



# Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference Newsletter

www.midatlanticaphasiaconference.org

Volume #2  
Issue #2

**April 2025**

## ***From The Editor's Desk:***

***Spring has sprung! Are you ready for the warm weather?***

***At MAAC we have been busy preparing for the Aphasia Access Leadership Summit in Pittsburgh(April 3, 4, & 5).***

*Mark and I presented a poster titled, PEER-TO-PEER ADVOCACY.*

MAAC is a peer-to-peer support group with members who advocate for our community members! We aim to increase social interaction and peer support and provide resources.

Peer-to-peer support groups such as MAAC are important by providing:

- Feelings of belonging, and friendships that result from shared experiences and understanding
- Informality-relaxed and casual communication
- Supporting environment to communicate
- Acceptance and aphasia information

Denise Mendez



## **Welcome to the Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference!**

Contact us and connect with us!

You are invited to join our

**Support Group sessions**

(7pm EST every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday)

&

**Conversation Group sessions**

(7pm EST every 4<sup>th</sup> Monday)



Scan this QR code and subscribe to get our emails and to see our website

<https://midatlanticaphasiaconference.org>

for useful information, photos, and calendars!

## **Do you see the glass as half-empty or half full?**



I recently read a research article from [NeuroscienceNews.com](https://www.neuroscience.com) that found that **optimism** was linked to **lower stress and greater resilience!** This is important as we survivors of various challenges strive to not just survive, but thrive!

The research showed that optimistic people:

- **worry less**
- **feel less lonely**
- **exercised more**
- **have better mental health**
- **have more coping strategies**
- **use virtual social interactions**

**OPTIMISM SHAPES RESILIENCE!**



## A message from Mark Harder, *MAAC President*

It is as **easy** as **connecting dots** with MAAC. We are on Zoom and we are in person.

We are at fairs and conferences. We collaborate with other organizations. We are in our community.

Join us with our support group meetings on the **2nd Monday** and the **4th Monday** of the month.

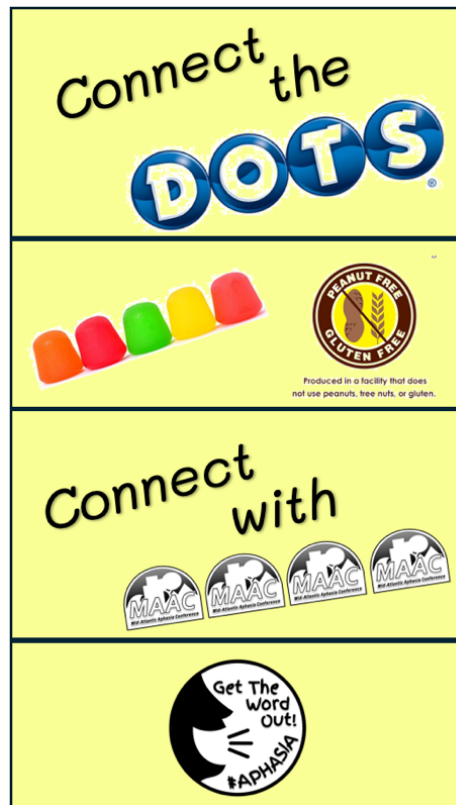
See us at our **4th Annual MAAC Aphasia Virtual Conference.**

Meet us and new friends at our **4th MAAC Aphasia Get Together.**

Come with us at Citizen Bank baseball park at the *MAAC Aphasia on the Big Screen* and celebrate the holidays with us on zoom and in person.

(See the schedule on page 8.)

CONNECT  
WITH  
MAAC!





# GET TOGETHER


Join us for the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual MAAC Aphasia Get Together

- ✓ SCAVENGER HUNT
- ✓ GAMES AND ACTIVITIES
- ✓ SHARING EXPERIENCES
- ✓ FREE LUNCH (REGISTER FOR TICKET)

BRISTOL TOWNSHIP AMPHITHEATER  
2501 BATH RD, BRISTOL, PA 19007

**SUNDAY JUNE 1**  
10AM-3PM EDT







For More Info Contact Mark Harder  
mharder.maac@gmail.com or 215-852-0730

Reserve here for ticket




# Join us for the 2nd Annual Mini-Conference

**Saturday, April 26th**  
9:30am – 2:30pm

Bucks County Community College  
Gallagher Room  
Main Campus  
275 Swamp Rd  
Newtown, PA 18940

**FREE Ticket**

**FREE Ticket**

Reserve here for a ticket



For More Info Please Contact  
Mark Harder  
mharder.maac@gmail.com Or 215-852-0730



## Tie Licked Me!



*I'm Tie and have you heard this case yet?*

*I licked his mouth and made his face wet.*

***He said he would eat me!***

***But he meant, he would feed me.***  
*And that's why I will wear this bracelet.*

**Email Mark and he will mail you an aphasia bracelet.**

## READ (or LISTEN) FOR FREE!

These apps, audiobooks, and e-books (electronic books) are FREE!

**MANYBOOKS-** [manybooks.net](http://manybooks.net)

Has tons of public domain titles and self-published books.

**AMAZON—** [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)

They are many free e-books for computer and Kindle device.

**LIBRARY APPS-** Services **Libby** and **Hoopla** are available at public free libraries. Check at your towns' library for details.

**LIBRIVOX-** [librivox.org](http://librivox.org)

over 40 thousand audiobooks in public domain available for listening FREE!

**TUNEIN-** [tunein.com](http://tunein.com)

Stream radio stations and podcasts and offers free audiobooks!

## Care Givers/ Care Partners Corner

### Taking Care of the Care Giver/Care Partner

[caregiver.org/connecting-caregivers/services-by-state/](http://caregiver.org/connecting-caregivers/services-by-state/)

Caring for a loved one can be very rewarding, but also involves many stressors. Care givers and care partners must take care to manage the stressors that can take a toll on their health, relationships, and state of mind.

Care givers/care partners taking care of themselves is a necessity. This is especially true when it comes to the state of mind.

#### Suggestions for Care givers/care partners

**Practice acceptance.** *(This may not be what you wanted for your loved one, but that God you are here to help!)*

**Embrace your caregiving choice.** *(You are so important to the health and rehab of your loved one!)*

**Take an organized approach.** *(Use binders or file folders to organize the mountain of papers that you may have to take care of.)*

**Look for the silver lining.** *(There always is one!)*

**Don't let caregiving take over your life!**

**Focus on the things you can control.**

**Take care of your health too!**

**Break big tasks down into manageable chunks.**

**Celebrate the small victories.**

**Get the appreciation you need.**

**Applaud your own efforts.** *(You may not get an award, but you deserve one!)*

**Talk to a supportive family member, friend, and connect to other care givers!**

## **An Aphasia Community Feature:**

### *Janet Burl-My Story*

9 1/2 years ago life stopped for me, and the Great Divine spun me around, gave me new challenges, then sat back to see what I would do. I had a hemorrhagic stroke-July of 2015, which, my doctor said, wiped out all my “major real estate”, and whatever didn’t come back in 6 months to a year wasn’t coming back. So, if all the prime land was gone, that left bog and desert. Well, it was going to take me a while, but if you mix muck with sand, you start to create fertile soil, so one wheelbarrow at a time I brought my bog to the desert, and started my recovery in earnest.

At this point I couldn’t walk, my right side was unusable, couldn’t read, couldn’t talk-had aphasia, apraxia, my cognitive abilities were gone-I’d see a picture of a banana, and if I could say anything at all, I’d say tree. After 6 weeks I was sent home from rehab, had physical therapy at home for two months two times a week, a speech therapist came in once a week, and then I graduated to clinical therapy for another 3 months. Then that stopped.

I retaught myself to crochet one handed! I started trying to read, looking at picture books, then board books, and moved myself up over the next 4 years to Christopher Paolini’s “Brisingr”! I kept doing exercises-ok, I admit skipping days, but I always went back to it.

I went back to work as a substitute teacher one year later, and the kids helped me with everything. Those 12-18 year old kids were amazing, through them my aphasia improved, they helped with my reading, plus so much more. During this time I suffered from depression, and became addicted to pain killers. Cut to 2021, I got laid off because of Covid, and my daughter talked me into going back to school to get my masters. I chose English/Creative Writing with a focus on poetry. In February of 2023, I graduated Summa Cum Laude.

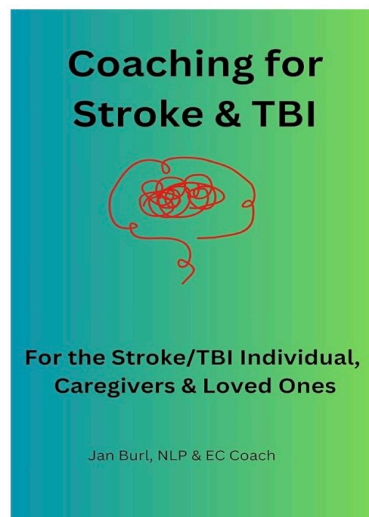
Then I wrote my first children’s book, “Tippy’s New Friend”, followed by, “Tippy Goes to California”, along with 3 books of poetry and a coaching book for Stroke & TBI . I am an international motivational speaker-the Voice for the Voiceless, Stroke/TBI, and Caregivers & Loved Ones. I give them hope of recovery, and also let caretakers, family, and friends know what is going on in the mind of the afflicted and not to give up on the individual, ever. Life is not the same as before, but in ways, it is better. I have finally found my very own dream, and am blazing my new trail to happiness and fulfilment. I am still fighting, went back recently to PT, after fighting crippling depression, and am back on the road to recovery! Every day is a gift, so make each day extraordinary.

## *Janet Burl-My Story (continued)*

Life is not the same as before, but in ways, it is better. I have finally found my very own dream, and am blazing my new trail to happiness and fulfillment. I am still fighting, went back recently to PT, after fighting crippling depression, and am back on the road to recovery! Every day is a gift, so make each day extraordinary.

In an upcoming interview, *Jan Burl*, author of “Coaching for Stroke & TBI, Caregivers and Loved Ones”, will share essential tips for caregivers, loved ones, and friends on how to better communicate with individuals living with aphasia. Drawing from personal experience and expert advice, the discussion will cover practical ways to support conversations—such as maintaining eye contact, reducing background noise, speaking at a natural pace, and allowing extra time for responses.

The interview will also highlight alternative communication strategies like using gestures, writing, and picture cards, as well as the importance of fostering independence while offering thoughtful support. Whether you’re a caregiver, family member, or friend, this conversation will provide valuable insights on creating meaningful, frustration-free interactions.



### **Laughter Is The Best Medicine!**

Q. Why are **ants** the healthiest insects?

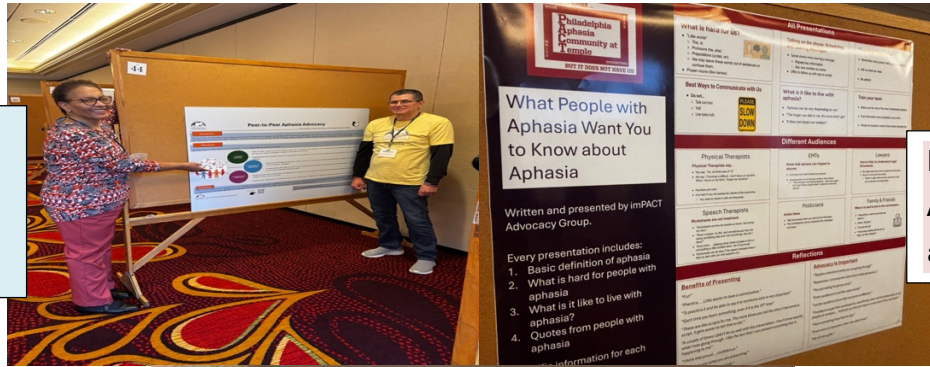
A. Because they have tiny **anti-bodies**!



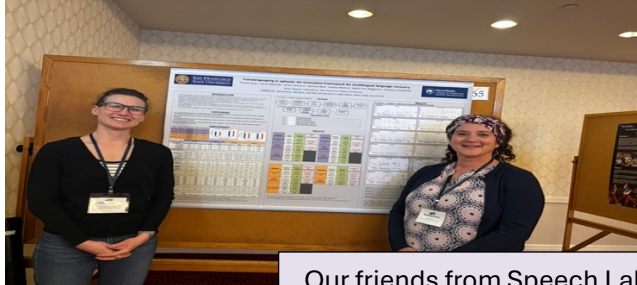


# MAAC PRESENTATION AT THE 14<sup>th</sup> APHASIA ACCESS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Denise and Mark presented the MAAC poster



Poster of the Phila Aphasia Community at Temple (Univ.)



Our friends from Speech Labs at Penn State and San Fran State  
Dr. Sandberg and Dr. Gray

MAAC was a sponsor of the Aphasia Access 2025 Leadership Summit



We donated a basket full of MAAC Swag!

Jerry K. Hoepner, PhD.,  
CCC-SLP ASHA Fellow was the winner!

## MAAC IN THE COMMUNITY Women's Health Fair (Mt. Airy COGIC)



## MAAC QUARTERLY SCHEDULE/CALENDAR

### April, May, June 2025

Date	Session	Topic/Guest
<b>Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> At 12 noon</b>	<b>Women’s Health Fair Mt Airy COGIC (Philadelphia)</b>	<b>MAAC In The Community</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday, April 14 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	<b>MAAC Support Group</b> For people with aphasia and care givers/care partners <b>On Zoom</b>	<i>Special Guest</i> Gordon Pettitt
<b>Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> At 9:30 am-2:30pm</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Annual MAAC Mini-Conference BUCKS CO. COMMUNITY COLLEGE</b>	<b>Gallagher Room 275 Swamp Rd. Newtown, PA 18940</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> Monday, April 28 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	<b>MAAC Conversational Group</b> For people with aphasia and care givers/care partners <b>On Zoom</b>	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday, May 12 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	<b>MAAC Support Group</b> For people with aphasia and care givers/care partners <b>On Zoom</b>	<i>Special Guest</i> Janet Burl
<b>Sunday, May 18th</b>	<b>BRISTOL BOROUGH SUNDAY STROLL Bristol, PA</b>	<b>MAAC In The Community</b>
4 <sup>TH</sup> Monday, May 26 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm <b>Memorial Day</b>	<b>MAAC Conversational Group</b> For people with aphasia and care givers/care partners <b>On Zoom</b>	
<b>Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> Annual MAAC Aphasia Get-Together</b> At the BRISTOL AMPHITHEATER		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday, June 9 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	<b>MAAC 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Aphasia Virtual Conference</b>	
June 10 <sup>th</sup> <b>ALL WORLD EVENT!!!</b>  <b>TALK SLOW DAY</b> 		
4 <sup>TH</sup> Monday, June 23 <sup>rd</sup> at 7:00pm	<b>MAAC Conversational Group</b> For people with aphasia and care givers/care partners <b>On Zoom</b>	
Friday, September 26 <sup>th</sup> <b>MAAC at the Citizen Bank Park</b> <b>PHILLIES</b> vs. Twins		

**GET THE WORD OUT!! APHASIA!!**



SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION!