

SUMMARY OF 2022 NSDA/DYSPHONIA INTERNATIONAL VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

April 29, 2022

SOAR: Support Outreach Awareness Research This year's theme acronym spells out the four pillars of our organization. When we work together with one united voice, we soar far and wide. We are mindful that our outreach is international and that we have expanded our mission to include related voice disorders. In doing so, we embrace the World Voice Day 2022 message: '**LIFT YOUR VOICE**'.

The interactive four-hour 2022 Virtual Workshop was our 18th annual Leadership Program. 56 people registered, including 10 Board Members, 2 Regional Coordinators, 14 Support Group Leaders, 25 Area Contact Leaders, 1 Special Projects Leader, and 4 Staff Members. Our participants represented 23 states across the US and three International Regions – Canada, Mexico, and India. Portions of the workshop were recorded for later viewing. Our 2022 leadership workshop was well received according to the feedback and evaluation forms. We learned that our leaders are looking for more information on potential meeting topics, research, and fundraising tips. Some of our Area Contact Leaders are looking for projects to become further engaged. Members of the 2022 Planning Committee were: Executive Director, **Kim Kuman**; Project Advisor, **Nancy Panos**; Support Network Director, **Mary Bifaro**; and Eastern Region & Canada Coordinator, **Carol Doles**.

Our NSDA/Dysphonia International President, **Charlie Reavis**, spoke about our transition to **Dysphonia International** and our expanded mission which includes related voice conditions. Two breakout rooms convened with leaders discussing what resources they need and how they plan to adapt to the expanded mission and name change of our organization. Each breakout room subsequently reported back to the full group. The Chatterfall technique was used to elicit and record responses of participants. Education & Awareness Board Committee Chairperson, **Dorothy Tannahill-Moran**, led participants through an exercise where we gave a one-sentence introduction of Dysphonia International. Here's one example which was received: "Dysphonia International – a community that cares about you and your voice – and provides support and hope for those impacted by life-altering vocal disorders."

Executive Director, **Kim Kuman**, reviewed the successful 2021 **Walk for Talk** event that was held in October last year and premiered the inspiring 2021 Walk for Talk thank you video. Plans are already underway for our 2022 Walk for Talk event to take place from October 20-23. Please stay tuned and plan to join us for this worldwide effort to raise awareness and funds to advance research for our NSDA/Dysphonia International community.

Support Network Director, **Mary Bifaro** presented **The Midge Kovacs Annual Awareness Award** to **Esther Zack** and **Vicki Orazem** and the **Valley of the Sun** group. Past NSDA President, **Dot Sowerby**, presented **The Dot Sowerby Pioneer Award** to **Larry Kolasa**, Founding President of the NSDA/Dysphonia International and past Leader of the Detroit, MI group.

Area Contact Director, **Dennis Kaszeta**, and NSDA Support Network Director, **Mary Bifaro**, delivered the closing remarks. Leaders were encouraged to continue to conduct virtual meetings with the NSDA/Dysphonia International on Zoom and join other meetings that are scheduled. It was agreed that by helping the NSDA/Dysphonia International, we are helping ourselves. The support pillar of the NSDA/Dysphonia International has always been constant. We want to bring hope to those we serve. Hope for better treatments. Hope for an eventual cure. Hope in knowing that everyone belongs in our community – no matter where you live, how old you are, and how your voice sounds. Hope is an acronym that might express: Helping Other People Endure.

NSDA/Dysphonia International support network leaders motivate, inspire, challenge, encourage, and equip people with SD through their important work. When they come together as leaders, there is power and strength in their unity, friendship, and fellowship. Our support leadership network continues to drive and shape our organization. They stand side by side with one hope and one dream – to help improve the lives of people with SD and related voice conditions. We appreciate the engagement and candor of our 2022 Virtual Leadership Workshop participants. We look back with gratitude and we look forward in anticipation. Every voice matters!