

Monthly Newsletter



December 2024 Edition

Upcoming Chapter Meeting - December 19, 2024

11:30 am - 1:00 pm - Will Rogers Exhibition Center

Get ready for our annual holiday chapter meeting on December 21, 2024! Enjoy lunch with Jacque Scholl on Zoom discussing efforts for teens with hearing loss. Be part of our spirited donation drive for the Seniors of St. Anthony's Behavioral Health unit. Look below for the list of new and unwrapped items needed!

One of our speakers for the December Christmas meeting will be during our lunch. Dr. Jacque Scholl, AuD. She is going to join via Zoom to take this opportunity to tell us about some legislative action that has been taking place to mandate hearing screenings for the children in Oklahoma schools. Currently, there is no mandates that require children to have their hearing screened and in many(most) places it doesn't happen and what activities are taking place to change that! Dr. Scholl has been working for two years to show the prevalence of auditory issues in Oklahoma schools and what best-practice screening protocols look like in the future.

We will also have a guest speaker, Gloria Walls, the Volunteer Coordinator for SSM St. Anthony Hospital. She will talk about the history of St. Anthony and how the HLAA Support a Senior project contributes to their goal of providing personal and compassionate care to the community. She will also talk about how their volunteer program supports the community in ways that are similar to how HLAA members support the hearing loss community. **She may even have a surprise for the members attending the Christmas meeting!** See details about the annual donation drive on the next page.

2025 Chapter Meeting: Save the Dates

MONTHLY MEETINGS

**THIRD THURSDAY
OF EACH MONTH
11:30AM - 1:00PM**

**Will Rogers
Exhibition Center
3400 NW 36th Street
OKC, OK 73112**

Hearing Loop Provided by
Assist2Hear, Inc.
CART (Live Captions) Provided
through Total Access Captioning, LLC



**FIND US ON
FACEBOOK**



@OKLAhearingloss

Stay connected through our Facebook page where you will find announcements, special events and friends who understand the difficulties of living with hearing loss.

Printing Courtesy of Hearts for Hearing



January 15, 2025 – Dr. Matt Masapollo, John W. Keys

February 20, 2025 – Jacque Scholl, legislative updates

March 20, 2025 – TBA

April 17, 2025 – Sgt. Tara Hardin, OK County Sherriff Dept.

May 22, 2025 – TBA

June 19, 2025 – HLAA COC Outing to the Movies

July 17, 2025 – BINGO

August 3, 2025 – Annual Ice Cream Social and scholarship awards

September 18, 2025 - TBA

October 16, 2025 - TBA

November 20, 2025 - TBA

December 18, 2025 – Annual Holiday Social

Light refreshments and water will be available, but primary meal will be on your own! If we have secured a lunch sponsor, communication prior to the meeting will be included in the monthly newsletter.

If your organization is interested in sponsoring a meeting and providing lunch, please reach out to Gene Richburg at gene2107@live.com

Whoa! This is B.I.G. - FREE Hearing Aids!

The [Beltone Hearing Care Foundation](#), a 501(c)(3) charity established by [Beltone](#), announced details for its '[Hear for the Holidays' hearing aid giveaway](#), a giveaway which gifts brand-new hearing aids to individuals with hearing challenges, and are provided at no cost—including no application fee.

The giveaway will be held Nov. 1 to Dec. 31, 2024, and welcomes nominations for deserving individuals who could benefit from Beltone hearing aids. The Beltone Foundation will gift a set of hearing aids every day in December.

To be considered for the hearing aid giveaway, individuals must complete a free hearing screening at a participating Beltone location and have a minimum hearing loss of 25dB. To submit a nomination, visit about.beltone.com/hear-for-the-holidays-2024/

“Hearing is our connection to the world in a way that no other sense can replicate,” says David Molella, president of Beltone North America. “At Beltone, we are dedicated to improving hearing for everyone. While we serve our patients daily, we understand that many still lack access to essential hearing care. That’s why we created the Beltone Foundation, and we’re proud to celebrate a decade of transforming lives with our ‘Hear for the Holidays’ initiative.”

For the past 10 years, the Beltone Foundation has been providing Beltone hearing aids to eligible individuals and organizations who may not be able to afford the cost of hearing devices. Founded in 2014, the Beltone Foundation has made a profound impact by donating over 6,800 hearing aids at no cost, changing countless lives without any application or service fees.

Key Takeaways:

1. **Free Hearing Aids Giveaway:** From Nov. 1 to Dec. 31, 2024, Beltone will gift a set of hearing aids every day in December to individuals with hearing challenges at no cost, including no application fees.
2. **Eligibility Requirements:** To qualify, nominees must complete a free hearing screening at a participating Beltone location and demonstrate a minimum hearing loss of 25dB.

To learn more, visit a Beltone clinic!



2025 HEARING LOSS SCHOLARSHIPS

- ✓ UNIVERSITY
- ✓ COLLEGE
- ✓ VOTECH
- ✓ CAREER TRAINING
- ✓ POST HIGH-SCHOOL INSTITUTE OF LEARNING

**APPLICATION
DEADLINE:
APRIL 8, 2025**



Go to our website at Oklahomahearingloss.org for complete rules and information.

Complete Application must be postmarked by APRIL 8, 2025 before midnight to qualify.

- 1 The Hearing Loss Association of America Central Oklahoma Chapter will award scholarships in the amount of \$1,500 to residents of Oklahoma who will be attending an Oklahoma institution of higher education(*) the fall of 2025.
- 2 Submit an 1000-3000 word essay expressing your goals and telling your story of how hearing loss has affected your life.
- 3 Download application from OklahomaHearingLoss.org

Contact **Scholarship Chair Sharon Hendricks** at info@oklahomahearingloss.org.

The Mission of the Oklahoma City Hearing Loss Association is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

Curious Technology... Use the Hearing Aid feature on your AirPods Pro 2 - Here's How!

Explore the dual functionality of your AirPods Pro 2, which can serve as hearing aids. Utilize features such as Live Listen to amplify surrounding sounds.

****The Hearing Aid feature is intended for people 18 years and older with perceived mild to moderate hearing loss.**

Access features such as:

- Adjust amplification levels and balance
- Use Conversation Boost
- Amplify specific sounds in your environment
- Control media with Media Assist

For comprehensive instructions, visit Apple's support page. <https://support.apple.com>

A Vietnam Veteran's Hearing Health Journey

HLAA Communications - November 11, 2024

Reprinted from HLAA Hear This! Blog. To read the full article and view related photos, visit. [HLAA November 11, 2024 Blog Post.](#)

At age 19, Melvin Allen volunteered for military service in his hometown of Chicago. After one year of training in communications and Morse code, he was sent to Vietnam as a Specialist E5 radio transmission operator with top secret clearance for the U. S. Army Security Agency.

During his service there in 1967 and 1968, at the height of the war , he wore a headset 12 hours a day, six days a week to monitor enemy communications, while also being exposed to noise from heavy artillery fire. Following his tour of duty in Vietnam, Sergeant Allen served two more years in Germany, spending five long days each week inside a metal shipping container with loud sound reverberation and maximum headset volume.

Not surprisingly, upon retirement from the military, he was diagnosed with mild hearing loss—which went untreated until much later.

Turning Point to Treatment

A visit to his local Veterans Affairs (VA) health care center confirmed that Melvin, then 61, had a service-connected hearing disability, and he was prescribed hearing aids.

Within 10 years, his hearing loss had progressed even further.

“By 2018, it had become difficult to understand my coaching clients, both in person and online during videoconference calls, even with my hearing aids—I found myself constantly asking them to repeat what they just said. I’ve always been extremely social and outgoing, but I began to isolate myself, because it was just too hard to hear and communicate.”

Finding the Missing Piece with HLAA

Melvin realized by then that he might need to consider the next step of getting a cochlear implant (CI). “But I spent two more years in denial of my condition before returning to the VA for help. I just wasn’t ready yet.”

Then he was invited to a meeting of the HLAA Los Angeles Chapter on January 25, 2020, by a friend from his master’s degree program who was a member. That day’s presenter was director of the University of Southern California (USC) Keck Medical Center’s cochlear implant program.

The information he heard provided the final piece that Melvin needed to move forward with his decision. Since the VA only had a single cochlear implant surgeon serving all of southern California at that time, they were referring patients to external providers such as Keck.

“I was implanted with my first CI through USC’s program during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020,” says Melvin. “After going through the auditory rehabilitation process, my hearing improved so much that I went bilateral the next year, in 2021. They’ve made a huge difference in my work and my life.”

Advice to Fellow Veterans

Melvin encourages other veterans with hearing loss to seek treatment as soon as possible.

“Go get tested, find out how your hearing is, get hearing aids and do whatever is necessary. If your hearing aids don’t work, get cochlear implants if you qualify...forget the stigma, surgery fears, etc., and just do what you need to maintain your hearing and stay connected with the world.”

Fast forward 38 years to 2008, when Melvin and his wife, Sherrie, enrolled in a psychology Ph.D. program together at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Carpinteria, CA. Partners in a successful Beverly Hills relationship and executive coaching practice, the couple had already earned master’s degrees and sought more extensive education to better support their clients.

“Up until that point, I had tried to compensate for my hearing loss for decades,” says Melvin, “but it just kept getting worse. In graduate school, I realized that I needed to finally do something about this, because I was missing so much in and out of the classroom.”

Today, Melvin and Sherrie continue their coaching and writing work remotely while traveling around the country and the world. A grandfather of two young women, Melvin describes flying out to attend a Washington Commanders football game recently with his son.

“I couldn’t believe that I was actually able to follow our conversation, even in the middle of a cheering crowd. My CIs have been life-changing and the difference in my hearing now is like night and day. If it wasn’t for them, I would just crawl into a hole and hide.”

Thank you to our sponsors!



Have you HEARD the news? Hearing loss awareness and access is growing throughout our state and the Hearing Loss Association of America Central Oklahoma Chapter is leading the charge. Every year, our chapter of the HLAA achieves our goals with the help of our amazing members and valued sponsors like you.

[Become a Sponsor →](#)

Current Sponsors:

PLATINUM (\$500 or more)

Assist2Hear, Cochlear Americas, Linda and Cal Bryant, John & DeeAnn Dolan, David and Robin Croninger, Hearts for Hearing, Dennis & Joan Kelley, Nichols Foundation, OG&E Energy Corp, VIP Care, Dr. Pam Matthews, Pro Hearing

GOLD (\$250-\$499)

Richard & Anna Ross, Nancy Landrum, Sylvia Frank

SILVER (\$100-\$249)

Charles & Carolyn Chastain, Wanda Evans, Pat Fennell, Mike & Elaine Frizzell, Shelley Gladden, KR & Lois Hornbrook, Tony & Sharon Howard, Elaine Lains, Betty Jo Large, Terry Mock, Suzanne Parker, Rebecca Plunkett, Crystal Schwab, Marion Thompson

BRONZE (\$50-\$99)

Leon Nelson, Peggy Scarbrough, St. Anthony’s Volunteer Dept., Ralph Wilsack

2024 LUNCH BUSINESS SPONSORS:

- Pizza Hut
- Johnny Carino’s

Board Members of HLAA - Central Oklahoma Chapter

A note from the board:

The board just participated in a semi-annual retreat where we brainstormed ideas and ways to support our mission. Topics covered included future scholarship fundraisers, an annual hearing loss convention/expo, outing the baseball game, after hours, mixers, chapter t-shirts, and much more! Come to our next monthly chapter meeting to learn more!

The Mission of the Oklahoma City Hearing Loss Association is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss by providing information, education, support and advocacy.

With our mission in mind, we want to thank you for continuing to receive and read our Hearing Loss newsletter. We hope to increase awareness and make a real difference for people with hearing loss. Thanks to the support from you, our members and friends, our chapter, over this past year, has been able to continue to offer support to many people living with hearing loss.

As we move forward, we need your support more than ever. Please consider including the Hearing Loss Association of America - Central Oklahoma Chapter in your financial plans. Thank you!

Board members include:

Ana Covey, okhearingloss@gmail.com, Vice Chairperson

Judy Hughey, jahughey55@gmail.com, Chair

Shelley Gladden, shelley.gladden@okstate.edu, Past Chairperson, newsletter

Ron Hendricks, ron-gmi@swbell.net, Treasurer

Rebecca Plunkett, rebecca.lederman@gmail.com, Secretary

Pati Burns, pati.burns@heartsforhearing.org, Member At Large

Sharon Hendricks, sharonok@swbell.net, Past Chair

Gene Richburg, gene2107@live.com, Member At Large

Join the Board of Directors!

We need you! Our next Board meeting is January 18, 2025. This will be the semi-annual board retreat where we will discuss upcoming goals and how we want to get there. Let us know if you can join - we'd love to have you!

Chapter Website

Check out the website for upcoming events, become a member, and see past activities!

[Read More →](#)

Are You a Member Yet?

New Membership or Renewals

Have you joined our organization or need to renew?

We appreciate your financial support!

ANNUAL DUES: \$15 INDIVIDUAL OR \$20 FAMILY

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Birthday Month: _____ Phone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

_____ New to Hearing Loss Association – Central Oklahoma Chapter

Preference for your newsletter delivery: _____ Email or _____ Postal Mail

Are you a member of HLAA – National? _____ Yes _____ No

(This is not a requirement, but a valuable resource)

Annual chapter dues are considered a donation:

\$15.00 per individual or \$20.00 per family.

All contributions are tax deductible.

Total Amount Being Paid: _____

To join or renew your membership, bring the information below to a chapter meeting or mail to:

Hearing Loss Association of America Central Oklahoma Chapter PO Box 42801, Oklahoma City,
OK 73123

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