



HLAA State and Chapter News

By Valerie Stafford-Mallis

Greater help comes from being part of a chapter. – Rocky Stone

HLAA Chapters and Walk4Hearing: A Winning Combination

Are you looking for a fun activity that can increase awareness of your chapter in the local community, beef up your chapter’s social plan, build relationships with potential chapter members and supporters, attract adults and families of children with hearing loss, and put money in your chapter’s treasury—all at once? Chapters that actively participate in the HLAA Walk4Hearing can accomplish all this and more.

The Walk4Hearing shares a common mission with chapters: to bring people together to raise awareness and support those with hearing loss. They both provide the opportunity to meet new people, share stories and offer encouragement; and, like chapters, the Walk4Hearing is spread throughout the country, taking place in more than 20 cities each year.



“Normally we raise anywhere from \$800 to \$2,000 for the Walk4Hearing. The HLAA Fox Valley Chapter received a very special gift from U.S. Captioning Company this past year as a result of our participation in the Milwaukee Walk4Hearing. U.S. Captioning named our chapter as a beneficiary of their alliance team. To our chapter’s surprise, their team raised more than \$5,000 and donated a little over \$2,000 to our chapter! U.S. Captioning wanted the money to remain in the region, and they wanted to continue to promote positive action for the hard of hearing community. They wanted the money to be used for programs or services benefiting people with hearing loss, so they chose the Fox Valley Chapter. This is over and above what our chapter team raised on its own and was a big boost to our chapter. Many thanks to U.S. Captioning!”

—Colleen Van Rooy, president, HLAA Fox Valley Chapter

The Walk4Hearing attracts a wide variety of people. They might be working-age adults who can’t get to a chapter meeting held on a weekday; families and friends of people with hearing loss looking for an activity the entire family can enjoy; or they could simply be active people who like to do things to help make the world a better place.

There are already many chapter members who are involved with a local Walk4Hearing. Likewise, there are also many Walk4Hearing participants involved with a chapter. But there are many more who are not. In fact, many people who take part in a walk might not even be aware of a local chapter in their area, so what a great way to attract new members! Some chapters use the Walk4Hearing as a way to revitalize chapters and build esprit de corps. Participating in one can be an amazing advocacy and awareness-building activity.

Many chapter leaders who are involved with a local Walk4Hearing report an uptick in first-time chapter visitors after the event. Make sure you are ready to welcome them and talk about the benefits of belonging to a chapter so they will keep coming back. The Walk4Hearing takes place



“This is what stood out for me as a way to encourage other states and chapters to participate and to enumerate the many benefits of raising funds: in 2007, our HLAA Michigan chapters instantly agreed to participate in the Walk4Hearing when we learned of the opportunity. The success we’ve enjoyed as the result of our participation in the Southeast Michigan Walk4Hearing has allowed our state organization, chapters and alliances sufficient funds for captioning (CART), hearing assistive technology, children’s camp, hearing loops, and more. It has been a great way for all of us to come together for a good cause and have fun!”

—Barb Quart, HLAA Royal Oak Chapter



"I love the Walk4Hearing not just for the substantial funds we raise each year, but also for the wonderful visibility we create for hearing loss. With hundreds of people of all different ages and backgrounds walking along the beach in their brightly-colored Walk4Hearing t-shirts and hats, it is always such a fun way to raise much-needed awareness, bond with others, and get in some exercise!"

—Lisa Yuan, HLAA Long Beach/Lakewood Chapter

in a given city only once per year, but most chapters hold meetings and events throughout the year, giving people the opportunity to be around others with hearing loss on a regular basis.

Securing donations as a Walk4Hearing participant is a great way to raise funds for your chapter's treasury. It also gives you a good reason to reach out and build relationships with a cross-section of your community which you might not otherwise interact with. From the local pizza shop to multinational corporations in your area, organizations might love the opportunity to support the chapter through a high-visibility event such as the Walk4Hearing—especially if their gift is acknowledged on the chapter's Walk4Hearing team page.

When individuals or organizations make a donation they invest a little bit of themselves in you and your cause. Be sure to send a personal thank you note to each and every one of your supporters telling them exactly what the chapter intends to do with the donations, and invite them to meetings or events to see for themselves where their money goes. What better way for supporters to experience the difference their gift makes in the lives of so many!

Of course, when a local Walk4Hearing itself has ended, so much more is just beginning. Chapters who make it a point to reach out to participants and donors after the event build on the relationships established before and during the walk. They ask supporters if they can include them on the chapter newsletter list and they invite them to chapter meetings and events. In short, they view the Walk4Hearing as a door that opens for building long-standing relationships that benefit everyone involved.

With more than 160 chapters and state associations but about 20 walks, we realize there might not be a Walk4Hearing in your area. If you look on the Walk4Hearing website—walk4hearing.org—you can find a complete list of dates and locations (2017 dates and locations will be posted soon). Maybe there's one within a few hours or a day's drive. Why not make it a road trip for the chapter? Wouldn't those extra funds raised—and the time spent getting to know other chapter members better—be worth it for the chapter?

Participation in the HLAA Walk4Hearing is a great social activity for chapter members. It's fun, it's easy, and the exercise is good for you! Establishing or strengthening bonds with current and potential chapter members—and doing fun things with them in the meantime—is a wonderful opportunity to reinforce a chapter's enthusiasm for the HLAA mission.

The Walk4Hearing is a great way to make friends and raise funds. If the chapter you belong to is not involved in the Walk4Hearing, or it has been a while since you were last involved, why not put it on your social plan for 2017 and see what happens? You will be glad you did! **HLM**

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"The San Diego Walk4Hearing brings together the larger community of those with hearing loss and their friends and families. Seeing all the kids there with hearing aids or cochlear implants is a joy. The "we are all in this together" feeling generates a lot of smiles as we walk around Mission Bay. Proceeds from the walk are deeply appreciated by our chapter as they make possible the venue and captioning for monthly meetings. The fact that people can choose various nonprofits to support with their donations is a plus. Everybody benefits."

—Char Iverson, HLAA San Diego Chapter