

## **COVER: HLA-NJ Annual Meeting a Terrific Success, Providing Information and Support**

The 2011 Annual Meeting of the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey (HLA-NJ) drew nearly 60 people who gathered to learn and celebrate the successes of 2011 and to look ahead to plans for 2012.

Arlene Romoff, a co-founder of HLA-NJ and the outgoing president, began the meeting by reporting the official tally for October's NJ Walk4Hearing, \$52,000, which will benefit programs and services for people with hearing loss in New Jersey and nationally. Since the first Walk4Hearing was held in New Jersey in 2008, a grand total of almost \$200,000 has been raised, according to Ms. Romoff. She recognized, by name, 25 people who have actively worked on projects and tasks this past year – significant to HLA-NJ's strength as an organization.

In recognition of Ms. Romoff's dedication, hard work and commitment to helping people with hearing loss, president-elect Linda Schaab presented her with a plaque, a gift and a bouquet of flowers.

Ira Hock, Executive Assistant for the New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, welcomed those who attended. The division provided invaluable communications assistance for the meeting, including real-time captioning (CART), an infrared assistive listening system and interpreters.

The new president of HLA-NJ Linda Schaab, was elected president at the November meeting, has extensive experience with hearing loss. She was born with normal hearing but when she was 16 months old, she contracted spinal meningitis, which resulted in profound deafness by age three.

Ms. Schaab got her first hearing aid at age five and has been wearing two hearing aids since junior high school. She received speech and lip reading training at the League for the Hard of Hearing in New York, now known as the Center for Hearing and Communication. At age ten, she was photographed there with former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. The late Mrs. Roosevelt also had hearing loss, and was a strong supporter of the League.

Ms. Schaab's involvement with HLA-NJ began when she attended a chapter meeting in East Brunswick. For 15 years, she and her husband, Marvin, have

been very involved with the group's Board of Directors and have attended several national conventions held by the Hearing Loss Association of America.

As a result of her advocacy, the N.J. Health Information Management Association purchased an FM system for their meetings and workshops. She has been nominated to serve the Advisory Council for the New Jersey Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Her appointment is pending approval by Governor Christie.

Other officers elected include Janet Rosen - Vice President, Dr. Jeff Liebman -Treasurer, Wayne Roorda – Recording Secretary, Carolyn Lance – Corresponding Secretary, and Trustees Dr. David Cooper, Anne Marie De Pierro, Marvin Schaab, and Amy Mogland.

Guest speaker for the meeting was Linda Kessler, Assistant Director of Communication at the Center for Hearing and Communication. She explained the subject of speechreading—one of the most valuable tools for people with hearing loss. Topics included “The Hows, Whys and Secrets” of speechreading, why certain words are difficult to speechread and communication strategies for a person with hearing loss.

Following the meeting, visitors had an opportunity to speak with some of the many exhibitors. They included representatives of Sprint CapTel and CaptionCall – both demonstrating captioned telephone services. Representatives of the N. J. Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the N. J. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and PepNet explained the services and resources they offer. Dr. David Cooper, an audiologist, was present to answer questions, and HLA-NJ members with cochlear implants were available to provide information and support. EmCom, an inductive looping company, had a new portable device to try out. Also represented was the Hearing Loss Association of America, offering information on how to become a member, as well as informative brochures.

To learn more about HLA-NJ and our scholarship program and new ALD Demo Center at Monclair State University, please contact Arlene Romoff at [info@hearingloss-nj.org](mailto:info@hearingloss-nj.org). We also invite you to visit [www.hearingloss-nj.org](http://www.hearingloss-nj.org), or to attend one of our local chapter meetings in Bergen, Monmouth/Ocean or Middlesex County, and our newest Morris County chapter. Dates, places and times for chapter meetings are available from [info@hearingloss-nj.org](mailto:info@hearingloss-nj.org).