



60 WEST HUNTER AVE MAYWOOD, NJ 07607 201.368.8585

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WITH APHASIA
COMMUNICATION
GROUPS IN
BRIDGEWATER
HAMMONTON
MAYWOOD
MONROE
MORRISTOWN
SCOTCH PLAINS
TOMS RIVER



**UNION CITY** 



#### WHO WE ARE

The Adler Aphasia Center is among the largest and one of the few freestanding aphasia treatment centers in the world dedicated to providing a therapeutic environment of innovative programming for people with aphasia and their caregivers. Since 2003, we have offered help and hope to stroke and brain injury survivors by teaching our members new communication skills, while offering opportunities to engage with others with aphasia and re-engage in their communities. We are also dedicated to improving the quality of life for the families and the caregivers themselves through professional support. Aphasia is a communication disorder that affects 40% of all stroke and brain trauma survivors. In NJ, there are an estimated 70.000 people with aphasia and nationally, 2.5 million. We operate two full service facilities with programming four days a week in Maywood and West Orange, NJ and eight Aphasia Communication Groups, a less intensive program offered twice a month in the towns of Bridgewater, Hammonton, Maywood, Monroe, Morristown, Scotch Plains, Toms River and Union City.

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**Life Coach** Meryl Nadell, M.S.W., LCSW

Program Director, Adler Aphasia Center -West Orange and Aphasia Communication Groups Wendy Greenspan, M.A., CCC-SLP

**Research Speech-Language Pathologist** Gretchen Szabo, M.A., CCC-SLP

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**Volunteer Coach/Development Associate** Stephanie Perna

**Executive Administrative Assistant**Amy May

**Program Assistants**Special thanks to Easter Seals for providing clerical assistance to our Center.

#### **OUR CO-FOUNDER'S MESSAGE**



Let me start by saying what a great privilege it is to know and care for our members with aphasia and their caregivers. Like so many people, I suddenly became a caregiver myself, so I know firsthand how they need all the help they can get when taking on the responsibility of caring for a loved one.

I am proud to continue to have a vital role in strengthening our caregivers' voices as well as the voices of our members with aphasia. And I'm certain Mike

would share this pride.

Fondly,

Baine Adler

Elaine Adler

#### **OUR BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE**



The pleasure of volunteering on this Board of Directors is the gratification we get when visiting the Center, whether it is during programming, at a charitable function or just shopping at *Something Special* and seeing our members and caregivers' smiles. We often hear, with great appreciation, the children of a member or a caregiver speak about what this organization means to their family and that is reward enough for me and for the members of this Board.

Looking forward, there will be an effort to increasingly meet the needs of our members, their caregivers and their families. We are also making a concerted effort to meet the needs of those living with aphasia throughout NJ by spreading our program to new communities. This was the Adlers' wish and of each of us serving on this board. We hope that you will help us in our efforts by being our ambassadors and promoting our mission, to expand awareness and knowledge of aphasia, through your financial support of our services. The most important ideals of our Board is that "no one ever be turned away from receiving services because of a lack of financial resources."

Cordially

Charles P. Berkowitz

#### **OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO'S MESSAGE**



Caregivers play a critical role in the long term recovery of a person with aphasia. Whether it be a relative or paid person, when you are having difficulty communicating, often times the caregiver becomes the voice and advocate for those they care for. The Center has always recognized and valued the partnership between the person with aphasia and the caregiver. Providing the support and education the caregiver needs to ensure that the person with aphasia has his/her message understood is part of the education and training

we offer the caregiver in an orientation session at the Center as well as in ongoing group discussion.

Our annual report this year pays tribute to these unsung heroes. People recruited for a job they didn't expect or weren't prepared for, yet providing care day in and day out with love and compassion for their spouse, partner, friend or family member. Read the stories of our caregivers and their loved ones and see how the Center has helped them to live life to the fullest. Note how one daughter's life, Christina, changed direction when she pursued a career as a speech language pathologist after her mom was left with aphasia after her stroke. Read about Don and how he felt privileged to care for his wife and now Don shares his insight with other caregivers facilitating caregiver groups.

Christina, Don, Evi, Jennifer and our many caregivers as well as Elaine Adler know that their story might be your story someday as all of us will be caregivers at some point in our lives. The lesson I have learned from them is: life may be different but it doesn't mean it still can't be a life full of love and good times.

With sincere admiration for our caregivers,

Karen Tucker Karen Tucker

## STRENGTHENING THE VOICES OF PEOPLE WITH APHASIA

Considered the gold standard of long-term aphasia treatment programs worldwide, the Adler Aphasia Center was among the first pioneers in 2003 to use group treatment focusing on regaining conversational skills and re-engagement in life, called the Life Participation Approach to Aphasia (LPAA). Having developed alternative strategies to help people with aphasia better communicate and enhance their quality of life, we are successfully producing meaningful real-life outcomes. By empowering people with aphasia to participate in their recovery process, we offer highly supportive interventions that allow them to more rapidly return to an active life. Adler Aphasia Center's programs and services are changing the lives of those with aphasia as we help them get back their lives and support them in their recovery.

#### LIFE SKILLS

Life Skills programming is the heart of what we do at our full service facilities in Maywood and West Orange. Aphasia has a profound effect on a person's life, causing emotional distress, depression, and social isolation, due to loss of language. Our programs aim to improve their communication skills, provide peer support, make new social connections, and build their confidence while improving their quality of life. In 2016:

- An average of 188 people with aphasia each month participated in more than 50 innovative discussion group activities in Maywood and West Orange;
- Our programs logged **over 12,000** therapeutic visits, improving our members' communication skills, confidence and self-esteem;
- Our Technology program participants wrote 12 member newsletters and 9 blogs;
- We offered approximately **1500** sessions in our computer lab with **84%** of our members participating.

#### **SOMETHING SPECIAL**

This cutting edge vocational program offers members an opportunity to participate in business development, crafting couture gifts, and assist in outreach to the corporate and local communities from which to share their experiences with aphasia in order to raise awareness. In 2016:

## Evi and Steve

Steve bumped into Evi on a cold winter's day on a ski slope, where he literally and figuratively knocked her off her feet as he was learning to ski. Steve was smitten immediately and made it up to her by buying her a hot chocolate. Fast forward 52 years into marriage and he is still smitten and still sharing hot chocolate with her.

A former Assistant Superintendent of Schools in the Bronx, Steve suffered a stroke in 2012. Used to talking for hours on end, this came to an abrupt halt with Steve's aphasia. As his caregiver, Evi learned to tackle taxes, medications, appointments and retrieving his myriad passwords for their accounts. But one of the hardest things for her has been losing her conversation partner. "It's more than tough being a caregiver. But his stroke and aphasia have brought us closer together in a way that I didn't expect," says Evi.

Steve has been attending the Center since 2014.
Evi attends the Center's weekly caregiver support group and has developed strong bonds

with other caregivers. The caregivers have formed a Caregiver Breakfast Club and gather weekly for support and to share each other's stories. "Caregivers can easily live a life of quiet desperation. But I am learning to use my inner strengths and honesty to help other caregivers by sharing my stories with newfound friends and that makes Steve happier. He loves coming to the Center, as do I."



- Members of *Something Special* donated **3,488 man hours** to this program;
- Revenue surpassed **\$60,000** by selling **4780** gifts with **542** orders taken;
- Proceeds from 2009 2016 totalled \$323,600 and have provided 19 members with full-year scholarships.

#### RESEARCH

Our formal research program demonstrates the efficacy of our model to expand the understanding of aphasia rehabilitation. We conduct annual assessment testing and satisfaction surveys which showed that after one year of participation in Adler programming, our members had statistically significant improvements in communication skills and in perceived quality of life. Our most recent member surveys showed in 2016 that:

- 97% maintained/improved their communication skills and increased their knowledge of aphasia;
- 95% maintained/improved their friendships and their participation in recreational and social activities;

- **91%** maintained/increased their comfort level in using computers, tablets, smartphones etc.;
- **84%** maintained/increased their use of technology in their daily lives;
- **95%** maintained/increased their level of comfort interacting in the community.

#### **VOLUNTEERS AND DONORS**

Our donors and volunteers continue to be our champions for our Center, our members and their families. In 2016:

- 780 donors told us that they value the work we do through their meaningful gifts;
- 2 150 volunteers donated 7,550 hours of service to our Center.



## OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

By providing healthcare professionals and students, service employees and the public the appropriate training and education strategies to communicate with people with aphasia, they are helping them to increase access to care, entitlements and vital services. In 2016:

- We actively trained and educated **over 3,000** NJ medical personnel, students, and service workers;
- We educated those in **more than 60**NJ institutions within a **7** county area;
- We surveyed those we trained before and after each training period. The average score prior to participation in the program was **79.9%**. The average score on the quiz after the program was **90.5%**. This improvement in responses demonstrates that this program resulted in increased knowledge about aphasia.

## APHASIA COMMUNICATION GROUPS

This replicable model is now in place in 8 NJ counties, offering twice monthly therapeutic groups to more people with aphasia throughout NJ. By exposing them to long term therapeutic opportunities, we are showing them the important role that these groups can play in their recovery. In 2016:

- We served an average of **82 people** with aphasia per month in **7** NJ towns;
- We set the stage to add **3 new groups** in 2017, including a bilingual group;
- Our member survey for these groups, on a scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree, showed:
  - o The group helps me communicate better. Ave. score = **4.69**
  - The group helps me meet others with aphasia. Ave. score = 4.90
  - The group helps me be more confident. Ave. score = 4.72
  - The group helps me feel better about living with aphasia.
     Ave. score = 4.75

# and the importance of investing in their well-being. The Center routinely witnesses the successes and triumphs as well as the effects of stress on the families and friends who care for their loved ones. From day one, supporting our caregivers has been a priority alongside serving our members with aphasia. We offer professional support for those whose loved ones are members of our Centers, those who are professional aides and for the caregiving community in general

We fully understand the role of the caregiver

**STRENGTHENING** 

**OUR CAREGIVERS** 

THE VOICES OF

We provided education, communication strategies and support to an average of **103 caregivers** each month;

not affiliated with our program. In 2016:

- We offered formal caregiver support groups during our business hours, facilitated by a life coach, in Maywood (during evening hours as well), West Orange and select Aphasia Communication Groups;
- We provided them with local resources to further support their needs;
- We taught them strategies to communicate with a person with aphasia, as part of our Aphasia Education Program, a 4 day program offered 3 times a year for people with aphasia and their caregivers, regardless if they are affiliated with our Center;
- We provided social opportunities to meet other caregivers informally through family centered events and outings, such as holiday parties, our annual camping trip, annual family dinners and our annual musical and choir performances;
  - We included them as part of our Adler public speaking team when visiting corporate partners to educate their employees about aphasia and caregiving.

Even when caregiving demands become more intense, caregivers often tell us of the positive aspects of their experiences. Caregiving makes them feel good about themselves knowing they are giving back to someone who has cared for them, as well as knowing that their loved one is getting the best care possible. The role also gives new meaning to their lives, enabling them to learn new skills and strengthen their relationships.

## Don and Peggy

Don remembers the exact date in 2007 when he went from pharmacist and husband of a superwoman named Peggy to caregiver. Peggy's stroke and aphasia changed the entire family dynamic overnight. He admits to having had it made as the primary breadwinner for his family, as Peggy did everything for the household. Suddenly he was emerged in scheduling medications, organizing doctor visits, preparing meals, housekeeping and mobility issues.

Peggy's aphasia eventually brought her to Kean University's aphasia group, where Don reluctantly tried their caregiver support group.
"I was surprised at my own misconceptions – I met normal

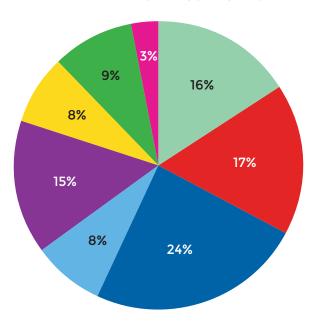
people who had the generosity of spirit to put their own stories and pain to one side to listen to another person. I gained valuable tips, understanding and support that have had a huge impact on my life," says Don.

Gaining confidence and strength in his abilities to be an effective and loving caregiver, Don periodically spoke to Kean's graduate students about his new role as caregiver. Peggy participated at Adler's Aphasia Communication Group in Morristown until her passing in 2015. Recalling how helpful this program was for Peggy, Don wanted to give back to this community. He approached Adler about using his newfound knowledge to facilitate an Adler caregiver support group in Bridgewater.

Don frequently shares his personal experiences with his caregiver group. He learned the importance of real communication not just with Peggy, but with the stranger in the grocery line. Now he is privileged to share his stories and provide a place where he can help caregivers find their own ray of hope, just as Adler's program did for Don.

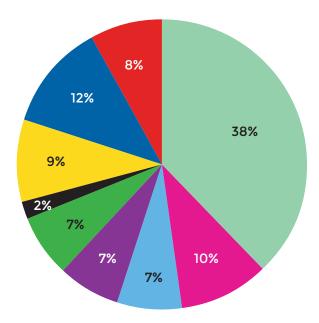
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#### WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



- Corporations
- Foundations
- Individual
- Government Grants
- Special Events
- Member Fees
- Training, Research and Program Fees
- Something Special Revenue

#### AND WHERE THE MONEY GOES



- Life Skills
- Technology
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- Education, Training and Outreach
- Research
- Adler at Hadassah Academic College
- Adler at West Orange and Aphasia Communication Groups
- Management & Administration
- Marketing and Development

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In 2016, we launched the Center's Anniversary Campaign, Strengthening Voices, designed to honor the exceptional contributions of Mike and Elaine Adler in the field of aphasia therapy and to raise \$1.5 million by the end of 2018, our 15th anniversary. The success of this campaign will help ensure that the Center can sustain and expand programming on behalf of people with aphasia for years to come.



With a minimum gift of \$2,500 or more, we thank the following donors as of this publication date whose combined voices have been heard as part of the broader Adler community.

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