



Remembering Elaine Adler

Elaine & Mike's Legacy is Our Inspiration

Join Elaine and Mike in creating a legacy of aphasia awareness and support

The world has lost an inspiring advocate and visionary leader with the passing of Elaine Adler on August 10, 2023, at the age of 95. Co-founder of the Adler Aphasia Center in Maywood, NJ, Elaine's legacy is one of empowerment, determination, and unwavering commitment to making a difference.

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Adler Aphasia CENTER

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*In memory.

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Message from Our President & CEO

We are profoundly saddened by the passing of a true visionary and our co-founder, Elaine Adler. Her visionary spirit and profound influence on our mission and the realm of aphasia rehabilitation are indelible. The Center's evolution and expansion was envisioned by our founders, Elaine and Mike Adler, whose energy, compassion, and soul still live deep in our hearts as we continue to carry out Adler Aphasia Center's important mission. We see our members and caregivers at their best when they experience that uplifting feeling of comfort, connection, and the deep respect we hold for them in their efforts to rebuild their lives.

In the wake of Elaine's passing, we find solace in the unwavering support of our community. Your steadfast commitment has been instrumental in nurturing the growth and impact of the Adler Aphasia Center as we embark on a new decade of purposeful endeavors.

Thank you for nurturing the Adler Aphasia Center as we begin another impactful decade. Together, we have made remarkable strides in enhancing the lives of countless individuals grappling with aphasia and their families and expanded our mission's horizons within the community. Your generosity resonates as our guiding force, propelling us forward.

Through your generosity, the Center has provided vital assistance and support to individuals with aphasia and their caregivers across New Jersey. In the past year alone, our programs have delivered over 30,000 service hours, fostering communication skills, rebuilding self-esteem, and bolstering caregiver well-being. Our efforts have touched over 800 lives directly, extending to families and beyond. Behind these achievements stands an unwavering team of 16 Speech Language Pathologists, 8 professional staff, 60+ volunteers, and 19 committed Board members. Their tireless efforts serve as a testament to our collective commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those affected by aphasia.

As we mourn the loss of Elaine, we recognize the significance of preserving her and Mike's legacy through action. I urge you to join us in honoring their memory by attending our upcoming benefit, becoming a sustaining donor, or volunteering at one of our centers. Together, let us ensure that the *Voices of Aphasia* continue to resonate, keeping Elaine and Mike's spirit alive in our work and in our hearts.

Thank you,

Naomi Gewirtz, MSW

Our Gratitude Knows No Bounds

We would like to acknowledge the following foundations and funders for their grant support since our last newsletter publication:

Myron and Elaine Adler Private Foundation

Blue Foundry Charitable Foundation

Clinton D. and Grace A. Carlough Charitable Foundation

Cestone Family Foundation

Columbia Bank Foundation

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TD Charitable Foundation

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Valley National Bank Foundation

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Wallerstein Foundation for Geriatric Life Improvement

Let's Honor Elaine and Mike's Memory and Keep Their Legacy Alive

Visionary Leaders in Aphasia Recovery

Elaine and Mike set out on their journey after Mike's stroke and subsequent aphasia diagnosis in 1993. Frustrated by the lack of appropriate long-term options, they established the Maywood Center in 2003. This humble initiative grew into a symbol of hope, offering stroke and brain injury survivors with aphasia a lifeline for renewed communication and independence.

Carrying On Their Legacy of Hope

Elaine and Mike's indomitable spirit lives on through the Adler Aphasia Center, which serves as their living legacy and an embodiment of their dedication. Their vision resonates in the lives of those touched by aphasia and the tireless efforts of our community. Now, more than ever, we honor their memory and continue to drive their mission forward. By supporting the Adler Aphasia Center, we ensure ripples of positive change that will be felt for generations to come.

Join us in preserving their legacy, not just in words, but in action. Your support today will empower individuals with aphasia and their families to forge ahead with courage and resilience.



Elaine with her kids



Elaine and her husband and co-founder of Adler Aphasia Center, Mike

Remembering Elaine Adler (1927-2023)

A Legacy of Empowerment and Advocacy

A Remarkable Journey of Advocacy

Elaine's impact reached far beyond the walls of the Center. She was a staunch advocate, dedicating her voice and influence to raising awareness about aphasia. Elaine played a pivotal role in the creation of Aphasia Access, an international consortium striving to improve communication access for those impacted by aphasia. Her efforts even led to the establishment of the groundbreaking Mike Adler Aphasia Task Force in New Jersey.

A Lasting Inspiration

Elaine's journey teaches us that challenges can be transformed into opportunities for empowerment. Her advocacy, determination, and visionary leadership have left an indelible mark on the world of aphasia rehabilitation and beyond. As we mourn her passing, let us also celebrate the incredible achievements she made during her lifetime. In the words of Elaine herself, "Anyone who visits here always leaves with a happy heart."

Let us carry forward her legacy of positivity, empowerment, and the belief that with determination, we can make the world a better place for everyone.



Meet Our Board Chair, Sandra Govic

Meet our Chair, Sandra Govic, Senior Vice President, Senior Wealth Advisor at Wilmington Trust. With more than three decades of experience in the financial

services industry, Sandra works closely with individuals and families on wealth management planning and execution. She is responsible for providing comprehensive wealth management advice to high-net-worth individuals, families, entrepreneurs, and business owners throughout the NY Tri-State region. Sandra works closely with clients and their advisors to develop financial strategies to help clients meet their current needs and plan for their long-term objectives, including investment management, planning, trusts, risk management, private banking, and family office services.

What first drew you to the Center and your interest in getting involved?

Back in 2006 a former colleague of mine introduced me to Mike, Elaine, and Chuck. I had the opportunity to come to the Gala to learn more about the Adler Aphasia Center and meet some of the members, donors, and staff. I thought to myself, I would like to learn more about what they do and who they serve. After coming to visit the Center to see firsthand what we do day in and day out. Meeting with the members and ringing the lunch bell, I thought to myself, wow this is such a wonderful place. A home away from home, a safe and secure environment, a cocoon outside of all the noise.

Living with aphasia is no easy task, and I think the pandemic has taught us that isolation is not good for anyone. Think about getting up one day and your life changes overnight, we help people to rebuild their confidence and self-esteem, so that they can have a better quality of life for themselves and their families.

Why did you decide to be on the board and take on the role of chair?

I wanted to get involved with an organization that helps those who suffer from brain trauma and to honor two beautiful people in my life. Those closest to me know that I lost my father when I was 25 years old to stroke. Then in 2003, I lost my only sibling and sister at age 38, who had a stroke as a result of preeclampsia.

I am at a point in my life where I have experienced enough in life to add value and make a difference as Chair. I see such a bright future ahead for the organization in so many ways and with the support of the Alder Family, I hope to lay the groundwork for many years to come and to celebrate the next 20 years with you all!

How do you see the Center evolving in the future?

Our program's monumental success over these past 20 years is directly attributed to the vision of Mike and Elaine Adler, and all the hard work from our staff, volunteers, and caregivers to help members return to an active life. Through partnership with universities around the world we look to their rigorous research so that we can continue to address the needs of our members. The Adler Aphasia Center has always been progressive, we can never be complacent and must look to technology, AI, the needs of our growing members, and continue to develop and challenge ourselves day in and day out to excel in what we do!

What excites you most about the Center and its future?

We have so much to be proud of in this our 20th year of enriching the lives of those with aphasia. The Center's ambitious program for the coming year is underscored by two notable elements: our belief in the right of people with aphasia to have access to effective, life-affirming rehabilitation programming; and our ability to continue to offer these vital programs, thanks to the generous support of our devoted funders.

Over the past year, the Center has been undergoing important changes that will contribute significantly to its capacity to manage continued growth and an expansion of programming, serving more people with aphasia and their families. Some of these plans include moving closer to developing a model of sustainability to support the Center for years to come, a board structure to help play a key role in the Center's ability to move into its third decade of programming, continued investment in reaching those with aphasia statewide, new and inspiring partnerships with valued community organizations to support the rehabilitation of people with aphasia, and finally an exciting aphasia study with the National Institutes of Health which will further underscore how our donors continued support helps us maintain our reputation as the leading research-based aphasia program in the Northeast.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, we'd like to reiterate to our members and their families: we hear your voices; we understand your needs; and we know that the Center's cause is worth our best efforts yet.

Adler Partners with Aphasia Researchers on NIH Funded Study

The Adler Aphasia Center is excited to be collaborating with National Institutes of Health funded researchers, Elizabeth Hoover from Boston University and Gayle DeDe from Temple University, on their clinical trial: *Understanding the Mechanisms of Change and Optimal Parameters in Conversation Treatment for Aphasia*. The research study builds on Hoover and DeDe's prior research to further examine the efficacy of a group conversation treatment for people with aphasia. The current project explores the possible impact of the size of the conversation group, the makeup of the conversation group, and the level of aphasia severity of group members on the effects of the treatment. From 2022 through 2024, three cycles of the study are being run in our Maywood location and at Boston and Temple Universities. The first cycle included 24 participating Adler members, 16 participants in cycle 2, and 16 scheduled for cycle 3. Gretchen Szabo, the Center's Research Speech-Language Pathologist who is serving as study coordinator at our site, shared, "We are excited to partner with these respected aphasiologists on this important research. It is a unique opportunity for Adler and our local aphasia community to make a key contribution to aphasia treatment research focused on conversation, which is something that we value greatly."

Dates To Know

Voices of Aphasia Gala, Celebrating and honoring the legacy of our co-founder, Elaine Adler

Wednesday, June 12, 2024, 6:00 – 9:00pm

Seasons Catering

644 Pascack Avenue

Washington Township, NJ



Scan the QR code to learn more about our Gala!

Adler Aphasia Center Annual Drama Production

Wednesday, July 31, 2024

Showtimes at 12:30pm and 7:00pm

Adler Aphasia Center at Maywood

60 West Hunter Avenue

Maywood, NJ

Training Mental Health Professionals to Support Clients Living with Aphasia

Did you know that two-thirds of all people with aphasia experience depression, the highest rate across all disability groups? But less than 1% receive direct treatment for psychological distress.

Adler Aphasia Center has long been dedicated to the rehabilitation of our members, focusing on building communication skills and restoring confidence through peer-supported activities. However, the Center's licensed speech-language pathologists recognized a critical gap in addressing the psychological needs of our members, including identity loss, frustration, guilt, and depression resulting from communication challenges, their guilt over becoming a burden to their families, challenges in their relationships, depression, and anxiety. To address this, the Center's staff collaborated with experts to launch a pilot program in 2022.

The program aimed to train mental health professionals across NJ to better communicate with individuals living with aphasia. Our key partners, pioneers in understanding the emotional/psychological needs of survivors with aphasia, included:

- **Dr. Blaise Morrison**, Rehabilitation Psychologist and Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill School of Medicine
- **Dr. Debra Meyerson**, author of "Identity Theft: Rediscovering Ourselves After Stroke"
- **Steve Zuckerman**, care partner and co-founder with Dr. Meyerson of *Stroke Onward*, a nonprofit building on "Identity Theft" to support survivors and care partners.

The training equips mental health professionals with the necessary tools and strategies to support the mental well-being of individuals with aphasia. By enhancing their understanding of aphasia and its psychological effects, as well as teaching practical communication techniques such as supported conversation and visual aids, these professionals can become more effective partners in the rehabilitation journey.

The inaugural seminar received outstanding feedback, prompting us to host a second training session in 2023. This session attracted 20 participants from 6 states, indicating a growing recognition of the importance of addressing the psychological needs of individuals with aphasia. Buoyed by the success of these initiatives, another session is planned for 2024.

Through these collaborative efforts, Adler Aphasia Center aims to not only improve the communication skills of its members but also to address the broader psychological challenges they face. By expanding access to specialized support beyond its immediate community, the Center is working to enhance the overall quality of life for individuals living with aphasia across the United States.

Caregiver Education Programs

The Center's educational programs for caregivers have proven to be a valuable tool for our participants. By creating opportunities that provide more knowledge about the process of caregiving, our programs are helping to increase understanding and compassion and reduce stress while strengthening the relationship they have with their loved ones with aphasia.



The Center's caregivers in The Caregiver Oasis

Recently, the Center held two such programs for caregivers: a virtual program titled, "Planning for the Inevitable: Organizing Financial and Personal Affairs," a seminar on preparing a clear path for anyone who might need to take over financial and personal affairs for caregivers and people with aphasia. A Certified Daily Money Manager® and owner of Tender and Timely Daily Money Management, Victoria Schrage led the discussion.

The second program, led by Sharon Glaser, MS, CCC-SLP, Program Director of Adler Aphasia Center in West Orange, was "Ask the Adler Speech Language Pathologist: A Virtual Session for Aphasia Caregivers." She provided caregivers an overview of common rehabilitative disciplines: Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy in which they learned about the tasks they perform and how they can benefit a person with a brain injury as well as the caregiver. Attendees also had the chance to ask Ms. Glaser questions about the content and/or their own personal experience.

All caregiver education programs are open to any caregiver and are free. Maywood offers in-person caregiver support groups twice a week for one hour. Caregivers of Adler members from West Orange, Toms River and our Aphasia Communication Groups meet virtually 2 days a month for one hour. Non-Adler caregivers are also welcome to participate in any support group for a nominal fee.

For more information on all Adler caregiver support groups and educational programs, contact Meredith Gemeiner, Social Services and Outreach Manager, at mgemeiner@adleraphasiacenter.org.

Something Special

A Gift that Keeps on Giving

Our Something Special program is thriving post-pandemic, now in its 14th year of crafting jewelry and gifts. Focused on boosting corporate sales events across the state, this



year, members engage in Beading Buddy, Lunch and Learn, and event sales in over a dozen NJ corporations. These efforts raise aphasia awareness among more than 10,000 employees at these companies. Event proceeds aid the Center's Scholarship Fund, ensuring inclusivity. To date, Something Special has generated \$600,000 in revenue, funding nearly 200 Adler member scholarships.

Pictured are employees from Cigna Healthcare, along with Adler members and staff, Board members and volunteers who took part in a recent Beading Buddy event in Maywood. If your place of business would like to participate in a Something Special event, contact Program Director Chrysa Golashesky at cgolashesky@adleraphasiacenter.org for more information.



Adler Aphasias
CENTER

60 West Hunter Avenue
Maywood, NJ 07607

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adleraphasiacenter.org



Full-service Centers in Maywood, Toms River, and West Orange, NJ. Aphasia Communication Groups serving Haddonfield, Hammonton, Maywood, Monroe, Toms River, and Virtual NJ groups.

Adler Aphasias Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Ways to Give

There are a variety of ways you can make your contribution to the Adler Aphasias Center, one of the few community-based, long-term rehabilitation centers in the country dedicated to providing a therapeutic environment of innovative programming for people with aphasia and their caregivers.

Gift of Cash, Check or Credit Card

Matching Gifts Make Your Donation Go Further

Wish List

Buy a Plaque for our Donor Wall

Place an Order at our Something Special Store

Gifts of Stock

IRA Charitable Rollover

Donor-Advised Funds

Join the Adler Legacy Society

Gifts in your Will

Please review our giving options for more details on our website <https://adleraphasiacenter.org/ways-to-give/> or contact Naomi Gewirtz, CEO, at 201.368.8585.

This information is not intended as legal or tax advice. Please consult your attorney or tax advisor.



Scan the
QR code to
Donate Now



Creating Community Connections

In 2023, Adler Aphasias Center held its first *Getting the Word Out* Community Fair in Maywood. The fair's purpose was to help the public gain an understanding about important community resources available to the aging and disabled population. Featuring more than 30 vendors, attendees were able to discover, engage and connect with vital community organizations and local agencies in Northern and Central NJ.

A panel discussion was also presented on the experiences of those who live with aphasia and work in aphasia therapy. More than 100 people attended the fair, which included an art show and the opportunity to purchase handcrafted jewelry from Something Special, designed and created by Adler members with aphasia.