



Building Bridges – Newsletter of the Aphasia Institute – The Aphasia Institute is a Canadian community-based centre of excellence, pioneering programs and practices that help people with aphasia learn how to communicate in new ways and begin to navigate their own lives again. Through direct service, research, education and training, the Aphasia Institute has built an international reputation as a world leader and educator in aphasia.

We Surpassed Our Annual Appeal Goal... BECAUSE OF YOU!

Your belief in our work and in our clients helped us raise more than **\$35,000** to support our research and education activities – to keep learning ways to make life better for people with aphasia and their families. **You’ve made a tremendous difference!**

Because of your generous support, we continue to do pioneering work to remove the communication barriers that threaten to overwhelm so many people in Ontario, in Canada, and around the world.

Thank you!



SAVE THE DATE!

On **Sunday, June 10th**, our community of clients, staff, volunteers and family will join together for the 21st year of the **Walk, Talk 'n Roll**, our annual signature fundraiser. In the coming weeks, we will share with you the story of our client, Becky, whose determination to re-engage in her life and give back to her community is truly inspiring. Look for an information package coming to you soon, and **please mark your calendars for Sunday, June 10th!**



I CARE

I Care is the Aphasia Institute's member-led fundraising campaign. For **I Care 2017-18**, our committed clients, volunteers, staff and family have already raised over **\$9,113!** They have done this through some very creative means, including: hosting dinner parties; bake sales; pizza parties; raffle tickets; odd repair jobs; selling gift baskets; an art sale; a baby-guessing contest; and donations in lieu of birthday gifts. One of our clients even started to grow a beard for I Care! (See the beginnings of it in John's picture, above.)

Our clients decide how the proceeds for **I Care** are to be used. This year, the money raised will help support the ongoing **SCAT™ Acute Care** research project, which we reported on in the Fall 2017 issue of this newsletter.



INTRODUCTORY PROGRAM

The Introductory Program is a twelve-week beacon of light for people with aphasia and their families. New clients to the Aphasia Institute are introduced to our conversation group approach, led by speech-language pathologists, social workers, and trained volunteers. The program affords a clearer understanding of aphasia and provides powerful strategies for continued communication and life participation. It helps create meaningful connections between client and family, restores confidence, and improves coping skills, reducing the daily risks that aphasia imposes.



Above left, new client Alex and his husband, Harris, with their custom-made Yes/No t-shirts. For more information on the significance of the Yes/No card, please visit the Building Bridges section of our website.

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

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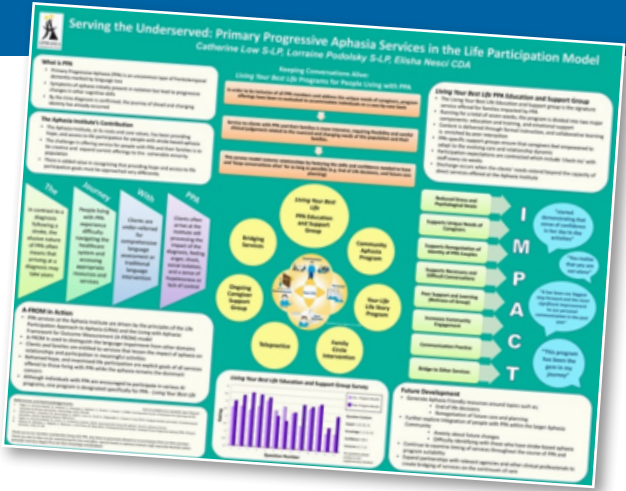
BUSTING APHASIA MYTHS

the myth

Aphasia only comes from brain injury or stroke

Although aphasia is caused most commonly from stroke or brain injury, we are starting to see more instances of a neurodegenerative form of aphasia called **Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA)**. With PPA, language function becomes impaired, slowly but progressively. Similar to Alzheimer’s disease, PPA results from a deterioration of the brain tissue necessary for speech and language. At first, PPA shows as an impaired ability to communicate, similar to other forms of aphasia. Eventually, other symptoms such as memory loss begin to develop.

Because people with PPA are fighting against a continued loss of language as well as reading, writing and comprehension issues, this neurodegenerative disease requires an entirely different support approach. Our response to PPA is a seven-week program, **Living Your Best Life**, which is offered exclusively to clients and families impacted by PPA. Divided into two components—Education & Training and Family



Support—this program provides a number of strategies to help rebuild communication and facilitate community involvement and social exchange. When the program ends, ongoing monthly family support meetings offer continued support and education for family members affected by PPA.

(Visit the Building Bridges section of our website for the full-size version of our PPA poster, shown above. This poster, highlighting the **Living Your Best Life** program, was presented at the Aphasia Access 2017 Conference in Orlando, Florida.)

CLIENTS GIVING BACK

Member Volunteer Resource Program



What began as an attempt to assist one of our clients who wanted to find meaningful community engagement has blossomed into a program designed to give all our clients a robust, group volunteer experience. Our Coordinator of Recreation and Integration, Fatima Cabral, sought out agencies that offered group opportunities which would help our clients reintegrate with and give something back to their own communities. The program is six weeks in length and provides training and group volunteer experience. At the end of the program, our clients have gained experience and confidence, and been provided with the skills and knowledge to decide if they wish to pursue a regular volunteer role in the community, either on their own or with further support from the Aphasia Institute. Recently, clients who belong to the Member Volunteer Resource Program participated in two Daily Bread Food Bank drives and visited the Toronto Humane Society.

Communications

Access Symbol and National Accessibility Legislation

Canadians with disabilities face ongoing, persistent, and daily barriers to goods, services, and opportunities in their lives. To reduce these barriers, the Government of Canada is preparing to develop the first national law on accessibility and inclusion for Canadians who have disabilities. One of the organizations selected to help the federal government write this legislation is Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC), which ensured that people with communication disabilities and their family members, as well as speech-language pathologists, were able to make their voices heard. (Visit the Building Bridges section of our website for a link to CDAC’s full report to the government.)

In addition to consulting on this vital legislation, CDAC also created a logo for communication disabilities visibility, similar to the blue-and-white wheelchair logo that is used worldwide to highlight mobility access.



What You Can Do

Because this proposed legislation is not yet a law, it is important to tell your Member of Parliament (MP) to support this bill when it is tabled for legislation. (Visit the Building Bridges section of our website for a link to Find Your Member of Parliament or to download a sample letter.)

Many thanks to our Education Consultant (SLP), Elyse Shumway, who has been working directly with CDAC on this initiative and who compiled the information for this article.

For all **SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS** mentioned in this newsletter, go to **www.aphasia.ca** and search for **Building Bridges Newsletters**.