



2019

NEWSLETTER

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Upcoming Meeting!

Monthly meetings every 2nd Saturday of the month.

This month's meeting will be held on

Saturday, September 14, 2019 at 9:30 am

Meeting Location:

We now meet at St. Luke Presbyterian Church

8915 Timberside Drive Houston, Texas 77025

(Visible from Bethany Methodist parking lot.)

Our speaker for July,
Carolyn McMahon

Come join the HLAA meeting on **August 10, 2019**,
Carolyn McMahon,
an N-CHATT trainer,
will be presenting on ways to cope with hearing loss in
a
“Hearing Loss Game Day” fashion.

N-CHATT Training



What is N-CHATT?

The Network of Consumer Hearing Assistive Technology Trainers (N-CHATT) is a **volunteer** consumer train-the-trainer program. The program's goal is to build a network of consumer trainers with the knowledge and skills necessary to train others impacted by hearing loss. Trainers will assist others in the successful integration of hearing assistive technology to support individual hearing and communication needs at home, work, school, and the community.



What comprises the N-CHATT program?

N-CHATT training includes webinars and eight online modules, each two weeks in duration. The online portion of the program is followed by an in-person two-day training session in the Washington DC metropolitan area, with presentations on training activities and hearing assistive technology topics, hands-on technology exploration, and opportunities for training practice and interactive learning. Upon successful completion of the training, individuals attend the HLAA Convention and commit to conducting at least three community-training events within one year of the start of the program.

In the group competition, we will play a team game of “concentration” using basic questions on various Hearing Loss topics. As each question is answered correctly, a piece of a picture of a famous person with hearing loss will be revealed. The first team to win gets bragging rights! In the individual competition, we will hand out a crossword puzzle and a word search puzzle. Prizes will be awarded to the first two people to complete the puzzles. Come and join us for a morning of fun.

Our Chapter Board Members

Jan Connolly **President** email: janpatrice@att.net

Allan Ofield **Past President** email:

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Lois Johnson **Advisor** email: ettalois@gmail.com

Upcoming Events!



Kick-Off At MainEvent

**Come Learn More About the WALK4HEARING & Get a
Complementary Meal!**

**Saturday, September 7, 2019,
from 2-4 at Main Event
in Katy I-10 @ Grand Parkway,
24401 Katy Fwy, Katy, TX 77494**



2019 Houston Walk4Hearing



**Come out and
walk with us to
make an impact!**

**No matter where you
are on your hearing
journey, on Walk day
you will feel
empowered.**

Find out more at
walk4hearing.org

Saturday, October 5, 2019

Location:

University of Houston -
Lynn Eusan Park
4500 University Drive
Houston, TX

Time:

9:00 a.m. Registration
10:00 a.m. Walk

Walk Chair

Karen Davin

houstonwalk4hearing@gmail.com

Article to Read From - Hano HealthRedesigned

Ava: Creating Total Accessibility for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Ava is breaking down communication barriers between the deaf & hearing worlds with the power of mobile and speech technologies.



[Click to view article!](#)

Based in San Francisco, [Ava](#) is on a mission to empower deaf and hard-of-hearing people with total accessibility 24/7.

Ava's mobile app transcribes audio conversations into text messages, making it easier for deaf and hard-of-hearing people to communicate, especially in group conversations.

In our first episode of *HealthRedesigned*, we speak to Ava's **Co-founder & COO, Pieter Doevendans**.

The d/Deaf communities

Ava's founder and CEO, **Thibault Duchemin**, comes from a family that is entirely Deaf. Even though Thibault can fully hear and is physically not deaf, he is classed as culturally Deaf because he grew up with sign language as his first language. People who are Deaf have a strong deaf identity and are often quite proud to be deaf.

A person who is deaf (lowercase 'd') instead, might have grown up in a hearing family, attended a hearing school and does not know how to sign. In other words, this person identifies more with the hearing world.

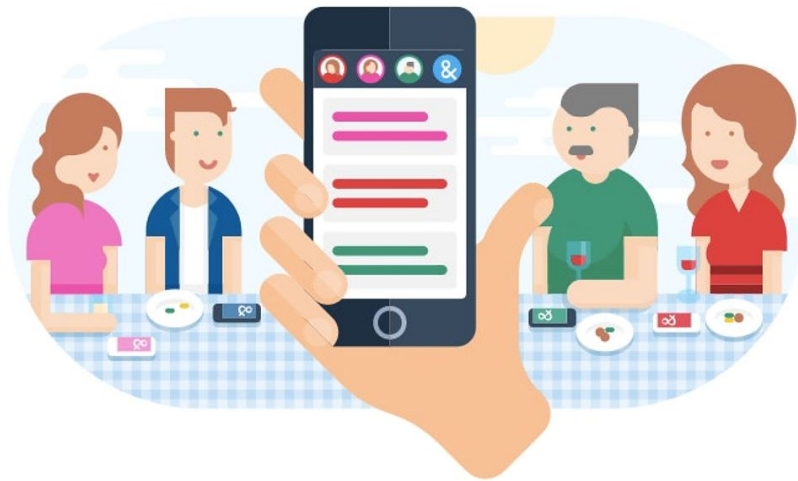
A deaf person's association with either community can vary as they grow up and as circumstances around them change.

It's often assumed that anyone who is deaf knows sign language, but in reality, only two to three percent of people who are deaf understand how to sign. Hearing loss can also range across many levels including deafness from birth to senior people who progressively lose their hearing as they get older.

This whole adventure has taught us a lot. We started only really understanding the capital D community where Thibault grew up in.

Experience 24/7 accessibility. Anytime, anywhere.

Last minute business meeting or family gatherings? A trip to the grocery store or hanging out with friends? Ava is always here for you, no matter when or where.



Bridging Communication Gaps

People with hearing loss often find it incredibly challenging to communicate, especially when there are more than two people involved in a conversation.

While interpreters, captioners, and various technological solutions like hearing aids and cochlear implants already exist on the market, these often go a little way in helping people with hearing loss thrive in group conversations.

Imagine being at a family dinner or a business meeting and not being able to follow the conversation of the multiple people in the room. It's frustrating and isolating. This is the biggest issue Ava seeks to improve for its users.

Even though captioning has been around for years, Ava is bringing forth a user experience that's truly innovative to make communication more accessible. Ava is also focused on understanding the complexities of a

multi-person conversation and presenting it in a way that makes it easy for users to understand via text.

Innovating and iterating

The real-time component of Ava is a feature that makes it unique as it helps users to better understand and engage in physical conversations. Ava can be used to transcribe a conversation in the same physical space that involves users who are deaf.

Through user research, Ava learnt that a deaf or hard-of-hearing person's number one challenge was to understand rather than being understood. That's when the focus shifted from building an app that conveys what a deaf or hard-of-hearing person is saying to one that transcribes conversations from all speakers in real-time.

One of the early obstacles of building Ava was having multiple microphones pick up the same person's voice at a single time and repeatedly display it as text on the interface. This is an issue that the team is fine-tuning today.

Ava also continues to improve the digital onboarding experience, both for users with hearing loss and fully-hearing users. The goal is to create a seamless and lightweight experience that doesn't discourage anyone from jumping on the app to converse, even if it's just for a quick conversation.

"I invite you, you join, and then we can start talking to each other. It's almost like a phone call but in a physical space together."



The User Testing Phase

Before any development began, Ava interviewed over 300 people to find out how they could build a great user experience and learn about features that users actually wanted. Ava's positive mission and story helped them find the testing user base they needed for critical feedback and they found that participants would continuously refer them to more people to test with.

One of the biggest insights they received was for a user to be able to follow along a conversation without any delays, something that they've managed to incorporate within the app.

They also learnt that deaf and hard-of-hearing people like to communicate in different ways, for example, some prefer to type out their speech instead of vocalising it.

So, they designed the app to display text as it's being typed out while merging it with speech from other users in the conversation. To give users more options, Ava is currently working on a text-to-speech feature that voices out typed-text.



Impacting lives

Ava has already had an impact on a number of lives. One user uses Ava to have conversations with clients—something that she wasn't able to do before. Another used it to have a dialogue with nurses and doctors when an interpreter wasn't present. These spontaneous and day-to-day interactions are exactly what Ava is trying to help facilitate.

Ava is just scratching the surface when it comes to its features. A recent release of the app includes the text-to-speech feature and allows users to

scan a QR Code to join conversations. A web application is also currently under development.

To support Ava, Pieter asks us to keep accessibility in mind as we go about our daily lives. You can become a part of the Ava Force to learn how your community and country can be more accessible.

Connect with Ava on:

[Ava's website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)



We are *HEAR* for you!

The Hearing Loss Association of America Houston Chapter is your local support group and organization for the deaf and hard of hearing of Houston, Texas. We wouldn't be here helping those in need without YOU! We are continuously growing in support, technology, and resources to help all who we can.

By joining the HLAA Houston Chapter, you're not just a part of support group. You're a part of a family. What's a better way to get to know your family than getting an exclusive interview with the people of your chapter?

This month's interview has been postponed.

Next Month's newsletter is going to be featuring a truth-spilling article about the strong-minded Enriqueta Martinez and the real, crucial, struggling lack of government and doctor support to receive the necessary hearing aid equipment for day-to-day life as a disabled Hard-of-hearing individual.



C0set Media Management

With the internet & media rapidly growing, I am here to help the HLAA Houston Chapter reach those in need of support and to raise awareness of hearing loss to audiences through social media, thus giving the organization more outreach than ever before.



C0set

Photography, Videography, Editing, Website Development, Social Media Management

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Meeting Schedule

Date : Guest Speaker

October 12: Javier from Cochlear- topic pending

November 9: Open slot

A silhouette of a city skyline with various skyscrapers and a mountain in the background, rendered in a dark blue color.

SEPT 2019 NEWSLETTER

This concludes our August E-newsletter of 2019!

A special thank you to the readers and sponsors supporting the HLAA Houston chapter. The best is yet to come!



Our Newsletter is proudly created by C0set Media Management & Content Creation