

# HLAA TC

## November 2015



### Twin Cities Chapter

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

This month:

***November 21, 2015***

Mike Griffitt, Williams Sound  
Details on page 4

Coming Soon!

***December 19, 2015***

Jon Skaalen, Accessible Arts  
White Elephant swap  
Pot Luck lunch  
Raffle  
Cookie Sale



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[www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org)

Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities Chapter (HLAA TC) is held the 3rd Saturday of the month (September thru May). We gather at 9:30 to socialize, and begin our meeting at 10 AM at The Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, 3915 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley, MN 55442. The meeting adjourns at noon.

## President's Message



*Christine Morgan with Lionel*

### President's Message

November 2015

At the risk of sounding old and clichéd: can you believe we are this close to Thanksgiving? What happened to the year?

If you didn't get the chance to see the documentary *Hearing Loss Matters* on TPT, see it here:

\*\* [http://www.mnvideovault.org/search\\_results.php?q=hearing+loss+matters&search-go.x=0&search-go.y=0](http://www.mnvideovault.org/search_results.php?q=hearing+loss+matters&search-go.x=0&search-go.y=0)

If you don't want to watch it on your computer, we will have DVDs available for you to check out in the near future.

If you belong to a group or organization that would benefit from viewing this educational and informative program, please let me (or Lionel) know and we will be sure to get a DVD to you. It runs about 26 minutes. Let's spread the word: ***Hearing Loss Matters!!!***

Have balance and/or medical issues? How about stress? Are you familiar with Tai Chi? Please see my article in this newsletter for a great opportunity.

Lionel and I met with Jill Vaughn, Audience Services Manager of the History Theatre in St. Paul. The Theatre does not own their space, they merely rent it so are unable to install looping. However, they now have captioning. We discussed best possible placement and seating. To get tickets (you can get up to 4 for each captioned performance) at a discount, call Jill at 651-292-4323 X 112. Be sure to leave a message if she is away from the phone and she will get back to you. You could also text her at [jvaughn@historytheatre.com](mailto:jvaughn@historytheatre.com) for tickets and/or with questions.

Remember: we are all capable of making an impact and inciting change. One small step, one little ripple at a time. ....

Enjoy the beautiful fall colors!

Christine



# HLAA-TC October 17, 2015 Meeting Synopsis

BY LIONEL LOCKE, VICE-PRESIDENT

President Christine Morgan called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. After welcoming the members in attendance, she introduced the guests and Merilee Johnson from CART. Christine thanked the Board and all the volunteers who help run our organization and then introduced Lionel, the Vice President, who introduced the guest speaker.

The guest speaker was Laurie Carlson, volunteer coordinator for CAN-DO Canines, previously named the Minnesota Hearing Dog Association. Laurie began by describing the 26 year history of hearing assist dogs. What a hearing dog actually does is to alert someone to noises that they are missing. For example, if a smoke alarm goes off, the dog will go and touch the person and lead them to the sound and together they can leave the house together.

As the years passed, the organization discovered a need for mobility assist dogs as well. Basically mobility assist dogs pick up dropped items, they turn on lights, they open doors, tug laundry baskets around, retrieve cordless phones, and help transfer from chairs to wheelchairs with brace techniques.

In addition to hearing assist dogs and mobility assist dogs, they now train diabetes assist dogs. These dogs are trained to smell when blood sugar drops. The dogs can tell from someone's breath when they are low and alert them and persist at alerting them until they react. If they don't respond, the dogs are trained to get a juice box or get glucose tablets.

The next type of dog trained by the organization is a seizure assist dog where the dog is trained to lick the face and go get help. The final dog trained by the group is autism assist. This is for children with an autism disorder. The dog is tethered to the child and is trained to sit down when they feel tension on the lease so the child does not bolt under sensory overloads situations.

With all 5 types of dogs, CAN-DO Canines does not charge except for a \$50 application fee. It costs about \$25,000 per dog from start to finish. The group is mostly supported by individual donations, and then service clubs, like the Lions and Rotary. This year the group is training 46 teams, (dog and client).

Laurie shared many stories about her clients and how the trained dogs assisted them and then introduced Stephanie and her dog Fred. Stephanie lost her hearing at 12 years of age from meningitis and a few months later received a cochlear implant. She is now 28 and decided after living alone after college that a hearing dog would be a real tool helping her cope with her hearing loss.

Fred has been with Stephanie for about 18 months and gives Stephanie a sense of safety and independence. She says it has been absolutely wonderful. He does his job perfectly, he loves doing it and he gets excited when there is a sound. He wags his tail and taps her saying, "we have to do this we have to get going."

Both Stephanie and Laurie answered many questions from the audience and Laurie ended the presentation by distributing business cards and information. Tours are open to the public once a month. President Christine then thanked Laurie, Stephanie and Fred and announced our break.

Vicki Martin, our newsletter editor, gave us her ASL lesson, this time with October words. President Christine announced the next HLAA National Convention, scheduled in Washington DC in June of 2016. Christine also reported on a documentary on Public Television titled "Hearing Loss Matters" airing October 25<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM on

*(October meeting synopsis, cont.)*

local TPT channels in Minnesota. Please check those stations for continued showings. Several members of the HLAA-TC chapter are featured in this documentary.

The balance of the meeting included discussion about Captioning at movie theaters and other public venues and the various devices available for people with hearing loss; a conversation about advocacy in the hearing loss community in conjunction with the State Commission, our efforts for captioning pledges where television is on in public areas; and how the State of Minnesota is focusing resources on age related hearing loss with tracking and plans already in motion.

Monique Hammond, Past President led a discussion about LOOP Minnesota and some of their continued efforts to install loops in government centers and other public venues where the business takes place.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at Noon.

## **What were they Thinking?**

*By Christine Morgan*

This is a phrase often repeated by our 4 year old granddaughter as she shrugs her shoulders and gives a perplexed look. I felt the same sentiment today.

We stopped in at the Panera in Edina for a quick coffee/tea and a treat. The music was overwhelming. I found what I thought was the quietest spot available (no groups chatting) while Lionel got our food. No sooner did I sit down and the music got even louder!

Lionel went up to one of the cashiers to ask that it be turned down and she replied that she could not do it. When he told me that, I went up to the same cashier (he's much nicer than I am) and told her I wanted to speak to the manger and was he there. She said yes but he was busy. I showed her where I was sitting and told her to send him over when he was done.

When he came over, I told him the music was extremely loud. He said something about they were working on it but the sensors turned the music up when the conversation in the restaurant got louder! Lionel told him that that did not make sense and should be the opposite.

I brought out my HLAA-TC business card and explained how the music at those decibels caused hearing loss. He apologized and looked surprised by my statement. He said they would continue working on it.

In the words of Fiona "What were they thinking?"

Christine T. Morgan



## **“Assistive Listening Technologies – to Loop or not to Loop?”**

The Hearing Loss Association of America Twin Cities chapter is pleased to present Williams Sound technical expert Mike Griffitt on Saturday November 21. The meeting will be held in the second floor large conference room at Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute, 3915 Golden Valley Road in Golden Valley. The meeting begins at 9:30 AM with coffee and social time, and the presentation will begin at 10 AM.

Mike Griffitt, U.S. Technical Training Manager for Williams Sound, brings more than 30 years of experience in the A/V industry, working with manufacturers, A/V and broadcast integration groups, and consulting firms. Recently, he’s been teaching the AV marketplace about assistive listening technologies such as FM, Infrared, Wi-Fi and Induction Loop. Mike also speaks to various groups on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as it applies to the requirements for assistive listening.

“This presentation will take a balanced view of the ever-growing request for Induction Loop systems. We will examine the requirements of the ADA legislation when it comes to Assistive Listening Systems, and the increasing need for these systems as our population continues to age... we will evaluate all of the options to consider when looking at budgetary concerns, and all of the pros and cons of each technology.”



Mike Griffitt

## **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) Free DIVERSITY Trainings**

### **Hearing Loss: National Health Alert!**

**Nov. 18, 9:30-11:30**

Hearing loss is a growing public health issue. During this workshop you will gain an awareness of the impact of hearing loss and some strategies to use when working or living with a person who is hard of hearing or late-deafened.

### **Hearing Loss in the Workplace**

**Dec. 17, 1:30-3:30**

There are nearly 29 million people with a hearing loss in the U.S. work force or educational setting! This workshop will identify effective communication strategies, helpful assistive technology, and valuable resources to help hearing and hard of hearing co-workers.

### **Registration Information**

Phone: (651) 431-5940 (or use your preferred Telecommunications Relay Service)

Email: [dhhs.metro@state.mn.us](mailto:dhhs.metro@state.mn.us)

Please provide the following information when registering:

-Name -Phone number -Email address

-Title & Date of training -Employer & Job Title -How you heard about the program

**NOTE:** All trainings will be held at Golden Rule Building, Suite 105, 85 E. 7th Place, St. Paul, MN

### **Accommodations**

If you need a sign language interpreter, CART Services, assistive listening device (ALD) or other accommodation, you must notify DHHS at least two weeks prior to the training session. This information is in accessible formats for individuals with disabilities by calling (651) 431-5940 or by using your preferred Telecommunications Relay Service

### ***HOLIDAY RAFFLE!***

The Twin Cities Chapter of HLAA is having a holiday raffle! We are raffling off 3 certificates for LACE (Listening and Communication Enhancement)!

LACE is a home use interactive computerized training program to assist in developing listening and communication skills and strategies. It is an adaptive program that is never too hard or too easy.

Each day you receive your training results and, if you choose, you can have the results transmitted securely to your hearing health professional. The choice is yours.

The program costs about \$99 but HLAA-TC has 3 to raffle off.

Tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5. You can purchase your raffle tickets at the November or December meetings. You could even send a check to Marie (Treasurer) if you are unable to attend either meeting. We will send you the tickets. You DO NOT have to be present to win. The 3 winning numbers will be drawn during the holiday party in December and if the winner(s) is not present, the numbers will appear in the January newsletter.

Please let either Christine or Lionel know if you have any questions about this program. Christine is presently trying the program.

A great holiday "gift" for yourself or someone you love who has hearing loss!

## Tai Chi? Like Hearing Loss, Not Just for Old People

By Christine T. Morgan

I am familiar with Tai Chi, the ancient Chinese martial art. Maybe you are too. Maybe you have tried it. Or maybe you have heard about it or watched it on some television show. Hmmm. Slow purposeful movement? What benefit is there in that? I'd rather run, jog or play hoops!

I learned and taught a form of Tai Chi in the late 80s and throughout the 90s. I have to say I reaped its many benefits. But then I moved to the Twin Cities, got busier and life got in the way. Fast forward to 2015. Ouch! Physical pain, hearing loss, some balance issues, some stress. What to do?

I recently became a student of Natural Step Tai Chi on North Penn in Minneapolis. I'm learning a different "form" from what I had been practicing in the 80s and 90s. A different "family" if you will. But still Tai Chi, the gentle meditative healing exercise for health with all its benefits.

Colin Snow, the founder and primary teacher, taught in Great Britain before coming to the US. He does not teach it as a martial art but for health benefits. He has been teaching for many years. His school has been involved in teaching Tai Chi in places such as the University of Minnesota Oncology, 3M, Medtronic, 3M, Cargill, Wilder Foundation, and the City of Minneapolis, to name just a few. I have seen many instructors throughout the last 25 plus years, and I find his skills and approach very impressive.

"Tai Chi strengthens the body while focusing the mind", states Travis Young, Lac in *Want better balance? Practice tai chi* in the Hometown Health Blog of the Mayo Clinic Health System in March of 2014.

According to Young, he had a lot of health problems prior to learning and practicing tai chi. As someone in the health care industry, he asserts that tai chi is "especially useful for improving balance and preventing falls". In his blog, he also refers to a study in 2004 by the Oregon Research Institute on the improvement in balance in inactive community members between 70 and 92 years of age.

There are many documented articles on the benefits of tai chi for sleep disorders, anxiety and stress reduction, improvement in depression, arthritis, cancer, heart disease, hypertension, stroke, breast cancer, fibromyalgia, and the list goes on. The studies were usually documented by different medical schools, the American Cancer Society, Mayo Clinic, American Heart Association, to name a few.

There are a few schools teaching tai chi in the twin cities. If you are interested, give them a call and try it. Natural Step is just one of them. I like Colin's teaching methods and understanding of the body and its physical and psychological issues.

Colin has offered to give a complimentary introduction class to anyone from HLAA-TC (or their friends and/or family). If this is of any interest to you, please let me know. If we have at least 3 or more participants, we can have a free class at the studio. I hope you will take advantage of this offer.

Let me know if you have any questions. If interested, you could also check out the Natural Step website at [www.naturalsteptaichi.com](http://www.naturalsteptaichi.com)



## Magazine miscellany

### Hearing Loss Association of North Carolina on Auditory nerve feedback and hearing in noise:

...the 8th cranial nerve, or the Vestibulocochlear nerve [passes] through the ... bony canals of your skull ...It's interesting to note that while many of the nerve fibers in this bundle do carry the sound signal to the brain, most...of the nerve fibers actually carry information BACK to the cochlea from the brain. The cochlea can then use this information to suppress sound you are not interested in ... like background noise ...

Even the best hearing aid can only amplify sound; it can't converse with your brain and help your brain eliminate background noise the way a normal working ear can do.

Get the full story at <http://www.nchearingloss.org/audnerve.htm>

### Commentary by Lise Hamlin for HLAA in Action 9/29/2015

This is an advocacy eNews, not a tech eNews. But when I discovered at a recent advisory council meeting that there are tech solutions to a problem we've been asked to solve repeatedly through advocacy efforts, we thought it deserved mention in this issue of HLAA in Action.

The question is: "Why can't TV enhance the speech and lower the background noise on TV programming?" Until recently, we didn't have a good answer. But surprise, we are not the only ones complaining about sound quality on newer, smarter, expensive TVs with beautiful pictures but they have lousy sound. Now that change is happening.

From a search on the Internet, we also found the solution has been around for a few years. There appears to be several choices now to find ways to enhance speech, from sound bars and external speakers in a range of prices to speech enhancement systems built into the TV itself. Sound bars seem to be the quick and easy choice. Buy the TV you want, and get better sound with an external component.

One reviewer in the Guardian (many of the reviews we found originated from Great Britain) reported about the Sonos Playbar back in 2013:

But the Playbar isn't just a dumb amp. There are two extra settings: "speech enhancement," and "night mode."

The "speech enhancement" is for all those times when you've been watching something and the dialogue has been buried in all the other noise going on. Despite sound engineers' best efforts, the frequency range covering the human voice sometimes needs some help. The Playbar offers a simple setting which, the company told me, does "a combination of things, including lowering bass, adding some gain to the centre channel, lowering the gains of competing channels and boosting/cutting specific frequency ranges in the speech band. This combination increases speech intelligibility without sounding artificial or creating an overly unnatural spectral balance.

Brave words. But yes, it really does do that. Turn the setting off, and the voices do seem to recede. (You might wonder why you'd ever turn it off. The answer: sometimes, you might not be watching TV.)"

Read the review in The Guardian here: <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2013/mar/04/sonos-playbar-review>

## **CI and Baha Groups**

### **Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group**

Sunday, November 15, 2015  
2:00-4:00 PM

The Timbers of Apple Valley  
14018 Pennock Ave.  
Apple Valley, MN 55124

Host: Helen Hoke and Cinda Rudolph

You are welcome to bring a spouse, partner, friend, family member, and/or significant other to any of these events! If you would like to bring a refreshment to share that would be wonderful!

We also hope you can join us for our 5 year celebration! Please mark your calendars!

Please join us for:

### **Adult Cochlear Implant Social Group 5 Year Celebration!**

Sunday, December 13, 2015  
1:30 – 3:30 PM

Dakota County Wentworth Library  
199 East Wentworth Ave.  
West St. Paul, MN 55118  
651-554-6800

Host: Sara Oberg

It will be held in the large meeting room. You are welcome to bring a spouse, partner, friend, family member, and/or significant other to any of these events! If you would like to bring a refreshment to share that would be wonderful!

Thanks!  
Sara Oberg

### **CI and Baha Informational meetings (sponsored by Cochlear)**

The group meets at St. Michael's Lutheran church, 1660 W. County Rd B in Roseville  
From 6-8 PM the second Thursday of each month, weather permitting.

If you have a cochlear implant (CI) or bone-anchored hearing aid (Baha), or are thinking about getting one, you may find these informative.

Next meeting is December 10

# October Meeting



Speaker Laurie Carlson



<p>You might not be able to do everything at once, you can however do it all in one place.</p>	
<p>Let us help you with that.</p>	<p><b>The UPS Store™</b></p>
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**Our next meeting is November 21, 2015**

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**Hearing Loss  
Association**  
of America

**Twin Cities Chapter Welcomes You!**

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**Secretary – Lisa Richardson**  
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**Meetings are held the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month September through May at the Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute 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) or visit us on Facebook: groups/HLAA-TC.**