



REBUILDING COMMUNICATION

# BUILDING Bridges



**Building Bridges** – Newsletter of the Aphasia Institute – The Aphasia Institute is a community-based centre of excellence that helps individuals with aphasia and their families. Aphasia affects more than 100,000 Canadians, depriving them of the ability to speak, read, write and understand others, often masking competency. The Aphasia Institute makes it possible for individuals to express themselves and provides tools and training for families and others who need to communicate with them. Your support allows us to continue to find new ways for individuals and their families to re-join life's conversations.

## It's been a busy summer!

June was Aphasia Awareness Month and as part of our goal to raise awareness about aphasia and connect with our community of friends and supporters, we were **everywhere** this past summer!

The Aphasia Institute kicked off Aphasia Awareness Month with an article in the Zoomer Media newsletter to spread awareness about aphasia and Walk, Talk 'n Roll. Please visit [www.aphasia.ca](http://www.aphasia.ca) for the full article.

A big thank you to Zoomer Media for their support.

**ZOOMER MEDIA**

The My Voice, Through My Lens Self-Portrait Photography exhibit featuring the work of our clients was hosted by MaRS, a landmark of innovation in downtown Toronto, from June 2-7. Our clients became artists and interacted with anyone and everyone who passed through the MaRS atrium, including professionals in health care, the sciences and education. This interaction between the artists and virtual strangers regarding aphasia and stroke, alongside the work of the Aphasia Institute and self-portrait photographs, elicited an extraordinary response.



We want to thank those who visited the exhibit throughout the week, our sponsors, and the MaRS team of Judith Leitner, Andrea Shewchuk, Ron van der Wees and Allen Gelberg.



On June 8, over 150 friends and supporters of the Aphasia Institute community took the Toronto Challenge by storm at our signature fundraising event, Walk, Talk 'n Roll and raised over \$70,000! These funds are critical to help improve the lives of people and their families who are living with aphasia. We could not continue to do the work we do without you – thank you for all your support and see you next year!

Clients of the Aphasia Institute Spotlight musical drama group gave an electrifying performance of "Grease, the Musical" to a packed and enthusiastic audience of over 170 people at the Al Green Theatre on June 22.

The event raised over \$1,600 towards our I Care campaign which helps to fund internal initiatives such as the purchase of iPads for our clients. Thank you to everyone who participated and supported this amazing show!



## CHECK US OUT ONLINE!

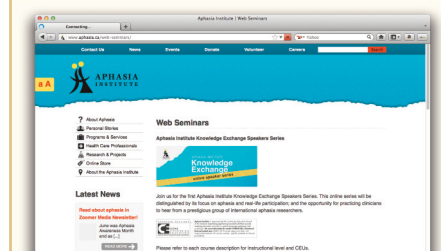
**NEW – Annual Report 2013/14 is now available online!**

Take a look at the great work we did last year thanks to your outstanding support! [www.aphasia.ca/about-the-aphasia-institute/reports-and-publications/](http://www.aphasia.ca/about-the-aphasia-institute/reports-and-publications/)

**NEW – Aphasia Institute Knowledge Exchange Online Speaker Series**

We launched a new webinar series for health care professionals in September that will be distinguished by its focus on aphasia and real-life participation. Practicing clinicians will have the opportunity to hear from a prestigious group of international aphasia researchers.

To find out more about the speaker line up and webinar topics visit our website: [www.aphasia.ca/web-seminars/](http://www.aphasia.ca/web-seminars/)



## Join Our "Conversations"

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[https://twitter.com/aphasia\\_inst](https://twitter.com/aphasia_inst)

# Honouring Gerry – 35th Annual General Meeting dedicated to an integral member of our community

Gerry Cormier, a member of our community, was a true optimist and embraced life despite his aphasia. He is the individual around whom the Gerry Series was created; a key teaching tool which has quite likely made Gerry the most famous person with aphasia. The Gerry Series continues to be used in training sessions for health care professionals around the world. And, although the footage is grainy and dated, it clearly demonstrates the benefits that the right communication tools make in having a successful conversation.

We dedicated our 35th Annual General Meeting on September 29 to Gerry's memory. In honour of Gerry's legacy and life-time contribution to improving the lives of people living with aphasia, we renamed our Communicative Access award, which

recognizes outstanding contributions to reducing barriers to full life participation for those living with aphasia, the Gerry Cormier Communicative Access Award.



A family event: Gerry's family walked in his memory at our Walk, Talk 'n Roll event on June 8.

## Remembering Gerry – from across the ocean!

I am sorry to hear about the death of Gerry – I feel as if I knew him, having used his video in many training sessions. I'm sure he IS the most famous person with aphasia in the world. He has certainly left his mark – on both sides of the Ocean. He will live on in our hearts and memories (as well as on our old video tapes!)

– Anne Feist, Speech Therapist, Scotland

## Exchanging Knowledge through Collaboration to Improve the Patient Experience: Staff from the Aphasia Institute and North York General Hospital Participate in Stroke Care Observership

Feedback from clients and their families indicates that they wish for more opportunities for meaningful information to be provided to them about aphasia, as well as more direct communication with patients in acute-care settings following a stroke. To better

understand the patient experience throughout the stroke and aphasia journey, the Aphasia Institute participated in an initiative called the Toronto Stroke Networks' Transition Improvement for Continuity of Care (TICC) Stroke Care Observership.

As part of this initiative, we hosted two visits for North York General Hospital's Stroke Assessment and Treatment Team to exchange knowledge on topics such as communication strategies for persons with aphasia. The team was also able to interact with our clients and their families to gain an in-depth and personal understanding of the aphasia journey.

Additionally, North York General Hospital's Stroke Assessment and Treatment Team hosted two visits for Aphasia Institute staff to observe persons with stroke first hand in acute-care and participate in patient rounds.

We hope this will be one of many future opportunities to improve access to our services, offer meaningful education for clinicians to see the possibilities beyond one's care environment, as well as continually enhance experiences for persons with stroke and aphasia.

We will be highlighting our clients' experience with this initiative in upcoming communications.



The Aphasia Institute relies on the generosity of individual donors and volunteers to deliver life-changing programs.

For more information, visit [www.aphasia.ca](http://www.aphasia.ca)

### The Aphasia Institute

73 Scarsdale Road, Toronto, ON M3B 2R2

T: 416.226.3636 • F: 416.226.3706

URL: [www.aphasia.ca](http://www.aphasia.ca)