

HLA-NJ News and Views - A Monthly Column from The Hearing Loss Association of NJ

By Peter Yerkes, Trustee, HLA-NJ

Step Out For People With Hearing Loss

Join People of All Ages at

HLA-NJ'S WALK4HEARING 2011

October 15, 2011

Mercer County Park West, West Windsor, NJ

www.walk4hearing.org

New Jersey Walk4Hearing, sponsored by the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey, offers an autumn outing in a beautiful park with friends, and a chance to meet new people who share your concern with hearing loss. Walk4Hearing might even change your life. Listen to two HLA-NJ members, Marie Nordling and David Cooper, talk about what the Walk4Hearing means to them, and why they come back year after year.

Marie Nordling says that when she first heard about Walk4Hearing, she had struggled with hearing loss for more than 20 years. Not surprisingly, she sometimes felt isolated and frustrated. Then, in 2008, she learned that the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey was holding its first Walk4Hearing, modeled on dozens of similar walks sponsored across the country by the Hearing Loss Association of America. Marie realized right away how important the Walk could be.

"So many people struggle alone, without knowing there is help out there through the Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey," she says. And, she says, the Walk was everything she hoped it would be. "The camaraderie of participants was amazing, even though it was a sunny but cold day." Marie formed a team which raised \$2,000. Together, the people who took part raised \$55,000 – a major step forward addressing the challenges of hearing loss. Among the many benefits, the money funded a scholarship program giving \$1,000 to high school students with hearing loss who planned to attend college. Support generated by the walk also helped enact Grace's Law, which mandated that health insurance provide some coverage for hearing aid expenses for children 15 years old or younger.

David Cooper also takes part every year. Want to meet a Doctor of Audiology who not only has time to chat, but also hands out free hot dogs? David is your man. More precisely, HLA-NJ's hot dog man at the Walk4Hearing and other HLA-NJ events – just one of many ways in which he supports HLA-NJ. As a doctoral student in audiology, David was assigned to observe a support group for people with hearing loss and submit a report on his experience. "I attended a chapter meeting of HLA-NJ in 2008, and absolutely fell in love with the group. I have been involved in HLA-NJ and the Walk4Hearing ever since," David says.

The Walk is valuable, he says, because it brings together adults and children from across New Jersey. "The Walk through the park is beautiful - and there is food for everyone, face painting and even bouncy rides for the children," he says. "It is truly a fun event."

Everyone who participates finds their own special rewards. They meet people who know what it's like to deal with their own hearing loss or hearing loss of children or elderly relatives. They find ways to help others with hearing loss, perhaps by joining in HLA-NJ advocacy efforts such as support for captioned movies and live theater performances across the state. Or they may want to help raise awareness of the growing problem of hearing loss. There are many ways to take part, including walking yourself, forming a team or making a donation. To find out more about the Walk and how you can take part, visit www.walk4hearing.org, or contact Walk Chairperson Laura Lindson at llindson@aol.com or HLA-NJ President Arlene Romoff at aromoff@aol.com.

Become Active in HLA-NJ

The Hearing Loss Association of New Jersey has three chapters, serving Bergen, Middlesex and Ocean/Monmouth counties. The Middlesex Chapter will meet on September 20, 2011, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church in South Plainfield. For information about other meetings, or HLA-NJ e-mail info@hearingloss-nj.org, or www.hearingloss-nj.org. To receive informative updates, ask to be put on our email contact list or contact HLA-NJ President Arlene Romoff at aromoff@aol.com.