



REBUILDING COMMUNICATION

# BUILDING Bridges



**Building Bridges** – Quarterly 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. Aphasia affects a person's language skills, not their inherent competence, but all too often, people with aphasia are discounted as incompetent because others lack the skills necessary to help them be understood. 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.

## We Hear You – Hearing Screenings: *Reducing language barriers*



accessible, and offered screenings on-site at the Aphasia Institute to clients, staff, volunteers, family members and friends. In total, 101 people participated, including 52 clients and 21 volunteers.

Our clients were thrilled to have their hearing screening results and information used for research purposes. Data is currently being analyzed for a larger project which will examine whether persons with

quantify the frustration and breakdown in communication that are a result of hearing loss in persons who also have aphasia.

**“The Aphasia Institute is perfect for this type of research because rejoining life's conversation is at the heart of all of the programs.”**

– Dr. Jo DeLuzio, Audiologist and Professor, University of Toronto

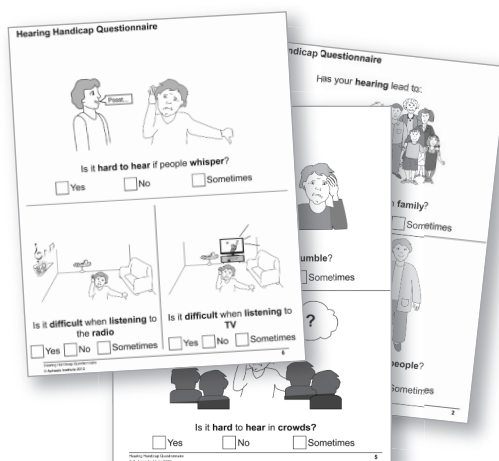
Acquired hearing loss can be difficult to diagnose and treat for people with aphasia who already encounter communication barriers. Not only can hearing loss aggravate existing challenges, but hearing screenings are not communicatively accessible for people with aphasia who wish to get their hearing checked. Health care professionals are also often unaware of how to assist individuals with aphasia.

In order to address some of these gaps, Dr. Jo DeLuzio, an Audiologist and Professor from the University of Toronto, and our Speech-Language Pathologist, Lisa Debow, conducted a research project at the Aphasia Institute in July with great success. They piloted aphasia-friendly materials to make hearing screenings communicatively

aphasia are at a higher risk for hearing loss than those of the same age who have never suffered a stroke. The piloted aphasia-friendly materials will also help examine whether it is possible to

Providing opportunities for our clients to participate in research that can potentially benefit them and their peers provides a sense of confidence and empowerment. For Tse, a former Senior Audiologist and Audiology Professor, participating in this research project was an opportunity to be on the other side of screenings he had performed thousands of times, and re-engage with a part of his professional and personal identity that aphasia had hidden.

We will be highlighting Tse and his funny and touching experience in upcoming communications.



### Join our Conversation!

 [www.facebook.com/aphasiainstitute](http://www.facebook.com/aphasiainstitute)

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

## I CARE Campaign – What we do to help ourselves



The internal community of the Aphasia Institute, including staff, clients, family members, students and volunteers, participate in the **I CARE Campaign** during September and October.

As part of the campaign, individuals or groups organize creative endeavors to spread awareness about aphasia while raising money for initiatives that are important to our clients. Previous **I CARE** activities include a client who sold sandwiches at lunch and donated the proceeds to the Aphasia Institute. Whether it is a family dinner, a garage sale, or donations – no activity is too small and no contribution is too little.

Our Aphasia Institute community does amazing things to show they care throughout the year too. The Coin Drive is a permanent fixture at the Aphasia Institute started by family members Mary Kosziwka, Linda Schmidt and Janet Kosziwka. The money collected goes towards subsidizing outings for clients who otherwise would not be able to participate. This initiative has enabled clients and their families to enjoy precious time together and create lasting memories. Simple, small acts throughout the year, or fun activities as part of **I CARE**, demonstrate the power of our community, and show how **WE CARE**.

## Research and Development Leading the Way – Best Practice Guidelines

The Aphasia Institute has taken a leadership role in partnership with others to improve services for people with stroke and aphasia in Canada. Nine new best practice guidelines have been recommended by the *Stroke and Aphasia Canada* team to support people with aphasia and their families along the stroke care pathway.

Although aphasia is one of the most common consequences of stroke, hospitals and rehabilitative facilities across the continuum of care have difficulty supporting patients with aphasia and their families. Now, guidelines recommend that all health care providers working with persons with stroke across the continuum of care should receive training about aphasia, including

the recognition of the impact of aphasia, and methods to support communication.

Aura Kagan and the *Stroke and Aphasia Canada* team will be presenting on these guidelines at the Stroke Congress in October. For more information, visit: [www.strokebestpractices.ca/index.php/stroke-rehabilitation/rehabilitation-to-improve-communication/](http://www.strokebestpractices.ca/index.php/stroke-rehabilitation/rehabilitation-to-improve-communication/)



## Inspiring Voice – ParticiPics

Thanks to the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Aphasia Institute is the recipient of a three-year grant to facilitate communication for individuals with aphasia.



Truly groundbreaking in its conception, this project entitled *ParticiPics*, will enable users via a web portal, to facilitate “in-the-moment conversations.” It will also include theme-based templates and expert support and training. Watch for the launch of *ParticiPics* in December 2013 on our website [www.aphasia.ca](http://www.aphasia.ca).



**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)

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