



East Bay Chapter Newsletter July 2023

On July 8 our topic will be: Aural Rehabilitation, Lip Reading, and Improving Communication.

Our presenter on July 8 will be Dr. Laura Gaeta, PhD, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at California State University, Sacramento. Her research is in aural rehabilitation with older adults and service delivery considerations for culturally and linguistically diverse populations. The program will be a mix of presentation about aural rehabilitation and lip reading, and facilitation of exercises aimed at helping people with hearing loss improve their ability to communicate. **Presented Via Zoom, Greetings 9:30 a.m.; presentation 10:00 a.m.**

Time to Renew your membership in our local chapter for only \$15 a year! If you already renewed, Thank you! Ways to renew: pay at our website on the “Donate” button in the upper right-hand corner; mail your renewal with your name, address, phone number, and e-mail to: East Bay Chapter, HLAA, P.O. Box 12484, Oakland, CA 94604-2484. See the back page to sign up and support National HLAA.

Register for this FREE event [HERE](https://www.hearinglosseb.org/monthly-meetings-1). Or use this link if you are getting a hard copy of the newsletter: <https://www.hearinglosseb.org/monthly-meetings-1>. After you register, you'll be sent the link to join the meeting. Consider staying after the meeting for AfterWords – a chance to ask more in-depth questions, as well as discuss anything you want with fellow members!

HLAA-EB posts our newsletters to the California State Association webpage and a link on our website. VOLUNTEER! Contact us to let us know you are available! Check out our website at: <http://www.hearinglosseb.org/> Contact us at: info@hearinglosseb.org

Apply for your FREE Police Communication Placards and window stickers!!

Anyone who has paid their membership dues for this year can submit your Name, Address and Phone Number, and we will send them out to you! FREE!

The Police Communication Placards and window stickers will notify any officer, if you get stopped by the police, that you have some hearing loss and will allow the police to treat your disability with respect. These items should make it easier to communicate with the police officer.

MEETING NOTES: *World Institute on Disability – Accessibility & Universal Design Work*

At our May 13th, 2023 meeting, our guest speaker was Kat Zigmont, the Deputy Director and Senior Director of Operations at the World Institute on Disability, also known as WID. Headquartered in Berkeley, California, WID was established in 1983 as one of the first global disability rights organizational think tanks, founded and continually led by persons with disabilities.



WID's Primary Work Areas: Initially, Kat provided an overview of the history of WID and then proceeded to identify WID's three primary work areas as follows:

- Disaster Risk Reduction, Humanitarian Action, and Climate Justice for Resilience & Sustainability.
- Policies, Systems, and Tools for Global Community Inclusion.
- Accessibility & Universal Design Solutions (AUDS).

As the leader of the AUDS Division at WID, Kat focused her presentation on the work of the AUDS division, which centers on the lived experiences of people with disabilities and their use of assistive technologies in their research studies, including hearing-related technologies, in helping to make products and services more accessible.

WID's Services: WID supports companies and non-profit organizations of all kinds and sizes to help them provide products and services that are accessible to all people. WID offers the following types of services:

- ✓ **Surveys & Focus Groups:** WID offers qualitative research, which allows a business or organization to gain input from persons with specific disabilities on how accessible their products or services are. WID has an extensive U.S. based and global network that allows them to engage multiple groups from their disability community to construct a holistic report which identifies problems, concerns, experiences and expectations shared by participants, along with WID's recommendations for improving accessibility.
- ✓ **User Experience Testing:** WID provides an opportunity for a company or organization to discover and learn how well persons with disabilities are able to access their offered products and services, as well as any particular concerns about accessibility and improvements that are needed. User testing follows 5 steps in conducting user experience testing:
 - The business or organization shares its accessibility goals, questions and perceived needs, while WID offers several sample questions that the company or organization may want answered.
 - WID builds a diverse group of testers with a range of disabilities to participate in the user experience studies.
 - Study participants are put through a series of activities or tasks and then asked to provide feedback as they try to complete them.
 - WID researchers observe and highlight those areas in which users seem to struggle to complete the assigned activities or tasks.
 - Finally, WID researchers organize their observations and notes which they then incorporate into a formal written report to help improve accessibility to the products and services offered by the company or organization.

- ✓ **Conference/Event Accessibility:** WID provides assistance to a company or organization in preparing plans for conducting a virtual or in-person conference or event that is digitally and physically accessible to all participants. After evaluating the conference or event plans, WID then provides specific recommendations and related resources to aid the company or organization in assuring that the conference or event is accessible and inclusive of everyone. If requested, WID even offers hands-on disability services and accommodations for a specific conference or event.
- ✓ **Assessments, Training, & Advisory Services:** WID can also provide overall guidance to a company or organization throughout the entire process in attempting to meet its accessibility goals. WID does this by providing initial in-depth assessments of its products and services, as well as offering training in organizational knowledge of disability bias, accessible UX practices, and working relationships with people with disabilities. WID then makes recommendations for improving accessibility by suggesting practical steps for carrying out their recommendations while designing a customized program for helping a company or organization achieve its accessibility goals in the most effective and efficient manner.

Becoming a WID Research Participant: If you are a person with a disability (including hearing loss), you may be interested in getting paid to participate in one of WID's research studies that is testing out products and services for accessibility. If so, it was suggested by Kat that you might go ahead and fill out WID's Research Participant Application by going to their website identified below.

Wrap-Up and Q & A Session: As our speaker Kat Zigmont wrapped up her informative presentation about the World Institute on Disability (WID) and its services, she followed up with a Q & A session where she opened up the meeting to audience members' questions and comments about their specific circumstances or issues. Many audience members described their own issues pertaining to hearing loss and related issues, such as difficulties and successes in acquiring access to captioning, hearing problems in noisy environments, and access to assistive hearing technology. She also encouraged individuals to communicate with her directly with further questions about WID and other related topics by emailing her at her contact information stated below.

For More Information/Questions: Visit WID's Website: www.wid.org; Email Kat Zigmont: kat@wid.org.

~ **Kathy Fairbanks**

We need your help! Can you volunteer? Contact us at: info@hearinglosseb.org

Here is a list of volunteer positions we are seeking to fill:

- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Contact people who said they could volunteer and tell them about volunteer needs. Recruit for those positions.
- **National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison:** Coordinate with the national organization (HLAA). Go to online meetings.
- **Outreach Coordinator:** Organize a table for our chapter at various street fairs and other venues. Set up the table. Recruit volunteers to help with the events. Reach out to people who participate in our meetings. Let people know about our chapter.
- There may be more possibilities.

The Bay Area Walk4Hearing was a big success!

On Saturday, June 3, HLAA chapter members from our East Bay Chapter, the Peninsula Chapter, the North Bay Chapter, and the Diablo Valley Chapter, as well as friends, participated in the Bay Area Walk4Hearing. HLAA [Walk4Hearing](#) is a nationwide campaign which brings hope to people with hearing loss in 20 cities, meeting them in their communities to raise awareness and show support. Teams of family and friends join with local HLAA Chapters and nonprofit and business partners to raise funds for local programs and promote hearing health. Walk4Hearing is HLAA's community of support in action, breaking down barriers to hearing health and empowering people with hearing loss across the U.S.

Those who participated in this year's Bay Area Walk4Hearing had a lot of fun! Our EB Chapter had a table so we got to meet and greet many people. Thank you to Connie Gee for chairing the Walk4Hearing for our East Bay Chapter. Thank you to Len Bridges for his work on the budgeting for the Bay Area Walk4Hearing. Thank you to volunteers George Chin, Sr., Yorkman Lowe, Janice Brown, Jasmin and Jay Mumford, Nancy Asmundson and others for their help with the East Bay Chapter table. Kudos especially to Yorkman Lowe and Jay Mumford for taking the table down and packing everything up. Thanks to Jay Mumford for helping to carry heavy boxes to Connie's car. The Alameda High School cheer leaders were there with rousing cheers and demos for all. There was an amazing balloon artist, and the creations were worn by participants in the walk! Upon returning from the walk, a shaved ice truck was there to cool down walkers with their wonderful flavors of ice.

If you weren't able to make it this year, consider attending next year. It was a lot of fun, and we saw many friends from the Bay Area Chapters, as well as having a chance to get some exercise!



Nancy and friend, Carol, at the HLAA East Bay table, left. Nancy and Carol return from the walk under the balloon arch, right.

JOIN HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (HLAA) – THEY ADVOCATE FOR YOU!

Go to this URL to join: <https://www.hearingloss.org/make-an-impact/become-a-memberrenew/>

OR, if you prefer to pay by check or card thru the mail, Nancy Asmundson has membership forms to send to you, or contact HLAA at 301-657-2248 or e-mail membership@hearingloss.org. Your membership form & payment go to HLAA, 6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320, Rockville, MD 20852.

COSTS: Regular Membership/year (will receive *Hearing Life* magazine in print and digital format): Individual - \$45; Couple/Family - \$55; Professional - \$80; Nonprofit - \$80; Veteran Membership: Complimentary 1-Year Regular Membership & Lifetime Online Membership.

STORY CORNER: AMY'S STORY

"I'm honored to share my family's experience with [hearing loss](#). I am the mother of twins, David and Elyssa, who were born extremely early. One of the consequences of their prematurity is that both my children have permanent hearing loss.

"Emotionally, it was like being knocked back to right after their birth at 24 weeks. It was just so unfair! They had already been through so much! And this was entirely different than anything they had been through up to this point -- this was permanent, not something that they would eventually outgrow.

"And while hearing loss is actually a disability I am familiar with, since my Dad is hard of hearing, I still could literally feel the track of my life shift beneath me after hearing that news. I knew in that moment that wherever I thought my life was going before, I was now headed someplace entirely different.

"We learned about the all-important 'speech-language acquisition window' and began to research cochlear implants. At the same time, I also began to learn sign language. Our goal was to give our children access to language in as many forms as possible. As much as possible, we wanted to put off forcing them into any path that would narrow their options. Don't misunderstand, I do want my children to be able to hear and speak so that they are not isolated from the larger culture we live in. I also felt though, that it was not entirely up to me ... our children should have input into the decision of how they would communicate, too.

"As our preemies continued to grow and develop, we started to notice that they were hearing more than their tests would have predicted. The hearing tests showed that David's hearing had improved—in some ranges to a moderate hearing loss level -- A miracle! Elyssa, however, still tested as profoundly deaf.

"The time had finally come to get Elyssa a cochlear implant. It wasn't easy to go through for any of us, but we are so glad that we did! Elyssa has done fabulous with her "cochlear elephant" as she called it at first, quickly catching up to where she was with her hearing aids and then surpassing that point. She had a hearing test at one year post-activation. I cannot describe the feeling of joy and pride I felt, sitting behind my "deaf" daughter, watching her respond to sounds I could barely hear. For David, hearing loss is not his major issue anymore, although it is still there. We certainly are in a different place than I expected six years ago, but it is also most definitely a good place."

East Bay Leadership Team

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Leader Dale Davis, ddavis94605@gmail.com

Outreach, National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: (need a volunteer)

Treasurer: Len Bridges, lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com

Programs: Robin Miller, robin@robinmillerlaw.com

Technology and AfterWords Small Group: George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com

Membership: Connie Gee, cbgee2014@yahoo.com; Marlene Muir, muircmc@comcast.net

Volunteer Coordinator: (need a volunteer)

Newsletter Editors: Nancy Asmundson, nasmundson@comcast.net; Kathy Fairbanks, mkathyfairbanks@att.net

Publicity: Andrea Doehrman, andreadoehrman@gmail.com; George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com

Technical/Audio Loop: Peter G. Townsend, peterg.townsend@gmail.com