

The Nominations Committee recommends that the following candidates be acclaimed as the new Board of Directors of the CHHA-BC Chapter:

President:

Ruth Warick

Directors:

Gael Hannan  
Nicole Leung  
Elwood Major  
Jessica Niemela  
Naghmeh Samenirad

Candidate info:

**RUTH WARICK:**

Dr. Ruth Warick is a founding member of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, a former national president and a former President of the CHHA Vancouver Branch. She currently serves as President for the BC Chapter of CHHA. She is also immediate past president of the International Federation of Hard of Hearing Persons and First Vice- President of the International Disability Alliance, a network of international disability organizations and interfaces with the United Nations in Geneva, New York and around the world. Ruth is a past president of the formerly named Western Institute of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the BC Family Hearing Resource Society.

Ruth was born hard of hearing and received her first hearing aid at age 11 although her significant hearing loss warranted earlier intervention. She is passionate about accessibility, awareness, education, and inclusion for persons with hearing loss.

Ruth was employed for over 25 years at The University of British Columbia, working as an Advisor on accessibility for students, faculty and staff of all types of disabilities. She is currently employed as Director of Programs + Services, Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility.

Ruth is a prolific presenter and has edited the IFHOH publication on *Realities Facing Hard ofHearing Learners in Nepal and Uganda* (2020) and the CHHA publication, *Hearing the Learning, A Postsecondary Handbook for Students who are Hard of Hearing*. She completed her doctoral degree at UBC in 2003; her Dissertation was titled *Voices Unheard: The Academic and Social Experiences of University Students who are Hard ofHearing*.

Along with Marilyn Dahl, she was instrumental in developing the CHHA-BC On-Line Mentoring Program for hard of hearing persons. She was also the lead author for the CHHA BC Hearing Healthcare Kit and organized numerous educational sessions including for the World Health Organization's first World Report on Hearing. She is a founding and steering committee member of the WHO World Hearing Forum.

#### Statement of reason for Nomination

I am committed to providing my personal and professional expertise to the continued success and growth of the BC Chapter of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. I am reliable, trustworthy, and both practical and visionary. I have years of experience in the disability and hard of hearing movement, resulting in a familiarity with the issues facing hard of hearing

persons. I also have experience in different employment sectors, including the media, government and the post-secondary environment. As a result, I have management, financial and volunteer experience which helps me to be effective in steering a non-profit organization. I like to get things done! It would be an honor to continue to be the President of CHHA-BC.

Gael Hannan:

As a lifelong person with hearing loss and a long time member of CHHA, it is an honour once again to be nominated to the board of CHHA BC. I have been heartened at the quality of endeavours that this board has taken on in its commitment to improve the life journey for British Columbians impacted by hearing loss. As an advocate, writer and speaker on hearing loss issues, I look forward to continuing to contribute my talents to this cause over the coming year. Thank you for considering my nomination.

Nicole Leung:

### *Biography*

Nicole Leung is an active individual in the hard of hearing community. She has turned her challenges into opportunities for change and remains passionate to help others on and off duty from her job as a nurse.

How did she lose her hearing? Just before her first birthday, Nicole contracted meningitis and left the hospital with a bilateral sensorineural profound hearing loss. She grew up in the hearing world, attending mainstream school until she found a second home within the hard of hearing community.

Nicole has been passionate in spreading awareness and encouraging change through numerous roles in the community.

In 2022 she organized and facilitated a six-day study session titled “Advocate for our Rights Through Leadership” for 25 young adults with the International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People (IFHOHYP). During the pandemic, she organized the event online in 2021, but hosted the session in Budapest last year.

In 2020, she braved the microphone to chat about disability challenges on the *All Access Pass* radio show at the UBC 101.9 FM radio station.

In 2018, she ventured into becoming a mentor for students of various healthcare professions in the *UBC Interprofessional Health Mentors Program* to exchange and explore concepts of healthcare. One of the first involvements began with the *CHHA BC Youth Peer Support Program (YPSP)* where Nicole facilitated a workshop called [Navigate your way to success](#) both on YouTube and in-person. In the YPSP, she also facilitated an [empowerment workshop](#) for hard of hearing young girls on resiliency and self-care.

Currently she is a high acuity trained registered nurse working in the Neuroscience ICU department full-time.

### *Statement For Nomination*

As my interests lay in increasing accessibility in education, healthcare, and empowering hard of hearing individuals, I have no doubt that the BC Chapter of CHHA is a place where I can exercise my creativity and passion. My background in healthcare and community education can contribute to the current projects of the society, such as the

hearing healthcare committee, the project to provide (and collect data on) beneficial hearing devices for seniors, and the act as the Council of Service Providers youth representative. I believe my strength comes from being able to convey and advocate for those who struggle with hearing loss because of my experience as a nurse working at the bedside, because I also have hearing loss, and because I envision that individuals with hearing loss can have it much better if there was just better accessibility and awareness. I hope that it is clear that I have a desire to be a part of the CHHA BC team of intelligent and driven individuals (as I have seen in my first term with the team), as well as learn how to continue to advocate for change especially on a more permanent and larger scale than I have in the past. Thank you for your consideration and time. I hope I am accepted so that I can contribute to a better world for everyone.

#### ELWOOD MAJOR:

Elwood Major is semi-retired after a successful 40-year career in the Real Estate Industry. Born with no hearing in one ear and partial hearing in the other, he grew up in north eastern British Columbia without the benefit of hearing aids and support. In the 90's.

Elwood is a graduate of the College of New Caledonia, President of the Abbotsford Hard of Hearing Branch, a Past President of the Rotarian's, and previously involved with the Chamber of Commerce.

Elwood is currently CHHA Treasurer of CHHA-BC and looking to be elected to Board for another year. CHHA – BC work is never completed and I would like to be able to continue on the Board for the benefit of Hard of Hearing in B.C. Hard of Hearing awareness is becoming a challenge, especially when society is turning to artificial intelligence or AI, the art of utilizing computers more in our daily lives. (Think automated voice mails or help desks, self check outs, self ordering or even robot servers.) CHHA – BC's Outreach and Education programs, support of Youth Peer support program, the successful The Way We Hear It project in Vernon, all assist or provide information for Hard of Hearing in their daily lives.

I am honoured to be nominated to serve on the Board and look forward to the election results at the AGM of 2023

#### JESSICA NIEMELA:

Jessica Niemela is a pediatric audiologist in Vernon, British Columbia. Jessica's previous career was as a registered nurse, most of which she spent in the emergency department. At the age of four, she was diagnosed with bilateral, moderate-severe sensorineural hearing loss, however she did not start wearing hearing aids until she was 20 years of age. She quotes "My experiences accepting my own deafness, coping with communication challenges, and ultimately wearing bilateral hearing aids shapes a big part of who I am today." As a person living with hearing loss, Jessica is a proud member of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA). She volunteers currently as one of the CHHA-BC board directors and she is the Okanagan event coordinator for CHHA-BC's Youth Peer Support Program. Jessica enjoys spending quality time with her young child and partner.

It is an honor once again to be nominated as a board member for CHHA-BC. My experience on the board has been so rewarding. I thoroughly enjoy being involved in the advocacy work that we do on the board for our deaf and hard of hearing community. I would especially love to continue the work on "The Way We Hear It!" CHHA-BC science exhibit which has proven to be a much needed initiative to spread the awareness of hearing health for our general population. We are actively working on this project to be hosted again in 2024. This year I have also represented CHHA-BC amongst other organizations for the deaf and hard of hearing which include The Council of Service Providers and the Provincial Language Services. I plan on continuing this representation throughout the year. Being a board member of CHHA-BC gives me the opportunity to continue to share our hard of hearing community in a way that is active and current. Thank you for considering my nomination.

#### NAGHMEH SAMENIRAD:

I am a hard of hearing teacher with sensorineural hearing loss. I have been teaching French Immersion in a primary school in Vancouver for the past 8 years. I have a strong educational background with a Master of Education (MEd) focused in Early Childhood Education as well as a degree in Teaching program from UBC. I have volunteered at CHHA Vancouver branch as a Member-At-Large for three years and continue to volunteer as a secretary for three years. I am

nominating myself as a Member at Large for CHHA BC as I want to continue contributing my support and knowledge to the CHHA BC. It is my passion to make a difference in the hard of hearing community, to advocate for better accessibility and services for people with hearing loss and to connect with others in a diverse community.