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## He's Our Future

***HLAA has a long history of stars who have learned all they can about their own hearing loss and have turned around and helped others. There's a new generation emerging.***

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was at the Awards Ceremony at HLAA2017 Convention this June when it came time for the Outstanding Young Adult Award to be presented. Jorge Delgado, 17, from Riverside, California, who graduated earlier that month from La Sierra High School and is now attending the Rochester Institute of Technology, was this year's recipient. Unprepared to talk, he spoke extemporaneously. He said, "I went to so many booths and workshops at this convention and I am really interested in the medical field. I am excited to see how my experience here in Salt Lake City will impact my future."

Among those he thanked was his resource teacher, Kathleen Tejada, who also came to the Convention and received the HLAA Community Service Award for her work in getting amplification systems installed in classrooms. Having a hearing loss herself, Jorge continued, "Kathleen got to experience a telecoil for the first time and it changed her life. Having the presenter speak into the mic which sent the sound right to her hearing aid without the background noise or interference was phenomenal. She never heard anything like that before and it brought us all to tears."

Jorge was eloquent, passionate, and grateful. I was sitting next to John Kinstler, outreach manager for CapTel, our sponsor for the evening. After listening to Jorge, John turned to me and said emphatically, "He is the future of HLAA!"

### **What Does an Outstanding Young Adult Look Like?**

Jorge's smile is the first thing you notice when you meet him; in fact, it disarms you. Add to that his empathy for others with hearing loss, his technology skills and his enthusiasm, and you have a rising star. He was born with congenital atresia in his left ear and has undergone 11 reconstructive surgeries

in that ear. During the 2016-17 school year he finally got some help through technology when he started using a Baha (a surgically-implanted, bone-anchored device). Treading carefully, he didn't try it out until he was safely in the classroom with both his teachers to support him. He was nervous but excited. He said, "I broke into tears because I was finally able to feel what other people feel when they listen and can hear."

Jorge's trepidation turned into risk-taking. He wanted to know more, hear more and learn more. He started finding out how other students with hearing loss were coping, how their devices worked and helped them use hearing assistive technology. Jorge provided them with encouragement and personal testimony with his own brand of joie de vivre—all to the betterment of others. He created a tutorial on how to use the Phonak Dynamic SoundField Digimaster 5000 and emailed it to students for easy reference. His ideas, technical curiosity and desire to bring better hearing to his peers continue to impact hundreds of students daily.

He cast his net wider when he set up a SoundField system for a workshop at the California Council for Exceptional Children Conference. He helped the university technician combine the existing PA system with the Dynamic SoundField.

Jorge was able to attend the Convention in Salt Lake City thanks to a convention scholarship funded by Listen Technologies. When he returned home, he wrote, "It was a true honor to accept the award in person. I took back a lot of resources, learned about new technology and downloaded some free apps I didn't know about. I can't wait to share all this with others."

Jorge has shown his mettle and will continue to be tested and learn.

He has something that people with hearing loss didn't have in 1979 when HLAA was founded and in the years following. He has benefited from all the advances in technology, with the promise of more innovation on the way. Combine that with his determination, Jorge is the future of HLAA.

There is a long line of people joining the ranks of those wanting to live well with hearing loss. Take a page from young Jorge's book, and as Rocky Stone once told me, "Keep saying yes to the future!"

Congratulations to all the award recipients at this year's Convention in Salt Lake City. They epitomize the best of HLAA—chapters, leaders, advocates, volunteers—all working on behalf of HLAA and people with hearing loss. For a list of all the award recipients go to [hearingloss.org/content/hlaa-awards-program](http://hearingloss.org/content/hlaa-awards-program). And look for 2018 award nominations to open this fall. **HLM**

*Jorge Delgado receives the 2017 HLAA Outstanding Young Adult Award from Patrick Holkins, HLAA Board member, who received the award in 2005.*



## Online Learning

Registration is open for the HLAA Hearing Loss Support Specialist Training (HLSST)

**HLSST is an online, self-paced training program which provides core knowledge for individuals who work with people with hearing loss. The training consists of four classes with as many as fourteen lessons in each class. Lessons are composed of multiple readings and captioned videos.**

The classes are:

Class I: Hearing Loss: The Basics

Class II: Coping with Hearing Loss

Class III: Hearing Assistive Technology and Services

Class IV: Advocacy, Resources and the Law

You may register for one class at a time or register for the entire program at once for the discounted price of \$225.

For complete details, table of contents, and registration information, visit [hearingloss.org/content/hlsst](http://hearingloss.org/content/hlsst). Questions? Email Nancy Macklin at [nmacklin@hearingloss.org](mailto:nmacklin@hearingloss.org).