

HLA-WA President's Exit Report for 2011-2013

Karen Utter's Report and insights on leadership and goals for HLA-WA during my term of office as President of the Board of Trustees (2011-2013)

I've read that Leadership is having and sharing goals and management is the execution of activities that will lead to those goals. I've tried to utilize both leadership and management skills along with the ideas and suggestions from our board members. Our goal was to move forward to update and make HLA-WA more relevant and locally recognized as an important organization representing our state's very large and diverse number of people who live and work with hearing loss.

My strong suggestion for the future President is that the leadership part of the job be emphasized and that the BOT work more and help to not only be involved with the management and implementation but also help activities be increasingly shared by more people in our organization. Having two vice presidents has been very helpful in getting a lot of outreach done these last two years. There could/should be more active committee work done to alleviate the accumulated tasks being done by a few people at this time. This will insure the future and help to keep our organization going strong. Committee members do not and should not all be elected members of the board. Our working partnerships should also include general members and chapter leaders.

My goals including some implementation and activities were as follows:

1. **Greater presence in the community by "getting out there"** to meet and mingle with diverse groups.
 - Cheri Perazzoli has been very instrumental in helping to make this happen with Loop Seattle/HLA-WA/HLAA.
 - Collaborating with new and diverse groups: Seattle Police Department, Seattle Disabilities Commission, CCAC and others that may have been found online
 - NW School for Hearing Impaired Children is in the works, collaboration on letter writing with others on common issues
 - Individual members doing outreach and access work in their own home community with civic, municipal and arts related and funding resource organizations.
 - Places outside the disability community that we've worked with long term.

2. **Building on the relationships that we do have and making them worthwhile and current for both entities.**
 - For example, Judi Carr building on the contact with Swedish Hospital,
 - presenting at the convention to meet others who are doing similar things in their areas. Encouraging others to join in and be presenters at the Portland Convention. (NW ADA Center and CS Deaf and HOH as well as Judi and John Waldo who does his ADA access work independently.)
 - Judi, Cheri and Karen were involved in a program explaining the hospital communication needs to a group of local "interpreter referral specialists" at a number of Seattle Area hospitals and medical centers.
 - Targeted outreach to local audiologists and their state association has been done and we continue to work with and stay in contact with the leaders of the state's AAA association. We were present and presented at both the 2012 and 2013 state conferences they've held in Seattle. HLAA has been well received

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and they now ask us questions and include us in some activity reports. One audiologist in Ellensburg (Linda Nelson, CCC-A) is interested in starting a chapter in her city. Kevin Liebe, AuD, who blogs for the Hearing Review online, is a fan and wants to support us and a potential chapter in his Tri-Cities Area.

- Working more closely with ODH and making our presence known by all regional centers.
 - Karen, Judi and Michael (?) met with the regional center directors and Eric Raff and stated our needs and concerns about the center's need to offer greater inclusion and services to hard of hearing citizens in our state.
 - Regional centers are now mandated to include services and outreach to more people who are HOH
 - Tacoma Regional Center has an HLAA member as its Communications Assistant (David Viers is also now a member of our HLA-WA Board.)
 - ODH has hired a HOH specialist to work with assistive equipment and is actively trying to better the access offered by our state. This includes CART and Loop systems now as well as ALDs.
 - HSDC has made a number of presentations to chapters.
 - Karen and Cheri attended the TDI/ALDA Conference in Albuquerque, NM this last October and developed enhances connections with HLAA through meeting Anna Gilmore Hall as well as working with and sharing time with Steven Frasier the NM State HLAA Chapter Coordinator and Loop proponent. We learned from Utah HLAA member Kathy Evans of programs that had helped them to increase access and recognition for HOH people in that state.
 - Karen belongs to many online listservs that share valuable information.
 - HLAA Leadership HLAAOfficialLeadersList@yahoo.com
 - SEATTLE4ALL@TALK2.SEATTLE.GOV
 - [Loops and Telecoils@yahoo.com](mailto:Loops_and_Telecoils@yahoo.com)
 - ALDAPugetSound@yahoo.com (I am also a member of this organization)
 - CochlearPioneers@yahoo.com (I am a long-term Cochlear America Product User)
 - [Deaf Northwest@yahoo.com](mailto:Deaf_Northwest@yahoo.com)
3. **Using current and newer technology** makes much of what we do easier and more effective. However, it's not reaching everyone yet.
- Our Website was updated to the new Word Press format and we are now hosted by Ivy Cat, a more local and reliable service recommended by our website guide, Scott Marlow. This has allowed us:
 - to make it more manageable and easily updatable
 - To streamline some of the pages to make them more current and relevant
 - Update some of the headings and remove the PayPal account until we can reset that to be workable

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- Individual email addresses were eliminated and generic/job related email address given to those who needed them. i.e. webmaster@..., hospitalkits@..., access@... and editor@...
 - Encouraging the use of FaceBook for our organizational outreach. This is being done by Marsha Gladhart and she's reporting good progress by reporting what's being viewed and shared by others.
 - I've been on LinkedIn and made many contacts from all over the country. These are people who are also interested in working for greater access and/or understanding communities for people with hearing loss. CART providers been very good at forming and active supportive community online and on LinkedIn.
 - HLA-WA Bylaws were updated, overhauled and finally ratified in 2011. We now comply with the current State of WA guidelines and also are able to vote using email.
 - There is a good working partnership between the newsletter editor Marsha, who also does our FB page, and she has also generously offered to serve as back-up to our webmaster Kate. An online place for board member documents is being planned and will be implemented soon. This will take the input of many of us and time to organize and post documents.
 - For the future we need to seriously consider a database contact management software program to use for announcements and other information that we can share with our email list(s) in a timely fashion. This would not be for our newsletter which is done in print and mailed and posted on our website. Mail Chimp has been suggested to us as a free program and would probably work. Marsha has experience.
4. **Encouraging and growing membership in HLAA.** This is an increasingly difficult thing to do because of the lack of local chapters to do outreach and the aging population that does not yet use computers to communicate. We need to do a better job of showing value to HLAA membership by offering usable exchanges of information and programs.
- We need an HLA-WA readily identifiable group identity that means something special for those that join and work with us.
 - Board members and others have permanent Name Badges with our HLA-WA Logo (Approx. \$12 each made by an HLA-WA member)
 - Board members and others have the opportunity to purchase quality Polo shirts with the HLAA-WA logo (\$35 each and orders of 6 shirts or more can be made at any time.)
 - Memberships come from active involved chapters. Seattle now has a forming chapter that has taken in many long-term existing members and given them a place of their own. New leadership has come forward and members have been added from diverse communities.
 - New member support was fostered by HLA-WA giving scholarships and added support to six people for the HLAA Portland Convention in 2013. Two of those are now members of our board, another one attended our board meeting and two others sent notes saying they were sorry that they couldn't attend. This bodes well for our future.

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I suggest that board members become more active in their roles and not depend on "others" to direct them. Committee work and/or assignments should be approached with an "end date". For example, if asked to report back to the board then that's not the next meeting but several weeks in advance of that meeting so there's time to plan what needs to be done. If the chair of any committee doesn't contact members then they should contact the chair and ask about what's planned? If no response then it should go to the VP (in charge of committees???) for clarity and encouragement as to how to proceed. The responsibility for work not done is the responsibility of the entire committee. Things happen and sometimes it's unavoidable to have delays or even missteps. *Let someone know that is in a position to help.* We work together and member must learn to *ask for what they need.* (Sounds familiar...) Hard of hearing people have communication problems and they will mis-hear and even mis-read things from time to time. We must always remember this as we work for clarity and understanding... not blame.

As always, we are working toward making progress for our community. Sometimes this means staying the same for a while. This can be good. We recognize that each of us is doing the best we can with what we have at the time. It's been my pleasure to work with this organization and I hope to be with HLA-WA and its activities as long as I'm able to contribute. For me this is fun and I continue to enjoy the dear friendships that have supported me and my own hearing loss/deafness for so very long.

Karen Utter
President HLA-WA 2011-2013

Note: A supplemental report of our office management duties will follow at a later date