

# My Story ... *by Angela Glotzbach*



Angela Glotzbach is a long time member of HLAA who has struggled with hearing for many years. Enjoy her very inspiring story!

Until I was 26, I always depended on my left ear. I was born with no hearing in my right ear. Then one morning I woke up and things sounded far away, and I knew something was not right with my hearing. Within 2 weeks, I could not hear anything. The doctors called it sudden nerve deafness. For 8 years, I used a hearing aid on that ear and struggled. I had only 4% hearing in the ear, so the hearing aid could only help so much. I was getting upset because I couldn't hear the conversations well at gatherings and was getting headaches from trying too hard to follow the conversations. Then I started wanting to avoid going out to do the things I love to do. I love hanging out with friends, but was getting depressed because of my hearing.

My audiologist suggested I look into a cochlear implant, so I did. It took me awhile to decide to do it because of course the doctors can't guarantee that thing will be better. I wanted to hear better at gatherings. I wanted to hear music and talk on the phone with better understanding. Finally, my audiologist made a good point and said what do you have to lose; you only have 4% now. On April 26, 2006, I had the surgery to get the implant. Seven weeks later, I finally got to have the implant turned on. That day was very upsetting - everyone sounded like Donald Duck, and I was in tears. After about one week, something amazing happened. Words and sounds started to sound normal and I began to hear things I had not heard in a long while. One of the first cool sounds was the sound of my flip-flops as I was walking! I just loved hearing it and the sounds at my son's baseball game. Hearing the National Anthem over the speaker and the crack of the bat as it makes contact with the ball were some of the first memorable sounds.

Soon, I began to enjoy music in my car. Not so much of the new music, but all the 70's and 80's music that I knew before. Sounds continued to get better and I was hearing all kinds of sounds like the tick of our clock in the bathroom, leaves rustling in the yard, and birds chirping outside

my window. One of the best improvements in my hearing was being able to better hear my daughter sing at her concerts and in her school plays. I began going to the movies with my children which I was afraid to try with my hearing aid. I also went back to work.

Today I really feel I made a great decision to get the implant. I talk on the phone fairly well, get to listen to my favorite music, and enjoy plays and movies. I still have a trouble in very noisy settings, but I feel I am doing much better in group settings. I no longer just want to stay home. I want to get out and do the things I love to do. Being able to hear my family and friends and to talk with them without struggling so much is the best gift of all!