

**Annual Report 2022-2023 of the CHHA Vancouver Branch**

CHHA Vancouver is a self-help, consumer group which provides advocacy, support and educational activities for successful living with a hearing loss. While the COVID pandemic has impacted our in person activities, we remain actively engaged in hearing loss issues at national and local levels and continue to reach out to our membership.

**Walk2Hear**

This past fall, the CHHA Vancouver Walk2Hear returned in person for the first time since the beginning of the COVID pandemic. It was our 13th annual Walk2Hear, and the seventh year that we have used the CanadaHelps platform. The fundraising campaign closed on October 31, 2023 with $2,315.00 raised.

The fundraising campaign culminated in a gathering at Jericho Beach Park on Sunday, September 17, 2023. It was a sunny day but not too hot due to some light cloud cover. Participants mingled with one another, reconnecting with old friends and meeting new friends after years of social distancing and Zoom webinars.

A large banner promoted the Accessible Navigation to Employment (ANTE) program, which is operated by CHHA National in partnership with Mohawk College. Volunteers at the registration table distributed ANTE program materials and briefly explained the ANTE program.



The only fly in the ointment was when the battery for the CART display started to beep ominously during event setup. Unfortunately, the battery could not be restarted, therefore it would be impossible to display CART on a large screen as originally planned. Catherine Siegler and Rosalind Ho hastily put their heads together to come up with a solution. Rosalind was able to set up a hotspot from her smartphone, so that Catherine could broadcast CART via a Streamtext link. Catherine and Rosalind then quickly distributed the Streamtext link to attendees via text message.

After welcoming everyone and very important stretches, led by Naghmeh Samenirad, participants set out to walk a 2 km loop around the park.

Awards were distributed at the closing ceremony. Ruth Warick was the top individual fundraiser. Wavefront Centre for Communications Accessibility was the top fundraising team. Draw prize winners were: Kyran Steuart, Lily Lam, and Teresa Hemsing.

Many thanks to our event volunteers: Amy Ho, Cheryl Marr, Edward Tran, Roxana Naseri, and Teresa Hemsing!

The Walk2Hear event was made accessible with CART and ASL interpreting.



**Educational Programs**

CHHA Vancouver and CHHA-BC jointly hosted a series of monthly webinars, held online via Zoom. All webinars were made accessible with CART and ASL interpreting.

***World Hearing Day 2022 — Hearing Care For All***

CHHA Vancouver partnered with Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility and the CHHA BC Chapter to host a webinar to celebrate World Hearing Day on March 7, 2022. Dr. Ruth Warick, who is the Director of Programs and Services at Wavefront, moderated the workshop.

Panel speakers from Wavefront and CHHA-BC shared hearing loss statistics and suggestions on how to improve hearing care for all:



The speakers emphasized that hearing loss impacts one’s mental and physical health; and so, regular hearing care should be a part of regular healthcare, not brushed aside as a luxury. Client-centred hearing health care should cover both hearing care technologies as well as other communication strategies.

Hugh McCormack shared statistics about the prevalence of hearing loss and tinnitus in the general population, and emphasized the benefits of using your hearing aids and cochlear implants as much as possible. Gael Hanan discussed that there needs to be better societal awareness around hearing loss, improved hearing accessibility and expanded professional hearing health care services. Brenda Poon presented on how to empower primary care providers to be instigators of change in hearing health care practice.

Chris Sutton summarized the formation of the Hearing Health Alliance of Canada, which is a unique partnership never seen before in Canada. Together with all levels of government, the Hearing Health Alliance of Canada has been working to develop a national hearing health care strategy, to remove stigma and barriers, and give all children access to proper and timely hearing screening, diagnosis, and intervention.

Gael had the last word: “make good communication your goal, not just good hearing.”

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***Transportation Access Issues for Hard of Hearing Persons***

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On April 26, 2023, speakers from different backgrounds discussed transportation accessibility issues for for sharing information about public transi

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• Chris Chan, Manager of Travel Training with Public Affairs, Translink newcomers.

University of British

• Sam Turcott, Executive Lead for Accessibility, BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty

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Spring 2016

• Hans (Uli) Egger, RHFAC Accessibility Certification Specialist, Rick Hansen Foundation

Lorem Ipsum Dolor Spring 2• Derrick Doll, Project Manager, Advanced Listening Systems Ltd

*Chris Chan Sam Turcott Hans (Uli) Egger Derrick Doll* 

**Hans (Uli) Egger** is the RHFAC Accessibilit

**Chris Chan** is the Manager of Travel Training

**Sam Turcott** is the Executive Lead for

Chris Chan outlined accessibility measures on Translink buses and Skytrain, and explained how to

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Accessibility at BC’s Ministry of Social

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implementation of the Accessible BC Act. Sam

Hans (Uli) Egger shared his background as a person with a spinal cord injury, and the challenges he en a strong advocate

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holds a degree in Economics from the University

faced dealing with hearing loss from a young age. Hans also shared a very useful checklist of what hard

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of hearing people should do before they go traveling. Hans also explained the Rick Hansen Foundation

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Derrick Doll presented about how Advanced Listening Systems has installed hearing loops at various Practitioner. He als

transportation hubs and routes, such as on 12 BC ferries, and 1-1 hearing loops at the gates in Victoria ilt environment accessibility. As a person

International Airport and Comox Valley Airport. However, North America is pretty far behind the UK or

Hard of Hearing, he also possesses the 

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year’s work experience in a hearing aid

Description: During this talk, Felicia D’Amato will present on how to set emotional

boundaries and practice self-care in the age of COVID. She will discuss what emotional

boundaries are, how they help us, and how to implement and practice them along with

self-care, while navigating a pandemic.

***Communication and Relationships Between Friends/Partners with Hearing Loss***

On June 13, 2023, Felicia D’Amato talked about navigating relationships while having a

Felicia D’Amato is a registered social worker in

British Columbia, working at the Deaf and Hard of

hearing loss, covering the following topics: communication strategies, communication

Hearing, and Deaf-Blind Well Being Program in

breakdowns, and introduction to love languages.

Burnaby. She speaks and signs fluently. Felicia has

spent the last 5 years working primarily with adults

and seniors, doing case management, system

***Panel of Professionals***

navigation, 1:1 counselling, running groups, and providing consultation to hearing professionals around the province. Felicia is passionate about mental health and supporting individuals around BC

On October 30, 2023, Heather Enns moderated a Panel of Professionals workshop to navigate the various systems they are involved

featuring the following hard of hearing professionals:

with. She loves what she does and is always learning

*Felicia D’Amato*

• Jessica Niemela, Pediatric Audiologist • Robin Sim, Engineer

new things.

• Jen Andersen, Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

• Jackie Lindsay, Human Resources Manager

CHHA is a self-help organization of persons with a hearing loss who advocate for hearing accessibility and inclusion.



The speakers talked about their backgrounds, detailed their career trajectories, and what their current jobs are like. They also offered tips on how to handle workplace challenges due to their hearing status, when and how to disclose it, and described accessible technologies that help them at work.

**Governance**

Membership is at 20 persons. An annual report was submitted to CHHA-BC, and members attended the virtual CHHA-BC AGM on May 18, 2023.

Members of the CHHA Vancouver Branch Executive are:

Rosalind Ho, President

Marco Chiaramonte, Vice-President

Naghmeh Samenirad, Secretary

Miron Gazda, Treasurer

Mary-Ann Livesey, Member-at-Large

Heather Enns, Member-at-Large

Thanks go to my colleagues on the CHHA Vancouver Board for their commitment and awesome work. A special thanks to Accurate Realtime Inc. for continued excellent captioning for us. 

Rosalind Ho, President, CHHA Vancouver Branch

Report respectfully submitted on November 28, 2023