
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.

My Stroke

By Charlotte E.

Adler Aphasia Center I'm so happy I found you!

I had my stroke about 5 years ago. The doctor told me I had a stroke. I don't have too many memories of that time, I had the stroke but didn't even realize that I had it.

My whole life is changed since the stroke. I was a fine speaker before the stroke. I'm trying to get back to the way I was.

I had no idea what aphasia was.

My husband and I were walking one day and saw the center. We went in and met Elaine Adler. We asked about the center and she explained what the center was about.

I have been coming here for about 4 years. When I first came to the center, I realized I had to learn how to help myself. People come out of their shells here.

I had to learn how not to feel like an outcast. I had to push myself to be accepted and more like I was before the stroke.

The volunteers are so important to me. They are nice people who make me to feel included at the center.



Charlotte E.

Before Adler and After

By George F.

Eleven years ago I had a stroke. I was in the hospital and in a rehab center for one year. The stroke left me with weakness in my right arm and difficulty speaking. I could read and understand, but no one ever told me I had aphasia. When I was discharged from the rehab center the speech therapist suggested that I go to the Adler Aphasia Center. It was at the Adler Aphasia Center that I learned for the first time that I had aphasia. I knew I had trouble speaking and writing but I didn't know there was a name for it. When I was told what I had it made me feel so much better.



George F.

Aphasia can affect a person's ability to understand, speak, read and/or write but not their intellect. For me, the problems were with speaking and writing. I had what was called "tip of the tongue." I knew what I wanted to say but I couldn't get the words out. I also could not write because I lost use of my right hand and had to learn to write with my left hand.

It is so important that professionals use the word aphasia because it helps the patient understand what he's dealing with and that there is a lot of hope for improvement. That is why I have been coming to the Adler Aphasia Center for ten years. My interactions with others at the center have helped me to speak a little better. I have made many friends and gained a lot of self-confidence. I hope that in the next ten years I will continue to improve all of my skills.

Patience and Humor!

By Art M.

I used to be a fireman. I took care of emergencies. Then I had a stroke. That was 10 years ago.

Since then, I have tried to be very independent but I have had to learn one new skill...PATIENCE!

That is the most important thing I have learned since my stroke. I think I am a much better listener as a result.

The other quality that is important for anyone with aphasia is a sense of humor. I always had one, and I still do.

Patience and a sense of humor help me live with the challenges of aphasia.



Art M.

Working with the New Normal

By Mike H.

People with aphasia from a stroke or other traumatic brain injury (TBI) often have their lives completely changed. Many can't perform even the simplest of tasks, at first. Family, friends, and neighbors don't call or come over after a while. Uncomfortable, scared and alone, aphasia survivors watch TV all day or look out the window.



Mike H.

When I had a stroke, I felt the same way. My speech was mangled and I couldn't write. My friends and co-workers were far away and soon started not to write emails or come visit. My wife was now working for two, and our kids were young and couldn't quite handle it. For a year after my stroke, I went to speech therapy twice a week, watched Netflix with subtitles, and played solitaire and Civilization on my computer.

Then, my wife's co-worker told her about the Adler Aphasia Center. Even though I went twice a week, I was still shy and withdrawn, rarely speaking. But I found out just how much everybody was willing to engage and help out. They couldn't do the same things they used to do, but they found other interests to take their place. They were bankers or lawyers or office workers, and now they became cooks or jewelry makers or singers.

Life is adjusting to my new normal. With the help of my new friends, I can speak again and have conversations. I can write again with difficulty, but my Dragon software helps. I talk to doctors and nurses about aphasia after life in a hospital. For the third time, I'm in our play in August where I will be playing the bad guy— I still can't understand the whole 'bad guy' thing, I really just want to 'help' people (*cough*). I still can't cook, though.

Living My Best Life

By Crystal B.

Having aphasia has had an emotional impact on my life. I was suddenly unable to speak, multitask and comprehend complex thoughts or readings. I couldn't spell and still can't spell correctly and compute mathematical equations without using a calculator or spellcheck.

Before my stroke I was employed by the City of Yonkers Police Department as a Public Safety Dispatcher aka 911 Dispatcher. I was a matriculating student at Fordham University Graduate School of the Social Sciences pursuing my Master of Social Work (MSW).



Crystal B.

Being unable to work was and still is heartbreaking. I defined myself as a good person and American because I felt I was contributing to society. I am very emotional because of my stroke and tend to look at things in a more negative manner. I try to keep a happy face but it's hard sometimes. Coming to the Adler Aphasia Center has helped me improve my moods on the days I attend. The members, staff and volunteers embrace me and my feelings and make me feel like I belong and I am a "good" person.

Things are looking up at the moment and hopefully the feeling will stay with me. I'm now on the Board of Directors at the Adler Aphasia Center and I'm a "good" person now. This opportunity is making me feel like I'm getting my POWER back and it feels amazing. I have a strong commitment to aphasia as it has had a direct impact on me, my life and how I live my life. Being on the board strengthens my advocacy role and I am determined to live my best life.

Looking at Aphasia from a Brighter Side

By Alyson B.

I had a stroke on September 28, 2013, so I had copious amounts of physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. About one and a half years after my stroke, I began looking at aphasia from a brighter side. Sports, sharing my story with aphasia, and acting were all some of the unexpected hobbies I took on.

I had played softball and high school tennis before my stroke. I was glad to do it.



Alyson B.

After my stroke, I have done adaptive tennis, Burke rehab hand cycling, Leaps of Faith adaptive water skiing, Helen Hayes sailing clinic and Blue Water Divers scuba lessons. The No Barriers Summit was fantastic. It's a 3 day event in Lake Tahoe. Some of the speakers were Marlie Matlin, Noah Galloway, and Ice T. I also did sports. It was such a great time.

Sharing our stories about aphasia, Avi G., my friend, and myself, while promoting Advocacy was important. We go to colleges and universities.

Adler Drama Club is also so much fun!

Looking at Aphasia from a brighter side has done wonders for me.

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

For more information please contact
Gretchen Szabo:

gszabo@adleraphasiacenter.org

If you would like to receive our
newsletter please submit your email
address to:

jdittelman@adleraphasiacenter.org

MEMBER NEWSLETTER DISCLAIMER:

This Adler Aphasia Center Newsletter is written by our members with aphasia and from their personal perspectives. The stories featured in this Newsletter are intended for its readers' general information and education. Adler Aphasia Center does not endorse nor recommend any commercial products or services that are featured in this Newsletter. Views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter do not necessarily state or reflect those of Adler Aphasia Center and shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.

Adler Aphasia Center, a non-profit organization with two full service facilities based in Maywood and West Orange, NJ and ten Aphasia Communication Groups located throughout the state, is an innovative post-rehabilitative therapeutic program that addresses the long-term needs of people with aphasia and their families. Aphasia is a communication disorder that impairs the expression and understanding of spoken language, reading and writing. It occurs most often from a stroke or other brain injury. It affects a person's ability to communicate, but not his or her intellect. For more information about our programs and services in Maywood or West Orange, NJ, or for information about our Aphasia Communication Groups in Bridgewater, Haddonfield, Hammonton, Maywood, Monroe, Morristown, North Bergen, Scotch Plains and Toms River, NJ, visit our website at www.adleraphasiacenter.org or call 201.368.8585

Member Spotlight

Meet our members Javed I. and Rosa T.

Hobbies: Tennis, Basketball

Favorite Sports Team: NY Yankees

Grew up in: England

Acquired Aphasia: 2010

Favorite Music: The Beatles

Interesting Facts: Loves to act and sing!

Job: Engineer at AT&T

Family: Married and has 2 Children



Javed singing in the AAC
Maywood concert

Hobbies: Gardening, Painting, Yoga

Favorite Singer: Chayanne

Favorite Vacation Spot: Punta Cana, Dominican Republic

Favorite Food: Bandeja Paisa

Grew up in: New York City

Job: Banker, Teacher, Makeup Artist

Acquired Aphasia: 2016

Family: Married with 4 children



Rosa petting a tarantula during
a special animal visit at the AAC
Maywood Center

Highlights from our West Orange, NJ Location

Meet our member Bob

Hi. My name is Bob. What I would like to talk about today is my professional life as a professor, post-stroke and getting aphasia.

Before the stroke I was able to do 30 books and 100 articles over a 50 year period.

After the stroke, I was not able to do anything.

Yet after 2 years of rehab and a year at Adler, I decided I would look at trying to do presentations at conferences and they worked out well . So I then decided that I would try to do a book. And the book is on Urban Planning. It's called Urban Planning Fundamentals from 1970 to 2020. The book is harder than presentations.

The book is much dense and you have to be very good at writing. I also learned a lesson that affects all of us. And that is that we hide our defects. My grammar is not as good as it should be and my writing is not good.

But you have to go forward because we need our skills and we need them into the future. So what we should do is find something that we're good at and do it as good as we can and help others with aphasia in terms of what they need to do. We can all get better by working in a group and helping each other in the group. Thank you.



Bob