



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association British Columbia Chapter

ISSUE 20, April 2019

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The Loop Newsletter



Message from the President

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

I have been thinking, recently, about the generosity and caring of our CHHA-BC volunteers, who together, and separately, give countless hours to the cause of achieving an accessible society for people with hearing loss. Following are some examples.

The NEW HORIZONS funded project, “Seniors Talk About Hearing Loss” has just ended. Based in Chilliwack and implemented by the Planning Committee composed of local CHHA members, seniors talked about their own hearing loss and its impact on their lives. Peer support and mutual support was provided in a meaningful exchange which shared effective coping strategies to better manage their own hearing loss in daily life. Thank you, staff, volunteers and New Horizons for supporting this project!

The three year pilot project Online Hearing Loss Mentoring, funded by WorkSafeBC, is now into its third year. Our third annual mentor training workshop will be held in mid-April, when four new mentors will be trained. The workshop will also provide a refresher session for the present six volunteer mentors. The project has received very positive evaluation from the External Evaluator, who deems the Mentor Training Manual and workshop training to be special features to commend. Thank you, mentors who volunteer for this project.

On April 12, CHHA-BC will staff a display table at the 16th Annual Geriatric Services Conference at the Vancouver Convention Centre. This the first time that hearing loss has been represented at this conference so it is our opportunity to share what CHHA has to offer in the way of peer support options. The public is invited to attend the evening plenary session, with presenter Dr. Kathy Pichora-Fuller, speaking on “Sensory Health and Aging Well.” We are appreciative of those who have volunteered to staff our display table and answer questions about what CHHA-BC has to offer to help older adults and their caregivers achieve better communication.

Another exciting volunteer endeavour is the CHHA-BC Youth Peer Support Program. It continues to touch the lives of young adults, and has now expanded to serve elementary age children as well, through the BC Buddies project. **(Continued on page 2)**



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(Continued from page 1) Thank you all for the many volunteer hours you donate to help our hard of hearing youth get a better start on integrating into the community, and in building a social peer support network for them.

Coordinating, leading and supporting all of this work is the volunteer work of the CHHA-BC Board of Directors, ably supported by the CHHA-BC office staff. Without their cooperative efforts, none of these projects would have happened. Thank you for your work!

The call for nominations for new board members of CHHA-BC has been sent out. Candidates will be elected to the board by members who attend the Annual General Meeting on May 11th, in Surrey. See the AGM announcement elsewhere in this issue of the LOOP for details. Please consider standing for election to serve a two year term on the board, with option to continue for indefinite terms of office. Your volunteer service will be warmly welcomed!

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The call for nominations to the Board of Directors of CHHA-BC Chapter has been issued to all members via email. For further information, please contact the Chair of the Nominations Committee, Miron Gazda, at nominations@chha-bc.org

Nominations may be made for the position of President or Director of the Board.

Elections to the board will take place at the Annual General Meeting of CHHA-BC Chapter, which will be held on Saturday, May 11th at BC Family Hearing Resource Centre, 15220- 92nd Ave Surrey, BC, commencing at 1:30 pm.

HERE'S AN EVENT YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS!

Minister Shane Simpson, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Government of British Columbia, will be the featured speaker in the morning preceding the Annual General Meeting of CHHA-BC. He will be bringing us an update on the work in progress to create an Accessibility Act in B.C. This is your opportunity to learn, ask questions, and provide input to the legislation. Our second speaker of the morning will be **Christopher Sutton, Executive Director of CHHA National**, who will bring us news of what is happening at the national level of the organization. Another opportunity to learn, ask questions, and provide input to the functioning of our organization. English real-time captioning will be provided for this event.

Location: BC Family Hearing Resource Centre, 15220 - 92nd Ave, Surrey, BC

Date: Saturday, May 11th, 2019

Time: 9:30 am Registration

Morning session: 10 am- 12:30 pm (Lunch will be provided)

Afternoon session: 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm Annual General Meeting of CHHA-BC

Please pre-register by email to info@chha-bc.org or phone to 604-795-9238



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Got Hearing Loss? Go Where the HoHs Are!

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

(Note: HoH = Hard Of Hearing = Slang acronym for a person with hearing loss.)

You have hearing loss and you're finally admitting you might need a bit of help – who you gonna call? Maybe you mumble to your doctor something about your ears, perhaps it's wax, or.... Maybe you take your neighbor's advice and go directly to a hearing aid clinic – they're everywhere these days – and have your hearing tested. Then, who knows, a hearing aid, or two....

Yes, but who are you going to talk to about all the other stuff? The stuff that helps people like you and me, the ones with hearing loss, get through the day. Or through our relationships, our jobs, our lives?

I'll tell you who you should call: the people who've been around the "hearing loss block" a few times. They are everywhere, these walking goldmines of experience and opinions; they have tried many strategies and can share with you what's true, what's myth and what works. They are living the life with hearing loss and know that some strategies work better for different people, depending on degree of hearing loss, personality, etc. Even so, successful communication means going beyond the hearing aid and the cochlear implant to embrace tactics that work in partnership with our technology.

If you go where the HoHs are, if you attend a meeting, or a conference, or a lecture for people with hearing loss, you'll find people who radiate compassion and understanding and knowledge – even a strong shoulder to lean on, if you need it. And it can be life-changing. I know this because, once, I needed this help. I needed practical advice to calm my fears about being a hard of hearing mom to a new baby.

This past weekend, I was the Keynote Speaker at Fresno State University's "Silent Garden" event, an annual lecture for people with hearing loss. The room was looped, so that people could turn on their hearing aid and cochlear implant telecoils and have speakers' voices come directly into their ears. One woman was attending her first-ever consumer hearing loss event; she had never met other people with hearing loss. She was a long-time user of hearing aids and a cochlear implant but had never used her telecoils. During a talk, she asked the person sitting beside her if the blue taped lines on the floor was the loop system the guy was talking about. Yes, it was. She almost jumped with the shock when she turned on her telecoils, first in her hearing aid, then her cochlear implant sound processor. She was blown away at what she was hearing (and I was in tears when she described her reaction to me): a powerful new means of access that she had never been told about.

So, where do you find these experienced folks? You can ask a friend who seems to do well with their hearing loss. Ask your audiologist for a referral to a local hearing loss support group or other resources. Unfortunately, these groups exist only where two or three people have decided to start them. But many areas – especially in Europe and North America – have consumer-based organizations with chapters around the country.

These days, the internet allows us to interact with others in real-time via Skype and other platforms. There is an explosion of online resources for people with hearing loss. **(Continued on page 4)**



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(Continued from page 3) Many are created by hearing aid and cochlear implant manufacturers and while they offer excellent advice, it's a good idea to also seek out consumer associations that have no financial stake in the information they offer. A good place to start is the International Federation of People with Hearing Loss, which lists member associations around the world. Excellent groups include the Hearing Loss Association of America, the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, and Action on Hearing Loss. In addition, there are many state and provincial service agencies serving people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Some consumer groups offer mentoring services.

Contact these support organizations. Tell them that you need information and support. These groups connect people with people and they are vital. When you talk to your audiologist for additional support, don't accept "I don't know" for an answer. Your hearing care professional should know. And when you do get help and useful information, please consider supporting them in the future. They need our help to help others.



New World Hearing Forum

By Dr. Ruth Warick, CHHA-BC Director-at-Large & President of CHHA Vancouver Branch

There are 466 million persons with a hearing loss, 6.1% of the world's population, according to the World Health Organization. WHO is concerned that, unless action is taken, the number of people with disabling hearing loss will grow over the coming years.

In order to raise awareness and bring about systemic change, WHO, with its partners, has been spearheading the formation of a global network of stakeholders to promote ear and hearing care worldwide. This network is the World Hearing Forum, officially established in July 2018. Dr. Ruth Warick, President of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People, is a member of the founding committee for the Forum.



Dr. Warick (right) with fellow members of the World Hearing Forum's Steering Committee

According to WHO, the World Hearing Forum will bring a collective vision to advocacy and collaboration in this field. Through networking and by sharing knowledge, skills and experiences from the field, the World Hearing Forum will galvanize action and facilitate the implementation of the World Health Assembly resolution on prevention of deafness and hearing loss ([WHA 70.13](#)). The World Hearing Forum will include governmental and nongovernmental organizations; including disabled people's organizations/user groups, charitable/service organizations, professional societies, parent groups, regional fora (with defined structure), private sector entities including international business associations, philanthropic foundations and academic institutions, that are active in the field of ear and hearing care. The International Federation of Hard of Hearing People is one of the organizations that is part of the Forum, representing consumer voices of hard of hearing persons and its national members which includes the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association.



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CHHA Updates

Speechreading in Comox

Contributed by Greg Lindsay, Courtenay BC

An entry level speechreading class is in progress at the Rec. Centre in Comox, BC. I am a new student and find it very interesting and a little daunting. The class is meeting weekly for ten lessons of one hour each. We meet in a room equipped with the T coil system. There are 10 students— 4 women and 6 men. I would guess that the average age is about 70. We have a range of hearing abilities. One person has had poor hearing from birth, one is deaf in one ear, one has a cochlear implant. The instructor, Nerissa Davies is well organized, enthusiastic and efficient. She sends the notes for the next class to us by e mail.



Nerissa Davies (rightmost) teaching a speechreading class in Comox, BC.

GOALS OF THIS COURSE

- Teach concrete skills and practice in speechreading
- Help people become more educated consumers of hearing aids, their accessories, and assistive listening devices
- Give students the power and tools to improve their own hearing by doing daily listening exercises in their own homes
- Give students comprehensive solutions in their daily lives
- Less isolation, more neural pathways and more empowered lives!

I find the classes to be tiring due to the concentration required. Trying to recognize words by looking at a silent moving mouth is not easy. My weakness is insufficient daily practice at home and around town. This course might help you; don't be afraid to try it if available. Don't hesitate to tell people that you are hard of hearing or a little deaf.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: The National Office of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association has moved. Please update your records with their new address:

**75 Albert Street, Suite 901
Ottawa, ON
K2P 5E7**



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Challenge Life Youth Retreat

Contributed by the CHHA BC Youth Peer Support Program

On March 8th to 10th, 2019, the CHHA-BC Youth Peer Support Program hosted our first youth weekend retreat. We had a total of 18 participants, ranging from ages 15 to 30 years old, who travelled from Abbotsford, Burnaby, Chilliwack, Kamloops, Maple Ridge, Nelson, Surrey, and Vancouver. We kicked off with an ice breaker activity by asking everyone to figure out their given careers labelled on their backs and then share their actual occupations. We spent the evening with board games, air hockey, table tennis, and foosball games.



Presenter Yat Li in discussion with one of the groups

The next day we had amazing presentations from two hard of hearing young adults – Yat Li and Elissa Robb from the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Yat started the morning with an inspirational story of his journey on “*Overcoming Barriers and Leading with Confidence*”. His experience reminds us that even in times of challenge, we can still overcome them with the right attitude and support. We concluded his part of the presentation with fantastic group discussions on different ways to instill confident thoughts and statements into our daily lives. Some of the statements included phrases such as, “*Never stop being my best self; Be more inclusive; Share stories; and Answer negativity with positivity.*”

The next speaker, Elissa Robb, had thoughtful conversations with the group about how to develop and build positive relationships with audiologists. She also introduced a variety of cool new technologies that would benefit hard of hearing people, such as modern vibrating watches that could be set to wake us up in the morning or lighting systems that can easily be connected into the home system. At the end, the group went over case scenarios with discussions on problem solving and preparedness for different situations should they occur.



From left: Bowen Tang (YPSP Co-Director), Yat Li, Elissa Robb, Joy Gong (YPSP Co-Director)

After lunch, we took part in outdoors activities in the sunny weather. There were a total of 3 different team building activities, such as: the platform, balance beam, and spider web. It was thrilling to see all the participants working together as a team to problem solve while being supportive of one another regardless of varying abilities. **(Continued on page 7)**



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(Continued from page 6) Finally, we completed the activities with several rounds of archery and Frisbee golf. One of the participants was experienced in archery, so she volunteered to teach less-experienced participants the proper form and use of holding the bow and firing the arrows.

In the late afternoon, we watched a Dutch documentary made by Stan van Kesteren, the creator of *"Hard of Hearing, So What?!"* It was a short film that followed the lives of four very different hard of hearing individuals in various stages of life – a high school student, carpenter and deejay, senior worker, film student, and finally the director himself. Each of them had their own challenges – such as, communication, background noise, and hearing exhaustion – but they all shared a common theme of perseverance and determination to get to where they wanted to be.

In the evening, we built a campfire, shared ghost stories, and sang while roasting our own marshmallows and devouring yummy rice-krispy squares served by camp staff. It was a memorable bonding activity for our participants – many of them had reflected that this was one of their favourites!

On the final day, as a concluding activity in our retreat we, as a group, wrote our own statements and filmed our own short video clips, drawing ideas from Stan's video. These short clips have powerful messages that will later be used to share with the public on hard of hearing awareness, and as an inspirational tool for other hard of hearing individuals across the country and the world.

The retreat was an opportunity for youth and young adults to come together for a weekend to meet and connect with each other. It was a reminder that we are not alone in our daily challenges and that we can share in each other's determination and success. Through these activities, we are empowering youth to raise awareness in their own communities and to feel proud of their own achievements. See you all in 2020!



The young adults participate in outdoor team-building activities (above) and gather around the campfire (below)



The young adults film their own video clips about hearing loss





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Upcoming Events

- **Friday, April 12th, 2019** — Providence Health Care will be hosting a free public presentation at the Vancouver Convention Centre from 7:00pm—8:30pm. Dr. Kathy Pichora-Fuller will present on “Sensory Health and Aging Well.” Hearing assistive devices will be available as well as real-time closed captioning. For details and to register, visit: <https://bit.ly/2CwQley>
- **Monday, April 15th, 2019** — CHHA North Shore Branch invites you to attend a presentation with guest speaker Daryl Houghton of Phonak Canada. The presentation will begin at 7:00 pm at the Summerhill, 135 West 15th Street in North Vancouver. For more information, call 604-926-5222.
- **Monday, April 22nd, 2019** — CHHA Abbotsford Branch will be holding its next meeting from 1:00pm-3:00pm at Chances, 30835 Peardonville Road, Abbotsford. Branch President Jerry Gosling will be discussing his speechreading classes scheduled to run July and August; he will also be explaining the CHHA mentor program. Refreshments will be served and there is no charge to attend.
- **Sunday, April 28th, 2019** — The CHHA BC Youth Peer Support Program will be having a Young Adults Social at the Chilliwack Tulip Festival. For more information, please email chhabcypsp@gmail.com.
- **Saturday, May 4th, 2019** — The CHHA BC Youth Peer Support Program’s next BC Buddies event will be an interactive farm field trip, scavenger hunt, and outdoor lunch at Southlands Heritage Farm in Vancouver! The deadline for registrations is April 27th. For more information, please visit: <http://www.chha-bc.org/youthpsp/bc-buddies/>



Want to stay up-to-date on events happening near you?

Follow CHHA-BC on Facebook and Twitter!



(Click the icons to visit our pages)



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Articles & Resources

A Hearing Technology Moron

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

"After 40-odd years of using various pieces of assistive technology, you'd think I'd be well past the basics – you know, like knowing how to turn it on and off. But I haven't. Technology continues to floor me as much as it did when I was in my 20s. At that time, the only electronic, electric (I think those two things are different but I'm not sure) and battery-powered devices in my life were a corded, rotary dial telephone, a television, a radio and my hearing aid. Oh, yeah, and the vinyl record player..."

READ MORE: <https://bit.ly/2J7B8WL>

Are Movie Theater Caption Readers Properly Maintained?

by Shari Eberts (taken from LivingWithHearingLoss.com)

"Since discovering caption readers at the movies a couple of years ago, I have firmly embraced heading to the movie theater to take in a film now and again. And with most movie theaters in my area now offering some type of captioning device, I can choose the movie based on where and when I want to see it, not where and when the accessibility options are offered. This is a treat, and one that I have come to expect. But recently, things are feeling less secure. In each of the last four times I went to the movies, there has been an issue with the captioning. It makes me wonder if the devices are being properly maintained..." **READ MORE:** <https://bit.ly/2TxIR4r>

On the Road to Performing Again, But This Time with Hearing Aids

by Phil Hilton (taken from HearingLikeMe.com)

"Recently I made a decision to perform again. This may seem deceptively simple, yet it's a challenge. For 25 years I was an entertainer. I began as a lead guitarist in a band back in the 80s. We played professionally for six years, but failed to make it and ended up folding. From this, I went into comedy and performed across the country as part of a comedy duo performing stand up. After that, I trained in drama and went into stage work, playing mainly character parts and producing and directing occasionally. Eventually, I ended up as a magician. It was in this role that felt like the real me. One day I began to look back over my years of performing and felt the urge to give back. Earlier in my life, I worked as a nurse and loved the work so much but disliked the stress involved. After much thought, I decided to retire from the stage and devote myself to helping others..." **READ MORE:** <https://bit.ly/2TruJe8>



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Following is a new online resource for seniors. Please note that it does not provide any resources to assist with hearing loss such as safety and security devices and strategies. For those, you are advised to contact CHHA-BC at info@chha-bc.org.

Ability411: An Online Resource for Seniors

Contributed by David Claveau, CanAssist Project and Promotions Coordinator

[Ability411](#) is a new website from CanAssist at the University of Victoria that answers questions about technologies to help BC seniors remain independent and safe. The website provides practical information and personalized answers for questions about a wide range of commercially available devices designed to assist seniors in areas such as eating, mobility, dressing, memory and recreation. Ability411 enables seniors and the people who care for them to ask for help in identifying effective commercial technologies in cases where they are unable to find an appropriate solution on their own.

Ability411 is another way for BC seniors to improve their independence, safety and quality of life, so they're able to live at home longer. The website also aims to reduce stress and burnout among family members and others by offering suggestion about technological solutions for seniors in their care.

The new service is operated by CanAssist and funded by the BC Government.

Visitors can browse answers provided to previous questions and, if they can't find what they're looking for, ask a question of their own. Ability411 staff provide a personalized answer within three business days. All answers to questions are reviewed by the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists.

Visitors who ask questions to Ability411 remain completely anonymous, but their queries and the resulting answers provided by Ability411 may be included in the website's growing database of Q&As, so that all visitors can benefit from the information.

The site does not provide medical advice; nor does it advise visitors of the "best" technology for them to buy. Instead, the site provides a selection of possible commercial solutions for people to explore. Visitors who ask questions related to medical conditions or symptoms are referred to HealthLink BC, the province's 24-hour health line (8-1-1).

Ability411 helps narrow the search for assistive technology and equipment, focusing on Canadian manufacturers and retailers as much as possible. In some cases, Ability411 provides information particular to a visitor's city or region in the province.

The site also provides information and links to equipment rental and loan programs in BC, health organizations for seniors, support services for caregivers, and other resources.

Get information on technology
and equipment for BC seniors
at ability411.ca

Ability411


CanAssist

 University
of Victoria