



APHASIA SPEAKS



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HARC EVENT



On the night of March 24th 2010, the dining room of Ouisie's restaurant was filled to capacity with people from the Houston community showing their support for HARC. The hours flew by as people talked and learned more of what HARC is all about. In the middle of the event Drs. Rita and Blair Justice made a speech that presented HARC's mission and the future plans for the center (excerpts from this in HARC website under HARC happenings).

It was such a great way to "kick off" opening HARC, and we thank everyone who participated.



HARC

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Featured participant **Dr. Blair Justice**



Cheryl and Jackie had the great opportunity to sit down as Blair talked about his journey as a stroke survivor

Tell me a little about yourself?

I am one of the founding members of HARC as well as on the board for the center. I have written eight books, the most recent is called *"Raising Lazarus: The Science of Healing the Soul"*. I wrote the following thoughts based upon *"Song of Myself"* by Walt Whitman.

"Song of Myself"

By Walt Whitman

I feel trapped by the
 voices I can't express
People wonder why I can't remember
 the words that go
 with what I have been
I go home in the evening,
 but have trouble finding the words
 that go with what I have done

Discovering What's Important

By Blair Justice PhD.

I discovered that what's important are two common pathways of well-being: (1) some value of finding that life is good despite an adversity, and (2) recognizing that aphasia effects one's ability to communicate with others.

Dr. Willard Fordyce of the University of Washington Medical School and father of pain research established what has become known as "Fordyce's Law." In plain English, it says:

"People suffer less when they find something better to do."

So discovering what's important, we find that activity, interest or experience that is so engrossing and engaging that one gets outside the self and perceives some value or benefit with something else. "Something else" may include taking delight in the ordinary by actually learning to "stop and smell the roses."

On recognizing that aphasia affects one's ability to communicate with others, we find that connecting with someone depends on our ability to finding some common ground to understand each other. Why not humor? The ability to understand the other doesn't depend on power, money, big homes, "excitement". It doesn't shatter hope, corrode faith, kill friendship, or suppress our memory. Humor gives both of us something to embrace. Any old line that marks us the way we are. If we connect with it, we have places to go.

Fordyce's Law says that people suffer less when they find something better to do. If we find a line that says humor is important, then it is.

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Featured participant **Dr. Blair Justice** *continued*

Tell me about your stroke and how it affected you.

I had a stroke during an emergency bypass surgery and couldn't speak, read, or write for months. I am a professor at the University of Texas School of Public Health and was heartsick when I couldn't teach classes or mentor my students. I am one of the lucky ones because I regained my speech.

Since your stroke what helps you continue to improve?

I did a year of speech and physical therapy to help me improve. I now work with patients at MD Anderson as a volunteer, and this allows me to continue helping people. I also make it a point to exercise everyday at the YMCA because it is a very important part of my life.

Tell us about HARC and why that became a mission of yours.

My wife, Rita, had the idea for HARC, but she didn't know about Aphasia until I had it. I was asked to join the board of the National Aphasia Association. We decided we had to do something in Houston. Rick and Doris Spengler and Dr. Lynn Maher joined us in forming HARC. Many, many others have helped make it a reality.



HARC HAPPENINGS

Mid April - Music groups started which includes: **Music and Movement** (exercise) and **Music and Language**



Music and Movement Class

Summer 2010 - **Art expression** classes and **book club** begins

BIRTHDAYS



Rick and Doris Spengler
(Two of HARC's founders)
Happy Birthday Rick!

Participants:

Jan 1	Jerry Svajda
Jan 24	Winston Goodrich
Feb 1	Ronald Reed
Apr 20	Helen Saure
May 8	Eric Adam
May 21	Doris Spengler
Jun 23	Cheryl Adamson
Jul 2	Blair Justice
Oct 15	Don Ison
Oct 30	Ruth Kamba

Volunteers:

Feb 25	Jackie Couey
Feb 29	Clarence Kamba
Mar 2	Rick Spengler
Mar 20	Bobby Allen
May 7	Rita Justice
Jun 14	Louise Adamson
Jul 1	Courtney Douthit
Aug 8	Billie Reed
Aug 13	Stephanie Schmadeke
Aug 29	Nancy Schmadeke
Sep 7	Dianne Foutch
Oct 5	Ross Kastor

National Stroke Month - May

Quotes from some of our participants:

"A stroke can happen to anyone. Try to stay active and try other things beside speech and learn to broaden your horizons." **Ruth Kamba**

"Even young people have strokes, so age isn't always a factor. A stroke can hit anyone at anytime. I was only 37 when I had my stroke." **Cheryl Adamson**

Controllable Medical Risk Factors

High Blood Pressure
Atrial Fibrillation
High Cholesterol
Diabetes

Controllable Lifestyle Risk Factors

Tobacco Use
and Smoking
Alcohol Use
Physical Inactivity
Obesity

Uncontrollable Risk Factors:

Age, Gender, Race
Family History
Previous Stroke or TIA
Fibromuscular Dysplasia
Patent Foramen Ovale
(PFO or Hole in the Heart)

National Aphasia Month - June

Some interesting facts:

No two people experience aphasia the same way. Some people have different symptoms than others. Some have mild problems, while others experience more severe problems.

Stroke-related aphasia typically improves within the first weeks, and continued improvements occur for months and even years. Have patience, a positive attitude and the willingness to learn about aphasia and the resources available. It is important to remind yourself that recovery can continue years after the stroke.

The goal for people with aphasia is to improve their ability to communicate with other people. This is done by getting back some language skills and learning new ways of getting a message across when needed.

Information taken from www.aphasia.org

Supported Communication for Aphasia

At HARC we use supported communication for aphasia. Our Speech-Language-Pathologist, Stephanie Schmadeke MA CCC-SLP, attended a week-long training in March at the Aphasia Institute of Toronto. This training was the basis for implementation of supported communication at HARC.

What is Supported Communication for Aphasia?

It is a set of techniques that includes using spoken and written keywords, gesture and body language, hand drawings, and sophisticated pictographs designed to support conversation on complex topics.

Supported Communication for Adults with aphasia (SCA) is a made-in-Ontario solution that allows people with communication barriers to engage in conversation, and through conversation, engage in life and all that makes living worthwhile.

SCA is designed to ensure that people who "know more than they can say" feel as though their competence is acknowledged. Supported Communication also ensures accurate exchange of information, opinions and feelings.

At its center is a high-tech piece of equipment: a well trained human being committed to enabling conversation with those who have communication barriers like aphasia.

Through SCA, people with aphasia are enabled by their conversation partners-be they doctors, nurses, spouses or old friends-and are once more able to communicate.

*Information taken from www.aphasia.ca; Aphasia Institute of Toronto

* Look at our supported communication section on our website. You will find friendly info about communication strategies and how communication may be affected when a person has aphasia.

* We would like to thank the Aphasia Institute of Toronto for their guidance and training and willingness to share resources.