
Aphasia Center of California

Volume 6 Issue 2 ♦ Fall 2003

ACC Let's Walk to Talk 2003

"No man stands taller than when he stoops to help another."

--Unknown

By Roberta J. Elman, Ph.D.
*President and Founder,
Aphasia Center of California*

More than 100 people walked and rolled for the Aphasia Center of California on Saturday, June 21st while raising funds for the ACC and raising awareness about aphasia. Our first independent "Let's Walk to Talk" event at beautiful Lake Merritt in Oakland was an unqualified success—more than \$19,500 was raised for program services at the Aphasia Center!

Aphasia Center walkers strolled and rolled as a large group for a quarter of a mile along the shores of Lake Merritt. Following this group stroll, many of the participants decided to walk and roll around the entire 3 ½



Aphasia Center of California supporters walked at Lake Merritt on June 21st

miles of lake shoreline! The "Let's Walk to Talk" event included delectable pre- and post-walk refreshments in the Downtown Oakland Senior Center's lounge, an art exhibit from the ACC's art class, a resource table with materials on aphasia and stroke, and a drawing of great prizes.

Top fund raisers included Ron Hausmann, George Yee, Philip Tien, Jim Santanna and Judi Briano who raised funds from the most number of donors. A heartfelt thank you to all who helped to raise funds!! Your efforts and enthusiasm are keeping the Aphasia Center's doors open!

I wish we had room in this newsletter to list each aphasia walk donor individually...but we would need several newsletters to do so!?! So an extra big THANK YOU goes to all who made donations to the Aphasia Center of California for the walk!! Please know that your generosity is already helping individuals affected by aphasia.

Thanks to the following businesses that donated services or merchandise for our participant prize drawing: Albertson's, Berkley Bowl Marketplace, Canvas Restaurant, Compadres Restaurant, Dina's Hair

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Our Mission statement: *The mission of the Aphasia Center is to encourage and expand communication and psychosocial well being for those with aphasia. We are dedicated to helping families and stroke survivors understand the ramifications of stroke and aphasia on their daily lives and to improve the quality of life for all those affected.*

Martin Aston: Be Here Now

By Mary Jane Laufenberg

Stroke Survivor and

Board Vice President,

Aphasia Center of California

I have known Martin Aston for seven years. I have watched his recovery take place and I am grateful to tell his story. In my eyes, Martin is a miracle.

When we met, I had just had my stroke but Martin was well on his way to recovery. This is not to say he was having an easy time of living. I remember his speech difficulties and physical disabilities. Martin is a tall, handsome man but what I most remember was his attitude. I believe that is what has carried him along the road of recovery. Martin stays in the present and never assumes life is difficult.

Martin's story begins with what his life was like just nine years ago. Martin was a successful businessman and owned Brothers Bagels with three different locations in Oakland and Berkeley as well as owning half of the Edible Complex Restaurant in Oakland. Martin took good care of himself physically and enjoyed cycling and running. He had many other hobbies such as playing the guitar and harmonica. He was also proud of his "fixer upper" skills and told me of his carpentry and electrician successes.

In March, 1994, at the age of 44, Martin's life changed. Martin had finished a four-hour bike trip riding from Berkeley to Orinda and back in the mountains on a Saturday morning. That evening, he had a headache, which proved over the next week to be the worst he had ever had. (This is often a stroke warning sign.) By Thursday night, his head and neck pain had worsened and a friend took him to the hospital.

The emergency room doctor told him he was probably just tired and had a migraine headache and to go home and take an aspirin. The next morning, his stroke occurred while he was taking a shower. His wife Sheila was

in Los Angeles celebrating her birthday and he was scheduled to fly down to meet her that day. When his neighbors did not hear his car leave the garage, they came looking for him and found him unconscious on the bed.

Martin did not awake for two days in the hospital and when he did come to, he was totally unable to speak and could not move his right arm, hand, or leg for the next two weeks. Martin says, "I thought I was going to die. But then I started to live again."

At this point, Martin's work began. All during his difficult rehabilitation period, Martin kept going. He had never learned how to say no and that trait certainly benefited him greatly. He continues to this day to work on his speech and language, attending

conversation groups, the Aphasia Book Club, and individual speech-language therapy sessions at the Aphasia Center of California. His speech and language skills have continued to improve over each of the nine years since his stroke. He also had many sessions of physical therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic, Rolfing and osteopathic sessions to help his paralyzed leg and arm.

Those of us who have had a stroke often hear from doctors and therapists, "The biggest recovery usually comes within the first six months after the stroke. And, in general, those first two years are when most of the recovery comes." I've always hated to hear those warnings and limitations. Each

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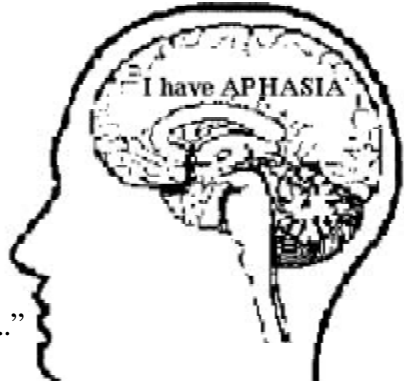


Martin Aston playing his harmonica

Aphasia Center News

Aphasia (uh fay' zhuh) n: an impairment of the power to use or comprehend words, usually acquired as a result of a stroke and sometimes from head injury or a brain tumor. More than one million Americans have acquired aphasia.

"I jenti ferbis..."



of the ACC's Tuesday afternoon communication treatment group and Dr. Elman discussing the impact of aphasia.

Web Resources for Family Caregivers

Aphasia causes life changes for everyone connected to the person who has aphasia. Aphasia presents special challenges for those who are caring for a person with aphasia. The following websites provide a wealth of information and resources for caregivers. If you are caring for someone who has aphasia, it is vital to care for yourself!

National Family Caregivers Association: www.nfcacares.org

NFCA is a grass roots organization that reaches across the boundaries of different diagnoses, different relationships, and different life stages to address the common needs and con-

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Kaiser Permanente Makes Grant to ACC

Kaiser Permanente has recently awarded the Aphasia Center of California a \$2500 Community Grant to help fund ACC services for those individuals with aphasia with low incomes. More than one third of the participants at the Aphasia Center have incomes that are below poverty level. This is the sixth consecutive year that Kaiser Permanente has funded the Aphasia Center. Thank you to Kaiser Permanente for helping us provide needed services to the most needy!

was described and specific clinical details were provided.

Oakland Tribune Spotlight on ACC

The Oakland Tribune and ANG newspapers carried a story about the Aphasia Center of California on the front page of the Features section. The July 17th article, included information about aphasia and featured members

ACC Book Club Featured in Magazine

The Aphasia Center of California's Book Club was featured as the cover story in the magazine "Advance for Speech-Language Pathologists" in July. This article provided details about the innovative program developed at the Aphasia Center during the past 5 years. ACC staff speech-language pathologist, Ellen Bernstein-Ellis, M.A. and Roberta Elman, Ph.D. were interviewed for the story. A general history of the Aphasia Book Club

My First Poem by Susie Altaffer

Susie Altaffer is a participant in the Aphasia Center of California who attends the Tuesday morning communication treatment group and the Aphasia Book Club. In addition to being a stroke survivor with aphasia, Susie is legally blind and uses her guide dog Savoy to navigate throughout the Bay Area. Look for more about Susie's remarkable story in an upcoming issue of the Aphasia Center's newsletter. In this issue, we are pleased to share one of her

wonderful poems:

***I used to work
Now I have fun***

***I used to ask to go by car
Now I walk and have Savoy***

***I used to smoke
Now I eat Ricolas***

***I used to wait
Now I live***

***I used to love to read
Now I love to listen to books.***

Thank You to Our Generous Donors

January - June 2003

If we have made any errors in this listing, please accept our apologies and contact us at (510) 336-0112.

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ACC Walk for Talk 2003



Walkers gather at the Downtown Oakland Senior Center

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Salon, Francesco's Restaurant, Glenview Florists, Infinity Salon with Dominic, Italian Color's Restaurant, La Strada Restaurant, Long's Drugstore, Mother's Cookies, Movie Express, Mucho Wraps, PacifiCare,

Pastino's Restaurant, Peet's Coffee & Tea, Purple Plum Restaurant, Rite-Aid, Safeway, Starbuck's Coffee, Svenhard's Swedish Bakery, Terzetto Cuisine, Trader Joe's, Ultimate Grounds, Uncle Chungs Szechwan Restaurant, and Zatis Restaurant.

Caregiver Resources

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cerns of all family caregivers.

National Alliance for Caregiving:
www.caregiving.org

The NAC is a non-profit joint venture, created in 1996 to support family caregivers and the professionals who serve them.

Administration on Aging National Family Caregiver Support Program: www.aoa.gov/prof/aoaprogram/caregiver/carefam/carefam.asp

Provides links with information and assistance in gaining access to supportive services in your community.

Family Caregiver Alliance:
www.caregiver.org

This organization, founded in 1977 in San Francisco, provides specialized information on Alzheimer's disease, stroke, traumatic brain injury, Parkinson's disease, ALS, and other disorders and long-term care concerns.

ARCH National Respite Network & Resource Center:
www.respitelocator.org/index.htm

The National Respite Locator Service helps parents, caregivers, and professionals find respite services in their state and local area or when a family travels or must move to another state.

Benefits Check Up:
www.benefitscheckup.org
The Benefits CheckUp is the nation's

Please frequent these businesses and let them know that you appreciate the donation that they made to the Aphasia Center of California!

Finally, this walk would not have taken place without the help of numerous event volunteers. A round of applause to our event committee: Enid Meyer (co-coordinator), Dan Sullivan, Vicki Welcome, Sue Ewing, Sid Dommes, Paula Crossato, Ellen Bernstein-Ellis, Mary Jane Laufenberg, and Gail Carpenter. A big thank you goes to those who volunteered their time to help things run smoothly on the day of the walk: Tracy Cook, Rich Laufenberg, Prudence Ashley, Steve Fry, Patricia Terry, Diana Sullivan, Mike Carpenter, Steve & Ben Ellis, Marvin Bernstein, and Christy Lloyd. Thanks, too, to Dori Ellis for the beautiful scarf she made for our prize drawing and to Rita Pascoe for designing our fabulous walk T-shirts. All of your time and talents helped to make "Let's Walk to Talk" a stunning success!

most comprehensive online service to screen for federal, state and some local private and public benefits for older adults (ages 55 and over). Benefits CheckUp was developed to address the millions of older adults who are

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Patricia Olson

Martin Aston

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time I see Martin, I know that often the medical people do not know everything! His speech is very functional and one does not notice his physical disabilities. He drives, exercises by walking, plays his harmonica (in one of the Blue Bear School of Music student bands),

travels internationally and still thinks he is a fine carpenter and electrician!

Martin misses his work and the people he managed and admits to a few down days. But as he said, "The rest of my life is really great!" He definitely is a role model in growing and learning and changing. He stresses the importance of staying present in the moment and his motto is, "Be here now!" May we all look to Martin for ways to handle the ups and downs of life.

Web Resources for Caregivers

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eligible for benefits, but not receiving them.

Eldercare Locator:

www.eldercare.gov/search_results.asp
The Eldercare Locator is a national toll-free directory assistance public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging that helps people locate aging services in every community throughout the United States.

The Well Spouse Foundation:

www.wellspouse.org
This national, not for profit membership organization gives support to

wives, husbands, and partners of the chronically ill and/or disabled.

ElderCare Online:

www.ec-online.net
For people caring for an aging spouse, parent, relative, or neighbor. Topics include home care & independent living; insurance, legal & financial matters, residential options, and more.

Editor's Note: Please note that any reference to specific services, information, or products does not constitute an Aphasia Center of California endorsement.

www.aphasiacenter.org

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This newsletter is a publication of the Aphasia Center of California

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