11 AM at HODROFF- EPSTEIN MEMORIAL CHAPEL, 671 S. Snelling Ave., St. Paul. Memorials preferred to Central Institute for the Deaf, Development Office, 825 S. Taylor St., St. Louis, MO 63110; or Hearing Loss Assoc. of America - Twin Cities Chapter, P.O. Box 8037, Minneapolis, MN 55408 or donor's favorite charity. SHIVA at 1783 Magnolia Lane No., Plymouth, all day Monday.

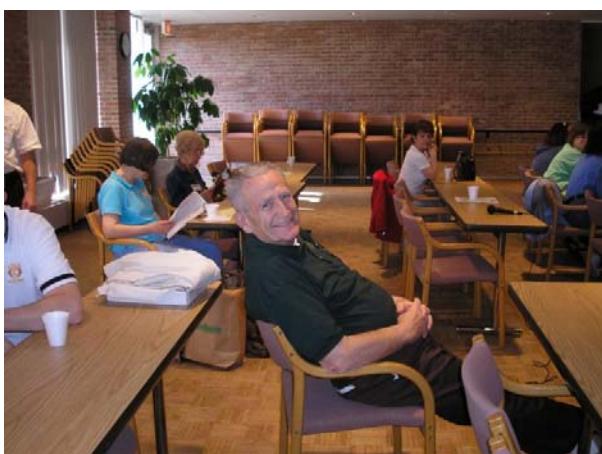
### *HLAA-TC members comment*

I feel very saddened... We will really miss Ralph Linda M.

The get together with the family was very comforting, as we each were a part of Ralph's life in different ways. — Merrilee K

What a handsome picture of Ralph ...when one of our members passes away, it leaves a big hole in our organization. – Sue B

“My thoughts are with Ralph. I bet he is letting St. Peter - or whoever guards the gates to Heaven in the Jewish religion - know in no uncertain terms that he has arrived and deserves to be admitted.... Ralph has now graduated. I wish him all the best and will pray for him so that the doors of Heaven open wide and that he will be received in God’s endless Love and Grace. – Monique H



## Pix from the January Meeting.....



## And a bonus!



Anna Marie Miller and her sister, 4th child of former president Dave Miller and his wife Karin. She was born Christmas Eve at 7:02 AM. This makes 4 little ones for the Miller Family

## February 2010

Our meeting room may be moved to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Please check the walls when you come in for the direction signs that will tell you where we are meeting.

**Matthew Hjelden, M.S., CCC-A**  
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This month's editor is Vicki Martin

**Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month September through May at the Courage Center in Golden Valley, MN. We gather at 9:30 to socialize and the meeting starts at 10 AM. All meetings are real time captioned by Lisa Richardson and her staff of *Paradigm Captioning* ([www.paradigmreporting.com](http://www.paradigmreporting.com)). Please visit the chapter's web-site at [www.hlaatc.org](http://www.hlaatc.org)**