



# THE B.I.G. NEWS

## BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP

COMMUNICATING ► SHARING ► COUNSELING ► SUPPORTING

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### MEETING NOTICE:

Wednesday, November 1

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center  
50 East North Street, Buffalo 14203

## A Great Loss for Us All

By Gail Cronin

On Tuesday, July 25 our cochlear implant community, along with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Buffalo, suffered a great loss when Fr. Robert J. McCartney passed away at the age of 83. Fr. Bob, as we all called him, was a tremendous advocate for people with hearing loss and served on our Board for many years. Although he himself did not have a hearing loss, he gave tremendously of his time, talent, and treasure, to those who do.

Fr. Bob was born in Buffalo in 1934. As a young man, he attended Our Lady of the Angels Seminary at Niagara University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree. He then completed a Master of Divinity degree at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora. He was ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Church in 1960. Over the course of his lifetime, Fr. Bob served the Church in many parishes and ministries including St. Elizabeth in Cherry Creek, St. John the Evangelist in Sinclairville, Annunciation Parish in Buffalo, St. Brigid, Holy Cross and Holy Family parishes in Buffalo, St. Vincent de Paul Parish in North Evans, and St. Frances Cabrini in Collins Center. While serving as a parish pastor, Fr. Bob was also a part-time chaplain at Gowanda Psychiatric Center. In 1987 Fr. Bob became the chaplain of Our Lady of Victory Hospital in Lackawanna. He continued to serve as chaplain of OLV Hospital until 2002, meanwhile taking on additional responsibilities as chaplain of Mercy Hospital in Buffalo from 2000-04. He retired in 2004.



Father Bob was also engaged in a tremendous amount of volunteer work. He served as EMT chaplain for the Highland Hose Fire Company in Derby and on the youth council for the town of Evans. He also served as an American Red Cross disaster volunteer and shelter manager. Fr. Bob was on the Board of Directors of the Community Grief Center of Western New York and Buffalo Implant Group.

Fr. Bob was an early adaptor to technology and joyfully embraced the internet. Being an older person when the internet evolved and became available to the public, many people were astounded by his facility with the new technology. Fr. Bob became the web developer for many organizations within and outside of the Catholic Church. In fact, that is how he came to join the Board of B.I.G. Due to his longtime close friendship with Sr. Dorothy Feltz, Fr. Bob accompanied her to our meetings when she was first considering getting a cochlear implant. At the time, our organization was in great need of a website. Fr. Bob offered to help us create one, and he continued to help us by managing our first website and overseeing all our photography for both the

*continued on page 3*

By Sue Wantuck

Greetings! Goodbye to summer and hello fall! My summer of 2017 was different without having a dog and I really missed going for a walks, however, it went well. In early August we went on our annual weeklong vacation to the Adirondacks. We were lucky to have nice warm and sunny weather that particular week. Each year that we return there I reflect back on my hearing journey. I remember Craig Carpenter telling me about the birds and nature sounds. At first, I was kind of like, "Yes; yeah I heard it." However, not really. I must admit to feeling guilty because I kindly said I heard it but actually I didn't. I think it is normal to deny at first. As time went on, actually few years went by, I started to understand better. During this past trip I

heard a whole lot more than I ever have before and I feel that it is because of being bilateral. When you first start to use your cochlear implant, you must understand that your brain needs to learn or re-learn what it is hearing/processing. It is like a downloading process when you setup or add something to your computer. You must give your brain a chance to pace the process of developing hearing. Also remember that everyone is not the same. Don't compare. Just be proud of yourself and overall BE PATIENT. That is what counts.

We lost a very special member of our group, Fr. Bob McArtney, in July. He was 83 years old. He was a wonderful, sweet, friendly, funny man. He was a proud supporter of our organization,

sat on our Board for eight years, helped develop and operate our first website and loved taking pictures. He will be greatly missed by many!

Our annual B.I.G. picnic was a success despite the rain, wind and storms. At one point the clouds cleared and the sun came out. I think Father Bob was letting us know he was there! We had a great crowd with almost 50 people, lots of delicious food and awesome basket raffles. Also, our t-shirts are in! We sold quite a few at the picnic and have many more available. Please consider supporting our group by purchasing one, or a few for family and friends. They will be available for purchase again at our next General Meeting on November 1 and they are \$20 each. Hope to see you there!

## From the Editor

By Gail Cronin

This has been a season of much change for our community. We, who were close to Fr. Bob and loved him so, are still grieving from his loss. At the same time we rejoice in the good news that our Secretary Melissa Burroughs and her husband have welcomed a new baby girl, Mia on September 27. Congratulations to the entire family!

Also a part of this time of change, we welcome a new member to our Board of Directors. Kathy Danahy has joined both our new Scholarship Committee and our Board. Kathy brings with her a wealth of experience from her career working with children and youth with hearing loss at Erie 1 BOCES. We are grateful to Kathy for sharing her time and expertise with us.

We are still in need of more volunteers. One way that you could help us is by sharing your story in The B.I.G. News. I know that we have many readers who do not attend our meetings. Even if you have never joined us in person, YOU are a part of our team. We would love to hear your story. It isn't a big time commitment. Simply type up your experience and email it to me, along with a recent picture or two, to [gdcronin@roadrunner.com](mailto:gdcronin@roadrunner.com). Please put "B.I.G. News" in the title. If you don't use a computer, you can hand write your article and mail it to our P.O. Box. I will type it up for you.

If you have more time to give, please consider contacting any of our current Board members to help you figure how your talents and available time can best suit our needs and yours. You might consider running for office or joining a committee. We can still use more members on our Scholarship Committee and our Picnic Committee. Also, we are still in need of someone to run for Corresponding Secretary. This past year we amended our bylaws to increase our roster of officers from four people to five, by creating the new position of Corresponding Secretary. At press time, our current officers have all agreed to run for office again for 2018, but all are running unopposed and no one has come forward to fill the Corresponding Secretary position. If you would like to run for any office, please contact us right away and let us know, as we are going to hold our 2018 elections at the November 1 meeting.

And finally, I would like to add a few comments about our recent picnic. I can't thank Sr. Dorothy enough for all her hard work for our organization, especially with our basket raffle. Under her leadership we raised \$410 for our Scholarship fund. At this point in time, Sr. Dorothy is in need of someone to take over coordinating future basket raffles. This year it was extremely difficult for her without Fr. Bob. Sr. Linda graciously filled in this year, but it would

be best if one or two people could step forward and handle this next year. And speaking of Sr. Linda, I couldn't help but notice that she and a few other angels who won prizes at the basket raffle generously gave their prizes to children in attendance. Some of those angels were older youths, who were observed opening their baskets and sharing their winnings with several of the younger children. That was a joy to see. (Gunnar Nowicki, you are a good role model!)

It should be noted that several people arrived to the picnic a little late and kindly brought prizes to donate. The decision was made, however, to not add late prizes to the basket raffle that was already underway because it would have been unfair to all those who had already purchased and distributed their tickets. So we held those few prizes for a future event. Next time we will be sure to request that all donations be submitted ahead of time so that every prize is available at the start of the game.

In addition to Sr. Dorothy and Sr. Linda, I would like to thank Molly McDonald, Emily Clark, and Jennifer Sexton from UB for volunteering for the evening. Also, thanks go to Will Licata for his wonderful picnic photography.

Please send me your feedback regarding this newsletter. I hope to see many of you at our November 1 meeting as well.

website and newsletter. He faithfully attended all of our Board meetings and contributed to our discussions sharing his vast knowledge and experience. Even after passing the torch of web management and photography to his successor, Will Licata, Fr. Bob remained an active member of our Board. He also assisted Sr. Dorothy with all of our basket raffle fundraisers.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Bishop Richard J. Malone for Fr. Bob at Our Lady of Victory Basilica on Friday, July 28. More than 30 of his fellow priests attended. Most of the B.I.G. Board was there as well, along with his extended family, many friends and past parishioners. Fr. Bob's niece Bonnie McArtney, with whom he was very close, gave a beautiful eulogy. She reflected on her many joyous memories of growing up and spending time with her favorite uncle, "Uncle Bobby." She made the congregation laugh with her stories about how Fr. Bob had singlehandedly converted an old bus into a travel camper for their family so that they could vacation together all across the country. She described the time when he got himself a motorcycle so that he could better serve the community as a fire chaplain, and how he enjoyed riding it for many years. He would ride around in his Roman collar with a leather jacket on top. Bonnie also detailed his love of science and nature, as well as ham radio and technology. He was also a huge fan of Robert Burns' poetry and loved to celebrate his Scottish heritage. Fr. Bob was also extremely close with Bonnie's brother Kenny, and Bonnie said that Fr. Bob was very much like a second father to him. Fr. Bob spoke of his niece and nephew often and it was apparent that he loved them very much.

Fr. Bob was a great friend to Sr. Dorothy. He often drove her to appointments and helped her with all of her projects. He made phone calls for her when she could not hear on the

phone and he sent emails on her behalf because she does not have a computer. They attended Mass together as often as possible and met weekly to play cards. He called her every day. They truly were best friends, and I know that his loss has been felt by Sr. Dorothy most deeply.

Personally, I adored Fr. Bob. He was one of the most extraordinary human beings I have ever met. He was never preachy, but always gave great guidance. He went out of his way to thank people and to give them encouragement. He frequently did that for me. Every time a new issue of The B.I.G. News came out, I would get an email from Fr. Bob. "Good job, Gail!" he would write. And he always had a positive thought to add. And even with things unrelated to B.I.G., he took notice. He asked about my children. He took interest in the other things that I was doing. Once, I had written a prayer reflection for a booklet in my parish. After it came out, he called to tell me how much he liked what I had written. I asked him how he came to read it and he said that a friend had sent it to him. I think he had a lot of friends. In fact I am sure he did. Who wouldn't want a friend like that? While he was in the hospital before his passing, I sent him a book about miracles, written by a friend of mine from my parish. He called me shortly before he died to thank me and tell me how much he enjoyed it. Even though he was having difficulty talking and I am sure it caused him discomfort, he called me and we had a lovely last conversation. I will treasure that memory for the rest of my life.

Fr. Bob always had joy in his heart. He was always smiling. Yet he was well aware of all the suffering in the world, and in his quiet, unassuming way, he worked hard to alleviate the suffering of others. In his final months, when his own suffering was great and he was oxygen-dependent, he still

continued to smile all the time! I've included a photo with this article, of our president, Sue Wantuck, visiting Fr. Bob in the hospital just days before he passed away. He was in pain and he knew that he was dying, but you can see that he was still smiling. He was filled with joy to see Sue one last time.



During the offertory at Fr. Bob's funeral Mass, the congregation sang "The Servant Song" by Richard Gillard. Here is a portion of the lyrics:

*We are pilgrims on a journey, we are  
travelers on a road.  
We are here to help each other, walk  
the mile and bear the load.  
I will hold the Christ-light for you in  
the night time of your fear.  
I will hold my hand out to you, speak  
the peace you long to hear.  
I will weep when you are weeping;  
when you laugh I'll laugh with you.  
I will share your joy and sorrow 'til  
we've seen this journey through.*

That is how Fr. Bob lived his life, always helping others, and walking with them to bear their load. He was always a witness of God's love when people were afraid or nervous and he always reached out and shared his sense of peace. His journey on this earth may be over, while the rest of us continue ours, but those of us who were blessed to have him in our lives are forever changed by our knowing him and we are better people for it!



# Parents' Corner: Year One

By Courtney Lynn



On June 13, 2016 we were patiently waiting for the otolaryngologist to come out of her office and tell us that the ABR hearing test went great and Graeden hears just fine.

Prior to this day he had been “passing” his in-the-booth hearing tests but was still struggling at home and school. Instead, the doctor came out, pulled me into another room and with tears in her eyes said, “I’m so sorry. I really thought he could hear. Graeden is going to need bilateral cochlear implants.” We knew there was a possibility of some hearing loss but we had no idea what cochlear implants even were.

We arrived at our first appointment at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center where the process was explained to us. We learned that Graeden would have to wear hearing aids for 6 months before he would be a candidate for cochlear implants. This is pretty standard. Graeden has always been my difficult child. I knew this was going to be a challenge. Not only was the testing a challenge, but getting ear mold impressions was a challenge, the drive to Buffalo was a challenge, and

getting Graeden to cooperate with the Audiologists was a challenge. I’m pretty sure after at least the first 5 appointments we were both leaving in tears. Both of us were frustrated and unsure of how we were going to get through this.

The day came for Graeden to get his hearing aids and we were told that they really weren’t going to help him too much but that he would have some sound awareness. We put them in and Graeden took them out. We tried everything for weeks to get him to keep them in. He got to the point where he would wear them at school but he would take them out as soon as he got home. Six months came and went and we were scheduled for surgery. We bought a couple of children’s books that explained the process of getting cochlear implants but we don’t think he understood exactly what was going to happen. We were worried about the recovery and how he would do with no hearing aids and no hearing at all.

The surgery went great but the recovery was long and hard for Graeden. He could only sleep sitting up for the first week and a half. If he tried to play and moved too fast he cried and held his head like there was a lot of pressure. He cried that he had boo boos and didn’t know how he got them. We debated if sending him to school would be a good idea but in the end we thought sticking to his routine would be best for him.

Activation day came. We were so excited. We’ve seen so many videos of babies, children and adults hearing for the first time and couldn’t wait to have our moment. This is it. This is the moment our lives are going to change and life is going to get easier. The audiologist turned on the processors and we got nothing but tears; sad tears. Graeden was so afraid and didn’t want to wear them. It took a good two hours to get through the appointment and at the end he still was very noncompliant.

We thought that going home and being in his own environment would make a difference but it didn’t. He hated hearing. Weeks passed and he would only wear them for school. Months passed and it still wasn’t getting any easier. He would much rather sign than hear.

At about the fourth month we finally had turned a corner. It was no longer a fight to get him to wear them. He wouldn’t ask for them, but he wouldn’t fight us about it. Two weeks of being more cooperative and now Graeden is asking for his processors. Now life is starting to get easier. Graeden used to be so angry and frustrated and he is now a sweet loving little boy. We are so thankful for everyone who helped us and put up with us along the way. We are so excited to continue our journey and help people just starting out on their journey.

## Deaf Awareness Week

By Kathy Danahy

Deaf Awareness Week is celebrated internationally, during the final week in September. It is sometimes known as IWD, International Week of the Deaf.

Locally, Deaf Access Services (DAS) invited our B.I.G. representatives to display and share information at their Deaf Awareness Week kick-off event. It was held at the Walden Galleria Mall on Tuesday, September 26. We had our newsletters and information available to the crowd who attended. There seemed to be interest in the WNY area.

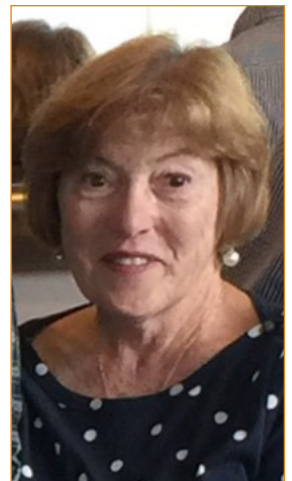
Pam Rohring and many others from DAS prepared a program filled with elected officials, government employees, housing advocates and financial planners. Buffalo Comptroller Mark Schroeder also offered a paid (summer) internship in his office to a deaf student who applies.

The night included performances from students of St. Mary’s School for the Deaf. ASL interpreter services were provided. It was great to have wonderful interpreters there, to aid the people attending. Ms. Rohring and her team did a great job putting the program together. The evening at the Walden Galleria was a very nice event.

## Our New Scholarship Committee

By Kathy Danahy

The newly established B.I.G. Scholarship Committee has met twice this month. B.I.G. President Sue Wantuck is overseeing Joanne Mayer, Karen Ward and myself to determine the criteria necessary for a student to apply. We are working as quickly as possible, to be certain that a College/University scholarship will be available to a student graduating from High School in the June 2018 class. Please “stay tuned,” as the information for applying for the Scholarship will be available in the next issue of The B.I.G. News.





# ••••• The Picnic Evaluation: A+ •••••

By Sr. Dorothy Feltz

Rain, wind, thunder, and lightening did not dampen the enthusiasm of the attendees at the picnic on August 4. There was an atmosphere of joy as everyone visited and chatted with each other.

Sue Wantuck, her husband and her son deserve a special thanks for working so diligently hanging tarps on the rafters of our shelter to protect us all from the wind and rain.

The entire B.I.G. Board did a fantastic job planning the picnic. With the help of many volunteers, they supplied us with lots of extras so that we could enjoy the delicious finger foods and desserts that were donated by our members. Joe Kolis made sure that we had a plentitude of delicious entrees. No one went home hungry. Thank you Joe!

Heartfelt gratitude goes to those who brought tables and/or donated wonderful raffle baskets and gift cards for our scholarship committee fundraiser. Sr. Linda Glaeser assisted in transporting tables and raffle baskets to the picnic. She and many volunteers set up the tables, the baskets and the cans for the tickets in a jiffy.

Sr. Linda, along with speech-language pathology students from the State University at Buffalo Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences, did a great job of selling raffle tickets. Previously, transporting baskets and selling tickets was always Fr. Bob's job. He was dearly missed.

Although we couldn't all be winners, many people went home with wonderful prizes. Those of us who didn't win cheered for those who did.

Needless to say, I was humbled when I received the unexpected Award of Gratitude from Buffalo Implant Group. I feel that the implant group as a whole has done so much more for me than I could ever do to express my gratitude in return.

From the first time that I attended a B.I.G. meeting, I felt so welcomed. At that time I was trying to make a decision regarding having an implant or not. Everyone was so supportive. They

reached out to me and answered all of my numerous questions. Since the comradery still continues I think that everyone deserves an award. Heartfelt thank you to all of you, and to the volunteers for making the picnic a delightful event. I always look forward to seeing so many of you at the B.I.G. general meeting. I hope to see you again at the next meeting on November 1 at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center.

Sue & Sr. Dorothy



Sr. Linda



The Wantucks





# Reflections On: Fall - Walking4Hearing and Not Giving Up!

By: Margie Fitchlee

Here we are again, entering my favorite time of year – FALL! It is a time to prepare, a time to reflect, and a time to continue on in that journey to better hearing. Those of you who have read my articles over the last eight years have often heard me talk about my “journey to better hearing.” I have given you much insight on what this journey has meant to me and where it has taken me.

On August 13, I attended the “Kick Off” event for the 2017 Buffalo Walk-4Hearing at Big Ditch Brewery in Buffalo. I was asked by Ann Rancourt of HLAA (Hearing Loss Association of America) to speak to the attendees about why I am walking in this year’s event at Delaware Park.

Although I am not a public speaker, I put my fears behind me and addressed the group. Where would I be without this wonderful invention called a cochlear implant? What would my life be like? I know the answer to those questions. I know that my life would never be the same. I am blessed! I will never forget that, or the fact that Dr. Ernesto Diaz-Ordaz is still considered by me to be the man who saved me. My message to those considering the implant surgery is to never give up. Continue to persevere. Don’t quit on your journey to better hearing! Always remember that you don’t have to face your hearing loss alone. The Buffalo Implant Group and its members are

here to cheer you on, to educate you, and to be there for you and for your families always! That is why I am walking this year. I am walking for you.

“Don’t Quit”

When things go wrong  
As they sometimes will;

When the road you’re trudging seems  
all uphill;

When the funds are low and the debts  
are high;

And you want to smile but you have to  
sigh.

When all is pressing you down a bit–

Rest if you must, but don’t you quit.

Success is failure turned inside out;

The silver tint on the clouds of doubt;

And you can never tell how close you  
are;

It may be near when it seems far.

So stick to the fight when you’re hard-  
est hit–

It’s when things go wrong that you  
must not quit.

These words of John Greenleaf Whit-  
tier ring so true to me and to all of you  
who are facing profound hearing loss  
and deafness. Don’t be afraid of where  
that road will lead you. Many are on  
it. We continue to travel on. Adventure  
awaits you. Your destination will not  
let you down.

On October 8 that road lead me straight to beautiful Delaware Park. I proudly participated in the HLAA “Walk4Hearing” event. An unknown author coined it right when they said, “In Autumn, don’t go to the jewelers to get gold; go to the parks!” That is exactly what I



prefer to do. I walk with courage just as Jonathan Lockwood Huie suggests when he said, “I walk today’s march with courage.” Many others also walk to support the Hearing Loss Association of America, to help raise much needed funds and to show awareness of what profound hearing loss is all about. It is, in my opinion, a very misunderstood thing. It touches the lives of over 48 million Americans and their families.

Hal Borland tells us that “Two sounds of Autumn are unmistakable...the hurrying rustle of crisp leaves blown along the street...by a gusty wind, and the gabble of a flock of migrating geese.” How lucky are we cochlear implant recipients to be able to understand and enjoy these sounds? I walk for those who, after implant surgery, will enjoy these sounds too. **HAPPY HEARING TO ALL OF YOU!**



# Ruth Fitchlee's Apple Crisp Recipe

Submitted by: Margie Fitchlee

8 cups pared sliced baking apples (I used Granny Smith or Cortland)  
2 TBSP. lemon juice  
4 TBSP. water  
1 1/2 cups brown sugar  
2/3 cup flour  
1/2 cup old fashioned oats (not quick oats)  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter or margarine (I use butter) melted

1. Put apple slices in a greased 9x13 pan.
2. Combine lemon juice and water...sprinkle over sliced apples.
3. Combine brown sugar, oats, flour, cinnamon, and salt into a medium bowl.
4. Cut in the melted butter or margarine to make a crumbly mixture.
5. Press evenly over apples.

Bake at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes. Serves 12. I like to serve it with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or a square of sharp cheddar cheese. It makes a wonderful Fall Dessert!



## T-shirts For Sale

Our B.I.G. t-shirts are now available for sale! All shirts are grey with our logo on the front left side and our mission on the back. They will be available on a first-come-first-served basis in sizes small, medium, large, and extra-large. If you were unable to purchase them at the picnic or as a pre-order, you can purchase them at the upcoming General Meeting on November 1 at Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center. If you are unable to attend the meeting, you can order your shirts using the form below and mail it to us along with your check made out to Buffalo Implant Group. All shirts are \$20 each, with profits from this sale going to support B.I.G. Please include a contact number (text or voice) or email so that we can arrange delivery to you.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sizes(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Funds Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ \$

Buffalo Implant Group, P.O. Box 350, Clarence Center, NY 14032-0350



# ..... Buffalo's First Annual Walk4Hearing .....

By Gail Cronin

For the first time, the Hearing Association of America (HLAA) held a Walk4Hearing in Buffalo, NY. On Sunday, October 8 over 250 walkers, and dozens of volunteers, joined together at Delaware Park to raise funds for organizations that support people with hearing loss. HLAA holds these walks all across the country, which raises both funds and awareness. In prior years, Western New Yorkers had to travel to Rochester in order to participate in a Walk4Hearing. This year, the Walk4Hearing came to us.

Med-El, the maker of cochlear implants, and CapTel, the maker of captioned telephones, are national premier sponsors of the Walk4Hearing program. These companies provide the most financial support. Other national sponsors include Advanced Bionics, Cochlear Americas, Health Innovations and Regal Entertainment Group. Our local Buffalo sponsors included Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center, New York State Relay Service, ReSound, Hearing Evaluation Services, and Phonak.

Ronnie Adler, the Director of Walk4Hearing, and her associate Ann Rancourt, the National Walk4Hearing Coordinator, organize 17 HLAA walks throughout our country. Based on their vast experience organizing walks in new cities across the nation, they helped the local volunteers set a fundraising goal of \$25,000 for Buffalo's inaugural walk. By the day of the Walk, we collectively exceeded that goal with a total of over \$34,000 received. Additional pledges are still expected.

Walkers could either raise money in the form of pledges and walk as individuals, or they could be part of a team. A team could be made up of a family, a group of friends, or an organization. Walkers could also designate that their pledges go completely to HLAA, or be split with a partner alliance such as a school or local organization whose mission is to help those with hearing loss. B.I.G. has been an alliance organization with HLAA and the Walk4Hearing in the past by sending a team to the Rochester Walk, and continued that tradition by having a team at this year's Buffalo Walk as well. In fact, all the members of the B.I.G. team also served as Walk volunteers. Our team raised a total of \$2,160.00, the majority of which was raised by our V.P. Margie Fitchlee.

Other alliance organizations for this Walk included Acoustic Neuroma Association, American Hearing Impaired Hockey Association, Buffalo Hearing & Speech Center, Deaf Access Services, Dogs for the Deaf Inc., Ear Community, Foundation for Sight and Sound, St. Mary's School for the Deaf, The Decibels Foundation and Usher Syndrome Coalition.

Many of the teams and/or families could be identified by the shirts they were wearing. One family, called Randy's Raiders, had a clever t-shirt that Randy's parents designed. Randy wears a bone-anchored hearing aid, so they called themselves "Raiders" with the "aid" in Raiders highlighted and their symbol was a pirate flag with crossbones and an anchor. Natalia's Team had a cute logo on the back of their shirts that read "We're hear for you" and the apostrophe was an ear. Natalia's dad recently made news by getting a tattoo of an ear-level cochlear implant processor right behind his ear so that his daughter wouldn't feel different from everyone else in the family. Walkers came from as far away as Rochester, Syracuse and Pittsburgh. Some brought their entire family. It was heartwarming to see the lengths families would go to support one another.





## Buffalo's First Annual Walk4Hearing *cont. from page 8*



Several sponsor organizations had information tables including Med-El, CapTel, Cochlear, Advanced Bionics, Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center, and Hearing Evaluation Services. They answered questions, distributed literature and gave away promotional materials.

Walkers who raised \$100 or more were given a Walk t-shirt on site. Walkers who raised \$500 or more will receive a Walk backpack by mail after the event. Walk4Hearing hats were also for sale at the event for \$10.

A large tent filled with activities for children helped to make all ages feel welcome. There were clowns making balloon animals and doing intricate face painting. There were numerous craft activities. Popcorn and cotton candy were available to all. A bounce house was a big draw as well. A refreshment tent provided participants with water juice, bagels, baked goods, and snacks all kinds.

It was a very windy day, but the rain held off. The changing colors on the trees of Delaware Park made for a lovely backdrop. Overall, Buffalo's first Walk4Hearing was a tremendous success. We look forward to another opportunity to raise funds and awareness by partnering with HLAA's Walk4Hearing again in 2018.



## Many Thanks

Tracy Balon

Buffalo Hearing and Speech  
Center

Melissa Burroughs

Craig and Jackie Carpenter

Emily Clark

Joe Cronin

Kathy Danahy

Deaf Access Services

Paula DeJac

Frank Duchini

Sr. Dorothy Feltz

Margie Fitchlee

Sr. Linda Glaeser

JoAnn Hammer

Mary Healy

Lisa Hill Nowicki

Jessica Holst

Donna Johnson

Joe Kolis

Evelyn Kauderer

Will Licata

Courtney Lynn

Kathy Maroney

Gloria Matthews

Joanne Mayer

Molly McDonald

Janet McKenna

Dianne Mogavero

St. Aloysius Gonzaga  
R. C. Church

St. Mary's School for the Deaf

Jennifer Sexton

The Sisters of St. Joseph

Mary Ann Slon

Joe Sonnenberg

Sam Spitzer

Jan Telban

Sue Wantuck

Karen Ward

Zenger Group

And all those who donated to our  
basket raffle!

# Long-Term Use of OTC Medications and Hearing Loss

By Gail Cronin

A peer reviewed study was published in the American Journal of Epidemiology in January, 2017 which supported and expanded upon previous research linking the long-term use of over-the-counter (OTC) pain medications, known as analgesics, with hearing loss in older women.

The researchers looked at over 55,000 women over the age of 48 who participated in a Nurses' Health Study. They asked the women about their use of OTC pain medications in three categories. They looked at acetaminophen, which is commonly known by the brand name Tylenol. They looked at aspirin. They also looked at non-aspirin NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.) These include ibuprofen, which is commonly known by such brand names as Motrin and Advil, as well as naproxen, which is commonly known by the brand names Aleve and Naprosyn. The researchers compared the patients' history of analgesic use with their reported hearing loss.

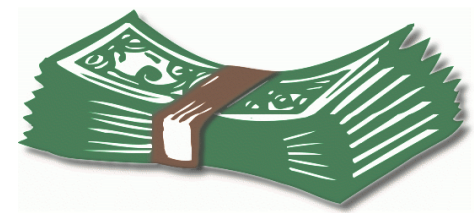
The results, which were consistent with earlier, smaller studies, showed that long-term use of aspirin did not appear to have a relationship with hearing loss. However, long term use of the other NSAIDs (ibuprofen and naproxen) and acetaminophen appeared to show a link to an increased risk for hearing loss. Long term use was defined as being used for two or more days per week for six years or more. This study is consistent with the team's prior study on men, which was published in 2010.

If you are a long-term user of ibuprofen, naproxen, or acetaminophen, consider discussing this with your doctor.

# Treasurer's Report

By Lisa Hill Nowicki

Thank you to everyone who came out for our annual picnic in August, an event that we all look forward to. Currently our membership and dues are close to a wash with our reoccurring expenses for 2017. We had the extra upfront cost of the t-shirts for our 2017 fundraiser. If you have not purchased a t-shirt already please do so to support our organization. The cost is \$20. Just a reminder, at our fall meeting we will begin our 2018 dues drive.



# Chautauqua Changes Challenge Deaphyduck

By Janet McKenna aka Deaphyduck



Deaphyduck found her twelfth visit at Chautauqua Institution to be "transitional." After acrimonious conflict between two factions, a rebuilt Amphitheater, the site of lectures, sermons, and performances, was inaugurated in July. Accompanying the new auditorium is a new hearing system. The "Listen" FM system replaces old infrared technology.

With two cochlear implants, Deaphyduck is not the typical hard of hearing Chautauquan.

The Amphitheater's new seating configuration confirmed it best to sit about five rows from the stage to see the speakers' faces at the podium, hoping their microphones did not hide them. More mobile speakers paced around the stage using neck microphones.

Deaphyduck's hearing experience varied from so-so to very good. The small Listen receiver measures 3.75 x 2 x .64 inches. Controls were easy to use. Battery life is 8 hours. Deaphyduck used her telecoils with a neckloop, which fastens left and right to the receiver. Most users opted for headphones. Earbuds are also an option.

Long lines of hearing system users returned their headphone devices after the morning lectures. Listeners corroborated their successful hearing experiences with the headphone FM system when Deaphyduck inquired.

No signs point to the checkout area for receivers. Yet people quickly found them. Leaving one's gate pass is the preferred form of identification.

Only speakers, rather than musicians, are hooked into the FM system. As well, the old infrared system is still in place in several venues, which Deaphyduck didn't visit in 2017. Another year's experience may better serve to evaluate the Listen receivers. Two different hearing systems in several different locations and no hearing systems beyond the usual podium microphones in other locations can confuse and challenge the Chautauquan with hearing loss.

*Editor's note: This article was reprinted from the Rochester HLAA Newsletter with permission.*





# Quarterly Newsletter

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Without your support, there can be no B.I.G. News. It is our belief that the B.I.G. News is of great value to our readers and to those who would like to learn more about us. We strive to provide you with current, useful information, inspiring stories and valuable resources for cochlear implant users and the people who care for them. Please show us your support by joining B.I.G. now!

## Our Next Meeting: Panel Discussion

Hearing Loss, Cochlear Implants, and the Impact on Your Partner

The Buffalo Implant Group is pleased to welcome a panel of our members and their spouses for a discussion on the impact of hearing loss and cochlear implants on their relationships.

**Wednesday, November 1, 2017**

**6:00 -8:00 PM**

**Buffalo Hearing and Speech Center**

**50 East North St., Buffalo 14203**

The meeting will be held in the lower level conference room. Limited free parking is available in the lot behind the building. Sign language interpretation will be provided.

A brief business meeting and elections for 2018 will be held at the beginning of the evening, followed by our panel discussion. The treasurer will be collecting dues payments for 2018. Our newly redesigned t-shirts will be available for purchase. Please support this fundraiser. Pizza, pop, and water will be provided. Please consider bringing a dessert to share if you are able. Social time will follow.

Friends and family are always welcome.



## **BUFFALO IMPLANT GROUP**

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