

HEARSAY

Volume 3, No. 1 March 2004

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF ...



SHHH opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss.

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Keep up-to-date. www.pa-shhh.org

A Message from Diana

When I first became involved in advocating for hard of hearing people, I was absolutely amazed to find out how many services are already available to us in PA. Although I have regularly paid both my state and federal taxes, until recently I had never heard of the existence of many of the offices that my taxes fund. I was excited to discover that there is an office in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania whose sole purpose is to serve deaf and hard of hearing people: the Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH). This office provides information, referral and advocacy and is a valuable resource for any questions or needs for people with a hearing loss. (Check them out at: <http://www.dli.state.pa.us/landi/cwp/view.asp?a=128&Q=67560>).

One of the objectives of PA-SHHH in publishing *HearSay* is to provide our readers with information about the offices and services available for hard of hearing people. In this issue, for example, you will find an article about the Center for Disability Law & Policy. Perhaps there will be a time when you or someone you know could use their help. If so, you will know exactly what they can do for you. They say that knowledge is power. We hope *HearSay* will help to empower you.

Diana Bender

PA-SHHH State Co-Director



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Look for this International Symbol of Access for Persons with Hearing Loss

PA-SHHH Hosts Banquet!

by *Diana Bender*

In what is hoped to be the first in a series of annual events, PA-SHHH is hosting a banquet on Saturday, April 24 in the Valley Forge Park Ballroom at the Scanticon Hotel & Conference Center in King of Prussia, PA.

In addition to a buffet luncheon, attendees will have the opportunity to see some of the latest developments in assistive technology at Potomac Technology's display table.



After lunch, Anne Pope, a member of the SHHH Board of Trustees and author of the popular book, *Hear: Solutions, Skills and Sources for People with Hearing Loss*, will elaborate on the many things that SHHH does for us.

Here's your chance to find out more about the resources that are available from our national office and how you can find answers to questions you might have about hearing loss.

Event organizers have collected an interesting array of raffle items. This is a great opportunity to obtain some wonderful prizes while showing your support for SHHH. Proceeds from this event will be divided between PA-SHHH and the SHHH national office.

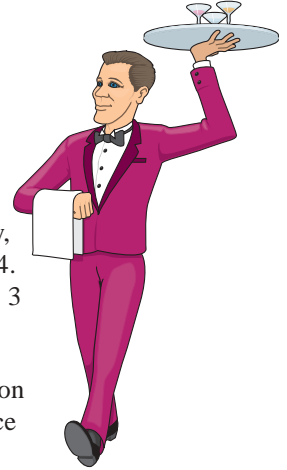
Here's your chance to meet other SHHH members while showing support for an organization that does so much for people who have a hearing loss.

Come and bring a friend. Everyone welcome!

Cost: \$25.00 per person Deadline to purchase tickets is April 17, 2004 (no tickets sold at the door).

Date: Saturday, April 24, 2004.
Time: 12 noon to 3 p.m.

Place: Scanticon Hotel & Conference Center (part of the Radisson Valley Forge complex) Valley Forge Park Ballroom 1160 First Avenue King of Prussia, PA 19406



For further information, contact: Carolyn Meyer - jmeyerhart@aol.com - subject "PA-SHHH Banquet" or Ronnie Adler - 610-265-1432 voice or 610-354-9392 tty.

Please return this form, make checks payable to "PA-SHHH" and mail to: Alice Dungan 6906 Shalkop Street Philadelphia, PA 19128-3217

Name: _____

Address: _____

Names of additional attendees: _____

SHHH Chapter you belong to (if applicable): _____

Amount Enclosed: _____ (\$25/person)

Email: _____

Your canceled check is your confirmation.

Employment Conference Comes to Harrisburg

by *Neil Bauman*

Hard of hearing people are often unemployed or underemployed because many employers do not know how to effectively communicate with them. Thus

employers lose out when they refrain from hiring intelligent, loyal, hardworking employees who just happen to be hard of hearing.



The PA office of Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH) is working to change this. They are bringing their highly-successful one-day conference "Working Together" to the residents of south-central PA this year. (Last year the conference was held in King of Prussia.)

This year's "Working Together" conference will be held Thursday May 6, 2004 at the beautiful Wildwood Conference Center on the Harrisburg campus of the Harrisburg Area Community College.

According to Marcia Finisdore, the PA-SHHH state co-director, "These conferences bring together hard of hearing employees and job seekers (including students entering the workforce) and employers, human resources personnel, rehabilitation counselors and placement services staff. The purpose of these conferences is to help employers, employees and job seekers work together so that hard of hearing employees can succeed in spite of their hearing losses."

(Continued on page 3)

Don't Hide This CAP!

by *Margaret McKenna
& Jennie Philip*

If you are hard of hearing (or have any other disability) and need help advocating for your rehabilitation or employment needs, the staff at the Client Assistance Program (CAP) is eager to help. It won't cost you anything either as their services are free to eligible clients.

You are eligible for CAP services if you are applying for or receiving services from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS), the Centers for Independent Living (CIL) or any other programs, projects or facilities funded under the Rehabilitation Act.

CAP personnel can provide you with information about the rehabilitation system in Pennsylvania and advocate on your behalf to receive those services you need to become gainfully employed. You should contact CAP if you have a question about your rights/responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act or if you are unhappy about the services you are receiving from a program funded under the act.

CAP is a federally funded program administered by the Center for Disability Law and Policy. The Center is a public interest law center that has advocated on behalf of people with disabilities since 1976. The Center also represents individuals with claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and has substantial experience in employment discrimination cases.

Bulk Copies of *HearSay* for Distribution

In the future, if you would like to receive bulk copies of *HearSay* to distribute in hospitals, audiologists offices, seniors homes, etc., please email Marcia (finisdore@pa-shhh.org) by April 15 and let her know how many copies of the June issue you could profitably use.

The Client Assistance Program can help you in four basic areas. First, it can provide you with information and advice about rehabilitation programs. Second, it can advise you of your legal rights and responsibilities. Third, it can help you resolve problems that may arise while you are seeking services from rehabilitation programs. Fourth, it can help you pursue administrative and legal remedies to protect your rights.

In practical terms, here are three examples of how CAP can help you—a hard of hearing person.

1. You require a specific piece of assistive technology in order to get/keep a job but OVR has denied you this equipment. Turn to CAP for help.

2. You can not get a job to achieve your vocational goal without extra training and OVR denies your funding request. Let CAP see what they can do to help you.

3. You are experiencing communication problems with your OVR counselor. Let CAP help you by clarifying for you and your OVR counselor your needs and OVR's process, and/or by acting as an extra set of ears (so to speak) to help you get the service you require to get work. If these efforts do not result in a workable solution, CAP can help you appeal the denial of service.

To learn more about CAP, visit their website at www.equalemployment.org. Their website offers a variety of resources and articles to help you.

If you feel you can benefit from the services of either the Center for Disability Law & Policy or the Client Assistance Program, call them toll free at 1-888-745-2357 (voice/TTY) or email them at info@equalemployment.org.

Margaret McKenna is an attorney and advocate for the Client Assistance Program at the Philadelphia office of the Center for Disability Law and Policy. Jennie Philip is an advocate for the Client Assistance Program in the same office.

Employment Conference

(Continued from page 2)

To that end, the conference will include a number of workshops covering a broad range of topics including assistive technology, hearing aids, coping and communication strategies, legal rights of employees and employers, successfully dealing with hearing loss both on the job, and when seeking a job.

Working together in a cooperative effort of the PA-SHHH state office, the South Central PA Chapters of SHHH, the Pennsylvania Business Leadership Network (PA BLN), PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), PA CareerLink and a number of other public and private business organizations.

The Wildwood Conference Center is located on the Harrisburg Area Community College campus at the SW corner of the intersection of I-81 (Exit 67) and Cameron Street (Route 22/322) just north of Harrisburg. Turn west off Cameron street onto Industrial Road. Continue to Gate 4, turn right into the parking lots and walk over the bridge to the conference center.

Registration will be \$35.00 which includes a buffet lunch.

For further information or to register for this conference write Barbara Beard at 98 Rosedale, Hershey, PA 17033, phone her (717-534-0820) or email her (barbbeard@webtv.net).

Telephone Contacts

To talk to someone about SHHH activities, or for further information, feel free to phone:

- Wayne Benson, Western PA
412-661-4724
- Neil Bauman, Central PA
717-993-8555
- Marianne Lock, Eastern PA
215-357-3702
- Ronnie Adler, Eastern PA
610-265-1432

Support Hearing Health Accessibility Act

by *Susan Parr*

PA Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (PA-SHHH) and the PA Academy of Audiology (PAA) are working together to support the Hearing Health Accessibility Act of 2003, (Senate Bill S-1647 and House of Representative Bill HR-2821).

These bills will provide Medicare beneficiaries direct access to audiologists. Direct access allows Medicare patients to go directly to a qualified audiologist for diagnostic hearing and balance testing. This legislation gives Medicare recipients the same hearing care options available to veterans and congressmen. Having both physicians and audiologists as entry points to the system greatly improves patient access to hearing and balance care especially for Medicare beneficiaries living in underserved rural areas as well as low-income beneficiaries who may be deterred by the cost of a physician visit. Hearing loss in the Medicare population is under-diagnosed and under-treated. Untreated hearing loss often leads to alienation from society, depression, and negatively impacts the quality of life.

Experience with other programs and insurances suggests that direct access to audiology avoids unnecessary costs and minimizes waiting time prior to the

audiological evaluation. Medicare currently allows beneficiaries direct access to a range of non-physician practitioners, including a dentist, podiatrist, chiropractor, clinical nurse specialist, clinical psychologist, clinical social worker, nurse-midwife, nurse practitioner and physician assistant. This bill adds audiologists to the list.

Representative Jim Ryun said, "I believe that all our seniors should have access to comprehensive audiology services provided by both physicians and audiologists." He further stated that this legislation is consumer friendly. It will help our elderly and rural citizens who have difficulty accessing health care services. It provides consistent policy among government agencies. With 80 to 90 percent of hearing problems not

Deadline for Submissions

We are always interested in receiving any news, articles or information of interest to hard-of-hearing people in PA. The deadline for submissions for the June issue of *HearSay* is April 15, 2004. Email your submissions to either:

- Neil Bauman, Editor (editor@pa-shhh.org) or,
- Gerry Rusher, Assistant Editor (rusher@pa-shhh.org) or,
- Mail them to Neil Bauman, HearSay Editor, 49 Piston Court, Stewartstown, PA 17363.

ask you to co-sponsor the Hearing Health Accessibility Act (HR-2821) introduced by Rep. Jim Ryun (R-KS) and Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA). This legislation would allow Medicare beneficiaries the option of going directly to a qualified audiologist for hearing and balance diagnostic tests."

Feel free to use any of the above information in your letters.

Full or Half Day Workshops

available through PA-SHHH include:

- **Employment**
- **Coping Strategies**
- **Public Policy**
- **Accessibility/ADA**
- **Speechreading**
- **Hearing Loss 101**

Contact: Marcia Finisdore (finisdore@pa-shhh.org) or Diana Bender (bender@pa-shhh.org)

medically or surgically treatable, Senator Campbell stated it's only reasonable that Medicare patients be allowed to consult with an audiologist without first seeing a physician. Audiologists are educated to recognize problems requiring medical attention and to immediately refer such patients to a physician.

I encourage you to write to your senators to support S-1647 and to your representatives to support HR-2821.

A sample letter to the US House of Representatives would begin, "As a resident of [CITY], Pennsylvania and a person with hearing loss, I am writing to

Susan Parr, Au.D. is the President of the Pennsylvania Academy of Audiology. You may reach her by phone at 814-641-4327; FAX at 814-641-7104 or email at dr.parr@verizon.net.

Away? Let Us Know

With each issue of *HearSay*, a number of copies are returned because people are temporarily away. Please let Marcia (finisdore@pa-shhh.org) know if you are going to be away for an extended period. This will save us postage. Thanks.

Mission of HearSay

The mission of *HearSay* is to educate and inform people about activities and issues concerning hearing loss in Pennsylvania.

Lions Clubs International Foundation Helps Develop Hearing Aid

The Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) is helping to develop the world's finest low-cost hearing aid. The long-range plan is for Lions worldwide to take a leading role in improving the lives of millions of hard of hearing people.

LCIF has approved \$600,000.00 for the Lions Affordable Hearing Aid Project (AHAP) to design, manufacture and distribute a high-quality, low-cost hearing aid. AHAP is moving forward steadily. A digitally-programmable hearing aid already has been developed, a manufacturing and distribution site has been established in southern India, successful clinical trials have been conducted in the United States and a fulfillment center is planned for New Jersey (USA).

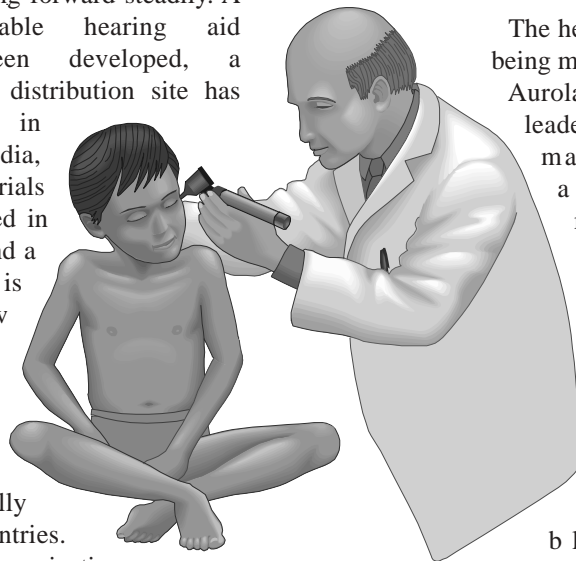
Hard of hearing people are an overlooked population, especially in developing countries.

The World Health Organization estimates that at least 250 million people have a disabling degree of hearing loss. The average cost of a hearing aid, \$1,450.00 in 2000, is prohibitively high for poor people. Only 12 percent of the 6 million hearing aids sold in 2000 were sold in undeveloped countries, which is home to 70 percent of the global population.

AHAP is manufacturing the hearing aids for \$40.00 to \$50.00. It will be sold from \$0 to \$500.00 depending on a client's ability to pay. The income realized from sales in wealthier countries will subsidize

the cost in poorer countries. Lions will be the exclusive distributor of the hearing aid to all Lions' groups and all U.S. non-profit groups.

Many Lions clubs currently provide either low-cost refurbished hearing aids or high-priced new hearing aids to the hard of hearing people in their communities. AHAP will allow Lions to deliver new high-quality hearing aids to those who cannot afford them.



The hearing aids are being made in India at Aurolab, a world leader in manufacturing affordable medical technology. Aurolab developed the low-priced intraocular lens used in Lions' anti-blindness projects. Aurolab is

part of the Lions Aravind Institute of Community Ophthalmology, initially funded with a 1.26 million dollar SightFirst grant. The lead manager for the hearing aid project is one of the originators of Aurolab, social entrepreneur David Green of U.S.-based Project Impact.

A pilot project will offer the hearing aid to Lions as a member benefit. If successful in parts of the United States and India, the member benefit could be extended to other regions.

To learn more about the Lions Clubs International and this project, go to: http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/content/lions_lcif_hearingaid.shtml. You can phone the Lions Clubs International Foundation at 630-571-5466, ext. 383 or email them at lcif@lionsclubs.org.

For Rent

Hard of hearing accessibility needs for meetings—large or small. Assistive Listening Devices available include:

- FM systems
- Infrared systems
- Audio-induction loops

Contact Walt Jensen:
jensen@pa-shhh.org

Opportunities for Students with Hearing Loss

The Washington (D.C.) Center for Internships and Academic Seminars Scholarship has a program for College Students with Disabilities - to increase employment for students with disabilities through an academic internship program. The deadline for applications is June 14, 2004. You can find all the details on their website at: <http://www.aapd-dc.org/Internships/washintern.html>.

The Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing invites you to attend LEAP-a leadership program designed to help college students with hearing loss develop skills in individual leadership, teamwork skills, conflict resolution, and problem solving. The deadline for this program is April 4, 2004. Find the details at <http://www.agbell.org/news/leap2004.cfm>.

Support SHHH

One way you can make a difference to hard-of-hearing people is to remember SHHH in your will. That way your money will continue to help hard-of-hearing people long after you are gone.

HearSay is edited and produced by:

Neil Bauman
Phone: 717-993-8555
Email: neil@hearinglosshelp.com
Website: www.hearinglosshelp.com

HearSay Subscription

If you would like to receive your own copy of *HearSay*, the official newsletter of PA-SHHH, please fill in this form and mail it to the address below. A *HearSay* subscription is free; however, PA-SHHH is a not-for-profit organization and we are grateful for any donations.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

- Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ to support *HearSay*. Donations are tax deductible and will be acknowledged in the newsletter and on the website.
- If you wish to remain anonymous, please check here.
- I cannot contribute, but I would like to receive the *HearSay*.

Make donations payable to PA-SHHH and send this form to:

Marcia Finisdore, State Co-Director
PA-SHHH
4 State Road, #109
Media, PA 19063



PA-SHHH is a totally volunteer organization. We rely upon the generosity of our supporters. Each issue of *HearSay* costs just under \$800 to produce and mail.

A special thanks to those of you who help make it possible.

A. Otto Amann
Rich Davis, Claire Emery
Dorothy Guest
Lehigh Valley Center for
Independent Living
Len & Elizabeth Mitchell
Ed Paschall, Selma Ryave
Richard Strauss
Milton Wolfson
3 anonymous donors

We apologize if we have missed someone. Please contact Marcia Finisdore for such corrections.

About SHHH

Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc., founded in 1979, is a non-profit consumer self-help organization. SHHH opens the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

The primary purpose of all SHHH members is to educate ourselves, our families, friends, co-workers, teachers, hearing health care providers, industry, government, and others about hearing loss.

SHHH has members and chapters in all 50 states. To find the chapter closest to you, contact a member of the PA-SHHH state committee if you are in PA, or contact the SHHH National Office.

Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People
7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200
Bethesda, MD 20814

Phone: (301) 657-2248 (Voice)
(301) 657-2249 (TTY)
(301) 913-9413 (FAX)

Email: info@hearingloss.org
Website: www.hearingloss.org

PA-SHHH Needs You



SHHH volunteers from all over the Commonwealth assist the PA-SHHH State Director by serving on the PA-SHHH Advisory Council or one of its committees. The PA-SHHH Advisory Council meets periodically in Carlisle. Committees conduct most of their business by email but meet periodically in various parts of the state as needed. We would be delighted to have you join us. If you would like to serve on either the Advisory Council, or one of its committees, please contact one of the state leaders listed below.

State Co-Directors: **Marcia Finisdore** finisdore@pa-shhh.org
Diana Bender bender@pa-shhh.org

Membership: **Ronnie Adler** adler@pa-shhh.org
Marianne Lock lock@pa-shhh.org

Communication: **Neil Bauman** bauman@pa-shhh.org
Alice Pakhtigian pakhtigian@pa-shhh.org

Government Affairs: **Diana Bender** bender@pa-shhh.org

Development: Open—will you volunteer?

“Come and join us. You will be welcome!”