

10 Ways to Celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Grace's Law!

By Jeanine and Grace Gleba

THEN:



(Grace Gleba red sweater on right at ceremonial signing of law.)

NOW:



(Grace Gleba volunteering with audiologist, Jen Titus-Thorton at St. Luke's Warren Campus)

"I want to personally thank Grace and the entire Gleba family for their years of advocacy on behalf of children with hearing loss. Grace's tenacity, and her own example of what children can achieve with the proper treatment for hearing loss, are a major reason why kids in New Jersey will be able to receive the gift of hearing for years and years to come. Grace and her family have taken personal adversity, and turned it into something positive for the people of New Jersey. We all owe her a debt of gratitude." Acting Governor Codey

Back in December 2008 a small (Christmas) miracle happened in the state of NJ and personally for our family. It's hard for us to fathom that it has been a decade since Acting Governor Codey spoke the words above and we witnessed the passage of Grace's Law S467/A1571. Like a small tattoo those bill numbers are emblazoned forever in my mind.

Grace's Law is known as Hearing Aid Insurance Legislation (H.A.I.L.) and mandates hearing aid coverage for NJ children 15 years and younger. For the Gleba family and all of the families who advocated in Trenton with us it was a monumental accomplishment. In fact, it took nine years to raise awareness and fight for this law to become a reality. The statistics validate this being quite a feat as only 3% of all bills introduced ever become a law!

So it's only natural that we want to reflect on this success and acknowledge the 10th anniversary! Here are 10 ways you can celebrate this landmark legislation whether you have normal hearing or a hearing loss!

- 1) Take a few minutes to learn the history of the bill [here](#) and [here](#). You can read the original legislation and the most recent pamphlet that the Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing has produced explaining [Grace's Law](#). Take note that as a result of the Affordable Care Act, NJ has made this an essential health benefit and since 2014 there is no longer a maximum benefit limit of \$1,000 per aid (after deductibles, co-pays etc.). Now that's something to celebrate – even better coverage for children!
- 2) Participate in and/or make a donation anytime to the annual NJ Walk4Hearing held each October “in honor of the 10th anniversary of Grace's Law” to the [NJ Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America](#).
- 3) Do you know a child who has benefitted from Grace's Law and is a shining example that with their hearing aids they have overcome obstacles and achieved great things? Nominate them to be a [Hear Strong Champion](#). Email us your story and we can post quotes to our Twitter account to celebrate these champions and more can see the impact this law has made!
- 4) Make a difference in someone else's life and give the gift of sound by donating old hearing aids to the [Hearing Aid Project](#) or directly to the [NJ Hearing Aid Project](#).
- 5) Wear ear plugs for a day to gain a better understanding of living with hearing loss every day and why getting fitted for proper hearing aids can improve lives. Read about Starkey Hearing Technologies [experiment](#).
- 6) [Support](#) research for the Hearing Health Foundation [Hearing Restoration Project](#).
- 7) Join us virtually on Wednesday, November 21st and tweet a message showing your gratitude for H.A.I.L. **Tag @graceslaw**. Here are samples:

- For 10 years #GracesLaw #HAIL has helped children in NJ hear. Help spread the word by doing something from the 10 Ways to Celebrate!
(add hyperlink in your tweet to this blog post)
- Millions of Americans experience some sort of hearing loss. #HAIL is needed in every state. #listenupamerica @hearstrong
- #HAIL Yeah!
- I'm celebrating #GracesLaw #anniversary by _____.
- #GracesLaw improved my/my child's quality of life by _____.
- This year I am thankful for #HAIL #GracesLaw and hearing technology #gratitude

8) Advocate like we did 10 years ago! Last year President Trump signed into law the federal Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Act of 2017 so maybe Congress will hear us now and pass [federal H.A.I.L.](#) for all ages. Hearing loss doesn't discriminate so why does insurance coverage? Write your legislators to let them know that this is important to you.

9) Schedule a hearing exam for you or a loved one.

10) Protect your hearing or lose it. People of all ages can be affected by noise induced hearing loss. October is National Protect Your Hearing Month. Turn down the volume on your electronic devices. Find more ways to protect your hearing from Noisy Planet [here](#).

How will you celebrate? We'd love to know and can also share it on graceslaw.com. Send an email to glebafamily@comcast.net

Where are we today? Jeanine Gleba is now an Advocacy Manager with a national non-profit organization and serves as a public member on the NJ State Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Advisory Committee. She is also a [Hear Strong Ambassador](#). Grace Gleba is now a scholar in the Schreyer Honors College at the Pennsylvania State University where she is majoring in Communications Sciences and Disorders with a minor in Health Administration and Policy. She hopes to continue her education to earn a doctoral degree and either become a pediatric audiologist or otolaryngologist specializing in cochlear implant surgeries. With her minor, she aspires to spread the word of Grace's Law and work to ensure that every individual is offered the opportunity to experience sound. Read about her summer audiology [experience](#). She is also a [Hear Strong Champion](#).



(Grace with the PSU Nittany Lion)