

HLA-NJ News and Views

A Monthly Column from The Hearing Loss Association of NJ

By Peter Yerkes, Trustee, HLA-NJ

Summer's Off to a Great Start at HLA-NJ

Walk4hearing 2012 Set For Oct. 13 in West Windsor; HLA-NJ Members Arlene Romoff and Carol Granaldi Win National Awards

The countdown has begun for **Walk4Hearing 2012**, so save the date-- Saturday, October 13, at Mercer County Park West in West Windsor, NJ.

As always, **Walk4Hearing** offers people of all ages a chance to gather in a tree-shaded lakeside park to support programs and services that help people with hearing loss. It's a great chance to see old friends in the hearing loss community, and to make new ones. Take part in the 5K (3.1 miles) walk...or sit and enjoy a hot dog or other snacks in bucolic surroundings. Face-painting and other activities will be offered for young people.

The **Walk4Hearing** also is the most important fund-raiser of the year for the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey and its parent organization, the Hearing Loss Association of America. Since the first Walk was held in 2006, **Walk4Hearing** has raised more than \$3.5 million to raise awareness of hearing loss, advocate at the national level and support chapters across the country. Here in New Jersey, **Walk4Hearing** raises more than \$40,000 annually to support national programs, and local initiatives such as college scholarships and demonstration centers for the latest technology to help people with hearing loss.

For more information, visit HLAA's website, www.hearingloss.org, or HLA-NJ's website, www.hearingloss-nj.org.

To raise the profile of HLAA and the **Walk4Hearing** even higher, the Hearing Loss Association of America has named one of America's most successful businesspeople as a new spokesperson and National Walk4Hearing Business Chair. He is Christopher J. Artinian, former president and chief executive officer of Morton's Restaurant Group, Inc.

Mr. Artinian and his wife have a son who was born with profound hearing loss. The Artinian family was the subject of a documentary, *Sound and Fury*, which documented the family's decision to provide a cochlear implant for their son.

By supporting the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey, **Walk4Hearing** also supports the work of dedicated visionaries such as Arlene Romoff, immediate past president of HLA-NJ, and Carol Granaldi, a long-time member.

Brenda Battat, executive director of HLAA, announced that Ms. Arlene Romoff, past President HLA-NJ was chosen from applicants across the nation for the Marcia Dugan Advocacy Award. It recognizes outstanding achievement in advocating at the national, state and local level, reaching out to the decision-makers on steps to help people with hearing loss.

Ms. Romoff's many achievements include successfully advocating for captioning of live theater performances in New Jersey, New York, and globally, in addition to successfully advocating for captioning at New Jersey movie multiplexes. Her art access initiatives have helped bring personal FM systems to gallery tours at museums nationally, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and CART captioning services for public lectures, including the Met and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

In Trenton, Ms. Romoff assisted in the successful advocacy of "Grace's Law," which mandated insurance coverage for children's hearing aids, and has been active in a wide range of other legislative issues. She has become a major source of information for people with hearing loss and cochlear implants thanks to outreach via Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Her website, www.arleneromoff.com, contains resource lists, captioned videos of presentations and interviews, and a link to her blog "Ask Arlene." She is the author of two published books—*Hear Again* and *Listening Closely*.

Carol Granaldi received this year's "Spirit of HLAA Award." According to HLAA, this award is given annually to "caring and dedicated people who are not only actively involved in HLAA but who also set an example for others as positive role models of the self-help philosophy that 'it's not the difference we have, it's the difference we make.'"

In nominating Ms. Granaldi, HLA-NJ said that Ms. Granaldi has made herself a highly visible and effective spokesperson for people with hearing loss in letters to the editor of newspapers across the state and frequent commentary in the Monthly Communicator. She often conducts workshops on hearing loss, and has played a major role in several HLAA chapters. She was the driving force in establishing HLA-NJ and is a “commanding presence” in the organization, according to Ms. Romoff.

She also has served on advisory councils for NJ Relay, and the state Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and was a founding member of the N.J. Coalition on Women and Disabilities. Her initiative led to introduction of legislation that allowed HLA-NJ to recommend five members to DDHH’s Advisory Council.

We’d Like to Hear from You

Everyone who lives with hearing loss has a story to tell, a coping tip to pass on, or a question. We’d like to use some reader experiences in future columns, and follow up on suggestions. Please contact me, at p.yerkes@comcast.net , or e-mail HLA-NJ at info@hearingloss-nj.org .

To learn more about HLA-NJ, please contact Arlene Romoff at info@hearingloss-nj.org . We also invite you to visit our Web site at 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 at www.hearingloss-nj.org .