



The Ear Drum

Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation & Research Center, Inc.
Box 800477 UVA Health System
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0477
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Winter 2014

Message from the President

At our Annual Meeting in July 2013, then President PDG Lion Doug Cross presented an Elbyrne G. Gill Award to Dr. George Hashisaki for his dedication to the Hearing Foundation and his work with Cochlear Implants and many other areas of hearing.

Not only is Dr. Hashisaki a well-respected otologist and researcher, he has actively served as Medical Director for the Hearing Foundation and has spoken to Lions Clubs and to Fall Conferences.

The Gill Award is available to all clubs to recognize extraordinary service by a Lion, Lioness, or any member of your community. To receive this Fellowship a donation is made in the name of the individual or the club of \$750.00. This payment can be made over three consecutive years.

We need to have each representative of this Foundation continually ask for donations to support the Foundations Research projects. Over the last couple of years our donations have decreased as fewer clubs are donating. These donations help to fund research into the causes of hearing impairment and methods to restore hearing to those who have lost their hearing.

One goal I have for this year is to see the hearing chairs, directors, and advisors to get the word out to all the clubs in their area to raise awareness of what this Foundation is all about, which may also increase our monetary donations.

I invite all Lions that can attend at least one Foundation meeting to please do so and find out what the Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation & Research Center is all about and what we are trying

to accomplish. I would also like to see each of the directors and advisory board members to please try to attend each meeting.

Our Foundation has come up with an Anniversary Pin for our 35th year of service. The attractive pin is available from District Hearing Chairs for \$5.00.

Yours in Lionism,

Rich

Lion Richard A. Evans, PDG
President, VLHF

Executive Director's Message

During the year-ending holiday season many people become especially appreciative of their own health, wealth, and good fortune; they seek opportunities to help others who are less fortunate. For members of the Lions family in Virginia, however, this season of good will and helping others extends throughout the year. We proudly proclaim every month that "We Serve". Our service touches other people's lives; it changes, improves, and often extends people's lives.

The members of the Hearing Foundation's medical team also work intensely to assist people with hearing-related problems through patient care and both basic and applied research projects. With our Lions Club contributions to the Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation and Research Center, Inc., we Lions assist Hearing Foundation Medical Director Dr. George Hashisaki and his fellow researchers to achieve their projects' goals. And we shall create more miracles through their service.

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Executive Director's Report- *continued*

If your Lions Club did not donate to the hearing foundation last year, please do so this year. If your Lions Club has contributed in the past, thank you. Your continuing financial support of hearing research is a prime example of your adherence to the Lions motto. We serve with funds as well as with work.

Because 2014 marks the 35th anniversary of the hearing foundation, this issue of the *Ear Drum* focuses on the history, objectives, and activities of the Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation and Research Center, Inc.

Yours in Lionism,

Don

Lion Don Colley
Executive Director, VLHF

Short History of VLHF

In June 1978, the International Association of Lions Clubs introduced a program called "Hearing and Speech Action and Work with the Deaf." In response to this initiative, Lion Kenneth S. Hitch from Clifton, VA, Immediate Past District Governor of Lions Clubs in Northern Virginia (District 24-A), contacted Dr. Robert W. Cantrell, then Chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery at the University of Virginia.

They agreed to explore the formation of an organization dedicated to supported research on deafness and hearing impairment. They formed a committee to pursue this idea, consisting of representatives from each of the six Lions Club districts in Virginia along with three University of Virginia medical personnel. A resolution to form the "Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation and Temporal Bone Bank" resulted from their meetings.

The Lions of Virginia approved the resolution in 1979 as did the University of Virginia School of Medicine, officially establishing this new hearing-research organization.

In August 1989, the words "temporal bone bank" were dropped from the foundation's name. Because research had discovered that artificial ear bones can be better used for transplants than human ear bones without the risk of transferring diseases, the emphasis shifted from being a temporal bone

bank (a facility that houses temporal bones) to a research center.

The Hearing Foundation is governed by a board of directors consisting of 24 members – three Lions from each LOV district, including the First Vice District Governor, and six University of Virginia medical personnel.

The Hearing Foundation is currently supported almost entirely by the Lions of Virginia. Since the formation of the Hearing Foundation, Lions Clubs in Virginia's six districts have contributed nearly \$2,500,000 to the Foundation in support of its objectives. Donations from the general public and businesses are gratefully accepted.

Foundation Objectives

The principal objectives of the Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation and Research Center, Inc., are

- To initiate and support hearing research on deafness and hearing problems in all age groups.

Basic Research: Ototoxicity (drug damage); noise damage; electrical stimulation of auditory nerves; regeneration of hair cells.

Clinical Research: Study of temporal bone anatomy and testing of new surgical procedures and/or implantable devices concerned with ear diseases and hearing disorders.

- To support the cochlear implant program for the rehabilitation of profound deafness in children and adults.
- To conduct diagnostic clinical examinations, which may result in surgery (*e.g.*, cochlear implant) or other rehabilitative processes (*e.g.*, hearing aids) to restore partial or complete hearing to individuals.
- To conduct informational programs to educate the public on hearing disorders and to encourage hearing protection.
- To initiate educational programs for ear surgeons on the latest surgical techniques to better care for hearing impaired individuals throughout Virginia and beyond.

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VLHF-Supported Programs

Cochlear Implant Program: The Department of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery initiated this program with support from the Virginia Lions Hearing Foundation. It is now one of the most active in the United States, and the University of Virginia ranks as one of the top five centers in the country. The cochlear implant is a device that restores the ability of profoundly deaf individuals to hear sound.

Implantable Hearing Aid Program: The Hearing Foundation provided "seed" money for this project to lay the ground work necessary for further developments. This program has also been supported by other foundations, including Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF), which has given two \$50,000 matching grants. This project has received much publicity and is currently working on the development of a device suitable for human use.

Hair Cell Regeneration: Each of us is born with a specific number of hair cells, which are the cells located in the cochlea of the ear and are necessary for us to hear. When they are damaged (exposure to loud noise is one of the greatest causes of damage), they are damaged permanently. This research is working to find a way to regenerate these dead hair cells, restoring hearing to those individuals suffering from "nerve deafness." Significant breakthroughs have been made recently.

Newborn Hearing Screening: This program was initiated through contributions from the Hearing Foundation nearly 30 years ago. The program tests newborns for hearing impairments which are detrimental to healthy development. The Virginia General Assembly used our program as a study center and, because of its success, has now adopted a law whereby all newborns (premature, hearing loss history in the family, etc.) are tested for hearing loss.

Hearing Aid Assistance: The University of Virginia Division of Audiology provides hearing testing for indigent individuals throughout Virginia. If the individual is not sponsored or referred by a Lions Club initially, the Audiology staff, after exhausting all other sources of assistance, will submit an application for financial assistance to the Lions Club nearest to where the individual resides. Should the Lions Club sponsor the individual, the

Club would pay all or a portion of the charge for a digital hearing aid.

Education Outreach: The Hearing Foundation provides educational information and materials to Lions Clubs throughout Virginia for distribution in their communities, including two informative booklets:

- *Hearing Loss in Children*
- *Noise and You*

We also provide ear plugs for hearing protection. These items can be ordered through the Hearing Foundation office.

VLHF Founders

The committee which transformed the Hearing Foundation from an idea into today's reality consisted of six Lions, one from each Virginia Lions' district, and three physicians:

<u>District 24-A</u> Kenneth S. Hitch, PDG Clifton, VA	<u>District 24-E</u> Curtis Fitzgerald, PDG Roanoke, VA
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<u>District 24-B</u> Charles G. Motley, PDG Bon Air, VA	<u>District 24-F</u> David R. Kegley, PDG Bristol, VA
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<u>District 24-C</u> Larry S. Bowman Broadway, VA	<u>Physicians</u> Robert W. Cantrell, MD Charlottesville, VA
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<u>District 24-D</u> John C. Ross, PDG Virginia Beach, VA	Richard B. Robins, MD Newport News, VA
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Peter A. Wallenborn, MD
Roanoke, VA

Board of Directors Meeting

The VLHF board of directors will meet on April 12, 2014, in Riggs Auditorium at 11:00 a.m. Riggs Auditorium is located in the West Complex of the University of Virginia Medical Center. At this meeting directors will adopt a budget for the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

All Lions are invited to attend the meeting.

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