



ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

# Embracing the Power of Connection



## About Aphasia

Aphasia (UH-FAY-ZEE-UH) is a communication disorder, resulting from stroke, brain injury, or brain illness. Although people with aphasia remain competent, aphasia can affect speaking, understanding spoken language, reading, writing, and/or participation in daily conversations. Without the ability to participate in conversation, every relationship, life role and almost every life activity is at risk.

## The Aphasia Institute

Founded in 1979 by Pat Arato (1938–2020), we are a Canadian, community-based teaching Institute. We have pioneered programs, tools and practices, such as SCA™, that help people with aphasia learn how to communicate in new ways in order to navigate their lives again. Through direct service, research, education and training, the Aphasia Institute has built an international reputation as a leader and educator in aphasia.



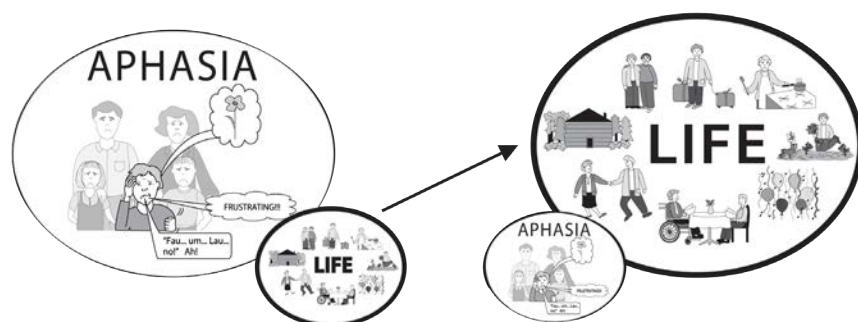






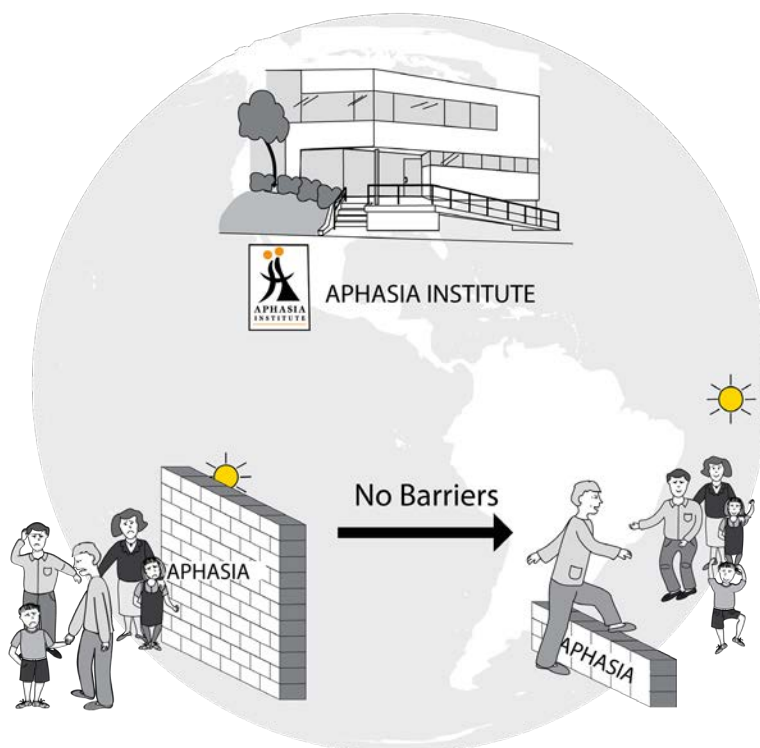
## MISSION

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



## VISION

There are no barriers to living successfully with aphasia.



# Embracing the Power of Connection

## – Gayle’s story

For Gayle, volunteering at the Aphasia Institute is more than giving back – it’s witnessing resilience and experiencing the joy of connection every day.

When Gayle’s mother had a stroke and developed severe aphasia in 2003, Gayle discovered the transformative power of the Aphasia Institute firsthand. While her mother was resistant at first, the warm, supportive environment quickly won her over and helped her reconnect with the world. *“Every drive home, she’d thank me. It meant everything to her,”* recalls Gayle.

After her mother passed and inspired by her mother’s experience, Gayle returned to the Aphasia Institute, as a volunteer.



We're a tough bunch - 720

Share

Music video series featuring Aphasia Institute members and staff

Gayle’s dedication knows no bounds. She has led conversation groups, facilitated documentary discussions, created joyful music videos with members, and welcomed new members and their families through the New Beginnings program. She’s seen friendships bloom between people from all walks of life – doctors, lawyers, truck drivers, engineers – united by shared experiences. *“They understand each other’s challenges, and there’s so much laughter in those hallways,”* she says.

Her husband often tells her she floats home after a day at the Institute, filled with new connections and unexpected lessons. *“When you have aphasia, your friends sometimes begin to disappear. But you come to the Aphasia Institute, and it’s finally your chance to have those meaningful conversations again.”*



# Direct Services & Programs

Our Adult Day Programs and related services are led by professional staff and facilitated by highly trained volunteers using a mediator model. Our staff and volunteers work with members and families to understand aphasia and provide them with strategies to communicate in new ways and make meaningful connections with those around them. To maximize accessibility, our programs are offered both online and in-person.

All new members are required to participate in one of two introductory programs, New Beginnings for people with aphasia post stroke and Living Your Best Life for people living with primary progressive aphasia. After completing an introductory program, members and their families are offered access to a variety of programming and services in our Community Aphasia Programs. Some highlights from the past year:



## Younger People's Meetup (YPMU):

Building on the success of the Younger People's Program launched in 2023, this program was initiated in 2024 to foster social connections and independence among younger individuals with aphasia. YPMU encourages meetups in community settings (e.g., coffee shops, and restaurants) without staff or volunteer support. Members cited their younger age, having aphasia and their gender as the main factors that drew them together, and what keeps them together was more focused on shared interests, complimentary personalities and shared identity related to engaging in volunteering.

The original group of 8 members have started planning meetups on their own with minimal to no staff support. The YPMU will be offered to a new group of members in 2025. An abstract focused on the YPMU program was accepted for the 2025 *Aphasia Access Leadership Summit* in Pittsburgh.

## Family Support Groups

Two Family Support Groups meet weekly online and monthly for in-person gatherings that foster stronger community connections.



### Monday Group

Caregivers of individuals with aphasia due to:

- Stroke
- Brain injury or illness



### Thursday Group

Caregivers of individuals with:

- Primary Progressive Aphasia



## Members of our family support groups share their experience:

“

*“My life changed twice. First when my son had his stroke, and then when I joined the Aphasia Institute’s family support group. There was no judgment, just reaching out to offer support”*

*“I feel a part of something. I’m not alone. I appreciate the advice from members and staff”*

*“I don’t know if we would be as good as we are without the Aphasia Institute”*

## Path to Resilience Workshops

Path to Resilience is a free program that reaches family members across Ontario — many outside our usual catchment area (Toronto) — three workshops engaged 49 participants in exploring their caregiving role and emotional journey, with overwhelmingly positive feedback and impact.

3

**Workshops  
Held** (2 parts)

49

**Participants**

86%

**Found Content  
Helpful & Would  
Recommend to Others**

90%

**Helped with  
Emotional Reflection**

## Increased Online Program Participation: Supporting Online Access for Members

This year, we enhanced our team with the addition of a Communicative Disorders Assistant (CDA). Their role includes providing support and training to members, enabling them to effectively use Zoom and access our iPad lending library. This initiative has boosted participation in our online programs which continue to grow and flourish.

## Community Inquiries, Referrals, and Assessments

Staff responded to 259 Community Inquiries over this past fiscal year. Some inquiries are directly related to how to access our services, while others are focused on learning more about aphasia generally and how to access additional community support services.

## Referral Source Engagement and Education

Feedback from referral sources including hospitals, outpatient clinics, and Ontario Health@Home highlighted concerns about long wait times for introductory programs, a need for multilingual services, and a desire for more information on the impacts of our direct services. This feedback has prompted a review of our intake processes and policies to reduce wait times and add enhanced information on our website including new forms, information about our services, and resources for families. Information sessions for referring agencies will be held in Fall 2025 and allow for additional feedback to be collected.



# Volunteer Program

Volunteers and our volunteer program are the backbone of our direct services and programs for people living with aphasia.

Our volunteers are engaged in the following areas:

- Communication Group Facilitators
- Community Reintegration Outings
- Outreach (Tele-Visit) Conversation Partners
- Toastmasters
- Research
- Administration & Program Support
- Expressive Arts Program

## Recruitment

Volunteer recruitment rose by 23%, with a strategic focus on reaching older adults through sector partnerships and targeted outreach. Working with partners engaged in volunteer management, we published an article in the [Hilborn Charity eNewsletter](#) that identifies gaps and opportunities in recruiting older adults.



53

**Total  
Recruited**

23%

**Growth**

48

**Youth/  
Students**

3

**Career  
Transition**

2

**Older Adults  
(60–70)**



## Volunteer Achievement

- **53 New Volunteers**  
joined our team this year
- **145 Volunteers**  
Contributed 8,994 hours to Direct Services, Admin, Research & Fundraising
- **9 Volunteers**  
Received the Ontario Volunteer Service Award, which was presented at the Toronto Reference Library, June 2025
- **16 Outreach Volunteers**  
Made 61 outreach tele-visits to members that were unable to attend programs



## Volunteer Training and Education

One of the standout features of volunteering at the Aphasia Institute is our unwavering dedication to providing enriching and engaging educational and training opportunities. This year, we launched monthly online Volunteer Education Seminars, creating an accessible opportunity for both in-person and online volunteers. Sessions are recorded and made available on the Community Hub for active volunteers to access at their convenience.

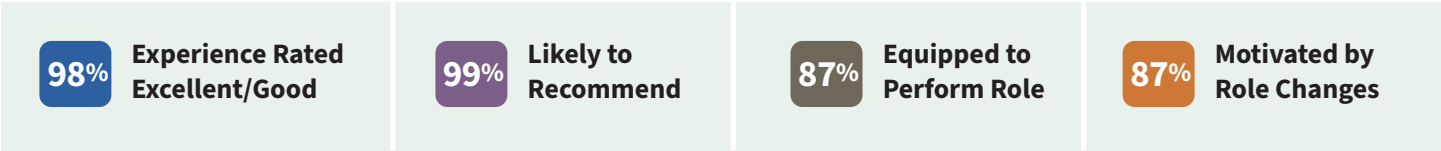
Highlights from this year include two drama focused learning workshops to improve volunteer understanding related to building inclusivity and cultural sensitivity in social interactions. We also invited volunteers to share their own expertise on a variety of topics including music games as therapy tools for people with aphasia, and the journey of one volunteer’s ability to tell stories through film.



## Volunteer Engagement

### Volunteer Survey Highlights April 2024

Volunteers reported high satisfaction and strong motivation, highlighting a supportive and engaging volunteer experience.



Thank you to our amazing Volunteer Community!				
Alyson Hassall	Jacki (Jacqueline) Silverman	Marina Ogawa	Vanessa Marques	John Nussbaum
Aaron Vincent	Jacob Rice	Meklit Tegegne	Viktoria Stradomska	Moirá Minoughan
Amisha Jagpal	Jaime Gaines	Myra Adomako	Yiannie Lin	Rose Kamnitzer
Anapaula Gonzalez	Janice Greenberg	Naomi Lewis	Zahra Sajjad	Valerie Chavossy
Bharati Bapat	Jessica Samuels	Pui Kei “Genevieve” Kam	5 – 9 Years	15 – 19 Years
Bianca Moauro	Jillian Yemen	Quynh “Quincy” Dang	Bonnie Boltman	Carol Pratap
Candice Choi	Jingyi Niu	Saba	Gillian Robinson	Cheryl Morris
Christiana Rumi	Joelle Peresin	Mirabolghasemi	Gloria Good Draper	Cynthia Blackman
Clara Choi	Judy Meshmesh	Samaana Jaffer	Joan Hamilton	George Kopulos
Clarie Leung	Juliana Ricciuti	Sarah Lewkowict	Patricia “Tricia” Broughton	John Tonus
Effie Balodemas	Kai Yi “Kai” Huang	Sharon Trinh	Susan Roza	Lynne Czutrin
Ela Andre Lising	Kate Gregory	Sheri-Anne Asaro	10 – 14 Years	25+ Years
Gabrielle Lai	Katherine Scott	Somya Khurana	Don McKellar	Mary Botterell
Erika Lam	Kiara Goldenberg	Tara Kaur	Gayle Wilmot	Myriam Shechter
Hayley Poon	Kristen Turner	Tenzin Shontsang		Urvashi Tanna
Isabella Sohl	Lauren Rabbat	Trisha Patel		

# Recreation and Community Integration Program and Special Events

## Recreation and Community Integration Program

Members and families continue to be offered a growing number of diverse experiences through our Community Outings and our attendance continues to grow. We offered 17 diverse events to members and their families — ranging from cultural outings to sports and social dining — supporting meaningful community participation and connection.

### Performing Arts

- National Ballet (3)
- Opera: *Carmen*
- Operatic Voice Competition
- Canadian Opera Company Concert

### Media & Entertainment

- The Good Stuff
- The Social
- Family Feud (2)

### Active Outings

- Indoor Climbing (2)
- Bowling

### Social Gatherings

- Strawberry Social
- Blue Jays Game
- Old Spaghetti Factory Dinner
- Winterlicious Lunch



## Engaging Members in Volunteering in the Community

The Aphasia Institute members continue to volunteer their time monthly at the Daily Bread Food Bank and bi-monthly at the Young Street Mission. This program helps to build capacity and awareness about aphasia in other community support agencies while also allowing members the opportunity to learn new skills, have fun, and give back.





## Special Events

**Town Halls** are held twice a year to update members and family members on Institute activities and gather feedback through focus groups. Topics typically include Health and Safety updates, Institute operations such as program changes and updates, and recreation and special events.

**Town Hall #1** took place in September 2024, focusing on the AGM and results of the annual Member Satisfaction Survey. An aphasia friendly version of the Corporate Records Resolution was provided to prepare for the AGM, and feedback from the Member Satisfaction Survey was discussed. Attendance included 40 members, 3 family members, and 15 volunteers joining onsite and online.

**Town Hall #2** was held in May 2025, highlighting the new Falls Prevention and Response Plan, how remaining ICare funds would be used to support special events for members and families such as the Annual Holiday Party, and preparation for Talk, Walk 'n Roll 2025. Attendance included 35 members, and 17 volunteers. This was the second hybrid-format Town Hall, with improved visibility and interaction between online and onsite participants.





# Education, Training & Resources

## New or Revised Tools and Resources

[Introduction to SCA™ eLearning module](#) was revised to meet *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) requirements, make content updates, incorporate new videos, and embrace more adult learning principles. The AODA-compliant module was launched in January 2025. In addition to the thousands of users that complete the eLearning on the Aphasia Institute's Community Hub, we are also embedding it in health system's learning management systems serving both acute and rehab settings.

Porting our eLearning allows us to promote best practice by extending the reach of our content, embeds this learning in onboarding for new staff, and is also used to refresh current staff knowledge.

## Current Reach (embedded in partner Learning Management Systems)

- Three rehab sites in *SW Ontario Stroke Network* – via *St. Joseph's Healthcare London*
- 14 acute care hospitals and 7 rehab settings (Central East Stoke Network)
- Stroke supporting institutions across Newfoundland and Labrador
- Additional Ontario Stroke Systems are coming onboard in 2025/2026!
- [The Aphasia Comic for Kids and Grandkids](#) provides some basic SCA™ techniques that kids and grandkids can use to communicate. We are distributing this resource for free in Canada through a partnership agreement with US-based Speech Language Pathologist, Graham Henderson.
- [The Aphasia Comic for Caregivers](#) which we first launched in 2023 was also [translated into Arabic](#) and uploaded to our [Aphasia Institute store](#) for free download.
- [The Communication Aid for Capacity Assessment \(CACE\) Tool](#) was reviewed and revised in collaboration with Dr. Alexandra Carling-Rowland (the original author) and re-launched in January 2025. The impetus to revise this resource came from a request from Ontario Health @Home (formerly known as Home and Community Care) who have been using the tool across Ontario. Website content was also revised to include a new section on "Capacity and Decision-Making Tools" that includes materials developed for the *European Life After Stroke Forum* in Dublin, 2024.





## Uptake of Tools and Resources

Strong engagement with our tools and platforms reflects the growing impact of communicative access practices, training, and resource sharing across health systems.

<b>SCA™ eLearning</b>	<b>5,509</b> completions by students and healthcare professionals <i>(865 from Ontario)</i>
<b>CAMS Tool</b>	<b>27</b> new facilities registered to use our Communicative Access Measures for Stroke (CAMS) online evaluation tool
<b>Videos &amp; Digital Resources</b>	<b>6,977</b> views/downloads of awareness videos and related materials
<b>ParticiPics Database</b>	<b>21,597</b> images downloaded New visuals added showing greater diversity and updated technology Backend improvements to search functionality ongoing
<b>Community Hub</b>	<b>8,458</b> new healthcare professionals registered <i>(including 1,128 from Ontario)</i>

## Quality Improvement: Improving Communicative Access in Stroke Care

Focus groups were conducted in Q2 with clinical speech pathologists and healthcare providers to gather insights on how the Aphasia Institute can support best practices in clinical settings related to SCA™ and communication accessibility. These findings will inform the development of new tools and resources that we can provide to stroke systems of care interested in improving communicative access. We continue to provide coaching and support to various individual health care providers, institutions and Stroke Networks on how to incorporate some of our existing tools like eLearning, Communicative Access Measures for Stroke, and various other resources. Some examples of this work in the last fiscal include:



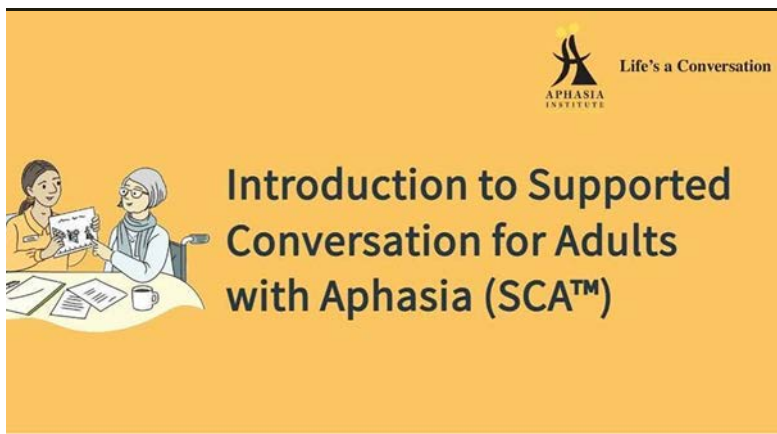
### Toronto Stroke Network (TSN)

*Toronto Stroke Network (TSN)* encompasses over 14 institutions across the GTA. We worked closely with TSN on a quality improvement project using Communicative Access Measures for Stroke (CAMS) platform and SCA™ training. Staff working across the stroke continuum of care were engaged in the initiative - including acute, integrated, inpatient, and outpatient rehabilitation units. Site specific champions encouraged completion of the CAMS both before and after training. Through this partnership we identified the need for a CAMS upgrade, which enabled aggregated reporting across units, and improved platform design.

Asha Shelton, a Speech-Language Pathologist working with the TSN, communicative access champion, and part time Trainer at the Aphasia Institute, presented a poster at the Centre for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety Certificate Capstone event highlighting local use of CAMS at Sunnybrook Health Science Centre. Asha acknowledges the Aphasia Institute's support across various initiatives below:

“

*“[I] express my sincere gratitude for your invaluable contributions to our recent quality improvement project on improving communicative access for patients with aphasia on the Neurovascular Unit at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Your efforts around CAMS support were instrumental in the project's success.”*



SLP champion and project lead Alyson King, worked closely with our team on the **NHLS Communicate Access Initiative**. Some key achievements of this partnership include porting our SCA™ eLearning module to the provincial NHLS learning management system, training 10 SLPs through our SCA™ Train the Trainer program which resulted in over 500 NHLS staff receiving basic SCA™ training. To facilitate important health related conversations between providers, patients and families “Communication Stations” were developed in 12 acute care hospitals which were filled with Aphasia Institute Resources on washable paper.

## Professional Training

We conducted a total of 15 training programs from April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025, reaching 167 trainees. We conducted 7 SCA™ CORE training programs, with 56 free Aphasia Institute sponsored spots to participants in Ontario. Additionally, we conducted 2 Train the Trainer training programs, 2 Two to Tango Training, 2 SCA™ & Group Workshop training, and 2 Counselling for People with Aphasia courses. Out of 167 attendees, 108 attendees were from Canada, and 59 were from the US and other countries.

## Member Trainers

A vital component of the SCA™ CORE training is the practical experience of using newly learned SCA™ skills and tools in conversation with Aphasia Institute members living with aphasia. Member trainers provide much-needed real-life feedback to trainees in an environment that highlights the true connection and difference the partner makes in healthcare conversations. This aspect of the SCA™ CORE training is often highlighted as the most important experience in acquiring the SCA™ skillset and mindset to prioritize conversation accessibility for people with aphasia. This year, we engaged 16 member trainers.



## Student Training

Supervised 5 graduate student placements – demonstrating a commitment to learning and mentorship for the next generation of clinicians.

- 4 SLP students from the University of Toronto
- 1 SLP Student from Western Kentucky University, who was a former volunteer
- 18 SLP Graduate Students from McMaster University participated in observation sessions

## Building Professional Trainer Capacity

This year we welcomed two new external trainers, Asha Shelton (*Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre – Toronto*) and Anne Carey (*Bruyere Health – Ottawa*). Both Asha and Anne have completed our Train the Trainer course and are SLP champions within their own regional stroke programs. Asha and Anne officially started to teach the SCA™ Core course in January 2025.



## Feedback from trainees:

***“This was a wonderful course which really sets you up with various scenarios to support the clinician’s ability to make the source material applicable. I appreciate that although we stick to the material, there is room within it to make it your own.”***

*– March 2025, Train the Trainer Trainee.*

***“I can’t recommend this course on Counselling for People with Aphasia enough. As an SLP, I’ve often felt that training in accessible counseling strategies is lacking, not just for us but across interprofessional teams. This course filled that gap in a meaningful way. I left with new knowledge and practical, scripted language that I can use to support patients and their families through challenging conversations. The course also provided communicatively accessible, picture-based tools and resources that make it easier to implement these strategies in practice.”***

*– November 2024, Counselling for People with Aphasia Trainee.*

***“While this workshop is intended primarily for learning to support people with aphasia, I love that this workshop can improve your communication skills to make someone a better communicator on the whole! I recommend this for anyone wanting to learn about communicative access, but also to become a better communicator.”***

*– September 2024, SCA Core Trainee.*

## Finland Training Pilot

We launched our partnership with Elisa Johansson, Speech Pathologist in Finland to create our first external Aphasia Institute Certified trainer. Aphasia Institute’s staff worked very closely with Elisa to develop a translated and culturally adapted training curriculum in Finnish and Swedish languages that incorporated insights and feedback from healthcare providers and people with aphasia in Finland. Lee-Ann Kant, our Lead Trainer travelled to Finland last summer to observe Elisa’s very first pilot SCA™ Core training and Elisa travelled to Toronto in Spring 2025 to visit the Aphasia Institute and see our Direct Services in action.

## Masterclass Webinar Series

Our Masterclass Webinar series participation rates continue to increase as we move into our 22nd series. We held 8 webinars as part of the Aphasia Institute Knowledge Exchange Speaker Series this fiscal with 2,610 attendees. This reflects an approximate 46% increase in attendance from the last fiscal year. This is attributed to an increase in marketing and promotion efforts through social media and Constant Contact.

Our expert speakers and topics included:

- Integrating Communicatively Accessible Counselling into Your Daily Practice, *Jerry Hoepner*
- Unleashing the Power of Research and Innovation in Aphasia Interventions, *Miranda Rose*
- Harmony after Aphasia: Choirs and the Resonance of Positive Post-Stroke Identity, *Ellen Bernstein-Ellis*
- Strategies to Integrate Communication Therapy and Daily Life Activities, *Sheila MacDonald*
- A Case for Therapeutic Aphasia Assessment: An Adult Learning Approach, *Professor Deborah Hersh*
- Supporting Functional Reading Tasks for People with Aphasia using TTS, *Kelly Knollman-Porter*
- Semantic Feature Analysis to Support Natural Conversation in Groups, *Mary Boyle*
- Communication Partner Training: Closing the Evidence-Practice Gap, *Kirstine Shrubsole*

# Research & Development

## The “Wall Question” Research Project

This project is led by the **Aphasia Institute Research Associates** which include, Dr. Esther Kim (University of Alberta), Dr. Katie Strong (Central Michigan University), Dr. Jamie Azios (University of Louisiana, Lafayette), and supported by Dr. Aura Kagan. The study examines the reliability and validity of the Wall Question as a standalone measure of quality of life. The study has involved oversight of select Aphasia Institute volunteers, graduate students from multiple universities, and clients with aphasia from our programs and elsewhere in Canada and the USA. Data collection on over 100 participants is now completed, with both quantitative and qualitative measures – an impressively large sample in comparison with other studies in the field. Preliminary results are encouraging and have been presented at two conferences.

An abstract was accepted to the *Clinical Aphasiology Conference* on May 29, 2025, “Examining Reliability, Concurrent and Face Validity, of the Wall Question as a Standalone Measure of Quality of Life”. This presentation was honoured as the “Audrey Holland Memorial Platform Presentation.”



## Peer Reviewed Publications

- Simmons-Mackie, N., Kagan, A., Chan, M., Shumway, E., & Le Dorze, G. (2024). Aphasia and acute care: a qualitative study of healthcare provider perspectives. *Aphasiology*, 1-18. doi:10.1080/02687038.2024.2392900
- Simmons-Mackie, N., Kagan, A., Le Dorze, G., Shumway, E., & Chan, M. T. (2024). Aphasia and acute care: a qualitative study of family perspectives. *Aphasiology*, 1-13. doi:10.1080/02687038.2024.2373431

## Presentations and Conferences

- Kagan, A. (2024, September). *Variation in Aphasia Intervention: Who decides?* Invited Keynote for *British Aphasiology Society International Conference*, Leicester, UK
- Elyse Shumway (2025, March). *Pratiques orthophoniques: perspectives en Neurologie 2025* Invited speaker for *Neuroformations*, Paris, France
- Lee Ann Kant and Robbyn Draimin (2024, June). *Aphasia Institute Member Trainers*, Aphasia Access Brag & Steal, Online conference



# Engaging with our Community – Communications

## Social Media

Social media engagement continues to rise across all platforms. After much thought, we made the decision to leave X (formerly Twitter). Our choice was guided by our commitment to uphold the values that matter most to us and the communities we serve.

Instagram	44% growth — from 879 to 1,269 followers
LinkedIn	19% growth — from 4,706 to 5,621 followers
Facebook	4% growth — from 2,212 to 2,302 followers

## NEW Aphasia Friendly Online Content

An **Aphasia Friendly** section of the website was finalized including new content and pictographs. This was a multi-year project partially funded by a generous donor. It was tested with staff, members, family members and volunteers with feedback informing the final version.

## Newsletters

Regular communication kept our members, volunteers, families, partners, and donors informed and engaged throughout the year.

Newsletter Type	Quantity Sent
Volunteer Communicator	11

Newsletter Type	Quantity Sent
Family Communicator	17
Training Updates	17
Building Bridges	2
Fundraising eBlasts	19

# Other News

## Strategic Planning

In Q1 and Q2, several planning sessions were held with the Strategic Planning Committee and consultations were completed with staff, family members, members, volunteers, Board, advisors, key donors, and health system contacts and partners. An almost final draft was shared with the Strategic Planning Committee in April and with the Board in May 2025 alongside a business plan to outline any new investments that might be required to achieve our goals. The new Strategic Plan will be launched at the AGM in October 2025.

## Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)

The JHSC was formed this year, and the Terms of Reference were approved by the Executive team. The JHSC reviewed the Infection, Prevention, and Control policies on an as-needed basis to ensure we are current on health and safety issues such as the flu season and COVID-19 and its variants.



# Aphasia Awards

## Pat Arato Community Partner Award

Named after our founder, the Pat Arato Community Partner Award has, since 2017, recognized our community partners and their leaders whose funding, subsidies, and expert advice reflect a deep belief in the work we do on behalf of people living with aphasia and their families.

*This year's recipients are:*



### Toronto Police Service 33 Division

Toronto Police Service 33 Division is recognized for their continued support of the Aphasia Institute's mission. Their involvement in our Talk, Walk 'n Roll fundraiser has been truly meaningful. For the second year in a row, their team of officers provided a reassuring and friendly presence along the Don Mills Trail, helping foster a strong sense of safety and community spirit.



### Yonge Street Mission's Evergreen Meal Program

Yonge Street Mission's Evergreen Meal Program is honoured for their meaningful partnership with the Aphasia Institute. Through their welcoming and inclusive environment, they have created valuable volunteer opportunities for our members. Their openness to learning about aphasia and Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™), along with their thoughtful accommodations, reflect the compassionate spirit this award celebrates.

## Gerry Cormier Communicative Access Award

Launched in 2010, the Gerry Cormier Communicative Access Award was renamed in 2014 to honour the enormous contributions of the late Gerry Cormier, a man with aphasia who agreed to be featured in our educational materials. Created in the early 1990s, the "Gerry Videos" remain a key component of our aphasia training today. This award recognizes individuals and organizations whose work has significantly reduced barriers to full life participation for people living with aphasia.

*This year's recipient is:*



### Alyson King, Newfoundland & Labrador Health Services

Alyson's leadership of the Communication Access Initiative with Newfoundland & Labrador Health Services exemplifies the spirit of this award. From training over 500 staff in Supported Conversation for Adults with Aphasia (SCA™), launching Communication Stations in 12 hospitals, to advocating for the integration of our eLearning into the provincial Learning Management System, Alyson's work is driving lasting, systemic change. We are proud to have supported and collaborated with her on this initiative and are inspired by her commitment at both the clinical and system levels.



## Ambassador Award

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The Ambassador Award was launched in 2005 to recognize outstanding contributions to the Aphasia Institute community.

*This year's recipients are:*

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### **Lorraine Podolsky – SLP Consultant, Former Staff**

Lorraine is being honoured for her exceptional contributions to the Aphasia Institute community. Most recently, her generous contributions of time and expertise to the aphasia-friendly section of the Institute's website, [You Have Aphasia](#), were instrumental to the project's success. Her thoughtful feedback, active participation, and professional insight as a speech-language pathologist and former staff member helped guide the team through years of development, culminating in a successful public launch during Aphasia Awareness Month.



### **Lydia Acheampong – Member**

Lydia receives this award in recognition of her impactful efforts to raise awareness about aphasia and disability. Her leadership as the Member Champion of our Talk, Walk 'n Roll fundraiser stood out, as she actively engaged the broader community and helped amplify our mission through education and advocacy.



### **Patricia Broughton – Volunteer**

Patricia is recognized for her outstanding dedication as a volunteer over the past eight years. Her leadership in launching our new Games Program, support at the Daily Bread Food Bank, and involvement in both the Outreach and New Beginnings Programs — onsite and online — have been invaluable. Alongside her regular commitment to our onsite Conversation Program, Patricia has also helped recruit new volunteers and enthusiastically participated in our Adapted Climbing outing, embodying the spirit of this award.



### **Seekumar Ramphal – Member**

Seekumar is celebrated for his vibrant contributions to the Aphasia Institute community. His cheerful spirit and high energy have left a lasting impression on everyone around him. Most recently, his enthusiastic participation in our Talk, Walk 'n Roll fundraiser stood out, as his positivity and encouragement inspired others to support our cause through donations — helping to strengthen the sense of community that makes this event so meaningful.



# Fundraising



## Talk, Walk 'n Roll

### Talk, Walk 'n Roll 2024

In 2024, for the first time, we successfully held Talk, Walk 'n Roll at the Aphasia Institute. The walk 'n roll around the neighbourhood was followed by social activities including live music, games, and refreshments.

The event proved to be a resounding success, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of everyone involved. The day was filled with family, friends, joy, and a profound sense of community. Together, we achieved our fundraising goal, raising over \$110,000. These funds will significantly contribute to our programs, research, educational, and training initiatives.



### Annual Appeal 2024

Our Annual Appeal 2024 showcased the inspiring friendship between Leigh, John, and Scott, members of the Younger People's Group, as they navigate the challenges of aphasia in the prime of their lives. Their journey shows the significant impact that the Aphasia Institute's programs, tools, and research have on individuals living with aphasia.

With the generous support of our donors, we successfully raised \$48,000! We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in or supported our fundraising efforts throughout the year.





# 2024/25 Donor Recognition

**\$25,000** Anonymous (1) Ron Strange **\$5,001 – \$25,000** David Davidson Munro Canada Operations Inc. Gary Ryan **\$1,001 – \$5,000** Anonymous (1) Irma & Colin Benner Peter Blakely Veronica Branigan Dennis & Nomi Brans Tom Bruce Paul Cecchetto Nida Chaudhary Isabelle Clements Peter Cruickshank Earnest Charitable Foundation Jane Brenneman Doug Gibson Silvia Gomes Steve Hobbs Laura Johnson Akilan Karunanandan George & Susan Kopulos Andy Martin Bruce McCallum Joseph Pataki Esther (Georgiana) Rose The Very Useful Theatre Company John Watson **\$501 – \$1,000** Anonymous (1) Mary Botterell Brettler Mintz Foundation Catherine Brookman Heather Courneya Clifford Faigan Natalie Gierman Joan Hamilton Irene Hewitt Dixie Jones Aura & Mannie Kagan Musarait Kashmiri Mary & Bruce Lewis Brahm Nathans Northern Chickpeas Alliance Inc. 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# 2024/25 Financials

## A word from our auditor to the Directors of the Aphasia Institute:

The accompanying condensed statements of financial position, revenues, expenditures, and net assets are derived from the complete financial statements of the Aphasia Institute as at March 31, 2025 and for the year then ended on which I expressed a qualified audit opinion, which is a common practice with respect to charitable organizations, in my Independent Auditor's Report dated June 23, 2025. The fair summarization of the complete financial statements is the responsibility of the Institute. My responsibility, in accordance with the applicable Assurance Guideline of CPA Canada, is to report on the condensed financial statements. In my opinion, the accompanying condensed financial statements fairly summarize, in all material respects, the related complete financial statements in accordance with the criteria described in the Guideline referred to above. Since these are condensed financial statements, readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes. For more information on the Institute's financial position, results of operations and cash flow, reference should be made to the related complete financial statements.

**Peter Tsui** CPA, CA, LPA

*Copies of the complete audited financial statements are available upon request.*



*Peter Tsui*

## Financial Key Highlights

For the year ended March 31, 2025, the Aphasia Institute had a net surplus of revenue over expense of \$8,471.

Revenues	24/25 \$	23/24 \$	Variance	Expenditures	24/25 \$	23/24 \$	Variance
Government & other grants	1,696,048	1,685,977	10,071	Salaries and employee benefits	1,435,232	1,324,442	110,790
Donations and fundraising	281,811	326,579	-44,768	Occupancy costs	341,382	337,303	4,079
Resource Material	36,311	30,766	5,545	Office expenses	91,690	96,362	-4,672
Client service fees	36,677	25,780	10,897	Provincial education and training	105,457	125,011	-19,554
Professional training and education	92,897	112,812	-19,915	Client services	8,563	9,218	-655
Investment Income	129,121	105,572	23,549	Amortization of capital assets	11,563	17,173	-5,610
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	1,113	1,113	-	Fundraising	18,154	42,779	-24,625
Other income	-	-	-	Staff development and travel	16,730	29,091	-12,361
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>2,273,978</b>	<b>2,288,599</b>	<b>-14,621</b>	Professional fees	146,148	204,011	-57,863
				Professional training and resource materials	13,511	11,872	1,639
				Bank charges and commission	15,815	9,985	5,830
				Equipment and software maintenance	61,262	86,322	-25,060
				<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>2,265,507</b>	<b>2,293,569</b>	<b>-28,062</b>

<b>Net Surplus</b>	2024/25: <b>\$8,471</b>	2023/24: <b>\$-4,970</b>	Variance: <b>\$13,441</b>
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For a complete review of the Audited Statements as of March 31, 2025, please see the Annual Reports page of our website: [www.aphasia.ca](http://www.aphasia.ca).



**Nida Chaudhary,**  
Treasurer

In FY 2024/2025, the Aphasia Institute closed the fiscal year with a surplus of \$8,471 of revenues over expenditures. Revenue increases in the current year were driven by an additional federal grant from the Canadian Service Recovery Fund which required reporting and approval by the Canadian Red Cross Society. In addition, there was additional revenues generated by higher year over year resource sales, client programming fees and investment income. This was offset by reduced revenues related to decreases in donations and fundraising and professional training. Expenses for salaries and benefits, rent and bank charges and commissions increased during the fiscal year.



## 2024/25 Aphasia Institute Board of Directors

**Jane Brenneman Gibson**  
*Board Chair*

**Peter Blakely**  
*Board Vice-Chair  
Chair of Fund Development  
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*Treasurer/Secretary  
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Nominations Committee*

## Leadership Team

**Natalie Gierman**  
*Executive Director*

**Musarait Kashmiri**  
*Director, Finance & Operations*

**Catherine Brookman**  
*Executive Advisor, Quality and Accreditation*

**Elyse Shumway**  
*Director, Clinical Services & Education*

**Rumi Gutter**  
*Manager, Social Work & Client Services*

**Shannon Hill**  
*Manager, Volunteer Services*

## 2024/25 Aphasia Institute Staff Team

**Allan Brown**  
*Art Instructor*

**Aura Kagan, Ph.D.**  
*Executive Advisor, Strategy,  
Research & Education*

**Caryl Pereira**  
*Executive Assistant*

**Clare Thompson**  
*Team Assistant, Client Services*

**Edward Luong**  
*Speech Language Pathologist*

**Fatima Cabral**  
*Coordinator, Recreation &  
Community Integration*

**Ipshita Siddiquee**  
*Coordinator, Communications and Donor  
Relations*

**Joan Borja**  
*Social Worker, Intake Family & Outreach*

**Leanne Buck**  
*Social Worker, Intake Family & Outreach*

**Lee-Ann Kant**  
*Lead Trainer & Speech Language Pathologist*

**Melodie Chan**  
*Coordinator, Research, Development &  
Implementation*

**Michael Chin**  
*Coordinator, Finance & HR*

**Nadya Shamji**  
*Speech Language Pathologist*

**Neetika Dhaddha**  
*Speech Language Pathologist*

**Nowel Ahmed**  
*Communicative Disorders Assistant*

**Robbyn Draimin**  
*Speech Language Pathologist*

**Sara Han**  
*Lead, Professional Education  
& Implementation*

**Wimmy Lam**  
*Executive Assistant*



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)

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The Aphasia Institute is committed to fostering a positive and respectful workplace free from harassment and discrimination, where everyone feels respected, safe and welcome. We are committed to gaining a deeper understanding with respect to EDI and prioritize educational opportunities for staff and volunteers as per our Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Anti-Racism framework and Indigenous, Inuit, Metis, and Urban Indigenous framework which is part of our Multi-Sector Service Agreement (MSAA).

## Land Acknowledgement

The Aphasia Institute continues on its path to learn about the vast array of Indigenous cultures and their history, as well as the harmful effects of colonization. We are proud to have created an aphasia-friendly Land Acknowledgment shared at our gatherings. This is a living document that continues to develop and reflect our learning journey.



### Aphasia Institute

73 Scarsdale Road  
Toronto, ON  
Canada M3B 2R2  
(416) 226-3636

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:

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