



**LARYNGECTOMEE CLUB OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY
NEW VOICE CLUB OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA**

SERVING THE GREATER WASHINGTON, DC METROPOLITAN AREA

Affiliated with the American Cancer Society South Atlantic Division, Inc
Member of the International Association of Laryngectomees



March 21, 2006

Dear Laryngectomees, Caregivers and Caring Medical Professionals,

It is with great pleasure that I am writing to inform you of an important, upcoming laryngectomee event. Our "New Laryngectomee Visitor Training Certification Class" will be held on Saturday May 6, 2006 starting at 10am. This event is a joint effort of the Laryngectomee Club of Montgomery County and The New Voice Club of Northern Virginia. Lunch will be provided. This class will take place at the American Cancer Society Building located at 11331 Amherst Avenue in Silver Spring, MD 20906. There is no cost to attend.

We are pleased to have two highly regarded Speech Language Pathologists to coordinate and present this program. **Joy Gaziano** and **Vicki Lewis**, who will be conducting this event, are coming here from Tampa, FL, where they both work at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center. They both have local ties to our area. Joy graduated from George Washington University, where she did her post graduate studies. Vicki worked nine years in our area, mostly at the Washington Hospital Center, before moving to FL with her family. We are equally pleased to have **Dr. David Bianchi, MD, FACS**, and his associate **Jeff Robin, PA-C** to present the Medical Overview portion of our program. I have had the pleasure of knowing Dr. Bianchi for over 6 years. He is a true friend of the laryngectomee. He has referred many patients to us in the past and is a very caring person.

Being member clubs of the International Association of Laryngectomees (IAL), guidelines laid out by that organization will be closely adhered to. The goal of the IAL for this program is to provide individuals, who have undergone larynx removal, an opportunity to achieve their maximum potential – emotionally, physically, socially, and economically. To accomplish the initial step of this goal, recent laryngectomy patients should be aware that former lifestyles can be resumed, and that the surgery they have had will not necessarily cause them to lose all aspects of their former lifestyles. A visit by a concerned, well-rehabilitated laryngectomee, who uses at least one type of alaryngeal speech, can make a major contribution to the total rehabilitation of the new or prospective laryngectomee. Specially selected and trained, the well-rehabilitated laryngectomee and spouse, when appropriate and possible, visits new laryngectomees in the hospital or at home before and/or soon after they undergo surgery. The presence of this visitor, who is neatly dressed, well-mannered and speaking with ease, can give the patient hope and determination to be become rehabilitated. When appropriate, the visitor can also answer many of the questions and hopefully ease some of the fears that may be troubling the patient and members of the family. It is imperative that whatever method of alaryngeal speech is used by the visitor, only the very best alaryngeal speakers should conduct these visits. If this rule is not followed faithfully, some patients may become so discouraged that the resulting damage to their morale and motivation, may severely affect their potential for rehabilitation. This is an especially sensitive issue with pre-operative visits where, in extreme cases, it could alter a decision to undergo surgery and affect chances for survival.

If you have an interest in serving as a future volunteer in this important endeavor, please fill out the accompanying Visitor Training Application form and return it to me at the address on the application, no later than April 30th. Seating for this event is limited, so if you are planning to attend, send your application form in early. Laryngectomees and their spouses/significant others will have first priority. Area laryngectomees and their families are welcome to stop by at the end of the class (around 3pm) to meet with those in attendance and help to finish off the food that is left over from lunch. I look forward to seeing many of you at this function and to having many of you accompany me on new laryngectomee visits in the future.

Sincerely,

HERB SIMON

Visitation Chairperson

The Laryngectomee Club of Montgomery County and New Voice Club of Northern Virginia