



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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Aphasia Awareness Week: June 1 – 8**
- **Walk, Talk 'n Roll** event on **June 8**
- Save the date for **"Grease" The Musical** (performed by our clients) on **June 28**



Storytelling 'Through My Lens' Volunteer led self-portrait photography program changes lives of clients

To many of us, the word 'giving' implies writing a cheque to a cause we care about. Volunteer, Judith Leitner, demonstrates that there are many creative ways to give other than from the wallet. An art teacher at the *Toronto Heschel School* for the last eighteen years, Judith donated her time, passion and professional expertise last fall to launch the *Through My Lens: Self-Portrait Photography* program at the Aphasia Institute. With the help of another volunteer and staff members, she taught participants how to use a camera to tell their stories in fresh new ways. A self-professed life learner, Judith stresses the importance of connecting art and life, maintaining that, **"creativity is the core of our humanity, at every stage of our lives."**

All photographs were shot with one hand which is even more impressive given that the non-dominant hand held the camera due to the effects of stroke or brain injury. Under Judith's direction and supervision,

"Through My Lens is beyond art therapy – it is an expression of humanity for people who often feel invisible and unheard because of their aphasia. This exhibit is building community from within."

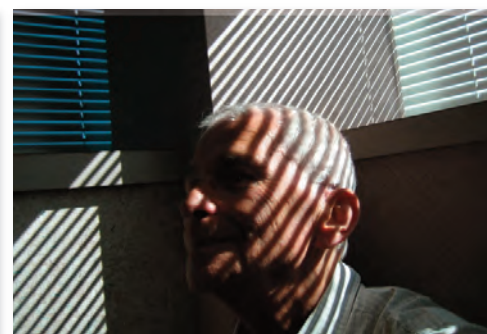
– Judith Leitner



One wall of the exhibit at the Aphasia Institute featuring Garfield A's photography

an exhibition of professionally mounted framed submissions was designed to ensure that the artists' work was displayed in a way that communicated that, **"the artists' remarkable creative process and their outstanding final submissions merit an excellent presentation."**

Feedback from the participants has been both emotional and hugely positive; **"This workshop opened a new window for me,"** states participant Garfield A. His comments echo sentiments expressed in all artist's statements which were prepared using *Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™)*; a methodology developed at the Aphasia Institute that helps people with aphasia communicate. Their statements describe increased



Client, Alex L's self-portrait, titled 'Happy' (October 2013)

self-confidence and self-discovery as participants explored story-telling through the use of photography in place of words.

Thanks to an \$8,000 *Ontario Arts Council* grant, this pilot program will be moving forward and expanding. Judith is currently exploring an accessible venue to showcase the exhibit during *Aphasia Awareness Week* in June. **"I feel wonderful when I leave,"** Judith affirms, illustrating what many of our volunteers already know... that when we give, we get.

Join Our "Conversations"



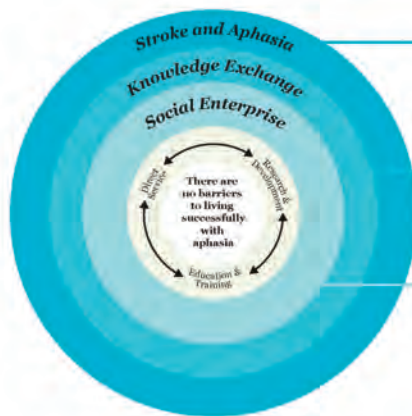
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Aphasia Institute Strategic Goals 2014–2017

Giving hope to people with aphasia and their families by developing and sharing innovative solutions that reduce language barriers to full life participation



Enabling Goals

- Develop our Quality Staff and Volunteers in a Team Learning Environment
- Strategically Communicate and Market the Institute
- Increase and Diversify Revenue
- Develop Efficient and Effective Information Management and Technology

Values

- Respect
- Compassion
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Excellence

Thank you for making our 2013 Annual Campaign a success – you have made a difference!

We have been overwhelmed by the response to Dr. Tse's inspiring story about re-connecting with his passion for audiology by participating in research at the Aphasia Institute that was featured as part of our 2013 Annual Campaign. With your generous contributions, we raised almost **\$30,000** to support research and development that makes a real-life difference to individuals and their families living with aphasia here in Canada and internationally. We just want to say, **'THANK YOU!'**



New strategic plan brings an exciting and fresh focus to the Aphasia Institute

Our new Strategic Plan for 2014/17 is an exciting step forward that gives us a fresh, streamlined framework for the coming years.

The process of developing the Plan was internally and externally driven – staff, volunteers, Board members and stakeholders were asked to determine the most pressing issues that could influence our organization so we might address these as part of our strategic direction.

The Strategic Plan has three main goals; one critical pillar is engaging the stroke community to improve stroke and aphasia services. This strategic goal validates the work we have already been doing, including our key role in bringing together national thought-leaders in stroke and aphasia to develop nine new *Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Stroke Care*, which recommends that all health care providers working with persons with stroke should have training about aphasia and reducing language barriers to stroke services. *Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia* (SCA™); a methodology we designed to help people who 'know more than they can say,' is specifically mentioned in the *Canadian Best Practice Recommendations for Stroke Care*.

To see all nine recommendations, visit, www.strokebestpractices.ca/index.php/stroke-rehabilitation/rehabilitation-to-improve-communication/

By committing to improving services for people with stroke and aphasia as a strategic goal, the Aphasia Institute will play a major role in spreading and implementing these recommendations through expanded training and education opportunities.

“The Strategic Plan has some gutsiness – there is ambition and stretch for the Institute to better reach its vision.”

– Lyn McDonnell, President, The Accountability Group

The next goals include expanding knowledge exchange to grow our learning, reach and impact, and to further develop mission-related revenue generation to achieve the organizational sustainability needed to help more individuals and families with aphasia.

The Plan will be formally implemented in April 2014 – more to follow on all the great endeavors that develop from this exciting strategic direction!

ParticiPics: Innovative Digital Toolbox

ParticiPics is an innovative digital toolbox housing a wide selection of aphasia-friendly materials including pictographic images and templates to facilitate meaningful, 'in the moment' communication for people with aphasia, made possible by a three-year \$406,000 grant from the *Ontario Trillium Foundation*. Currently in Year Two, we completed a soft launch for targeted health care professionals and family members to assist in the fine tuning of the technology and products. Watch for our formal launch in the near future.



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

For more information, visit www.aphasia.ca

The Aphasia Institute

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