

# Aphasia Center of California

Volume 9 Issue 1 ♦ Spring 2006

## Aphasia Book Clubs: The Book Connection™

*“Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need.”*

*Kahil Gibran*

*By Roberta J. Elman, Ph.D.,  
CCC-SLP, BC-ANCDS and  
Ellen Bernstein-Ellis, M.A., CCC-  
SLP*

Aphasia often affects the ability to read. Many participants at the Aphasia Center of California (ACC) tell us that their inability to “read a good book” is one of their greatest losses. Our Book Connection™ program began when ACC members told us they wanted to read again. Not sentences or short paragraphs, but actual books!

We wondered how we could adapt a book club to make it both accessible and enjoyable to people living with aphasia. This was about the time that Oprah Winfrey had started her book



*Members of the ACC Book Connection™ Program discussing their latest book*

club, and we knew that ACC members would want to be doing similar activities as their friends and family members. It became our challenge to figure out a way to create a book club for people with all types and severities of aphasia, so that they could join the rest of the country in reading for fun.

Seven years, 15 popular books, and thousands of hours of hard work later, we have learned an enormous amount about creating book clubs for people with aphasia. Our ACC members taught us what worked and what needed adapting. We learned from participants that it wasn’t critical that they be able to read and understand every word, but rather that

they could enjoy whatever they read or listened to on audiotapes.

In 2004, we received funding from the Langeloth Foundation to replicate our program at four sites: the Aphasia Institute (Toronto), Montclair University (New Jersey), MossRehab (Philadelphia), and the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Speech-language pathologists and people with aphasia at these sites used our materials and provided us with invaluable feedback to help enhance our program. We have recently achieved our goal of assisting others in starting aphasia book clubs—our Book Connection™ manual and materials can now be downloaded

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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.*

## The Book Connection™

*Continued from page 1*

from the ACC website ([www.aphasiacenter.org](http://www.aphasiacenter.org)). We will be using proceeds to develop materials for additional books.

The materials we develop include “reading ramps” that make information accessible to people with acquired reading impairments such as aphasia. For example, we create chapter highlights and summaries. These reading ramps support the book’s content by emphasizing key parts of the storyline while also simplifying the vocabulary and grammar. Weekly worksheets are another example of a reading ramp that we have developed. These worksheets provide participants with the opportunity to make a personal connection to the story as well as provide reading and writing practice. Along with the summaries and the worksheets, we develop other reading ramps depending on the unique needs of each book. For some books, it is important to develop vocabulary and character guides so that participants can follow the plot line more easily.

We also incorporate unabridged audiotapes in order to assist people with more severe reading disorders to read the book. We choose books that have a relatively straight plot line. And we look for large print books because many of our members have told us that they are easier to read.

Our weekly discussion sessions are the most important part of the Book Connection™ program. These discussions promote an exchange of ideas and thoughts that many

*Continued on page 6*

## Our Benefactors' Circle

The Aphasia Center extends a special thank you to our Benefactors' Circle donors who have made an annual contribution of \$2000 or more. Benefactors' names are engraved on brass plates that are mounted on a mahogany plaque displayed at the Aphasia Center of California. Our Benefactors' Circle donors for 2005:

### Platinum Benefactors' Circle Donors (\$5,000 and above a year)

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### Gold Benefactors' Circle Donors (\$2,000 - \$4,999 a year)

- ♦ Patrick & Eileen Cafferty, Jr.
- ♦ Carol and Harold Parsley

The Aphasia Center would also like to acknowledge individual donors who generously contributed \$250 or more in 2005:

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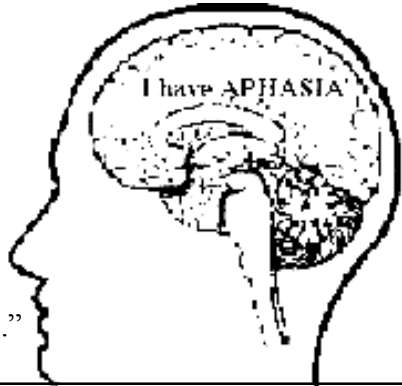
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# Aphasia Center News

**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.

"Ijenti ferbis..."



aphasia awareness by educating your friends and family about aphasia. Join us at our "Walk to Talk" event in June at Lake Merritt. Whenever you can, educate people about "aphasia" and give them the website address of the Aphasia Center of California so they can learn more: [www.aphasiacenter.org](http://www.aphasiacenter.org)

## Storage Space Needed

Do you have or know of some free garage or storage space that we could use? The Aphasia Center of California is planning to start a quality donation and consignment program. We need storage space in either Alameda or Contra Costa Counties. Please contact Dr. Elman at (510) 336-0112 if you know of available space

## Shreve & Co. Jewelers Donation

Please join us in thanking Shreve & Co. Jewelers in San Francisco for their generous donation of a stainless steel men's chronometer watch for our holiday party raffle. More than \$900 was raised by the raffle—these funds will benefit programs at the ACC!!

## Education and Training Around the World

Although the Aphasia Center of California's programs are physically located in California, our philosophy and clinical techniques continue to be shared with professionals and people affected by aphasia around the world. Dr. Elman will be an invited speaker at the National Aphasia Association's Speaking Out! conference to be held in Boston in June. She will give a full day workshop about research and clinical techniques related to Aphasia Group Communication Treatment. She will also be giving a keynote address about the ACC's Book Connection™ program during the conference. Over the past year, ACC staff

has given papers and workshops in Virginia, Alabama, New Jersey, Florida, and California.

## June is National and California Aphasia Awareness Month

Help the ACC raise awareness of aphasia. Increasing the awareness of aphasia will help us to provide needed services, improve research funding, and reduce the isolation often caused by aphasia. You can help us to raise

## Join our Fourth Annual "Walk to Talk" Raise Funds and Awareness!

**What:** The Aphasia Center of California's Fourth Annual "Walk to Talk" is a fund-raising event to raise funds for our programs. Our "Walk to Talk" will feature a 1/4 mile and 3 mile untimed walk/run.

**When:** Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006. The walk will begin at 10:00am.

**Where:** Lake Merritt, Oakland. Walk starts at the Downtown Oakland Senior Center at 200 Grand Avenue.

**How:** Companies and individuals, from walkers with kids to seasoned athletes to people with their dogs on leashes can participate in this event to benefit the Aphasia Center. Help the Aphasia Center by sponsoring an Aphasia Center participant, asking friends and family for donations, or joining us for the walk. Please contact Roberta Elman (510) 336-0112 to receive a walk packet or for more information.

## APHASIA CENTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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- Secretary-Treasurer: Enid Meyer
- Esther Akiba, RPT
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## Thank You to Our Generous Donors

July-December 2005

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 2005 Annual Report

## 2005 Services

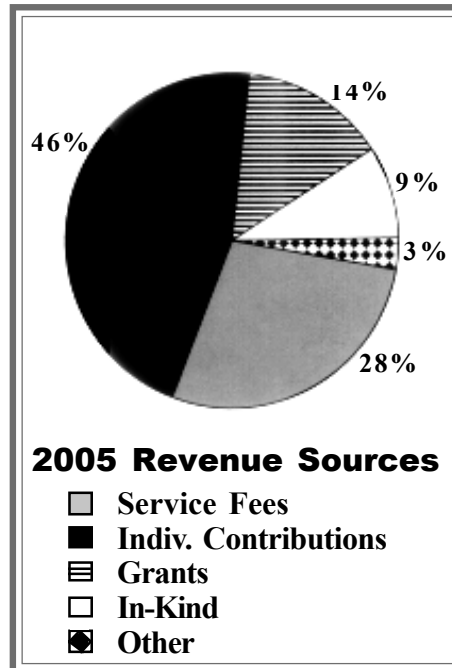
Total Visits: 4696  
 Group Communication Treatment  
 Visits: 2507  
 Individual Speech-Language Treatment  
 Visits: 151  
 Reading & Writing Classes: 491  
 Painting/Drawing Classes: 547  
 Fitness & Relaxation Classes: 862  
 Educational Stroke Group Series:  
 138  
 Information & Referral (includes  
 phone, mail, and e-mail): 1937  
 Web site hits to date: 36,000+

## ORGANIZATION & CORPORATE DONATIONS

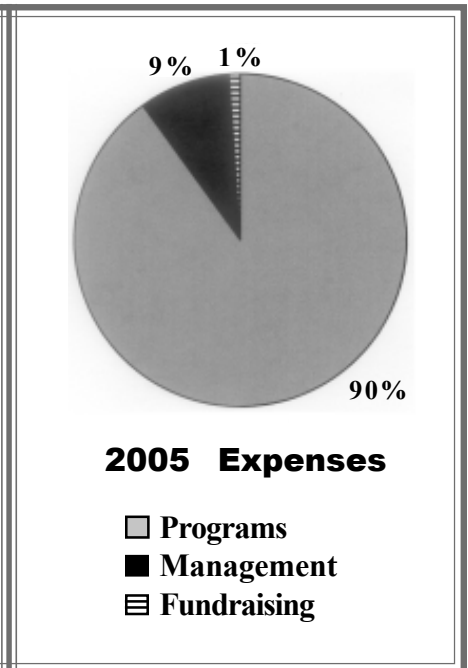
Amalgamated Transit Union Local #1555  
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 Italian Color's Restaurant—Oakland  
 Jamba Juice—El Cerrito  
 Jay's Hallmark—El Cerrito  
 Kinko's—Walnut Creek  
 Long's Drugstore—Rockridge, Oakland  
 Mother's Cakes & Cookies—Oakland  
 Neldam's Bakery—Oakland  
 Pac & Save—Emeryville  
 Pasta Pomodoro—El Cerrito  
 Pastino's Restaurant—Oakland  
 Peet's Coffee & Tea—Oakland  
 Klaudia Promessi—Oakland  
 Rite-Aid—Montclair, Oakland  
 Safeway—Rockridge, Oakland  
 Shreve & Co.—San Francisco  
 Svenhards Swedish Bakery—Oakland  
 The Junket—El Cerrito  
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Ultimate Grounds—Oakland

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Speech-Language Pathology Services: Ellen Bernstein-Ellis, Roberta J. Elman, Susan Adair Ewing  
 Administrative Services: Roberta J. Elman  
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 Newsletter Design & Layout: Morris Older

## DONATED PROGRAM SPACE

City of Oakland, Downtown Senior Center

# The Book Connection™

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individuals with aphasia tell us they don't get the opportunity to have in their daily life. The Book Connection™ discussion sessions work best when they are not a strict review of the book content or worksheets. It can be a challenge for a facilitator to ensure equal participation in conversationally based

groups. We strongly encourage discussion group facilitators to become familiar with the theory and techniques associated with group dynamics and group process, as well as the specific skills needed to facilitate aphasia conversation groups.

As speech-language pathologists, developing the Book Connection™ program has been a thoroughly

rewarding experience. Our Book Connection™ experience has taught us that, regardless of the severity level of the aphasia, Holbrook Jackson was correct when he wrote, "the end of reading is not more books, but more life."

\*\*Look for an article about our Book Connection™ program in the May/June 2006 issue of Stroke Connection Magazine published by the American Heart Association.

## Donors

*Continued from page 4*

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