

HLA-NJ News and Views

HLA-NJ Invites 2014 Scholarship Applications from NJ High School Seniors with Hearing Loss

By Joel Strasser, APR, Fellow PRSA, Trustee, HLA - NJ, Public Information Officer

Applications are now being accepted from high school seniors with hearing loss for one of four HLA-NJ scholarships to be awarded this high school year to students pursuing higher education. With funding made possible in part by the successful Garden State Walk4Hearing in October, four scholarships of \$1,000 each are being offered to successful candidates.

HLA-NJ's scholarship program is designed to encourage and support young students by publically celebrating their successes and achievements with hearing loss. Aligned with the HLA-NJ goal to bring awareness to life challenges of hearing loss, the application requires a thoughtful essay on how hearing loss has impacted the student's life, and how its challenges have been met.

Scholarship winners will be announced in May, and an award ceremony and celebration open to all will be held in June (TBA).

All students with hearing loss and the following qualifications are encouraged to apply: 1) high school senior between the ages of 17 and 20, 2) New Jersey resident, 3) acceptance into a college, university or vocational school by June 1, 2014.

The official application can be found online at <http://hearingloss-nj.org>, and can only be submitted online. The application deadline is May 1, 2014. No late applications (received after midnight May 1) will be accepted. The success of an application will increase if students start assembling the required application documentation as soon as possible, and begin drafting the required essay.

Questions concerning the application or application process are welcome and may be addressed to Alice J. Glock, HLA-NJ Scholarship Chair at aglock@optimum.net.

Other Advocacy News From HLAA National

- ❖ Filed comments with TDI and other consumer groups in the FCC's Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on IP Captioned Telephone Relay Service.
- ❖ Filed comments with consumer groups with the FCC on issues related to captioning equipment under CVAA
- ❖ Sent letters of support to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in support of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- ❖ Posted on Facebook and HLAA e-News a poll for Regal Cinema regarding how people with hearing loss prefer to hear the soundtrack at movies in the theater: just the dialog or enhanced dialog with some background music, sound effects.
- ❖ Board Member Michael Stone attended an event at the FCC on November 13 with FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler who shared his perspective on the work of the commission and discussed issues facing the agency.
- ❖ Senate Hearing Champions reintroduced the Hearing Aid Tax Credit. Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Dean Heller (R-NV) reintroduced the Hearing Aid Tax Credit on November 13 and they plan to work to ensure that the legislation is considered when Congress addresses tax reform. The bi-partisan bill is nearly identical to legislation introduced in the past and it is similar to H.R.1317 that was introduced in the House of Representatives in February by Representatives Tom Latham (R-IA) and Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY). Both bills would provide a tax credit of \$500 per device to people of all ages who need a hearing aid. HLAA will continue its support of the bill.

❖ The Access Board's Rail Vehicles Access Advisory (RVAA) Committee's first day of meeting on November 13 included a vote to approve new members who applied for membership on the Committee. Seven organizations and companies applied, including HLAA. HLAA was voted onto the RVAA Committee as well as the NY MTA and NJ Transit, pending appointment by the chairperson of the Access Board. The Advisory Committee will review current regulations and provide the Access Board with suggestions on a range of accessibility issues, including updating the regulations to ensure that people with hearing loss have access to information provided aurally, such as announcements and audible emergency alerts, which are provided in rail cars.

❖ Here's something to celebrate: <http://www.runwaygirlnetwork.com/2013/11/21/southwest-airlines-to-offer-closed-captioning-on-wireless-inflight-entertainment-in-early-2014/> . Member John Waldo says, "We may be getting close to the tipping point where people start to understand the importance of captioning. I've said for some time that 50 years ago, nobody thought about wheelchair ramps, it just didn't happen. Now, nobody thinks about wheelchair ramps, it happens automatically. We are at the stage where people are thinking about captioning. Now we have to get to the point where nobody thinks about it anymore, but just does it."

WALK4HEARING "Gets Better and Better"

❖ New Jersey's Garden State Walk4Hearing was held Sunday, October 20, 2013, with 820 people attending.

❖ The Washington DC Walk4Hearing took place on Sunday, November 3, where about 320 people attended.

❖ The Florida Walk4Hearing (Jacksonville) was held Saturday, November 9. This walk concluded the 2013 Walks.

❖ Staff met for a strategic planning meeting for the 2014 Walks. This is the first of several meetings.

❖ The walks have passed the \$1.3K mark on the on the Walk4Hearing Web site. This is REMARKABLE! Thank you all for your amazing support and dedication. Walk4Hearing Director Ronnie Adler says, "Each year, the Walk4Hearing program gets better and better." In 2012, we had a total of 9,000 walkers who participated in the Walk across the country. In 2013, there were 11,000 walkers.

Chapter Development

❖ The HLAA Convention 2014 State/Chapter workshops and 2014 Webinars Calls for Proposals went out to state organization and chapter leaders and chapter coordinators, with a December due date.

❖ The first chapter development webinar was held on November 23 at noon for chapter coordinators.

Membership

❖ An HLAA Member Survey reminder went in the November 6 HLAA e-News. The paper survey was mailed the week after for those HLAA members who don't use email or who have opted out of receiving our email communications (about 900 people). A notice also went in the November/December Hearing Loss Magazine. The survey continues to show a high response rate both by email and by mail. Staff is tabulating results as they come in.

Media/Communications

❖ Anne Pope, former HLAA president, talked on WYRS radio in Manahawkin, New Jersey, about hearing loss, the stigma, communication strategies, who's affected, and what can be done about it. She was excellent. (There is no transcript unfortunately.)

❖ An email blast went out in November asking people to tell us about their workplace experiences as people with hearing loss. We received close to 150 responses, both positive and negative, about workplace experiences. These anecdotes are being used as resource materials for the January/February

2014 Hearing Loss Magazine, which features employment and workplace issues. The experiential stories also will be used to develop materials to support people in the workplace. More details will follow in 2014 as we formulate a strategic plan for this program.

❖ Former HLAA Board President Julie Olson from Wisconsin did a radio interview on hearing loss prevention on WFLN-AM in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Click on this link

<https://rongray.sharefile.com/d/s94f6e90465d4d66a>

❖ Obviously, this was not captioned because it is radio, but Julie does an excellent job of promoting HLAA and our chapters, materials and Web site as well as hearing technology and preventing hearing loss. This interview was a result of the public service announcements (PSAs) that hi HealthInnovations put out across the country in partnership with HLAA. The PSA will also be played in all NYC taxicabs.

Social Media

❖ Look at the Walk's Facebook page. Remember to "Like" the Walk and HLAA on the HLAA FB page.

❖ People can easily access social media sites via the icons on the top right-hand corner of www.hearingloss.org.

Webinars

❖ The HLAA Webinar schedule is set and is on the Web site along with instructions how to participate. Sam Trychin, Ph.D., was the guest speaker on November 20. Anna Gilmore Hall's webinar is available for replay in the HLAA Portal if you missed it.

HLAA Convention 2014, Austin, TX, June 26-29

❖ Early-bird registration closed on January 31, 2014.

❖ State organization and chapter leaders and chapter coordinators received a special, "delegate" registration form that entitles them to get an Education Package registration for \$125 (until January 31, 2014 when the rate rises to \$150.)

Governance

❖ HLAA Board of Trustee members welcomed Katherine Bouton (NY) and David Jones (VA) to the National Board.

Development

❖ New! HLAA Donate Button on GuideStar - Visitors to GuideStar can now make donations on HLAA's page: www.guidestar.org/organizations/52-1177011/hearing-loss-association-america.aspx

❖ HLAA Named a Top-Rated Nonprofit by GreatNonprofit.org - We are now listed as a GreatNonprofit, which will raise our visibility and outreach to potential donors.

❖ Reminded federal workers about the Combined Federal Campaign. Designate #11376

❖ Take Advantage of IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution - Program Ends December 31, 2013. If you are 70½ or older you may qualify to donate any portion up to \$100,000 from your IRA accounts directly to HLAA without having to include any of the IRA transfer as part of your taxable income. To learn more click here.

For additional information about HLA-NJ, contact Joel Strasser at jjas888@aol.com , or Joel.Strasser@hearingloss-nj.org .