



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!

### 22 Years and Still Going Strong



◀ Walk 2019 Champion  
Christine, with her  
husband, Vincent

For our 22nd annual Walk, Talk 'n Roll, we celebrated yet another first: We received the *CTV Students Supporting Seniors Award* for the highest youth participation at this year's Toronto Challenge. Our clients also participated in their own neighbourhood walk-a-thon for the third year in a row.



When all was said and done:

**You helped us raise close to \$85,000!**

**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 2019

When you receive this year's Annual Appeal story next month, you'll learn about our client, Jack, and his wife, Rosie. You'll find out why Jack's neighbours call him "the walking man" and how Rosie helped a total stranger who was gripped with fear after their loved one had suffered a stroke. Please look for this story of strength, love, and survival when we launch the Annual Appeal in November. Funds raised through this campaign 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.

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# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2019



Each year, the Annual General Meeting gives us the opportunity to share our many successes. It also gives us the pleasure of presenting awards to some very deserving recipients. This year's AGM was even more special because it marked our 40th anniversary of pioneering programs and practices that help people with aphasia learn to navigate their lives... one conversation at a time.

One of the things that makes our Annual General Meetings so 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 several special guests and some deserving award recipients.

## Highlights:

### From Roots to Trees



With four decades behind us, we felt it was important to remember and celebrate our founder, Pat Arato, and our grassroots – where we began when the seeds were planted to where we are now.

Gary Ryan, who has been involved with the Aphasia Institute for over 28 years—including as board chair and board advisor—spoke of his long friendship with Pat and of her enthusiasm to grow what started from humble beginnings in her basement to the creation and delivery of innovative aphasia solutions.

With the help of long-time volunteer Anna Taylor, the Creative Expressions Group showcased our biggest accomplishments of the past forty years, with a placard march from the front of our building to the meeting podium. Not surprisingly, they were met with a rousing ovation! (See photo, top of this page.)

## Awards:

### Ambassador Award

Launched in 2005 to recognize outstanding Aphasia Institute community members, this year's recipients were:

- **Christine & Vincent Patten:** For their participation in the Introduction to SCA™ eLearning video and their championing efforts toward the Walk, Talk 'n Roll campaign



The Pattens, with Aura Kagan (centre)

- **Jack & Rose Shapiro:** For their advocacy in creating aphasia awareness during the Walk, Talk 'n Roll campaign

### Gerry Cormier Communicative Access Award

Created in 2010 and renamed in 2014 to celebrate the enormous contributions of our late client, Gerry Cormier, this award was presented to:

- **Dana & Jonathan Lampe:** For their work in reducing barriers to full-life participation for people living with aphasia



Kay Cormier (centre), with Aura Kagan (l) & the Lampes (r)

- **Ontario Regional Education Group (OREG):** In recognition of their outstanding role in stroke education and reducing barriers to full life participation for people living with aphasia



Scott McPhee (Shore), with Board Chair Jane Brenneman Gibson

### Pat Arato Community Partner Award

Created in 2017 to honour our founder, this award recognizes our community partners and their leaders whose funding, subsidy, and expert advice show a deep belief in the work we do on behalf of people living with aphasia and their families.

This year's recipient was:  
**Shore Consulting Group Inc.**



# TOASTMASTERS TURNS 20!

As if celebrating 40 years of communication support wasn't enough, we pulled out all the stops to commemorate the **20th anniversary of our Toastmasters Group!**

What began as a question — *Can people with a language disorder thrive in a speech-making forum?* — became one of our crowning achievements: the Toastmasters Gavel Club.

Because of its reputation as an international leader in promoting public-speaking skills, Toastmasters seemed a perfect, if unconventional, fit for our clients. Its inclusion in our program began as the brainchild of Rochelle Cohen-Schneider, our Clinical and Educational Director. As a little girl in Johannesburg, South Africa, Rochelle had attended a few Toastmasters sessions with her mother, and it left on her a lasting impression. She believed that creating our own gavel club would facilitate conversation and camaraderie, both key components to reducing the daily risks of social isolation that aphasia imposes.

So, in 1999, we introduced **Speechcrafters**, the 12-week Toastmasters' beginner's course. Upon its successful conclusion, we held the program's first graduation dinner. Shortly thereafter, the Aphasia Institute was awarded its Gavel Club status and we have offered this program every Friday since.

In their own words, our clients tell us all the time what Toastmasters means to them:

***"It's scary enough to get up and make a speech without aphasia. But with aphasia, I was worried I'd make mistakes and forget my words. I became far less nervous when I realized all of us with aphasia face the same challenges, whether it's daily life or making a speech. These are my friends; we accept and trust one another."***

- Gloria

***"Before the stroke, I was terrified of public speaking. Now, it's nothing to me. I love it."***

- Dennis



Toastmasters Volunteer Leaders (from left): Don McKellar, Steve Gahbauer, Carol Pratap

***"It took a lot for me to do it. I was so thankful to look out at the eyes that were looking back at me and know they knew where I was coming from. They all had aphasia and they understood. So if I stumbled over my words, if I forgot my place, then all would be forgiven. For the first time since my stroke, I felt like I had taken a fundamental building block of life that I had lost, put it firmly in the ground, and was ready to step on it."***

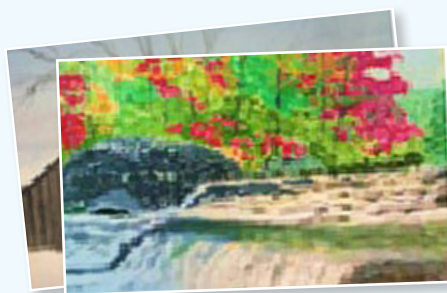
- Ky

At a celebration of this two-decade milestone earlier this month, Rochelle thanked long-time Gavel Club volunteer Steve Gahbauer (pictured above), and presented him with an award of merit – for his leadership in fostering trust and creating safe opportunities for our clients to take the leaps of faith that make our gavel club a true embodiment of everything we do in our Community Aphasia Program. Let's raise our glasses and toast to another twenty!

## AN EASY WAY TO HELP US!

Buy our greeting cards

[www.aphasia.ca/shop/  
greeting-cards](http://www.aphasia.ca/shop/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.

# TRAINING COMES FULL CIRCLE



Our SCA™ Trainers, Robbyn & Lee-Ann – Denmark

Our world-renowned **Supported Conversation for People with Aphasia (SCA™)** training is offered on-site and in classrooms across Canada and around the world. Trainees then take this communication methodology back to their own hospitals, clinics, and health care organizations, and teach it to their colleagues.

Approximately 50 speech-language pathologists (SLPs) from Denmark have attended our training sessions over the past decade. They took our SCA™ techniques and practices back to Denmark and helped to create a structure of health care that is now communicatively accessible on multiple levels and across multiple organizations and systems. This paved the way toward a lucrative deal that saw 10 of our communication resources and toolkits translated into Danish.

With so many Danish health care organizations now fully immersed in the teaching and daily use of SCA™, we recently sent two of our trainers to Denmark to facilitate a 4-day workshop where, for the first time, we took our *Two to Tango* course on the road. The training has directly empowered even more Danish SLPs with the skills and tools to help facilitate communication between people with aphasia and their conversation partners – **and all with access to aphasia-friendly resources translated in their own language!**





For more information on our initiatives, how you can participate, volunteer, sponsor, or to make a donation to support the work of the Aphasia Institute, visit:

- [www.aphasia.ca](http://www.aphasia.ca)
- [cams.aphasia.ca](http://cams.aphasia.ca)
- [participics.aphasia.ca](http://participics.aphasia.ca)

For all **SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS** mentioned in this newsletter, go to [www.aphasia.ca](http://www.aphasia.ca) → **Us** → **Reports & Publications** → **Building Bridges** → **Current Issue & Supplemental Links**

## Join Our “Conversations”

-  [www.facebook.com/aphasiainstitute](http://www.facebook.com/aphasiainstitute)
-  [https://twitter.com/aphasia\\_inst](https://twitter.com/aphasia_inst)

*Celebrating our **40<sup>TH</sup>** Anniversary!*

2019 marks our **40th anniversary** —from humble beginnings in the basement of our founder, Pat Arato, to four decades of creating and delivering a multitude of innovative solutions to people living with aphasia and their families.

## OUR FUNDERS

