Wake Chapter Newsletter

July 2025

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Summer Social Returning to Raulston Arboretum

All HLAA Wake Chapter members are invited to a summer social on Sunday, July 20, at the JC Raulston Arboretum in Raleigh. This beautiful location proved popular for our 2024 summer social.

We've reserved Room 109 in the arboretum's air-conditioned education center, and the chapter will provide a light lunch from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. You are welcome to bring family and friends. It's a chance to meet and socialize with others while enjoying a sandwich, salad, chips, desserts and a beverage.

Please RSVP to Steve Latus (slatus@comcast.net) by July 13.

Participants will have the option of checking out the arboretum's splendid gardens before or after the lunch.

Arboretum admission and parking are free. The arboretum is in west Raleigh near the N.C. State Fairgrounds. The address is 4415 Beryl Road. At this time, Beryl Road is partially closed due to construction. If the road is still closed as the date of the social approaches, we will send all registrants a map providing detour directions.

The mission of the arboretum "is to diversify the landscape by sharing our passion, our plants and our knowledge to plan – and plant for a better world." The arboretum collects, evaluates and selects for introduction landscape plants for their most beneficial economic, ecological and aesthetic value. Its gardens are a living laboratory that reside in and complement the curricula of North Carolina State University.

Raulston Arboretum was a pleasant setting – both inside and out – for our 2024 summer social.

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Hannah Lewis Named Scholarship Recipient

Hannah Lewis of Wake Forest is the recipient of a 2025 Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Wake Chapter scholarship.

The scholarship program provides scholarships to high school seniors with hearing loss residing in Wake County who plan to attend an accredited university, college, community college or trade school. In its sixth year, the program is made possible by the generous support of participants in the North Carolina Walk4Hearing, a hearing health awareness and fundraising event conducted by HLAA.

Hannah graduated from Franklin Academy High School in Wake Forest in June and will attend Wake Tech in Raleigh.

Hannah's hearing loss journey

I was adopted from Guatemala and came to the United States at the age of 11 months. My parents realized something was wrong with my hearing when we came back to the states, and I received cochlear implants at a young age.

School accomplishments

Hannah participated in band, debate and student council. Included in her class work were courses in American Sign Language. During the summer of 2024 she took part in the week-long North Carolina Governor's Page Program, which gives high school students the opportunity for hands-on participation in state government.

"It was a fun and awesome experience," she says.

As part of that program, Hannah spoke in front of members of the North Carolina General Assembly, advocating for change in the healthcare industry.

Hannah used email and one-on-one conversations as needed to communicate with her teachers when she sought to clarify verbal directions given during class lectures.

According to teacher Elaine Beale, "Hannah has made so much progress during the past four years in effectively self-advocating regarding her hearing loss needs."

"Hannah has a passion for civics like no other student I've taught," says teacher Alley Von Eberstein. Not surprisingly – and as the adjoining photo in front of the U.S. Capitol hints, Hannah aspires to become a member of Congress.

Hannah is serving as a counselor at New Life Camp in Raleigh as she awaits the start of her college career.

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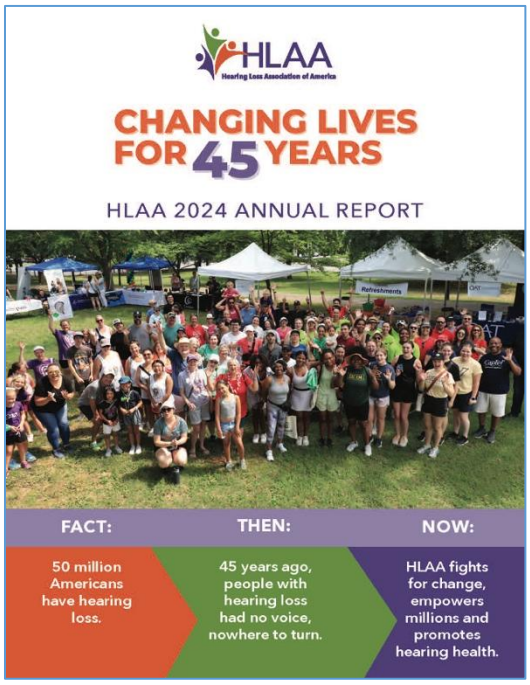
Changing Lives for 45 Years

Since the Hearing Loss Association of America was founded in 1979 it has grown into a unique nationwide community of support and advocacy.

In HLAA's 2024 Annual Report, Executive Director Barbara Kelley explains how the organization is impacting our world today.

"HLAA's work changes millions of lives," she says. "We impact hundreds of pieces of legislation creating more affordable care, treatment and accessible communication for people with hearing loss. We empower thousands of people every day with trusted educational resources. We are a steady voice on boards, committees and councils across the U.S., making sure that people with hearing loss aren't forgotten."

Read more about HLAA's 2024 achievements, programs and financials in the report, which is available on the HLAA website.



View Marlee Matlin Documentary in Cary

The story of trailblazing deaf actor, author and activist Marlee Matlin is told in a recently released documentary film titled "Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore."

At the age of 21, Matlin was the first Deaf actor to win an Academy Award for her performance in "Children of a Lesser God."

Matlin's incredible journey has continued with standout roles in acclaimed projects such as "The West Wing" and the Oscar-winning "CODA," all while relentlessly advocating for greater inclusion and accessibility both within Hollywood and beyond its borders.

The film, which incorporates American Sign Language and open captions, will be shown at The Cary Theater (122 E. Chatham Street) for five days in July:

- Saturday, July 5, 5 p.m.
- Wednesday, July 9, 7 p.m.
- Thursday, July 10, 2 p.m.
- Friday, July 11, 5 p.m.
- Saturday, July 12, 2 p.m.

Ticket purchasing information is available at https://thecarytheater.com/tickets.

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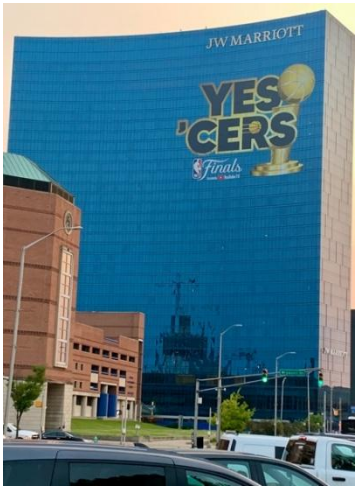
HLAA 2025 Convention: Slam Dunk in Indianapolis!



There was excitement in the air in Indianapolis during the Hearing Loss Association of America 2025 national convention.

The June HLAA event happened to overlap with the championship series of the National Basketball Association (NBA) playoffs, which featured the Indianapolis Pacers and Oklahoma City Thunder. The Pacers home arena is a few blocks away from the convention host site, the JW Marriott Indianapolis. The enthusiasm of the Pacers fans on game nights added just a touch of zest to the HLAA proceedings.

Coincidentally, the convention's general session keynote speaker was Lance Allred, the first player with hearing loss in NBA history.

Another highlight was a research symposium on "Stigma: Making the Invisible Actionable." Many people with hearing loss wait seven years or longer to seek treatment – if they get treated at all. Symposium panelists discussed the role that stigma plays in this dynamic. Panelists included Dr. Jessica West, Ph.D. MPH (speaking in the photo at left), a medical sociologist in the Duke University School of Medicine who recently spoke on the topic of stigma at an HLAA Wake Chapter meeting.

Educational workshops were offered on a wide range of topics, and an exhibit hall showcased emerging technologies, service providers and leading hearing health companies.

HLAA devoted an entire day of the convention to chapter leader training (see photo at right). Representing the Wake chapter at the session were Chapter President Steve Latus and Sharron Bradshaw, the recipient of a Wake chapter grant to defray some of her convention expenses. Training sessions covered such topics as ethics, advocacy, chapter outreach, finance best practices and new branding guidelines. Significant time was devoted to discussing revisions in the processes involved in conducting the annual Walk4Hearing.

Louisville will host the next HLAA national convention from June 10-12, 2026.

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Favorite Moments at the HLAA Convention

Representing the Hearing Loss Association of America Wake Chapter at the HLAA 2025 Convention were Chapter President Steve Latus and Sharron Bradshaw, the recipient of a Wake chapter grant to defray some of her convention expenses.

Bradshaw “learned a lot” during the Chapter Leader Training that kicked off the convention, characterizing it as “a long day, but worth it.” Latus agonized over which educational workshops to attend, because each time block included three choices. “I based my decisions,” he said, “on which topics I felt would be most relevant to share with our members back home.”

Below are photos of other special convention moments.

Bradshaw, Research Symposium panelist Dr. Jessica West and Latus

Participants in the Indy Walk4Hearing held on the last day of the convention

From her convention hotel room, Bradshaw enjoyed postgame fireworks at Victory Field, home of the Indianapolis Indians minor league baseball team.

At the request of a Wake Chapter member, Latus tested Captify caption glasses at a booth in the exhibition hall.

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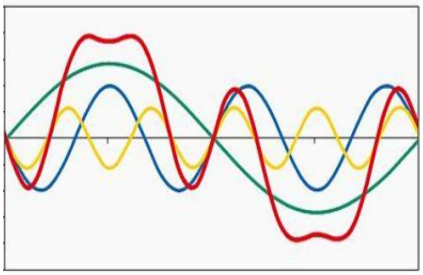
Tech Focus: Harmonics

Most people with hearing loss are familiar with the fact that sound waves have frequencies that determine the pitch of the sound. But frequencies are not as simple as most of us imagine. We may think of the pitch of a sound as a pure tone at a specific frequency. While it is possible to create a pure tone consisting of a single frequency using a tuning fork, or with an electronic generator, most frequency sounds are made up of several frequencies: a base frequency and several harmonic frequencies. Most instruments and the human voice will include some configuration of harmonic (or overtone) frequencies.

When a base sound has harmonics, the harmonics will be at regular intervals of the base frequency. So, a 300 Hz base sound would have harmonics at 600, 900, 1200, etc. The amplitude of those harmonic frequencies tends to diminish as their pitch increases. But depending on the source, the amplitude of each harmonic also varies with the source, and that adds the richness, nuance and subtlety of the sound. If a clarinet, a trumpet, and a violin all play the same frequency, they will sound completely different partly because those harmonic and base frequency blend to create a different timbre.

The image on the right illustrates a base tone as a green sine wave of say 300 Hz. The blue sine wave is the first harmonic at 600 Hz, and the yellow sine wave is the second harmonic at 900 Hz. The amplitude of the base and harmonics waves add up to the red sound wave that we hear. The image shows the diminished amplitude of the first and second harmonic frequencies, and it does not show additional harmonic waves, nor does it show the amplitude variations of harmonics that make different sources unique.



If you wear hearing aids or cochlear implants (CIs), you may miss the nuances that harmonics have on sounds.

> **Hearing aids** can accurately stimulate hair cells in the cochlea, but for most people with sensorineural loss, the effectiveness of hair cells at different frequency ranges can vary from normal to minimal to zero. The motion of the hair cells is what triggers signals from nerve cell at the base of hair cell up the auditory nerve to the brain. So, the shape of the curve on your audiogram means you may not perceive some sounds accurately because your perception of the base and harmonic amplitudes vary from what your hearing aid is providing. Hearing aids can be life savers, but can't provide perfect hearing.
>
> **CIs** don't work like hearing aids. CIs use 22 or fewer electrodes to stimulate the nerve cells at the base of mostly non-functional hair cells. There are several thousand nerve cells that those 22 or fewer electrodes stimulate with each electrode's frequency. So, the brain attempts to estimate the frequency that the nerve cells in-between electrodes should represent. CIs can get pitch mostly correct and benefit from some of the benefits of harmonics after rehab, but neither will be perfect.

It's not all bad, though. Harmonics can help both hearing aids and CIs. Hearing aids typically can't directly stimulate frequencies below ~150 Hz, and CIs typically can't directly stimulate frequencies below ~200 Hz. But most hearing aid users (with working low frequency hair cells) and most CI users can hear all the keys of a piano, despite the first eleven low frequency keys having frequencies less than 200 Hz. The lowest key is only about 27.5 Hz … well below what a hearing aid or CI can stimulate directly, but most hearing aid and CI users can hear all the keys of a piano. When the base frequency cannot be directly stimulated, but the higher frequency harmonics of the note are heard, the brain tries to fill in the missing base frequency. So, we can hear those notes, even if they are not perfect pitch and timbre. Hearing aids may be better at providing all the harmonics above the lowest frequency it can process than CIs, which may miss some of the harmonic frequencies between electrodes, but it still explains how we can hear the lowest frequency key of a piano.

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