



Canadian Hard of Hearing Association British Columbia Chapter

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year March 1, 2024 to February 28, 2025

In 2024-25, CHHA-BC continued to implement its Action Plan focused on three themes: Advocating for Accessibility; Communications, Awareness and Education, and Self-help and Sustaining CHHA-BC.

Accessibility and Advocacy

Under the theme of advocacy, we held an on-line session in July 2024 to provide feedback for the Provincial Government's consultation on accessibility standards. In January 2025, we intervened with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission about captioning for online streaming undertakings.

We held a meeting with Provincial Language Services in December 2024 and are working on increasing awareness of this free service. We have added this information to our website (<https://chha-bc.org/captioning-access/>) and our *Hearing Access Health Guide for people with hearing loss*.

We continued to promote our policy paper on *Access to Hearing Aids* available on our website (https://chha-bc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CHHA-BC-HEARING-PAPER_LN_2024-Published-final-version.pdf)

Education, Awareness and Communications

As part of our second New Horizons project, we developed a workshop on Living Well with Hearing Loss. The first one was piloted in person in June 2024 at the Regency Southwood Resort for Seniors' Week. Others were planned for in-person delivery in March 2025 in Prince George, Kelowna and Sidney. The workshop focused on communication strategies, resources and collaboration with CHHA-BC.

Our groundbreaking *The Way We Hear It! Exhibition* was held at the Albion Centre in Maple Ridge in May 2024. Project coordinator Jessica Niemela undertook to arrange videos of the exhibition as a lasting legacy. Numerous groups, including from schools, toured the facilities and several workshops were held in conjunction with the Exhibition including a Mix-n-Mingle educational event for employers and participants from the hard of hearing community, discussing workplace rights in Canada.



We also spent a considerable part of this year planning to host the third Exhibition in Prince George in May, 2025.

CHHA-BC participated in the *Impairments Open House* on April 15, 2024, hosted by the Maple Ridge Lions Club, whereby awareness about hearing loss was shared with the public. We were a guest speaker for a presentation to alumni, faculty and current students of the School of Audiology and Speech Sciences at UBC on March 5, 2025. We continued to highlight World Hearing Day of March 3rd by holding a joint online webinar with Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility. The theme for the session was *Ensuring Hearing Health for Living Well* in recognition of the importance of ear and hearing health.

Our Youth Peer Support Program included a Family Weekend Camp held at Camp Jubilee from September 13-15, 2024. Seven families and two young adult coordinators enjoyed outdoor and indoor activities, including a campfire sing-along following dinner. Many meaningful interactions and connections were built among the families and youth participating in the event.



Communications

The Loop, our electronic newsletter, was produced four times during the year. We launched a new social media strategy to enhance our online presence and engage more effectively with our community through [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) in addition to our website.

In February, 2025, we conducted a membership survey, obtaining valuable feedback from interested persons. This was the first of such survey undertaken in the last few years.

We continued our liaison and mutual work with the Vancouver Branch and the North Shore Branch, the two remaining active CHHA branches in British Columbia.

Self-Help and Sustaining CHHA-BC

We continued a wide variety of representations to provide a perspective from hard of hearing consumers. Our representations were as follows:

Council of Service Providers - Jessica Niemela and Nicole Leung

Breaking Barriers Research Project - Gael Hannan

CHHA National Network - Ruth Warick

Provincial Language Services' Community Advisory Group - Jessica Niemela

Technical Committee on Employment Accessibility - Ruth Warick

Cochlear Implant Committee of CHHA National - Ruth Warick

Virtual Communications Research Project of Wavefront Centre - Naghmeh Samenirad

Membership

Membership in the Chapter is automatic for individuals who sign up with CHHA National and with branches in British Columbia. Our membership numbers were 209, compared to 135 members last year as well as the previous year. We also have almost 200 "friends of CHHA-BC" on our mailing list.

Administration

Henry Kutarna served as a half-time Operations Manager until the end of August 2024, completing almost five years in that role. We thank him for his service to CHHA-BC. In January 2025, Joy Borgonia assumed the role of Operations Manager working alongside Purti S. Kannan. Purti joined us in

September 2025, filling the position of Finance Coordinator, previously filled by Ravi Katari. At the same time, Shehana Mirza left the position of part-time program coordinator, due to a move out of province. In May 2024, Narada Thomas joined us as a Social Media Coordinator. Vivian Zhang, Office Assistant, and Karen Stierhoff, Communications Coordinator, continued their work for us.

We are grateful to our staff for their support. We are also pleased to be an equity employer with a majority of our staff having a hearing loss.

Our annual fundraising campaign was affected by a postal strike which occurred at the height of the campaign, affecting the income generated during the campaign. We also continue to face challenges that telemarketing fundraising which relies on contact by landline telephones are not reaching audiences who rely on mobile phones. Regardless, our financial picture was buoyed by a substantial bequest. As well, we received grants from The Caldor Foundation, Provincial Gaming Authority, and Seniors New Horizons Program of the Government of Canada. We thank these sources for their support of CHHA-BC.

GOVERNANCE

Our thanks to CHHA-BC's board members for their stewardship and service:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| President | Ruth Warick |
| Vice-President | Gael Hannan |
| Secretary | Jessica Niemela |
| Treasurer | Elwood Major |
| Member-at-large | Nicole Leung |
| Member-at-large | Naghmeh Samenirad |

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Miron Gazda for his work undertaking a Peer Audit and for chairing the Nominations Committee. Our thanks to Charles Laszlo for serving on the Committee.

None of our work would be possible without you, our members. Thank you for your support and dedication to the cause of improving access, support and services for hard of hearing persons to participate in all aspects of society.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the CHHA BC Board and Staff



Ruth Warick, President

May 24, 2025