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ACC Connection

Volume 23, Issue 2 ♦ Fall 2020

Keeping People With Aphasia Connected

“However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at.”

– Stephen Hawking

**By Roberta J Elman, PhD
CCC-SLP, BC-ANCDS
President and Founder**

It’s been about six months since we provided an update about the Aphasia Center of California and how we’re adapting to online services. Here’s the short answer: it’s going MUCH better than we could have ever anticipated!

As I write this, the ACC is providing twelve weekly groups: communication treatment groups, book club groups, and Music Club groups. All of the groups are facilitated by four extremely talented speech-language pathologists: Giti Cira, Lyssa Rome, Sue Ewing, and Madison Fox. These ACC speech-language pathology team members have years

of experience in running aphasia groups. And I’m so proud to work with each and every one!

Of course, there remain day-to-day challenges on the technology end of things. My job description has been “updated” during the

pandemic to now include running the ACC “HELP Center!” I assist ACC participants and their family members in real time with any difficulties they encounter getting into the group sessions.

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Still Making Music!

**By Roberta J Elman, PhD
CCC-SLP, BC-ANCDS
President and Founder**

For this issue of the ACC Connection, I had the chance to interview ACC speech-language pathologist Madison Fox, M.S. CCC-SLP about her life in music and her thoughts about facilitating the Center’s two weekly Music Club groups.

Madison, can you describe the ACC Music Club groups for us? What happens during a session?

Music Club is a fun-filled mix of singing, reminiscing, and discussion, along with a healthy dose of celebrity gossip! We listen to music that crosses genres and generations, have fun singing together, watch videos from iconic live performances, and chat about a band or singer’s life story. Mu-



ACC Speech-Language Pathologist
Madison Fox

sic Club members share personal memories and opinions about different musical artists, and even do impromptu show-and-tells with their album collection or favorite band t-shirt. Some of our members know a lot of musical facts and

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**Thanks to Our Donors page 2
ACC News page 3**

Our Mission Statement: *The mission of the Aphasia Center of California is to enhance communication skills, quality of life, and overall well-being for all those affected by aphasia.*

Thank You to Our Generous Donors

January 2020 - July 2020

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

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Keeping People With Aphasia Connected

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Over time, the calls have become less frequent. But there have been software updates and other changes that are out of our control. So providing ongoing “aphasia-friendly” telephone support is an important service for keeping people connected. And, I have to say, I have never been more grateful for the “lab instrumentation” course I took as a graduate student. That knowledge helps me stay focused on the problem

at hand and consider the potential software and hardware issues for getting everything and everyone “connected!”

In addition to the weekly aphasia groups and our “help center,” we also continue to provide information and referral services. We’re here to help family members and stroke survivors from around the country, navigate the often confusing options that occur following stroke. We offer basic information about aphasia as well

as referral to appropriate community resources and services.

I’ll end with the most important news of all: ACC participants with aphasia remain connected and continue to communicate with one another regularly because of the ACC’s online program. We remain extremely grateful for your continued support and for becoming part of our Aphasia Center community. The impact we have on the lives of people with aphasia is because of YOU!

Aphasia Center News

Some Ways We Continue to Spread the Word!

At the ACC, we believe we have a duty to share our work with other healthcare professionals. That's one way we spread the word!

Here are some recent publications and presentations by ACC staff:

- ◆ Holland, A.L. & Elman, R.J. (Eds.). (2021). *Neurogenic Communication Disorders and the Life Participation Approach: The Social Imperative in Supporting Individuals and Families*. San Diego: Plural Publishing.
- ◆ Elman, R. J. (2021). C.A.P.E.: A Checklist of Four Essential and Evidence-based Categories for Aphasia Intervention. In A.L. Holland & R.J. Elman (Eds.). *Neurogenic Communication Disorders and the Life Participation Approach: The Social Imperative in Supporting Individuals and Families* (pp. 21-52). San Diego: Plural Publishing.
- ◆ Elman, R. J. (2020). Ethical responsibilities to adults with communication impairments involved in group therapy. *Seminars in Speech & Language*, 41(3), 241-248.

ACC staff had a number of accepted papers at both the Clinical Aphasiology Conference and the International Aphasia Rehabilitation Conference. Unfortunately, these meetings were cancelled due to the pandemic. We're planning to share this work at future conferences.

ACC speech-language pathologist, Lyssa Rome, presented an online session about the ACC's Podcast Listening Group hosted by Aphasia Access.

Please join the Aphasia Center of California on Facebook!!
www.facebook.com/AphasiaCenterofCalifornia

There's a new 2020 Charitable Donation Opportunity!

Some good news: As part of the recent CARES Act that was signed into law, you will be able to deduct up to \$300 on your 2020 federal tax return for making charitable donations, even if you don't itemize. Plus, if you file as "married-filing-jointly," you can get an above-the-line tax deduction of up to \$600 for charitable donations in 2020!

Smile when you buy at Amazon!

Whenever you make purchases at Amazon, start off at AmazonSmile.com instead of Amazon.com. Amazon will actually donate 0.5% of the price of each purchase to the Aphasia Center of California! And there's NO COST to you. If you already have an account at Amazon.com, just log into AmazonSmile.com with the same login information you normally use. The first time you login, you will be asked for the name of an organization you want to support. Please choose the Aphasia Center of California. Thanks so much for your support!

Credit Card Donations Are Easy to Make!

Did you know that you can make a donation with your credit card to the Aphasia Center? It's easy to do! Just go to the Aphasia Center of California "Donate" button on the home page of our website: www.aphasiacenter.org. You can make a one-time donation or a monthly, quarterly, or annual recurring donation. All donations help us make a dramatic difference in the lives of those affected by aphasia.

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Some ACC Music Club Members Meeting Online

Still Making Music!

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love stumping each other with trivia. I bring my guitar and lead the group through various songs, and we incorporate elements of breathing and vocal exercises to promote mind-body connection and musical skill building for those members who have a passion for singing. There is no obligation to sing of course, but when we hear a good song, most of us can't resist humming, tapping, or singing along!

Do you think people with aphasia benefit from attending a group like the Music Club?

Music is something almost everyone can connect to--whether you are someone who sang before your stroke or someone who just appreciates a good song. I think

participating in Music Club lets people with aphasia reconnect with that aspect of their identity. Some people with aphasia find music helps them get words out, and so singing may offer a feeling of fluency they otherwise miss in their day-to-day activities. There is also research that looks at the positive impact of music on mood. I find that we all seem to feel a bit brighter and more connected at the end of a music club session!

Please tell us a little about your professional music background.

I have been singing since I was a little girl at my mother's piano. I trained as a singer in high school and college, and learned to play guitar when I was 16. While living in New York, I started writing

my own music and that became a wonderful passion of mine. I had the great fortune to move abroad to Spain for three years and met some amazing musicians there. We started a band, had some fun touring small venues in Spain and other parts of Europe, and recorded our first album together. I was sad to leave Madrid, but luckily found some incredible new bandmates when I returned to New York. I continued to do music there for a few more years before moving back to my home state of California to earn my Masters degree in speech-language pathology.

What made you decide to become a speech-language pathologist?

I think communication is a human right. It may look differ-

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Still Making Music!

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ently for different people, and it can come in many forms, but I believe access to participating in life and sharing oneself with others through words, gestures, smiles, writing, and even music is an essential element of the human experience. I originally thought I would go into speech-language pathology as a voice specialist because of my singing

background, but my first semester of coursework, related to adult language and neurogenic communication disorders, made me realize I had found my passion. I love helping people regain their communication and swallowing functions. In addition to the time I spend at the ACC, I also work as a speech-language pathologist in several different medical settings. I love working in hospitals and

being the first therapist a family gets to talk to about aphasia. I also love educating other medical professionals about how to be an excellent communication partner to people living with aphasia. I think another thing that makes me happy with being a speech-language pathologist is that I get to learn so much from the people I serve. There is something very inspiring about their stories, and it fills me with hope. It's been the most rewarding adventure of my life, next to becoming a new mom of course!



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