

## June is Aphasia Awareness Month

We are so excited to share with you our latest newsletter written by our members with support from our volunteers at The Adler Aphasia Center in Maywood, NJ.

### Starting at Adler

By Lisa G

When I first had my stroke, I couldn't speak at all. My fiancé Moe said, "I don't know how to help you, what can I do?" I was talking but it was rubbish. I was very sad because I couldn't talk. I went to the hospital for 5 days because I was depressed. And then I saw a sign that said APHASIA and I asked Moe, "What's this?" It was a sign for the Adler Aphasia Center, and I said, "I'm going to go." He said he would take me. I wanted to go! We went for a tour and I was so happy because of all the people who also had aphasia. It was so warm and friendly there. I was talking nonsense but got better and better there because of the people and because I talked a lot.



Lisa G.

And I am still doing better because all the people are helping me and I can help them too. Everything here is all good. We talk all the time. And it's getting better.

Every summer we do a play in Drama Club. Last year we did Sister Act. Sister Act was fantastic, I put money in the jukebox and we were all dancing on the stage. That was my favorite part! We went to where the people were seated and we were giving them tee shirts with Sister Act on them. They were happy. Some got water bottles or pins. We are doing another show this summer. I can't wait for everyone to see it. I won't say the name so it will be a surprise.

### Moving Right Along

By Peter C.

When I had my stroke 3 years ago, I was depressed and I did nothing except walk the dog. Now I text with my friends or face time, we can make plans to meet. Every day I learn a new word and talk to people, I'm improving. I go the gym, I walk, go to New York, I love cooking. Now I can read the recipes.

When I first had my stroke, I couldn't read the signs in the supermarket. I went up and down every aisle. Now I can read and it's much easier. Driving is easier too, I don't get lost.



Peter C.

Having aphasia is like being in another country, talking is hard. We used to visit Spain and other countries, where different languages are spoken. Aphasia feels like that now.

Aphasia hasn't stopped me from living. Slowly I am getting better each day.

## We Are Survivors

By Crystal B.

Aphasia is a speech disorder usually caused by a stroke. There are at least 2 million people in the United States who have aphasia. Speech therapists play a vital role in assisting those like myself who have difficulty communicating.

Speech therapy should be started while hospitalized and while in rehab and at home. Friends and family can help also. Talk to us slowly, be patient and have a pen and paper handy. We are the same person before the stroke, still smart, still beautiful, still a good person.

We are not victims, WE ARE SURVIVORS AND WARRIORS. We continue to overcome life's difficulties and continue thriving, aphasia or not. Do not pity us, SUPPORT US AND THE ADLER APHASIA CENTER!!!



**Crystal B.**

## Raising Our Voices for Aphasia

By George F.

Community Baptist of Englewood is one of the churches I attend. New Hope Baptist Church of Hackensack is another church I attend.

In 2014, we held a fundraiser at Community Baptist called "Raising our Voices for Aphasia". It featured Vy Higgensen's Gospel for Teens choir. Lori Stokes was the Master of Ceremonies.

I gave a 5 minute presentation about aphasia and how the center helped me. I was very nervous. It's hard to get up in front of people because of my aphasia. Some of my jewelry was sold that day. We had a sale after the concert.

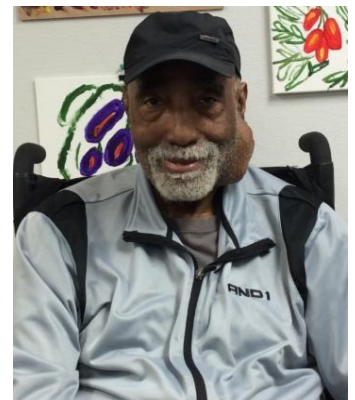
The following is my speech:

"My name is George F. and I grew up in Englewood. I used to work for IBM, New York Power Authority and in construction.

I had a stroke 7 years ago and got aphasia. I was in the hospital for a whole year. A speech therapist at Hackensack Hospital told me about the Adler Aphasia Center..

I started coming 2 days a week. I meet other people with aphasia. There are a lot of programs but I really like the computer and video chat. Now I love fantasy baseball where I am able to pick my teams on the iPad. Coming to the Center helps me communicate better.

Your donations help give scholarships to people who can't afford to come. Please tell people about our Center so they know there is help for aphasia."



**George F.**

## ACT FAST!

By Alyson B.

In an article titled, New York-Presbyterian: Know what to do if you see someone having a stroke, there are two words everyone should know if someone is having a stroke, ACT FAST! It is estimated that 2 million cells die in the brain every minute, if the brain is deprived of oxygen.

### Call 911 and know what to do when waiting for help to arrive:

**Don't** drive to the hospital. Paramedics are quicker and can recognize when someone is having an emergency.

**Don't** take an aspirin. Leave the medication to the medical personnel.

**Don't** take anything to eat or drink. Swallowing could be an issue.

**Do** write down the time. Once you have a time written down, it will greatly help the emergency team.

**Do** help the person lie down. Keep stroke victims on their side with their head elevated to promote blood flow.

**Do** loosen any confining articles of clothing.

**Do** check on breathing and pulse. If the person is unconscious and does not have a pulse, begin CPR immediately.

I never knew not to take an aspirin. Everyone is always saying if you encounter someone having a stroke, take aspirin. So, now I know you should NOT take aspirin until you see a medical person.

The article by NY Presbyterian was informative.



**Alyson B.**

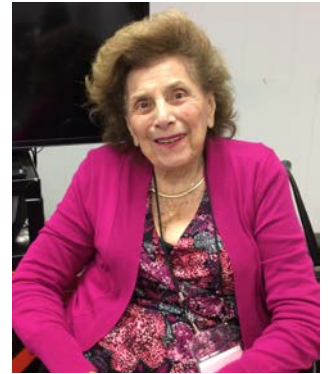
## Glad I Found Adler

By Charlotte E.

The thing that bothers me most is my speech. I feel like people have a hard time understanding me. I was hoping that my speech would improve since the stroke but I don't think it has. I think it has become worse since the loss of my husband.

I have three children and six grandchildren and I don't think I keep in touch with them like I used to because I don't think I communicate with them the way I would like to. I don't want to blame my inability to communicate on my age. I never felt or acted my age. I blame it totally on my aphasia. That means I have to come to the Adler Center as often as possible to improve my speech as I come from a very long lived family.

The way I found the Center is when my husband Dan and I were taking a walk one day and saw the Center. We saw the sign and went inside. We didn't even know what aphasia was. Elaine Adler was sitting at the front desk. After speaking to her, she suggested I might have aphasia. I didn't even know I had had a stroke. So I went to the doctor and he diagnosed a stroke and told me I could improve. That's when I started coming to the Adler Center regularly. When I come to the Center I don't feel like anyone is judging me. When I leave the Center after a day of activity, I always feel that I might have improved somewhat, but I don't believe I really spoke well, like my old self.



**Charlotte E.**

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### **Aphasia Communication Groups (ACGs)** **There are ten ACGs throughout New Jersey!**

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