



REBUILDING COMMUNICATION

BUILDING Bridges



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.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS! 21 Years and Still Going Strong!

Pictured at right: SLP Natalie with Client Becky, this year's Walk champion

Pictured below: Volunteer Ushi, Client Javed & SLP students Kristin & Charlie



With the 21st anniversary of Walk, Talk 'n Roll, we celebrated another first: **an increase in family participation!** We had more families involved in our walk than ever before. For the second year in a row our clients also participated in their own neighbourhood walk-a-thon.

When all was said and done:

- You helped us raise over \$83,000!
- You helped us keep our promise to people living with aphasia and their families:

We help you navigate your life one conversation at a time.

ANNUAL APPEAL 2018

For former client Marion, a diagnosis of **Primary Progressive Aphasia** held a finality that she and her husband, Bill, were not willing to accept. They had something much stronger than Marion's diagnosis—an unbreakable bond built over 61 years of marriage. We invite you to read their story of love, humour, friendship, and perseverance as we launch this year's Annual Appeal in November. Funds raised through this initiative help support direct services to our clients, as well as our research and education initiatives.



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

The Aphasia Institute
73 Scarsdale Rd., Toronto, ON M3B 2R2
T: 416.226.3636 • F: 416.226.3706
URL: www.aphasia.ca

WHAT'S NEW?

1. Internationally recognized tools & online training will be free

The Aphasia Institute is helping Ontario lead the way to patient-centred stroke and aphasia care! With the Ontario Ministry of Health's grant of \$1.2 million over three years, key internationally-recognized tools and training developed by the Aphasia Institute will be free in Ontario. We'll also be providing, free in Canada and internationally, all our digital pictographic tools and an online quality improvement tool for health care facilities. This will enable health care providers to offer more accessible and equitable care for people living with aphasia and their families.

For more information, please visit <https://bit.ly/2pC8XCX>

2. All the Way from Finland!

This past June, two of our speech-language pathologist trainers travelled to Helsinki, Finland to lead a 3-day professional training session, teaching our Supported Conversation skills and techniques to speech-language pathologists from Finland and Sweden. Hosted by the Finnish Association of People with Physical Disabilities, this request came after two Finnish SLPs attended our training sessions. Participants learned our methodology and were then given a framework for how to teach it to other health care professionals in hospitals and other health care settings.

"Such an inspiring workshop! After the first day I went and tried it with my patients and the change in our conversation and interaction was huge!"

– Helsinki Training Participant

3. Accessible Canada Act Passes First Reading!

In our last Building Bridges newsletter, we told you of the efforts made to have an act passed in the federal legislature to ensure that people with communication disabilities and their family members, as well as the concerns of speech-language pathologists, would be heard. We are happy to announce that the first reading of the **Accessible Canada Act** has passed.

For further information, please visit <https://bit.ly/2C04z7Z>

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2018

Each year, the Annual General Meeting gives us the opportunity to share with you our many successes. It also gives us the pleasure of presenting awards to some very deserving recipients. And what makes this Annual General Meeting special is that all areas of its presentation are conducted with fully accessible communication tools such as handouts and pictographic slide presentations—including all voting activities! **As with all things we do, our Annual General Meeting reduces communication barriers!**

This year we were delighted to be joined by international guests.

Highlights:

- Receiving the **Gerry Cormier Communicative Access Award** for their pioneering work in raising awareness for aphasia—the **Tavistock Trust for Aphasia**. In attendance from England to accept this award were Henrietta, the Duchess of Bedford, and the Honourable Nicole Campbell. The Duchess noted, “This feels very



Aura Kagan (Executive Director); Henrietta, Duchess of Bedford, and the Honourable Nicole Campbell (Tavistock Trust); Kay Cormier, wife of the late Gerry Cormier

strange for us because we give awards, we have never received one before.” (The Aphasia Institute is, in fact, a grateful recipient of the Robin Tavistock Award.)

- Two more recipients of the Gerry Cormier Communicative Access Award were our community partners, **TransCare Community Support Services** and **Spectrum Health Care**. These organizations have enabled their personal support workers and other staff to take time from their daily responsibilities to attend our training sessions, further reducing barriers to full life participation for people living with aphasia and others with like challenges.
- Longtime client **Bill Scott**, in attendance with his wife Bonita, received the **Ambassador Award** for his efforts to spread aphasia awareness, having been for many years a voice for others like him who are living with aphasia.
- Named in honour of our founder, Pat Arato, and for her pioneering work in aphasia support, the **Pat Arato Community Partner Award** was this year given to:
 - Our municipal partner, the **City of Toronto**, for its commitment to providing accessible space within the city and for organizing the annual **Toronto Challenge**, in which we have participated for 21 years. This event is our most important annual fundraiser!
 - Our landlord, **Quad Engineering Inc.**, for their support in offsetting our rent and going the extra mile whenever required.
- To celebrate the many great accomplishments of the past year, our own clients and volunteers created three video presentations specifically for this meeting, featuring music, dance, and movement.



Aura Kagan; Lori Lord (Spectrum); Kay Cormier



Jane Brenneman Gibson (Board Chair) & Jane Simms (City of Toronto)



Aura Kagan; Odette Maharaj (TransCare); Kay Cormier

BUSTING APHASIA MYTHS

the myth

Aphasia can only improve for six months to a year following its onset

Many people believe that stroke- and brain-injury-related aphasia can only improve for 6 months to one year following the event that caused it. We know, however, that this is untrue. Through a phenomenon called *neuroplasticity*, the brain has the ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout a person's entire life. Working in tandem with neuroplasticity are the Aphasia Institute's Supported Conversation techniques, providing powerful communication tools for people living with aphasia and their families, helping them to reduce the language barriers that aphasia imposes on daily life. In addition to evidence-based research, our own volunteers and clients have shared plenty of anecdotal testimony to support this.

AN EASY WAY TO HELP US!

Buy our greeting cards

Greeting cards, created right here by our **Art Program** clients, are available in our online store. Proceeds from these cards help subsidize program fees for clients with financial challenges.



Shop our secure on-line store:

www.aphasia.ca/shop/greeting-cards

For all SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS and an electronic copy of this newsletter, go to www.aphasia.ca and search for **Building Bridges Newsletters**.

OUR FUNDERS



Human Resources and Social Development Canada

STAY IN TOUCH



Our thanks to: Gravity Design Inc.