



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association British Columbia Chapter

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Message from the President

A message from Dr. Marilyn Dahl, President of the CHHA—BC Chapter

The day has finally arrived! The B.C. Provincial Government is working on preparation of B.C. Accessibility legislation. A year ago, members of Barrier Free BC met with Minister Simpson, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, to discuss the need for Disability Access Legislation in B.C. In December 2018, invited leaders representing 24 stakeholder groups met with Minister Simpson, for a roundtable discussion on what should go into the act. We were asked, “What do you think are the most important considerations to effectively increasing accessibility and removing barriers through accessibility legislation?” It was evident from the discussion that we all were in agreement on utilizing strategies such as education, inclusion, awareness raising, and ensuring that measures for implementation, enforcement, and evaluation be established right from the start.

Closing remarks from the minister indicated that there would be an ongoing consultation process, with opportunities provided for individuals and groups to submit remarks through various designated channels. So, you can still have your individual say on the topic, if you so wish. There is a commitment that the bill will be ready to go to parliament in one year.

At the national level, following on a full consultation process, Federal Accessibility legislation was enacted, in 2018, and work is now commencing on developing the rules and regulations to enforce the provisions of that Act. Be assured that attention is being paid to what has gone into the federal act, as useful to a “made in B.C.” Act.

I was recently asked if hearing loss has been represented in those discussions. The answer is yes! At the national level, along with other CHHA members across Canada, CHHA members in B.C. were active participants in contributing to various types of consultations in preparation for development of Federal Accessibility Legislation. **(Continued on page 2)**



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(Continued from page 1) At the provincial level, as CHHA-BC President, I was pleased to represent people with hearing loss, on the Barrier Free BC Committee and at the recent stakeholders consultation. And, as noted in the first paragraph, there will be opportunities for consultation across B.C.

It is not only at the federal and provincial levels that CHHA-BC's members work for access. From time to time, we receive reports of their individual and group successes in achieving hearing access, at the local level - whether it be Vancity's installation of one teller's station per bank, equipped with a hearing assistive device, or a city council installing a group assistive listening system.

One such encouraging account came to our office recently, from Dan MacQuarrie. Dan lives in Salmon Arm and has been working to bring greater awareness to hearing loss and advocating for improved access for hard of hearing individuals in his community. In October they donated headsets to the city and were able to get loop systems installed at their city hall as well as a local credit union; next, they hope to have a loop installed at a pharmacy counter. Dan is very passionate about continuing to improve access in this way and he has more projects underway this year. Another goal of his is to make communication devices more available to hospital patients during their stays.

If you have a similar success story of promoting and achieving hearing access in your community, do please contact the CHHA-BC Resource Centre and let us know about it. Email info@chha-bc.org



I Have Hearing Loss. My Partner Doesn't. Help!

By Gael Hannan —writer, humorist, advocate, and CHHA-BC Director-at-Large

In the vocabulary of people with hearing loss (PWHL), a person who doesn't require amplification, implants, captioning, or clear speech from everyone is referred to as 'hearing'. As in, I have hearing loss and my husband is hearing. I refer to him in my work as the Hearing Husband, but should you meet him, he also responds to Doug, because that's his legal name.

Many or most PWHL *love* having a hearing person – be it a spouse, a close friend, a parent, or a child – in their lives to help fill in the gaps of what we don't hear or understand. But I wonder if the reverse is also true: a hearing person *loves* having a PWHL in their lives so that they can be interrupted in almost activity for requests of "what did he say", be constantly reminded to speak-up-face-me-don't-mumble, and frustrated demands to take over a phone call with the hydro company because the customer service rep on the other end of the line is not understandable.

Add to that, the hearing person has to decide what's worse – discreetly reminding your PWHL to stop bluffing in a group conversation (which may earn them an embarrassed retort), or helplessly watching your loved one become isolated in the fast-flowing talk between friends. *(Continued on page 3)*



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(Continued from page 2) That's not all. The hearing person and PWHL have been communicating so well on a car trip, that the hearing person forgets – for just a moment – to have their face visible for a comment. The reply is swift: why do you always face away from me when we talk? Wait, there's more. The hearing person knows better than to initiate a conversation from another room. But hey, the PWHL has just called out something from the kitchen, so you forget – for just a moment – and call out a reply. The PWHL comes roaring out of the kitchen to say: you KNOW I can't hear through walls. Reminding them of who started the conversation is not the best response because it doesn't matter if you're right, the best course of action would have been to hightail it into the kitchen before speaking.

And how about this. You're both in bed and the lights have been turned off for the night. Your PWHL mumbles something, but it's not quite clear. Do you turn on the light so that the conversation can proceed, always a shock to the system when you're half asleep, or do you just ignore the comment until your partner delivers a soft blow to your ribs with a clearly-stated request for you to get up and check on the kids? A classic lose-lose situation.

I have often asked the Hearing Husband about how he feels about living with me and my profound hearing loss. In his tactful way, he says it's all part of life together. But even though we've had 30 years of togetherness, there isn't a day that we don't have some hearing-related incident. When he shows irritation at a request to face me, etc., I try to remember that he's usually just annoyed at himself for forgetting. If I get irritable with him, it's almost always because of my own frustrations with hearing loss, not him. (Even the most well-adjusted PWHL has these moments.) Oh wait a minute, it *does* bug me when we're flying somewhere and there's a PA announcement which I just *know* is about our flight probably leaving early from another gate and when I ask the Hearing Husband what the announcement was about, he'll shrug and say he didn't hear it or wasn't listening. That merits another rib-jab because hey! You've been blessed with a great sense of and why aren't you using it!

I won't say that love conquers all, because sometimes it doesn't. Hearing loss can place a real burden on communication, which is the glue that keeps us connected. But if someone loves you, they're not going to let hearing loss change that. Unless, of course, you refuse to admit your hearing loss and won't do what it takes to *improve* communication. I've been lucky; the Hearing Husband knew about my hearing loss and its challenges when he was still the Hearing Boyfriend. He has been my cheerleader through years of getting used to new hearing aids, frequent trips away from home for conferences or speaking engagements, writing deadlines and, most notably, getting a cochlear implant two years ago. The only tough part was that nobody told him he'd have to remove the stitches from my head.

The hearing people in our lives might not be perfect, but with a little patience and communication training – or perhaps 'with a lot of patience and a little communication training' – they might become damn-near-perfect.



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BC FAMILY HEARING resource ★ society

15220 - 92nd Ave., Surrey, BC, V3R 2T8 Toll Free: 1-877-584-2827 Email: info@bcfamilyhearing.com

Contributed by Lisa Cable, Development Coordinator at BCFHRS

BC Family Hearing Resource Society is the largest not-for-profit organization in British Columbia serving children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing, aged birth to school-entry. For over 35 years, we have been providing intervention, support, education, sign language instruction and peer-to-peer mentoring to families throughout the province.



Founded in 1982 as the BC Elks Auditory Rehabilitation Centre, we began with only five families and three part-time staff. Very shortly, the staff were consulting and training other professionals; providing outreach programs throughout the province and had published the first edition of “My Turn to Learn,” a guidebook for parents of children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing. This was all in addition to building a solid foundation as an Early Intervention Centre for these same families.

Over the years we changed our name, moved to our current location in Surrey, opened Satellite Centres in Victoria and Vancouver and continued to grow in many different ways. While we’ve experienced many changes over our 36 years, one thing has remained constant – our desire to serve the families that we work with to ensure the success of every child that passes through our doors.

Parents of children who are deaf and hard-of-hearing often have to make an overwhelming amount of choices and decisions in the first five years of their children’s lives. We believe strongly in informed choice and strive to support each family, in their individual circumstances, while they navigate these decisions. We do this by hiring the highest caliber of staff, keeping up-to-date with current research and professional practices, ensuring that families have access to information in the language that they are most comfortable with and providing them with a variety of ways to connect with members of the community who can support them.



BC Family Hearing Resource Society is more than just an organization with a mission and a mandate. It is a family and a community. Everyone; from our families, alumni families, staff, board members and volunteers; make up this special and valuable community. We invite you to come and visit us so we can show you the wonderful things that are happening here! www.bcfamilyhearing.com/get-involved



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Speechreading in the Comox Valley

Contributed by the CHHA Comox Valley Branch Speechreading Team

In September 2018, Nerissa Davies, Audiologist from the Comox Valley, attended Speechreading Instructor Training, taught by Leslee Scott. Funding for this training was provided by CHHA-BC Chapter and the Comox Rotary Club, with legwork being done by local CHHA Comox Valley Branch. Thank you to all who contributed funding, time and effort to achieve the goal of a local speechreading instructor in the Valley!



Students of the October speechreading course proudly display certificates of completion alongside Speechreading Instructor and Audiologist, Nerissa Davies (rightmost).

Soon after Ms. Davies was certified, she began teaching a speechreading class in October 2018. Eight students attended, with a near-perfect attendance rate. Students enjoyed learning and practicing speechreading, as well as learning more about hearing loss, how hearing aids work, and about self-advocating. It was a truly enjoyable experience with lots of laughter as we learned. Participants reported improved speech reading skills, improved confidence in communicating and self-advocating, and better knowledge about their own hearing, after taking the course.

The next class is scheduled to begin in February 2019 and the registration process has begun! We are looking forward to another fun-filled session. Once again, much gratitude goes out to all those who helped make this happen. We are improving the lives of hard-of-hearing people with your support!

Connect with a local branch!

CHHA BC Youth Peer Support Program

Email: chhabcypsp@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.chha-bc.org/youthpsp/>

CHHA BC Parents' Branch

Email: info@chhaparents.com

Website: <http://www.chhaparents.com/>

North Shore Branch

Email: chha_nsb@telus.net

Website: <http://www.chha-nsb.com/>

Abbotsford Branch

Email: abbotsfordretiree@gmail.com

Comox Valley Branch

Email: cvhardofhearing@gmail.com

HEAR Branch (Coquitlam)

Email: anna.r.bernard@gmail.com

Vancouver Branch

Email: chhavancouver@gmail.com



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Upcoming Events

- **Saturday, February 23rd, 2019** — CHHA Vancouver Branch will be hosting a session on “Aging Well with Hearing Loss” with Dr. Kathy Pichora-Fuller, Professor of Psychology at the University of Toronto. Dr. Pichora-Fuller will explore the connections between hearing loss and age-related physical and psychological health issues. The presentation will take place from 11am - 12:30pm at the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, 2125 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver. CART Captioning will be provided and a light lunch will be served after the session. **For more information and to register before February 15th**, email chhavancouver@gmail.com.
- **March 7th - May 9th, 2019** — The Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre is offering a Level 1 Speechreading course at their Victoria location. View the course poster for details: <https://bit.ly/2Sd5ZFu>. **Registration is due February 22nd**. For more information, please contact IDHHC by telephone: 250-592-8144 or by email: idhhc@idhhc.ca.
- **March 8th-10th, 2019** — CHHA BC Youth Peer Support Program invites deaf and hard of hearing young adults ages 18 to 30 to their “Challenge Life” Weekend Retreat. The retreat will take place at the Timberline Ranch in Maple Ridge from Friday, March 8th to Sunday, March 10th. There is also a 1-day option for youth ages 15 to 17. **The deadline to register is February 8th** and, thanks to recently obtained funding, YPSP was able to reduce the cost for participants to only \$35. For full details and to register, please visit: <http://www.chha-bc.org/youthpsp/challenge-life/>.

Hard of Hearing/Late-Deafened Endowment Fund

Please consider making a donation to CHHA-BC's Hard of Hearing/Late-Deafened Endowment Fund. This fund provides steady income and enables us to advance our mission over the long-term. In years where donations are down or government funding is reduced, income from this fund will still arrive, enabling CHHA-BC to continue providing programs and services to hard of hearing individuals province-wide. To make a donation, please visit: <https://www.vancouverfoundation.ca/chhabc>

Thank you for your support!



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Articles & Resources

Why I Won't Be Taking the Bird Box Challenge

by Gael Hannan (taken from Hearing Health Matters: The Better Hearing Consumer)

"We finally watched Bird Box, the new Netflix mega hit, because our son talked us into it, and Sandra Bullock has never disappointed us. It gave me the willies. Not a Spoiler Alert! Anyone who has even heard of this movie, or seen photographs and trailers filling up social media, knows that Sandra Bullock's standout article of clothing is a blindfold, worn for much of the film. Sandra and her two movie children become so good at functioning-while-blindfolded that they are able to stumble through a forest, launch a rowboat and row down a raging river. To do this they depend on their wits and their sense of hearing which tells them if they're in, say, an open space or how far away they are from anything, such as a scary thing..." **READ MORE:** <https://bit.ly/2CsreW>

What If Your Reading Glasses Also Provided Captions?

by Shari Eberts (taken from LivingWithHearingLoss.com)

"Sitting in the dimly lit restaurant, I struggled to read the menu. Lucky for me, I keep readers in my purse, which I quickly pulled out and the problem was solved. But when the waiter came to tell us about the specials, I had trouble hearing him, even though I was wearing my hearing aids and lipreading furiously. Wouldn't it be wonderful if I could solve this problem just as easily — reaching into my purse for my captioning glasses — ones that would turn speech into text in real-time and with exceptional accuracy? Interestingly, a graduate student team at Cornell Tech is working on something just like this..." **READ MORE:** <https://bit.ly/2RtHxPS>

Hearing Assistance Dogs are Changing Lives

by Debbie Clason (taken from HealthyHearing.com)

"Tall or short, active or subdued, scruffy or carefully coiffed, dogs most definitely make good companions. But for some, our furry, four-legged friends are much more than house pets, they are actual lifesavers, providing service for individuals with a wide range of disabilities including those who are deaf or hard of hearing..." **READ MORE:** <https://bit.ly/2OtrziH>

***For information on Hearing Assistance Dogs in Canada, visit the following websites:**

Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides: <https://www.dogguides.com/hearing.html>

Pacific Assistance Dogs Society: <https://pads.ca/assistance-dogs/>