

Wed, May 7, 2008

Walk4Hearing Kickoff Meeting @ Grand Rapids Hilton

Chris Jacques: *[music playing]* Well this is really dramatic here. I did not know it would be so fancy. I am Chris Jacques and the current president for the Grand Rapids chapter of HLAGR. We have a loop system here; if you cannot hear real well, raise your hand. If you are closer to the center, there is more difficulty. We wanted two loops to catch it, but we are using someone else's facility. It's a bit down in the center.

I am here just to recognize a bunch of people for right now. I want to start out with the Board of Directors and the people involved with the Walk. Marilyn Knol is our Walk4Hearing chairman; she loved it so much last year she is here again. Joel Westmaas organized tonight's meeting. Mike Wiersma put the loop system in and also set up the video presentation portion. Thank you, Mike.

We also have Nancy and Hannah Cluley. Hannah is our newest Board member. She just joined. Jackie B. is also a new board member who we got active right away and does in-kind donations. Sanford Freed is our secretary -treasurer and Vic Krause is our member at large, Day at the Capitol captain and re-founder of this chapter.

Hannah, take that out of your mouth. Reach in the box and pull out a card. Can you read the name? Hillary. We have to start out with a bit of fun here. I wanted to also recognize some of our sponsors. First of all the Hearing Clinic is sponsoring us. Our Gold sponsor is MetroHealth Hospital. Our major sponsor is Premovations. David Myer's organization; Kaczmarek Hearing; our media sponsor is TV-13. Our guest tonight is Linda Steil. That is German. She is running for 72nd District Michigan House of Representatives. She is one of our kilometer sponsors this year.

Some of our sponsors also include West Michigan Hearing Services, SafeCall, Knapp Hearing, Hearing Services and Support in Kalamazoo, Universal Forest Products, Michigan Athletic Club, Urban Goods in Saugatuck, the City of Wyoming's Park and Recreation Department, etc. *(reading list of sponsors)*. We will start our event at one of the parks in Wyoming. I think I caught them all; if not, I apologize.

Tonight we have a few different things we will cover. For starters, probably the most important is that we want to have fun. I hope when you leave you talk about how much fun you had. Last year we had a blast and we didn't even know what we were doing! I want to make sure you have fun tonight. We want you to learn how to be great volunteers and how to raise some funds.

Vic Krause is our next guest and will give you more ammunition on why to be involved.

Vic Krause: this is high allergy season so excuse my voice. For the last 3 years now everyone has worked so hard to bring information to those with hearing loss. One of the events that we started was a Day at the State Capitol. We have over 100 people

signed up so far. It gives us an opportunity to meet with our legislators. What we do each year is present a legislator of the year award to someone who is committed to our cause. This year [Linda's] husband, Glenn Steil, will receive the award. So, Linda, thank you. Having been a former State representative myself I want to take a few minutes here to introduce elected officials and/or people who are running for office.

This is Linda Steil who is running for State legislator.

Linda: thank you. I am delighted to sponsor a kilometer for the Walk4Hearing next month. I hope to participate with all of you. As Vic said, I am running for State representative. One of my biggest efforts in the campaign is going door to door. So far I have hit 800 homes. 10,000 is my goal. I am a candidate for the Cities of Cascade, Kentwood and Gaines Township. I would love to leave information with you in case you want to discuss anything with me. I hope you meet your goal of \$50,000 this year. Then Sandy will have lots to do. Thank you for having me; it's a pleasure to be here. I'll see you at the Walk!

Vic: thank you for your support. I will take a few minutes, and then my wife and I need to leave. We have two granddaughters that are home schooled and part of their schooling had to do with nature. A play is being performed this evening and they wrote the music for it. It's a sellout crowd tonight for them and we need to get there.

This is really exciting. Part of what we do is advocate for hearing loops. Since we have been here we got the DeVos Center and the Civic Theatre looped. On Wednesday, May 21, the Gerald R. Ford airport and concourses will be totally looped. This is the first airport in the United States that is totally looped. This was a huge project on their part. What is going to happen is that I have a meeting tomorrow morning with the airport staff and we will plan the marketing of this event so people around the country will know about this exciting project. Stay tuned. I hope we can have an event out there and tours for deaf and hard of hearing people so you will know what benefit you will receive when you fly out of there.

Thank you all for your support. I look forward to walking with you on June 21.

Chris Jacques: thank you, Vic. One of the things that I was told by Joel was that I was supposed to turn that part off [computer screen] so you are not totally distracted. Who is next? Hannah Cluley. She is going to tell us about herself. Not just that she is on the Board.

Hannah Cluley: I am part of the Board of Directors and I will talk about my experience with hearing loss. I was born hearing impaired and have a moderate hearing loss. We found out when I was 2. I learned about a few other people who were hearing impaired after my mom joined this group. I did the Walk4Hearing last year but this year will be a lot more fun. Like Chris said we need to know what we are doing. It will be a great walking experience; I hope you participate because this helped me a lot.

The meetings at MetroHealth Hospital are helpful too. I hope you have fun on the walk. Thanks.

Chris Jacques: I think what is important to know is that people with a hearing loss have their own experiences but a lot more people are affected by people with hearing loss even if they themselves don't have a hearing loss. We have been blessed by people without a hearing loss that are also involved here. We have someone else who can hear very well. He can hear a pin drop across the room. This is Mike Wiersma.

Mike Wiersma: This is really hard to follow Hannah. It's a great opportunity to be part of this. I encourage all of you to come to the meetings because in one way or another these events are a huge help for all of us. We have had Bill Barkley come to talk to us, some ENTs come in, and other programs; we have great things coming up too. Vic is also coming up with more for us. I encourage you to sign up to be a team captain because the more people involved the better. We are the Loopty-Dos. We are shooting for big numbers on the team.

Guest: for those of us not hearing impaired, can you explain what looping is? I have a daughter with a cochlear implant.

Mike: This is a whole discussion. The loop is a simple wire around the room with a magnetic field. Anyone with a hearing aid with a t-coil, or transformer in it, we induce voltage into the t-coil and whatever is played through audio is then broadcast like Wi-Fi into the hearing aid. Someone who would try to put on headphones has the microphone in the back of the hearing aid. Without wearing a headset you can broadcast the audio right to the hearing aid. That is it in a nutshell. Is that good?

Guest: yes, thank you.

Mike: I love to talk about this. Ask me questions if you would like.

Chris Jacques: the loop system is like a transistor radio and our hearing aid is a receiver. Sandy Freed will tell you what we hope to do with the money we raise.

Sanford Freed: what we hope to do with the money is spend it. We will spend it on ways that increase awareness and also technical education and help us to enjoy a higher quality of life. There are lots of ways to come at this. One way to do this There were slides earlier of a place in Oklahoma City. It's a Hearing Helper Center. It's a lending library of assistive technologies like telephones with loud ringers or signalling devices that go off when the telephone rings or smoke detector sounds or things for people with profound hearing loss. It's a lending library; what we want to do is give people a chance to try these items and then if they like them go to a hearing center to purchase them. Hart Hearing in Kalamazoo is great.

I also want to tell you what we have been doing. Vic mentioned the Day at the Capitol where we try to raise awareness in our legislators. Marilyn is also our technology resource person which is designed to*[technical difficulty; connection reestablished]* The hearing technology resource piece is for people to learn about the devices and programs.

How many saw the program with Bill Barkley? We have 10 programs a year. Nancy does a great job looking for the programs. Each one costs about \$250. Does everyone get postcards? That is an important part of our program. The C-Print program is also part of this. If I don't talk loudly enough, you can see it on the screen. This is also available on our website. You can go on there and read the transcripts from past meetings. Joel maintains the website and it's a great tool. All of these are the benefits of the Walk4Hearing.

We are an eager group and a bit outnumbered sometimes but we have great ambitions just not enough people. Now back to Chris Jacques.

Chris Jacques: thank you, Sandy. Sandy has been a great board member for us. He served as president of the organization and came back to be secretary-treasurer for us. He really had no choice. He and I and Marilyn also serve on the state board. Howard and Georgia are also involved. We appreciate all of you.

Before we go to the next portion, Hannah would you like to pull out another name for me? I have a gift from Cheryl's on Mason Street in Saugatuck. Kathy Keizer, congratulations. I told you we would have a bit of fun.

Before we get into the meat of the program and learning about what you are here to learn about, can we close the door so no one can escape? That is a joke. Don't take me seriously. Last year we had a few more people at the event but as I look out at this group and compare it to last year's this year I see 100% of people who are going to be involved in the Walk4Hearing. I know that all of you here are dead serious about the Walk4Hearing. You are here and dedicated, and that is what is really the whole point of tonight's program.

I want to thank all of you that are here and involved. You will be our front for all the fundraising that is going to happen. What we will review are the roles and tasks for captains and walkers. That way you can transfer that information to all those who want to walk or donate. We also need helpers at the walk itself. If you know someone who has a skill or interest, you are our major representatives to try to attract them to help us.

We will give you all the information you need to contact us and let us know who you can attract to help out. This is now Joel Westmaas who will give more details.

Joel: Are you ready to raise money? I hope so because you will do it. Hannah Cluley and Nancy are passing out materials. You will need a blue sheet like this that says Team Captain - Volunteer Interest Form. We have a big incentive for you if you sign up tonight. You have three things coming to you right now. There is a blue interest form that is going to be important. If you have not yet formed a team and would like to, we would love it if you would fill this out and if you do, hand it to Jackie and we will enter you into a drawing for a grand prize tonight.

The other one is an envelope like this. You can solicit family members, friends, your boss, etc. You want this handy to record the donor information. You can also pass this out to people who may want to collect for you. All we need is for this to be turned in on the day of the walk or before. The donors all get credit for this because we are a 501C corporation.

The most important one to walk through is this one, a loose leaf set of sheets. It's information and training on how to log onto the website to form a team and organize yourself and make donations. From this site you can send e-mails, tally team contributions, send communications to team members, etc. On the back side is a tips and tricks sheet. Who like to go out and solicit for money? Not many do. We want you to be comfortable with that because this is a great cause.

Turn to the first inside page of the training material. How do I volunteer to organize a walking team as a captain? The same training is on the website. The site itself is very self explanatory. This is our site, hearinglossgrandrapids.org Our web master put this on here. It says in the vague print to go to the national site. We look for that blue star. Follow the blue star to get four options. You click on the one....There is one of our photogenic walkers [*Hannah*] ight on the national site. You can read on right there. First a board member and now on the national site.

Click on the national site and you have four choices.

Marilyn: there is also a temperature gauge to show how the fundraising is progressing.

Joel: This is where you can see our goal and what we have achieved and all the local teams who are organized and donated so far. You can see how your numbers grow and how you contribute to the total.

I will create a new team, the Silly Walkers. We will have a \$500 fundraising goal. That is modest. By clicking "next" I agree to walk and collect donations. It also lets me record a personal donation. It will take a credit card for you or a donor. I won't take the time to fill out the captain's name and such for the Silly Walkers but you can see all the options. You also have the option of opting out of postal delivery from the national organization.

You also need a user name and password for your personal page for your team or you. You can track donations coming in to you and send e-mails or put out a testimonial. They can find you on the site and donate to the walk. I won't go all the way through it, but that is the first page to complete. Then the team is set up.

I will go back a few pages here and show you where we find a walker. If I wanted to donate to your team or your walker...I will search for a team name. Let's see if we can scroll down here. I am the team captain and here is the team. It displays the goal and the extent of the fundraising. I can also go to my personal page. This is something I

sent out to all my friends. Then they can donate right to the site.

Guest: if we fill this out, will you put us online?

Joel: we will. But if you do it yourself, you can put your own photos on it and your team members. But if you want us to do that for you, we will.

Guest: after you put the team name on, can you dress it up at a later time?

Joel: we will need to send you a password because the personal information is what you need to unlock the page.

Guest: if I have cash donations from friends so my temperature gauge goes higher than Hannah's how do I do that?

Joel: you can put cash on there that is not part of the credit card. Sandy says it has to be a credit card to show on the temperature gauge.

Marilyn: you can indicate the amount is "unconfirmed."

Joel: Karen raises a good question. No matter how people want to give you money, don't turn them away. Take the money; whatever you can get. I should also point out that there is a donor to go to if they want to give in-kind gifts. Mike has given through Premovations. We would like it if the sponsor were to give a significant gift if you would contact a board member so we can get signage.

Guest: what will the route be?

Marilyn: we are extremely excited about the route. Last year the hospital was not open and we were free to walk about the campus. This year we have traffic, but the route planned is significant to the sponsors. We will start at the park and head out like we did. We will cross the street and stay on the hospital side down to Byron Center, then on to Gezon Parkway and back to the park. That is 1.7 miles. We are not locked into the 3.4 miles or 5K that the brochure says.

When the sponsor signs are out, people will see them. That is a huge advantage this year.

Guest: in the instructions it says that cancelled checks serve as a receipt. How do you do that when it's online?

Joel: there is a confirmation that you receive and you when the donation is made you get an e-mail from the site like you would if you purchased someone online.

Guest: last year when our team collected money it was mostly cash and checks. I could not enter that on the website and could not increase the temperature gauge. I also wanted to say that the new income tax laws say that you need a receipt for any amount. We need to get them a receipt, don't we?

Joel: I don't believe there is a way on the site that we can register cash donations. Marilyn?

Marilyn: I can register them as "unconfirmed." it does affect the temperature gauge but we need to go behind the scenes. Send an e-mail as that occurs and we will make it happen.

Guest: I don't remember how I did it but I entered a check. If you go to the donation page, you can just follow the steps.

Joel: you are in the 300 level. This is beyond my expertise.

Sanford Freed: I will confer with the accountant and see if it is less than a \$250 limit for a receipt. If you want a receipt, put on the envelope all the information we know. There are too many envelopes to keep track of, but if you want to make it obvious on the envelope.

Guest: last year we were given forms for receipts.

Joel: Marilyn? Last year we had receipts for cash donations. Do we have them this year?

Marilyn: I have none from national. I will see if I can get some. Otherwise buy a little receipt book from Meijer.

Joel: The Kalamazoo table has asked the most questions per capita. These are good questions. I want to close this part of the presentation. You are all now empowered to go out and raise funds and recruit people. We are looking for 80-150 walkers. It's going to be a lot warmer than last year.

Before you leave, we have posters and chapter brochures. There are also chapter business cards. Arm yourselves with these along with all the things on the tables, including the envelopes. Contact us with any questions. You can either come up to us or e-mail us or go to the website.

Jackie will circulate among the tables to collect the envelopes for those who are going to be team and captains.

How many people are first timers this year? Let's have a hand for them. We really had a lot of fun last year. It was about this time last year. There was a cool breeze blowing. We will have Starbucks coffee, bagels, etc. We will have a great year.

Chris Jacques: I have a few more prizes to fill out. While I talk if you fill out the form that says you will be a captain, we will give you a ticket to be part of our biggest prize of the night. Hannah has already pulled out a ticket. Georgia. This is from the Urban Cottage of Saugatuck.

I just want to make sure that you do have all the registration information. I want to make sure that you feel free to stay here. The bar is still open and there is food left. If you want to sign up on the website right now, we will help you get that done right up here. Note also that when you fill out the forms and sign up that we will contact via e-mail so you can be up-to-date on all that is occurring. You will also have an e-mail address for any questions that you might have.

I think I have covered all that we wanted to cover. I want to thank you for coming. Pull out one more before the grand prize. Kay. All right. I have a t-shirt for you. One more time, Hannah. Tabitha Jackson.

All right, are we ready, Jackie? Let's do one more before the grand prize. Samantha Wilson. I am not looking at the sizes of these so don't take offense if it does not fit. It

might be pajamas.

Don't anyone leave just yet. Do you have any other questions while we wait? Anything? Okay, I was born in Kansas.... Does that get anyone going? On an army base.....

Joel: how deep was the snow when you walked to school? *[laughter]*

Chris Jacques: one more. Bob Ragsdale. Are we ready, Jackie? Shake it up. The box. Okay. Drum roll please. Okay, I have a ticket here. Theresa Ragsdale. Via Maria in Holland. Congratulations.

Feel free to stay around. We will stay here for a while. If you have questions or want to get signed up on the website, we are up here. Have at it.