



East Bay Chapter

East Bay Chapter:Newsletter



March 2025



Chapter E-mail: Info@HearingLossEB.org

Chapter Address: PO Box 2266, Alameda, CA 94501

March 8, 2025 Meeting: Mary Grace Basco, Stephanie Knight-Shaw, Julie Cohen, and Jessica Serrano are teachers of the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) here in the Bay Area, working for the Alameda Unified, Berkeley Unified, and Oakland Unified School Districts. Collectively, these teachers have over 70 years of experience working with students with hearing loss. From infants to high schoolers, kids have a lot to learn about their own hearing levels and how to advocate for themselves. Learn about what DHH teachers do and why these teachers feel it's the best job in the world.

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

- Date: Saturday, March 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:

- ❖ 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: *"Empowered Communication: InnoCaption and Other Technology and Tools for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community"*

At our Feb. 8, 2025 HLAA-EB Chapter meeting, our guest speaker was Matt Goncalves, Marketing Director for InnoCaption, a free mobile app that provides real-time captions for phone calls. Matt did an excellent job of introducing us to InnoCaption, as well as describing some of the practical technology and tools designed to improve communication access for individuals with hearing loss. He also reminded us of useful assistive devices, such as captioned landline phones, hearing loops, video relay services (VRS) and personal amplifiers which are available to help the deaf and hard of hearing (HoH). With the help of his assistant Noah MacLean, he then followed up with a real-life demonstration of some of the items and an open-end discussion/Q & A session with audience members.



Our Speaker's Background: Our speaker Matt Goncalves initially described his own background. Referring to his accent, he explained that he was born in 1987 in Brazil and in 2002 moved to the United States. He went to high school in Florida, then spent 2 years in South Carolina and 2 years later transferred to the University of George Mason in Virginia. That's where he met his future wife Cristina whom he married in 2015, as well as future mother and father-in-law Meg and Joe Duarte. In 2010, they launched their small family-like business.

As Matt proceeded to tell his story, he noted that when he met the Duarte's in 2010 that he began to become familiar with the deaf and hard-of-hearing community and before that didn't know anyone with cochlear implants. Joe Duarte worked at IBM in 1982 and used a TTY device. Joe had tested every accessibility tool possible, but only when Joe discovered InnoCaption did he feel comfortable making calls on the cellphone. Joe Duarte became the sole investor behind InnoCaption and continues to serve as co-CEO of InnoCaption with the founder Joseph Lee. Matt serves as Director of Marketing at InnoCaption while his wife Christina serves there as Sr. Director of Regulatory Affairs and also is an active HLAA-CA Board Member. Matt continued to show pictures of the team which helped launch InnoCaption in 2016 at the HLAA convention when they were fewer than 10 people and as the InnoCaption team grew close to 40 people in 2024 and keeps growing and expanding.

Technology & Tools for Individuals with Hearing Loss: Prior to further describing InnoCaption, Matt identified some of the many types of technology and tools now available to individuals with hearing loss.

➤ ***Real-Time Captioning Services:***

- ***Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART):*** A professional stenographer-based service used for live events, classrooms, and meetings where CART providers offer real-time transcriptions for either individuals or large audiences.
- ***Zoom Live Transcription:*** Provides AI-generated captions during Zoom meetings, with an option for third-party human captioning services.
- ***Google Meet Live Captions:*** Uses AI-driven speech-to-text technology to generate real-time captions for virtual meetings.
- ***Microsoft Teams Live Captions:*** Offers AI-generated real-time captions during meetings, making virtual collaboration more accessible.

- **Microsoft PowerPoint Live & Subtitles:** Built-in real-time captioning and translation for PowerPoint presentations.

➤ **Captioning Apps:**

- **InnoCaption:** A mobile app that provides real-time captions for phone calls using either stenographers (human-based captions) or automated speech recognition (ASR), which is funded by the FCC and offered at no cost to those with hearing loss in the US.
- **CaptionMate:** A real-time AI-generated captioning service for phone calls, which supports over 100 languages for multilingual accessibility and free since it's FCC funded.
- **AVA:** A mobile and desktop app that provides AI-generated captions for group conversations, meetings, and live events.
- **Live Transcribe by Google:** A free Android app that provides automatic speech recognition (ASR) captions for in-person conversations in real time.

➤ **Captioning Devices (Landline Phones):**

- **ClearCaptions:** A captioned phone service that provides free, real-time text captions of phone conversations for eligible individuals with hearing loss, where the captions appear on a screen, ensuring users never miss a word.
- **CaptionCall by Sorenson:** A captioned telephone service that provides real-time captions of phone conversations, which is available for landline and mobile users, and can help individuals with hearing loss to communicate confidently.
- **CapTel:** A specialized captioned phone that displays real-time captions of phone conversations on a built-in screen, designed for either home or office use, offering various models with touchscreen displays and amplified audio.

➤ **Frequency Modulation Systems (FM Systems):**

- **FM Systems Described:** Wireless assistive listening systems used in classrooms, meetings, and public spaces to deliver clear sound directly to a user's hearing aid, cochlear implant, or personal receiver.
- **How It Works:** A microphone (transmitter) is worn by the speaker; The listener wears a receiver that connects to their hearing device; sound is transmitted wirelessly, reducing background noise and improving speech clarity.
- **Ideal for:** Classrooms where teachers wear the microphone; lecture halls, churches, and large group meetings; and noisy environments where hearing aids alone may not provide enough clarity.

➤ **Hearing Loop (Hearing Loop) Systems:**

- **Hearing Loops Described:** Hearing loop systems use electromagnetic signals to transmit sound directly to hearing aids and cochlear implants with telecoil (T-coil) technology.
- **How It Works:** A loop of wire is installed around a room or seating area; a microphone captures sound, which is converted into an electromagnetic signal; the signal is picked up by hearing aids or cochlear implants with a T-coil setting, allowing users to hear more clearly.
- **Common Locations:** Theaters, auditoriums, & conference rooms; places of worship; airports, train stations, & customer service areas.

- **Personal Sound Amplification Systems (PSAPs):**
 - **PSAPs Described:** Non-prescription devices that amplify sound, but are not classified as medical hearing aids; useful for individuals with very mild to mild hearing difficulty in specific situations.
 - **Examples of PSAPs:** Base SoundControl Hearing Aids (OTC hearing solutions); Pocket Talkers.
 - **Choosing the Right Assistive Listening Device (ALD):** The best ALD depends on the individual's hearing loss, lifestyle & environment. Many ALDs work in combination with HA's or CI's.

- **Video Relay Services (VRS):**
 - **Video Relay Service (VRS) Described:** A free, FCC-regulated telecommunications service that allows deaf and HoH individuals to place and receive phone calls using American Sign Language (ASL) through a qualified video interpreter (VI).
 - **How VRS Works:** The deaf and HoH user connects to a VRS provider using a video capable device (smartphone, tablet, computer, or videophone). A certified ASL interpreter appears on the screen and interprets the conversation in real-time.
 - **Key Features of VRS:** 24/7 availability in the U.S.; no cost to users since funded by the FCC; multiple device support; Spanish VRS
 - **Examples of VRS Providers:** Sorenson VRS; Purple VRS; ZVRS; Convo VRS.
 - **Use Cases for VRS:** Phone calls with family, friends, & businesses; calling doctors, customer service agents & emergency services; professional communication for job interviews & business meetings.

- **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI):**
 - **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) Described:** An on-demand ASL interpreting service that provides live sign language interpretation for face-to-face conversations when an in-person interpreter is not available.
 - **How VRI Works:** A deaf or HoH individual and a hearing person are in the same room; they connect to a remote ASL interpreter using a video conferencing platform on a tablet, laptop or smartphone.
 - **Key Features of VRI:** Immediate access; cost effective; flexibility can be used anywhere with an internet connection; multi-purpose use supporting multiple spoken & signed languages.
 - **Examples of VRI Providers:** Sorenson Interpreting; Purple VRI; ZVRS Interpreting; Convo VRI.
 - **Use Cases for VRI:** Healthcare appointments.; legal & court settings; workplace meetings; educational institutions; emergency situations.

InnoCaption: After identifying and describing the numerous useful tools & devices now available to individuals who are deaf or have some level of hearing loss, Matt proceeded in using the remaining time describing InnoCaption, how it works, what sets InnoCaption apart, and key features of InnoCaption.

- ✓ **What Is InnoCaption?**
 - **InnoCaption Described:** InnoCaption is a mobile app that provides real-time captioning or phone calls for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - **How It Works:** InnoCaption users can speak while reading captions of what the other party is saying.

- **No Cost:** InnoCaption is offered at no cost for those with hearing loss in the U.S. because it is funded by the FCC.
- ✓ **What Sets InnoCaption Apart?**
 - **First of Its Kind:** First mobile focused, real time call captioning service.
 - **Automated Speech Recognition (ASR):** Easy to use with ASR.
 - **Live Stenographers:** CART providers.
 - **Certified by FCC:** Free for eligible users.
 - **HIPAA Compliant:** Security & privacy assured by annual auditing by the FCC.
 - **The Way They Treat Their Users:** A support team is readily available to provide help to users.
- ✓ **Features of InnoCaption:**
 - **Use Your Cell Phone Number:** Patented One Number System links your existing phone number with the InnoCaption system, using their Call Forwarding & Caller ID features.
 - **Human or AI Caption Switch:** You can switch between live stenographers (CART providers) and fully automated captions before or during calls with the choice being yours.
 - **InnoCaption Web:** If you need a larger screen, you can use their InnoCaption Web Portal to make captioned phone calls directly from your computer.
 - **Transcripts:** You can easily view past call transcripts, email important ones to yourself or permanently delete them, all from the InnoCaption app.
 - **InnoCaption Web Tutorials:** Tutorials are available to InnoCaption users on many topics that might be helpful in learning how to effectively use or improve in using InnoCaption.

Wrap-Up; In wrapping up his very informative, excellent presentation, our speaker Matt Goncalves suggested that audience members consider investigating some of the many technological devices and tools reviewed during his presentation. After answering lots of questions from the in-person and remote audience, he then invited audience members to try out the InnoCaption app and some of the available tutorials on how to effectively utilize the various features of InnoCaption in living your best life no matter what level of hearing loss you are experiencing. Matt also encouraged anyone needing more information or had further questions to contact him or his support team at InnoCaption at the sources noted below.

Finally, Matt clarified that he had no intention of recommending or endorsing any specific hearing loss service or product for any particular person without personal assessment and consultation. Likewise, the HLAA-EB Chapter leadership reminded everyone that the policy of the HLAA-EB Chapter is to not endorse any service, product or person that may have been identified, described, or discussed during the current presentation, discussion or follow-up Q & A session.

For More Information and/or Questions: Visit: www.innocaption.com

Call: 571-289-7632

Email: matt@innocaption.com Email: innocaptionsupport@com

~ 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
Volunteer Coordinator: Linda Gee, lgee@hearinglosseb.org
Newsletter Editors: Nancy Asmundson, nasmundson@comcast.net. Kathy Fairbanks, mkathyfairbanks@att.net
Publicity: Marlene Muir, muircmc@comcast.net, George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com
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.