



East Bay Chapter:Newsletter

♥ February 2025 ♥

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February 8, 2025 Meeting: Empowering Communication for the Hard of Hearing
Join us for a presentation on tools and technologies designed to improve communication accessibility for individuals with hearing loss. We'll introduce InnoCaption, a free mobile app that provides real-time captions for phone calls through live stenographers and automatic speech recognition, empowering users to stay connected with confidence. The presentation will also highlight other assistive devices, such as captioned landline phones, hearing loops, video relay services (VRS), and personal amplifiers. Real-life examples will be shared, followed by an open discussion and Q&A session. Don't miss this opportunity to learn about solutions that enhance independence and accessibility for the hard of hearing community!

The meeting will be held in person and on Zoom. The in person meeting Event Details:

- Date: Saturday, February 8, 2025
- Time: 9:30 Social; 10:00 Meeting; and 11:30 Lunch
- Location: Oakland Kaiser Fabiola Building, 3801 Howe Street, Room G26
- Cost: Free

While this session is a hybrid meeting, we encourage you to attend in person for an engaging and informative experience. Enjoy our usual morning coffee and bagels, and stick around after the meeting for pizza lunch (**PIZZA!**). We're looking forward to seeing you there!

Questions? Info@HearingLossEB.org Please REGISTER for the meeting at: www.HearingLossEB.org

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

Coming Soon:

- ♥ March; How teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing work with their students
- ♥ April: Tinnitus source and management options
- ♥ May: Walk for Hearing
- ♥ June: How to read an Audiogram
- ♥ July: No meeting
- ♥ August: No meeting
- ♥ September: Hearing Loss and Music

MEETING NOTES: "DCARA and You: Services & Activities for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Persons"

At our Jan. 11, 2025 HLAA-EB Chapter meeting, our guest speaker was Amy Gomme, Executive Director of DCARA, who gave a very interesting and informative presentation about the services and activities provided by this non-profit organization for deaf and hard-of-hearing (HoH) individuals. In introducing herself, Dir. Gomme described her own background while growing up with hearing loss.



Our Speaker's Background: Initially, Dir. Gomme provided us with a brief overview of "*Fun Facts about Me*", at which time she described her background of growing up as the third generation in a deaf family. where her siblings, parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunts were deaf, using American Sign Language (ASL) and most didn't speak. However, Amy could use both ASL and spoken English since she was hard of hearing (HoH), but not totally deaf. Therefore, Amy's parents decided to send her to public school, where she was mainstreamed with speech therapy which helped her to gain her ability to speak.

Nevertheless, Amy struggled in public school with her inability to hear or speak adequately, where they didn't have interpreters, she had few friends and others would laugh at her and dismiss her requests to repeat. It was especially hard on Amy during her lower grade school years as she had to deal at home with some hearing family members who used only spoken English without any ASL, some deaf family members at home who only signed without speaking, and then going to public school where they typically used English and no interpreters.

So, in sixth grade she asked to go to Deaf school along with her deaf siblings, where they used mostly sign language, but also offered speech therapy, interpreters and other types of assistance to help their staff and students communicate adequately no matter whether they were deaf or HoH. At Deaf school, Amy started to blossom and gain a better understanding of what it means to have hearing loss. As Amy moved forward with a new positive identity through her college years and then into her career, she gained insights into how the broader world sees those with hearing loss as either deaf or hearing. Amy now realizes that the real world is made up of a full range of hearing loss experiences and needs. Hence, a wide range of services and activities need to be available through organizations such as DCARA.

Community Statistics: To help us gain some perspective on the extent of deafness and hearing loss, Dir. Gomme cited some current statistics from the community. In California, there are approximately 3 million deaf or HoH people. DCARA has provided services to 710 persons during the past 2 years, which amounts to about 0.024% of the population. She then gave a statistical breakdown of those served by DCARA during this time period>

- **Self-Identification:** 4.6 %
- **Deaf:** 45.77%
- **Hard of Hearing (HoH) 9.58%**
- **Hearing:** 36.34%
- **Other:** 4.5%%

Deaf Access Programs: DCARA has 8 deaf and HoH regional service centers conveniently available throughout Northern and Southern California.

- ✓ **Region 1:** Deaf Community Services
- ✓ **Region 2:** Center on Deafness – Inland Empire
- ✓ **Region 3:** Orange County Deaf Equal Access Foundation
- ✓ **Region 4:** Greater Los Angeles Agency on Deafness
- ✓ **Region 5:** Tri-County Glad
- ✓ **Region 6:** Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services Center
- ✓ **Region 7:** NorCal Services for Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- ✓ **Region 8:** Deaf Counseling, Advocacy & Referral Agency

DCARA's Services & Activities: DCARA provides several important practical services and activities for those in the deaf and HoH community.

- **Information & Referral:** DCARA distributes an abundance of valuable information on deafness and hearing loss by making it available through its deaf access programs, as well as in-person and online meetings, webinars and workshops. DCARA also refers persons requesting or needing additional resources or assistance with resolving their hearing loss issues.
- **Interpreting Services:** DCARA provides interpreting services to those needing assistance in communicating and conducting their personal and business affairs. This interpreting assistance can be virtual or in person. Interpreting services may also include some kind of visual access such as ASL, SEE, lip reading, and /or standard oral spoken English or spoken Spanish.
- **Youth & Family Services:** DCARA offers several programs especially for youth between the ages 0 to 22. These programs and workshops target not only youth but rather the whole family in its mentoring efforts by focusing on deaf culture, deaf role models, language milestones, ASL, and family language. They also provide parent education in linguistics and educational advocacy so the parents can learn how to best help their own children.
- **Employment Services:** DCARA provides job search strategies, desk counseling, document translation practice interviews, and support for job retention and referrals.
- **Community Empowerment Services:** DCARA recognizes the importance of empowering those individuals in the deaf and HoH community, and therefore encourages them to participate fully in their offerings on advocacy, information & referral, community education, job development & placement, peer counseling, communication access, and independence living skills.

Making Connections:

- **DCARA's Mission:** Dir, Gomme emphasized that DCARA is intent on fulfilling its mission of making the connections in helping persons who are deaf or HoH to live their best life with deafness and any level of hearing loss.

- **HLAA & DCARA:** DCARA has frequently collaborated with HLAA national and California, as well as local chapters such as HLAA East Bay by offering relevant resources, webinars, workshops and other events to all interested parties.,

DCARA's Future Events: DCARA is currently arranging several up-coming events.

✚ **San Jose Sharks:** SAP; March 5, 2025

✚ **Love & Literacy:** Fremont, CA; March 15, 2025

✚ **Community BBQ:** TBA; July 26, 2025

Q & A Session: Dir. Gomme opened up her remaining time for any questions or comments from audience members. There were several positive comments about DCARA's current services and activities. There were also several comments from audience members about their own hearing loss situation and some suggestions for DCARA on what would help them with their hearing loss issues. Here are some examples offered by audience members:

- ❖ Educating doctors and staff working in hospitals and other medical settings to wear clear acrylic masks, to speak more clearly and slower so individuals with hearing loss can lip read and better understand their medical diagnosis, treatment and instructions.
- ❖ Encouraging builders and others in construction industries to use materials that better control and manage noise, especially in buildings often visited by the public, such as medical facilities, restaurants, movie theaters, and religious entities.
- ❖ Providing more free or low-cost classes in speech/lip reading, American Sign Language (ASL), and training sessions in use of hearing loss assistive devices such as the Pocket Talker.
- ❖ More advocacy training on behalf of not only deaf persons, but also individuals who have some serious level of hearing impairment and therefore deserve assistance in learning and understanding their legal rights.
- ❖ Continuing DCARA's efforts to fill the missing connections between DCARA and HLAA in providing the needed support to the hearing loss community.

Wrap-Up; In wrapping up her excellent presentation, our speaker Dir. Amy Gomme invited audience members and any deaf and/or hard-of-hearing persons to explore the many services, activities and resources that are offered by DCARA. Interested individuals, family and friends may also wish to visit one of the DCARA Regional Centers in their area. For more information and/or questions, Dir. Gomme encouraged us to visit their website or call them directly, as stated below.

Finally, the HLAA-EB Chapter leadership reminded everyone that the policy of the Chapter is to not endorse any service, product or person that may have been mentioned or discussed during the current presentation, discussion or follow-up Q & A session.

For More Information or Questions: _Visit: www.dcara.org Call: 510-343-6670

~ Kathy Fairbanks

HLAA 2025 Convention

Make plans now to Join the HLAA's 40th annual convention, June 11-14, 2025, in Indianapolis, Indiana—host of the famous Indy 500 automobile race. Our annual event brings together hundreds of people with hearing loss from around the U.S. to learn, discover and connect. Check out the latest technology and hear from health and industry experts during a series of empowering events designed to help you live your best life with hearing loss.

AND, the HLAA-East Bay Chapter is offering Stipends to help defray the cost of attending. BUT you'll have to apply for the stipend and your application must be submitted by March 8, 2025. You must pay upfront and you will receive the stipend after you return. See below for the most reasonable prices and get the payment in early! Amount of stipend is covered in the Stipend Policy on the next page. Apply online [here](#) or use the application on Page 7.

Registration is now open for the Convention so reserve your spot today!

Early bird pricing is offered until March 14:

- **Individual – \$425**
- **Couple – \$725**
- **Student – \$175**
- **Day Rate – \$200**
- **Research Symposium Only – \$25**

Convention Highlights

- **Hear an inspiring keynote speaker during the General Session**
- **Attend our Research Symposium exploring “Stigma: Making the Invisible Actionable”**
- **Celebrate and connect at the Welcome Back event and other social functions**
- **Learn from our exciting educational workshops on a wide range of topics**
- **See product demonstrations of the latest technology for people with hearing loss**
- **Walk through the Exhibit Hall featuring cutting-edge tech and hearing health industry advances. Free Exhibit Hall-only passes available**
- **Enhance an HLAA Chapter or State Organization at the HLAA Leadership Training**

Every member who has attended a convention came away impressed with the amount of good information!

HLAA East Bay Chapter Stipend Policy for the HLAA Annual Convention

Rev. January 29, 2025

The HLAA East Bay Chapter will provide financial support to Chapter members who wish to attend an HLAA Annual Convention, at the discretion of the Steering Committee. The Chapter believes it is important for one or more members to participate in the educational activities offered by the HLAA national office, with the understanding that those who attend will share their learnings with the entire membership.

1. Notice to Members. Notice of the availability of stipends shall be announced at the Member Meetings held in February and March of the applicable year and also in the Chapter Newsletter distributed during those months. The notice shall include the contact information for the Stipend Committee Chair, from whom an Application Form may be requested.
2. Amount of Stipend. The amount of the stipend and the number of stipends to be awarded shall be determined by the Steering Committee and documented in the Budget for the applicable year. However, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, and before the stipend recipients are announced, the Steering Committee reserves the right to rescind the stipend by majority vote.
3. Eligible Members. Current paid members of the Chapter, according to the Treasurer and Database Manager, are eligible.
4. Application for Stipend to Attend the HLAA Annual Convention. Members seeking a stipend must complete and submit a written application to the Stipend Committee Chair. The application must be received by the Chair no later than the date of the Chapter membership meeting occurring on the second Saturday of March in the year of the HLAA Annual Convention.
5. Selection Process. The Stipend Committee Chair will present a recommendation and the application information received to the Steering Committee, and will notify the awardee(s) at least one day before the HLAA early-bird registration deadline to help the recipients better plan for and attend the HLAA Convention. A special meeting may be required to make this determination, depending on the early-bird registration deadline announced by the HLAA national office. The selection criteria will be based on first-time attendance, years of membership with the Chapter, current contributions to the Chapter, and involvement with the hearing loss community.
6. Payment of Stipend. After attending the HLAA Convention, the member must submit proof of attendance to the Stipend Committee Chair. The Chair will then verify the member's attendance with the Steering Committee and authorize the Treasurer to disburse the stipend from the Chapter funds. Attachment: Stipend Application for Attending the HLAA Annual Convention

HLAA East Bay Chapter Stipend

Revised January 29, 2025

Stipend Application for Attending the HLAA Annual Convention

Name:

Address:

Email:

Phone Number:

Are you a first-time attendee? Yes _____ No _____

Are you a current member of the Chapter? Yes _____ No _____

Would you be willing to provide an oral report at a Member Meeting, sharing what you learn and your experiences from the HLAA Convention? Yes _____ No _____ (If not, please provide a brief explanation.)

Please describe your involvement in and contributions to the Chapter and/or the hearing loss community.

Date:

Signature: _____

Please drop this form off at the next HLAA-EBC meeting or scan and e-mail to Nancy Asmundson at nasmundson@gmail.com. Deadline for applications: March 8, 2025.

U.C. San Francisco seeks study participants to help with research!

Spotify Study:

MUSIC LISTENING STUDY

Do you listen to music on Spotify?

Researchers want to learn about music listening preferences in cochlear implant users and how they differ from normal hearing controls.



Scan to participate!

WHAT WILL PARTICIPANTS BE ASKED TO DO?

Volunteers will be asked to extract their listening data from Spotify and then fill out two quick surveys. All study activities will be completed remotely.

WHO CAN JOIN?

We are looking for adult volunteers, ages 18 and up, who listen to music on Spotify. You do NOT need to be a cochlear implant user!



Want to learn more?
Contact the study team at:
✉ michelle.zhang3@ucsf.edu

UCSF 

Sound and Music Perception Lab

AB Programming Study:

This research study develops personalized programming maps to improve speech and music perception in cochlear implant users. We are recruiting Advanced Bionics cochlear implant users who is 7 years of age or older. Participation involves coming to the UCSF Parnassus campus where we will create a personalized programming map based on your individual hearing history and status. You will listen to some sounds and music using this personalized map and provide your feedback. Your visit may take up to 4 hours, and may be spread out among several sessions. We pay \$15 per hour, and up to \$75 per visit, provide snacks, and compensate for parking costs.

If you wish to participate in either of these studies, please email Brooke Barry at brooke.barry@ucsf.edu.

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:

- **Zoom Assistant** - Assist George Chin, Sr. to run Zoom, cameras, and PA/Audio Loop during in person/hybrid meetings.
- **Camera Operator** - Use a remote control to operate our 2 cameras for in-person Zoom meetings.
- **Volunteer Coordinator**: Contact people who said they could volunteer and tell them about volunteer needs. Recruit for those positions.
- **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.
- **Just want to help?** All of our committees need helpers! All volunteers are welcome! Contact us and we'll help you figure out what would be a good fit for you.

HLAA SF/East Bay Leaders

Our Steering Committee, Leader: Len Bridges, lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com
Outreach National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: Linda Gee, lgee@hearinglosseb.org
Treasurer: Len Bridges, lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com
Programs: Robin Miller, robinmillermail@gmail.com, Verna Dow, vbdow@comcast.net
Technology: George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com
Membership: Connie Gee, cbgee2014@yahoo.com, Marlene Muir, muircmc@comcast.net
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Technical/Audio Loop: Peter G. Townsend, peterg.townsend@gmail.com
Website updates: George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com. Peter G. Townsend, peterg.townsend@gmail.com
Consulting Legal Counsel: Gerald Niesar, gniesar@nvlawllp.com
Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services: Audrey Spinka, captionit@gmail.com

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

hearingloss.org Membership is now open to all of our valued supporters who help fuel our mission and change the lives of people with hearing loss. **Everyone who gives is now an HLAA member, helping to amplify our HLAA voice, and fulfill our important mission— together!**

COST OF MEMBERSHIP: The HLAA national office had consolidated the donation and membership processes. Presently, anyone who donates as little as \$1 would become a member of the national HLAA. Additionally, with a donation of \$45 annually, individuals have the option to receive a hard copy of the Hearing Life magazine from the national office.