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## Online Event is the First of Its Kind for World Voice Day

*Giving a voice to the voiceless*

**Chattanooga, TN:** US-based network VocalDisorders.org and the Australian Dysphonia Network have teamed up to present the first-ever worldwide event in recognition of World Voice Day. The event is called the Vocal Unity International Summit. The Summit is a 6-day multi-speaker conference that will be broadcast online from April 16-21, 2017. It will feature speakers from around the world who have expertise and experiences with vocal disorders.

In the United States alone, an estimated 9.4 MILLION people have faced some form of chronic voice problem (source: [National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders](#)). Until now, World Voice Day mainly celebrated the usefulness of voice in science, speaking, and the arts. The Vocal Unity International Summit brings awareness to the impact of losing your voice and offers unprecedented access to insights from leading specialists who treat vocal disorders.

Andrea Hardaway (founder of VocalDisorders.org and head of Vocal Unity) says, *“Since 2008, I have been meeting people around the world who are dealing with these challenges every single day. I couldn't just sit around and watch more people sink into silence. I had to do my part to help give a voice to the voiceless. That is what I am fighting to do now.... in a greater way than ever before.”* Hardaway started her advocacy journey for her mother (who has a condition known as Spasmodic Dysphonia). However, her efforts now support thousands of others around the world.

With a roster of 18 speakers, including top clinical experts and researchers, Vocal Unity is positioned to be the first-ever World Voice Day event with a worldwide focus.

### **About Vocal Unity:**

Launched in 2017, Vocal Unity is a movement first envisioned by Andrea Hardaway (founder of VocalDisorders.org) The movement kicks off on April 16th with a 6-day, multi-speaker event that is broadcast online. The event bridges efforts of organizations around the world by providing a single platform for sharing expertise critical for aiding in the recovery and management of vocal disorders.

### **About VocalDisorders.org:**

VocalDisorders.org is a grass-roots initiative to empower those who live with voice restrictions. Founded by Andrea Hardaway, whose mother was diagnosed with a vocal disorder, VocalDisorders.org has over 3,000 members from around the world.

### **About Australian Dysphonia Network:**

The Australian Dysphonia Network was established in 2016 in an effort to connect and provide local support for people living with, or impacted by a voice disorder. The Network is a newly registered charity which aims to raise Public and GP awareness of dysphonia, and to fund research into it's causes, management and the human impact of life with a voice disorder.

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