



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
British Columbia Chapter

Member Survey



Help us to serve our communities better!

Visit: <https://go.radd.ovh/chhabcsurvey>

CANADIAN HARD OF HEARING ASSOCIATION - BC CHAPTER'S

THE LOOP

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



DR. RUTH WARICK
President, CHHA - BC

Living well with our hearing loss is a goal for many of us. CHHA BC strives to provide educational activities, resources and support to make this goal possible.

This month we are holding several in-person workshops in different parts of British Columbia to provide strategies for better living with a hearing loss. Workshops will be held in Prince George on March 18, Sidney on March 25 and Kelowna on March 26 and 28. Board members, Gael Hannan, Naghmeh Samenirad, Nicole Leung and I, as well as our Operations Manager, Joy Borgonia, are delivering the workshops. We will be sharing strategies about assistive technology, interpersonal communication tips and information about supports. We are grateful for the funding for this project from the New Horizons for Seniors program of Employment and Social Development Canada.

Ensuring Hearing Health for Living Well was the theme of our World Hearing Day webinar held on March 3, in cooperation with Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility. I was pleased to moderate the event, which included practical tips and current information from Rebecca Angel, Director, Audiology & Business Transformation, Wavefront Centre; Michael Currie, CHHA BC member and Co-Chair, BC Hydro AccessAbility Network; and Dr. Brenda Poon, Senior Research Fellow, Wavefront Centre. For example, did you know that while less than 8% of men and women aged 40 to 70 report a hearing loss, actually 63% of them have a measurable hearing loss? Recognition of a hearing loss is the first step to living well with it.

As part of our educational work, board member Nicole Leung presented at a luncheon colloquium on March 5 to the School of Audiology & Speech Sciences at the University of British Columbia. She shared information about CHHA BC, which is important for audiology students to know as they go out into practice following completion of studies.

CHHA BC is open to delivering more workshops and presentations, so please contact us at info@chha-bc.org if you would like us to present one to your organization or in your community.

Finally, I want to share that we have launched a survey to solicit your feedback. We want your opinion about our work and to hear what you would like to see more of from us. We have sent the information about the survey to all of those on our mailing list and posted the survey link on our website.

The survey will run **from March 5 to March 26, 2025**, ensuring everyone has ample time to share their insights. You can access the survey here: <https://go.radd.ovh/chhabcsurvey>

Please take a few moments to participate; your input is crucial in helping us enhance our programs!
Thank you for being an essential part of our community.

Sincerely yours,
Ruth Warick
president@chha-bc.org

MESSAGE FROM THE OPERATIONS MANAGER



JOY BORGONIA
Operations Manager, CHHA - BC

Building Bridges as New Operations Manager

My early months leading Operations at the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association have been an exciting journey. As someone with hearing loss, I know this job is not just work but a chance to help the hard of hearing community.

My story began years ago when I noticed changes in my hearing in my late twenties. I was doing well in my career when I suddenly had to face losing my ability to hear. This was hard, but I chose to fight back instead of letting it bring me down. I became an advocate and learned the value of community support.

I volunteered with different organizations for people with hearing loss. This experience gave me purpose and helped me connect with others facing similar challenges. I wanted to use my experiences to help others. When I got the chance to become the Operations Manager at the BC chapter of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, I knew it was my time to step up. In my first weeks, I felt both excited and nervous. Each day was full of learning and meetings.

I know I still have a lot to learn. I remind myself, “Every day is a new opportunity for growth.” I focus on ensuring our communication is accessible to everyone, using tools like real-time captioning and assistive technologies. I want to reach out to more underserved groups and collaborate with local businesses to raise awareness. I also want to explore new technologies to improve communication for hard of hearing individuals.

My time in this role so far has shown me the strength, passion, and commitment it takes to make a difference. Each challenge is a chance to grow as a manager and someone who understands the struggles of those we serve. I am thankful to advocate for our hard of hearing community and excited for what lies ahead.

With our CHHA-BC Officers and board members and the individuals we serve, I aim to create a community where everyone can communicate easily, regardless of their hearing ability.

Joy Borgonia
OperationsManager@chha-bc.ca

THE WAY WE HEAR IT!

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
British Columbia Chapter

FREE ADMISSION

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF CONNECTION!

THE WAY WE HEAR IT!
A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EXHIBITION

Be part of a welcoming gathering to celebrate our new exhibit. Learn about hearing health, hearing loss, and celebrate our vibrant Deaf/Hard of Hearing community.

Prince George Public Library
Keith Gordon Room
888 Canada Games Way, Prince George, BC V2L 5T6
May 1st, 2025 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Refreshments and a private tour of the exhibit will be provided!

CC ASL interpreting and CART Captioning provided. All are welcome!

Past and present contributors:

Children and Families Hearing Society, The Prince George Public Library, CALDOR, 3M, Wank-Davies, SCIENCE WORKS, PH9NAK, HillSpire, oticon, VPA

We're thrilled to announce that CHHA-BC's "The Way We Hear It!" Community Engagement Exhibition is coming to Prince George! This is an interactive exhibit designed to educate visitors on hearing health, hearing loss, and treatments while promoting solidarity with the deaf and hard of hearing community. It is held in different regions of BC in order to increase awareness of hearing health during May's Better Hearing and Communication Month.

We invite community members, parents, children, anyone interested in learning about hearing health, and members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community to our grand opening event on May 1, 2025, from 6:00 - 7:30 pm at the Prince George Public Library's Keith Gordon Room.

ASL interpreting and CART captioning will be provided. All ages are welcome to explore the exhibit and experience the art, technology, and culture of the Deaf and

Hard of Hearing world. Refreshments and a private tour of the exhibit will be provided!

We extend our sincere thanks to the Northern BC Hearing Society and the Prince George Public Library for their invaluable support in bringing this exhibit to Prince George, fulfilling our mission to increase awareness of hearing health across the province.

We look forward to seeing you at the grand opening! The exhibition will be open throughout the month of May.

See our exhibit webpage and archives from past locations: <https://chha-bc.org/the-way-we-hear-it/>

FREE
ADMISSION



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
British Columbia Chapter

Presents



Come and learn about hearing loss, hearing health, assistive devices,
and our Deaf/hard of hearing communities!

Prince George Public Library

888 Canada Games Way, Prince George, BC V2L 5T6

May 1st- 30th, 2025

During library hours of operation
2nd floor

Activities
for all
ages!

www.chha-bc.org

Past and present contributors:



Children and families
Hearing Society



The Prince George
Public Library
www.pgpl.ca

CALDOR
FOUNDATION



PHONAK



Neil Squire



Cochlear*



Interior Health



VPA

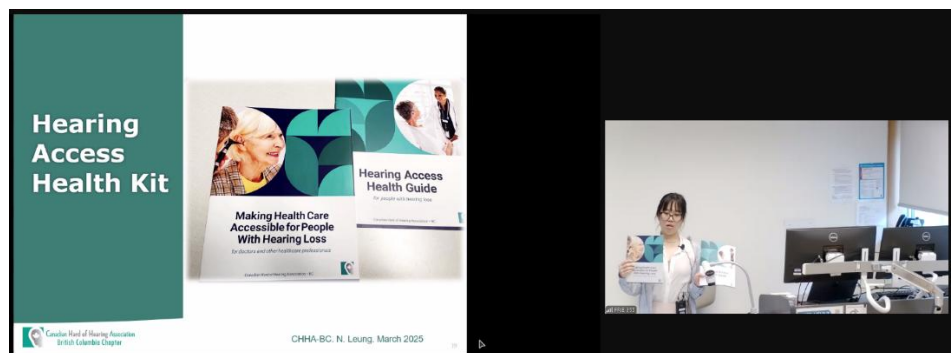
CHHA-BC PRESENTATION AT UBC

Nicole Leung, board member of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association – BC Chapter, presented to the UBC School of Audiology and Speech Sciences on March 5th about **CHHA BC – Empowering the Hard of Hearing Community Through Advocacy and Action.**

Among her topics during the noon-hour presentation was the impact of hearing loss and why early intervention matters; how CHHA BC supports individuals, families, and professionals; and its advocacy initiatives and available resources.



Nicole (2nd from left) and the representatives from UBC School of Audiology and Speech Sciences.



Screenshots from Nicole's presentation at the UBC School of Audiology and Speech Sciences.

LIVING WELL WITH HEARING LOSS

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association-BC Chapter will host four workshops on "Living Well with Hearing Loss," featuring insightful discussions by leading hearing loss advocates with a focus on practical communication strategies, assistive technology information and sharing resources.

The first workshop will be held in Prince George; attendees can engage with Joy Borgonia, the Association's Operations Manager. A week later, on March 25th in Sidney, Hearing Health Advocate Gael Hannan and Ruth Warick, CHHA BC president, will deliver the workshop. Both workshops are open to the public – please see the posters in this issue for information on how to register.

Two workshops will be given at the end of March in Kelowna by Nicole Leung and Naghmeh Samenirad, hard of hearing advocates and board members of CHHA BC. The workshops are being delivered on request to specific closed audiences.

CHHA BC is grateful to the New Horizons for Seniors Program for supporting these workshops.

FREE EVENT

LIVING WELL WITH HEARING LOSS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

A PRESENTATION FOR SENIORS

Join us for an informative session on strategies to improve your life with hearing loss:

- Assistive Technology
- Interpersonal Communication Tips
- Supports and Programs

Tuesday, March 18th, 2025

10 AM-11:15 AM

HART Pioneer Centre (6986 Hart Highway) Prince George

Light refreshments provided



Presented by:

Joy Borgonia

Operations Manager

Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, BC

RSVP by March 16 th

Contact Lorraine at hartpioneer@shaw.ca to reserve your seat

With thanks to the New Horizons for Seniors program



Empowerment and
Social Development Canada

Employment and
Development Social Canada



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
British Columbia Chapter

FREE EVENT

LIVING WELL WITH HEARING LOSS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

A PRESENTATION FOR SENIORS

Join us for an informative session on strategies to improve your life with hearing loss:

- Assistive Technology
- Interpersonal Communication Tips
- Supports and Programs

Tuesday, March 25th, 2025
1:45 PM-3:00 PM
Shoal Centre (10030 Resthaven Drive, Sidney, BC)
Light refreshments provided

Presented by:



Gael Hannan
Advocate, Speaker, and Author



Ruth Warick
President, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - BC Chapter

RSVP by March 17th:
info@chha-bc.org

With thanks to the New Horizons for Seniors program



Employment and Social Development Canada

Employment and Social Development Canada



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association
British Columbia Chapter

HEARING LOSS CAN BE HARD WORK



Gael Hannan

Author, Speaker, and Vice President, CHHA - BC



Life with hearing loss can be chaotic and messy and, at times, just plain hard work.

Trying to sort out what was said and by whom is often an aerobic workout, complete with swiveling heads, waving arms and raised voices. In Finland on a Scandinavian speaking tour, I was sitting at dinner with a joyous group of new hearing loss friends. Suddenly, there was an urgent kerfuffle as Siw (pronounced See-v) tried to figure out what someone had said. I could neither hear nor understand what seemed to be a frantic conversation, with heads turning and voices coming from all directions. Finally, when everyone laughed and calmed down, I asked, What was it, what happened? Siw's husband Roger said, Oh, Eivar just asked if anyone wanted a cup of coffee.

This simple question turned into a small storm of energy and time and confusion and repetition, not unusual at the hearing loss dinner table – or the hearing loss life.

The act of Trying to Understand requires a mental exertion that people with typical hearing loss don't experience, and therefore may not understand or recognize in their family and friends with

hearing loss. This extra effort is necessary to concentrate on what's being said, interpret its meaning using cues such as speechreading, body language, and context, and to ask for repeats and/or verification. The emotions caused by our hearing loss are also strength-sapping. Anger, frustration, or sadness dig into our energy reserves and, conversely, when we are tired for any reason, we don't 'hear' as well. This often-invisible effort is an extra layer in how we interact, and often leads to listening fatigue.

If a person with hearing loss decides against going out for dinner with friends, their given reason might be it's too noisy or there will be too many people. These are common and valid reasons, but the unspoken message is that they simply don't have the energy needed to navigate the event. It's hard work and it's easier to stay home.

On a lighter note, some years ago, I had an aha moment as to why I've always been reasonably slim: I expend a lot of energy in being the 'one who goes.' When someone over there says something indecipherable, I go over to them. When I hear a voice calling from another room, I go to the voice. Happily, once I became a hearing health advocate who stands up for herself, I've stopped much of the going, but I seem to have put on a bit of weight.

We can combat listening fatigue and keep our energy up in many ways, including the old-fashioned ones. Get enough sleep. Get enough exercise. Eat healthy food.

But we can also be prepared and proactive! We can adjust our listening environments to make it easier to interact with others. We can turn up the lights, turn down the noise and position ourselves to see clearly the people we need to see. Then we can ask those people to work with us, to become our true communication partners. We can also take breaks to give our eyes and ears a rest.

Yes, hearing loss can be hard work, but if we're smart and use Hearing Hacks, we will communicate better and have more energy at the end of the day.

LIVING SUCCESSFULLY WITH HEARING LOSS

Lisa Dillon Edgett
Audiologist/Instructor

The course, entitled *Living Successfully with Hearing Loss*, is offered through Vancouver Community College. They provide essential knowledge, strategies and resources to help those with hearing loss and their communication partners to manage the challenges related to hearing loss.

The spring session is now scheduled. All courses will be delivered online and run for 12 weeks. For these courses, online delivery means that you will receive material to review each week through a course website and/or emailed PDF. Groups meet once per week using Zoom for 90 minutes. Zoom meetings are scheduled for both afternoon and evening times. Financial support may be available.

LSWHL Level 1:

Tuesdays, April 1 - June 17, 1:00 pm PT

Tuesdays, April 1 - June 17, 7:00 pm PT

LSWHL Level 2:

Wednesdays, April 2 - June 18, 1:00 pm PT

Wednesdays, April 2 - June 18, 7:00 pm PT

For the first time, we are also offering LSWHL Level 3! This course expands the knowledge, skill, and abilities developed through Levels 1 and 2 and provides the opportunity for students to apply these skills in their lives with support, guidance and feedback. The students move from generalized situations to real challenges and responsibilities of living in the hearing world. This course emphasizes real-life experiences both in and out of the classroom, incorporating higher-level communication, larger groups and noisy environments. The students will evaluate their relationship with technology and, ultimately, assess their self-efficacy related to living successfully with hearing loss.

LSWHL Level 3:

Thursdays, April 3 - June 19, 1:00 pm PT

Thursdays, April 3 - June 19, 7:00 pm PT

Recent feedback from students:

“This is a great course, and I would recommend it to anyone who has been diagnosed with hearing loss. It’s especially beneficial to take the class alongside loved ones or members of your support network. The shared experience fosters understanding, strengthens relationships and equips everyone involved with valuable tools to navigate the challenges of hearing loss together.”

“The most important thing I learned in this class is how essential empathy and effective communication are in overcoming challenges related to hearing loss. This understanding helps to foster stronger connections, reduce misunderstandings and create a more supportive environment for myself and those I interact with.”

“I've mostly avoided having to ask someone to repeat 3+ times because my questions about what I didn't hear are more specific. Thus, people (including both my boyfriend and me!) are less frustrated.”

“I became more assertive to talk about the better ways of communication with my co-workers and family members. I will tell people if I don't hear part of the conversation instead of nodding to pretend.”

“I think the most important thing I have learned in this class is to advocate for myself. I am now more open and assertive about my hearing loss.”

“Another aspect of the class I found extremely helpful was the camaraderie that came from sharing challenges and feelings with others who were going through similar experiences. It was reassuring to connect with people who truly understood what I was going through, making me feel less alone.”

Please email the instructor, Lisa Dillon Edgett, if you have any questions, want more information, or would like to register for any of the courses.

BRIDGING THE SILENCE: FILLING THE VOID IN HARD OF HEARING LIVES

By Gemma Greco



Group of International Hard of Hearing Advocates in Attendance at IFHOHYP Conference

Growing up with hearing loss was not the easiest of experiences. Always having a group of amazing friends and family around me was fantastic, but it was hard knowing that none of them could truly relate to the daily challenges of my world. For so long, a void had lingered in my life, born from the feeling that no one could truly relate to my experiences with hearing loss. This emptiness seemed unfillable—until, unexpectedly, it wasn't. It took several years, but eventually, this void began to fill with immense love, connection, and joy. It took travelling eight hours on a plane, across

continents and oceans, to find what I had been missing. It was my trip to France with The International Federation of Hard of Hearing Young People (IFHOHYP) that changed everything. On this trip, I met people from all corners of the globe, each of us different yet so profoundly connected by our shared experiences of living with hearing loss. For the first time, I felt truly understood.

The conference was held in the fairy tale city of Strasbourg, France. As soon as I arrived, I was welcomed into a community that spoke my language—not in words, but in experiences and accessibility. We shared stories, exchanged smiles that needed no translation, and understood the silence that spoke volumes.

Accessibility at the conference in Europe was something I had never seen before in North America. The entire room was equipped with microphones that could directly stream to my hearing aids, and sign language interpreters were on site and with us in all hours of the conference. My favourite part was the incredible palantypists who were typing away the live speech that was broadcasted on a giant screen where everyone could follow along similar to closed captioning on a television. This ease of movement and accessibility was empowering. As each day unfolded with a new sense of inclusion, the void I had felt my entire life was finally getting filled so fast. This thoughtful and



Gemma Presenting at IFHOHYP Conference

accommodating setup allowed me and my hard of hearing international peers to engage fully in every session, topic and conversation without the usual fear of missing out on what was said. It was almost as if I walked into a world where the barriers I had faced my entire life had disappeared, allowing me to immerse my whole self completely in the learning and new networking opportunities.

One of the discussions focused on advocacy and inclusion in sports. Here, I shared my passion for soccer, discussing how all sports can be adapted to include athletes with hearing loss. We brainstormed ways to make auditory cues visual or tactile and how to foster communication and teamwork with hard of hearing individuals. This session not only broadened my understanding but also ignited a desire to advocate for these adaptations in Canada.

Perhaps what surprised me most was the universal nature of our struggles and triumphs. Despite the diversity in our backgrounds or the countries we lived in, the stories I heard echoed my own. This revelation was both comforting and motivating. It showed me that while our challenges are universal, so too is our resilience. The journey did not just fill that void with moments of connection but planted seeds of a lifelong mission within me. Today, I am more committed than ever to advocating for the hard of hearing community. My aspirations stretch beyond just making a difference; I aim to transform the landscape of accessibility and inclusion, ensuring that no one has to feel the isolation that myself or my international heard of hearing peers once felt. And I am forever thankful to this event and to IFHOHYP and CHHA for helping me realize that I too can positively contribute to filling this void in our world.

As I reflect on my journey, I look across my desk and see the blue string bracelet hanging on my Eiffel Tower replica – a reminder of where I started and the paths yet to explore. In my activity at IFHOHYP I knew I was a part of something bigger than myself. I took the scissors and cut a piece of the string to keep with me forever, crafting it into a bracelet that symbolizes the unbreakable bond and shared journey with those who understand my silence. The world is so vast, yet our shared experiences bridge distances, proving that in the realm of understanding and empathy, there are no borders. Only connections, waiting to be made.



A Web of String Activity Showing Our Connection to Each Other No Matter Where We Are

I encourage everyone reading this to remember that you are never alone in your experiences. There are people, associations, mentors, and organizations—including CHHA and IFHOHYP—ready to support you. Unfortunately, not all of us are aware of these resources, as accessibility and awareness are ongoing challenges that we must tirelessly work to improve. Inspired by my time at the conference, I made a personal commitment: if there's anything I can do to prevent another person from feeling isolated as a hard of hearing individual, I will act. This motivation inspired me to create the [@gghearing](#) Instagram account, a platform dedicated to promoting advocacy and improving accessibility for the hard of hearing and deaf communities. I am incredibly grateful to CHHA for introducing me to the IFHOHYP community, a connection that has not only filled a long-standing void but has profoundly enriched my life.

*The **In My Corner** feature comprises a series of short stories written by young adults with hearing loss. For each edition of the newsletter, CHHA-BC reaches out to the hard of hearing community and asks if anyone would like to tell us a story about themselves and how they have dealt with being hard of hearing.*

If you would like to contribute a short story for a future edition, please email communications@chha-bc.org.