



Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference Newsletter

www.midatlanticaphasiaconference.org

Volume #3

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July 2026

From The Editor's Desk:



Wow! Already we have passed half (1/2) of the year! January through June were very busy months for the aphasia community as we multiplied our efforts with **GETTING THE WORD OUT-APHASIA!!**

We have joined new support and activity groups! We have continued with other virtual and in-person groups and activities!

Many of us participated in advocacy and awareness activities with our local representatives, senators, and city commissioners.

We joined the NAA in requesting proclamations and letters of support recognizing June as National Aphasia Awareness Month!

MAAC celebrates, appreciates, and thanks all of the advocates who worked so hard and accomplished so much in the first 6 months of this year!



We are looking forward to the next 6 months!

Denise

A MAAC JOKE

Mark met many people at the MAAC Get-Together!

Everyone wore a name tag.

Mark read the tags so he could greet people by their names.

There was a man whose last name was **Szczepaniak**. He complained that people always had a hard time pronouncing his last name.

Mark replied, "I bet my last name is harder!"





JUNE IS NATIONAL APHASIA AWARENESS MONTH

MAAC is so proud that the team GOT the WORD OUT about APHASIA with events!!!



6/6/2026 - We had a table at the Trenton Thunder Ballpark, in NJ to help raise awareness.

6/19/2026 - The Long Island Ducks Baseball, in NY with MAAC and A Matter of Matt spreading the word! Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference was right under the score board!



6/20/2026 - It was a wonderful day in Philadelphia, PA. First we had a table, Walking for Epilepsy for EPILEPSY FOUNDATION and raised awareness about aphasia. Later, we included Magee Rehab Aphasia Support Group sharing pics by our PECO lights aphasia awareness message.

6/28/2026 - In the community at the Bristol Borough, PA, Sunday Stroll advocating for people with aphasia with information, Aphasia Ducks, and using the Aphasia Simulation module from Voices of Hope for Aphasia.





JUNE IS NATIONAL APHASIA AWARENESS MONTH

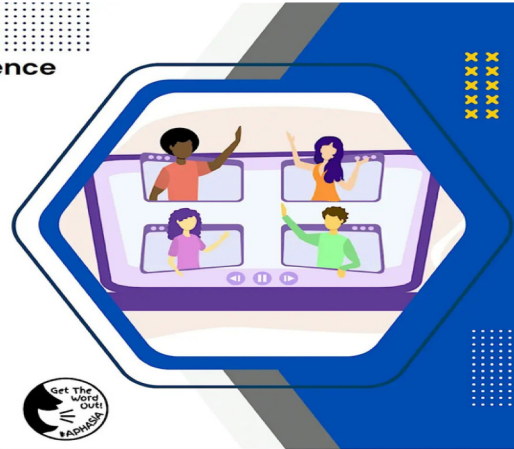
Not only did we have events during June, we had 3 important virtual conferences.



Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference

5th Annual MAAC VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Connecting People With Aphasia Through Journeys, Support Groups, and Research
June 8th and 22nd, 2026 7:00PM ET on Zoom



Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference
5th Annual **MAAC**
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE **FIRST SESSION**
Sharon M. Antonucci, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, C-AAIS
Jefferson Moss

Jenn Derry
National Aphasia Association Ambassador

Gayle DeDe, PhD, CCC-SLP
Philadelphia Aphasia Community at Temple (PACT)

Michael Obel-Omia
Cycling Across America in 101 Poems: A Stroke Recovery Journey

Yasmeen Farooqi-Shah, PhD, CCC/SLP
University of Maryland Aphasia Research Center

Matt Weingartner
MAAC Representative

Hannah Hornsey, SLP
Poems in Speech

Laura Malis
Paula Gallagher
Aphasia Awareness

Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference
5th Annual **MAAC**
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE **SECOND SESSION**
Janet Salvatore Buri (Jan)
Author/Coach

Rachael Condon, M.S., CCC-SLP, CDP
Drexel University

Jerry Wald
Let's Talk Stroke

Vilma Mazziol, MS, LPC, CRC, CVE & Keira Aviles-Rivera
Magee Stroke Support Group and Magee Peer Mentoring Program

Michael Obel-Omia
NAA Black American Aphasia Connection

Jessica Intintoli, M.A., CCC-SLP
ChristianaCare

Jennifer Kelemen, MLS
Adler Aphasia Center

Dr. Denise Mendez
>More Than Aphasia

Sandra Stein, SLP
Capital Health Aphasia Support Group



TALK SLOW DAY

Speaking and Listening with Dr. Farooqi-Shah

Wednesday, June 10, 2026
2:00PM ET on Zoom

Talk Slow Day - Speaking and Listening with Dr. Farooqi-Shah

- The history of Talk Slow Day and inspiring quotes
- The difference between fast and slow speech
- Why slowing down helps communication
- What research tells us about aphasia and speech rate
- Simple take-home tips to make conversations easier



submitted by Sandy Stein, SLP-CCC

Aphasia is a communication impairment that **affects** all aspects of language, including **speaking, understanding speech, reading, and writing**. Imagine going to a foreign country where you do not speak the language, or you only remember a few words from your high school or college language course. You would have difficulty saying what you mean, understanding what others were saying to you, reading the language, and writing things down.

Aphasia is caused by a brain injury, typically due to stroke, traumatic brain injury, or some other illness. Depending on the exact location of the brain injury, aphasia can manifest itself in many different ways. Some people with aphasia have more **difficulty understanding what is said to them and reading** than they do speaking. Other people with aphasia have more **difficulty saying what they want to say but understand much of what is said to them**. Sometimes aphasia is more severe and affects understanding, speaking, reading and writing quite broadly.

Aphasia Simulations module was developed as a collaboration project between Dr. Jacqueline Hinckley and [Keen Research](#). Dr. Hinckley is currently a Professor at [Nova Southeastern University](#) and Executive Director Emeritus of [Voices of Hope for Aphasia](#). Keen Research develops [software development kits](#) for on-device speech recognition for mobile devices. In the past, when Aphasia Simulations were developed, Keen Research has experimented with various online services focused on helping with speech rehabilitation of people with aphasia.

Aphasia Simulations was adapted for use in the Voices of Hope for Aphasia Website by the University of Florida Chapter of the Association for Information Systems.

The purpose of these simulations is to provide some activities that can help you understand what it might be like to have aphasia.

Words can describe, but personal experience helps us see things from someone else's perspective. A personal experience can change our attitudes as well as our knowledge. Our hope is that the experiences that you will have through these activities will help you to increase your knowledge of aphasia and your empathy towards those who are living with aphasia.

To link to Aphasia Simulations page, or to email the link, please use:

<http://vohaphasia.org/simulation>



Let us know what you think after trying the simulations.

Email us at:

msharder.maac@gmail.com



Dysarthria Tongue-Twister

Tie: You are on zoom a lot and talk with a lot of people.

Me: You are right Tie. I am on zoom sessions for stroke support groups, aphasia support groups, and difference meetings. It is a good way to meet new people, share experiences, and tips.

Tie: Well... it seems that this person is always yelling at you.

Me: He is not yelling. Some people have dysarthria. It is a motor speech disorder caused by damage to the brain or nerves. This damage weakens or paralyzes the muscles of the mouth, face, and respiratory system, resulting in slurred, slow, or difficult-to-understand speech.

Tie: If it is hard to understand you, does it mean that he can't understand you too?

Me: People with dysarthria understand me and know what they want to say but physically struggle to pronounce the words. They are still intelligent.

Tie: It must be frustrating.

Me: My friend has a great attitude. He says, "I am not slurring, I am speaking in cursive."

<https://youtu.be/2INn9m5bau8?si=13BjQnGJPTlnAJHz>

This is a great (short) video that gives clear information about dysarthria!

Highlighting Stroke/Aphasia Support Groups

This quarter, MAAC highlights **Janet's "Talk Time" Chat** on the second and fourth Friday of the month from 2:00PM ET to 4:00PM ET on Zoom.

Janet M. Gritz, MA, CCC/SLP facilitates the session with patience and time. She also facilitates the Montgomery County Stroke Association Stroke Support Group on the third Thursday of the month at 3:00PM ET to 4:00PM ET on Zoom.



Janet M. Gritz, MA, CCC/SLP
janetgslp@comcast.net

Montgomery County Stroke Association, Inc. (MCSA)
email: mcstroke@comcast.net
website: www.mcstroke.or

THE MAAC COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD

For over four years, MAAC has been a dedicated nonprofit organization, committed to supporting and empowering the aphasia community.

The organization's commitment is evident in the actions of its members. Each person plays an important role in advancing MAAC's mission and making a difference within the community.

At this time, The Reiner's- Frank and Laura, the first MAAC Community Champions, nominated three Speech Language Pathologists - Kristen Palmer, MA, CCC-SLP, BCS-S, CHSE, Kimberly Van Buren, MS, CCC-SLP, and Julie McCauley, SLP M.S.

Frank said that it wasn't even close – all three candidates are the BEST!!! “They relate to me. They give everyone a chance. They are not by the book and they are smart. Everyone is treated differently.”

Kristen, Kimberly, and Julie's efforts and presence do not go unnoticed.

The support, awareness, and kindness shown for Frank and Laura have a lasting impact on our community and deep gratitude is extended to all that you do.

Therefore, we honor Kristen Palmer, MA, CCC-SLP, BCS-S, CHSE, Kimberly Van Buren, MS, CCC-SLP, and Julie McCauley, SLP M.S. by awarding them with the Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference Community Champion Award!!!

Congratulations, and thank you for your continued dedication.

MEET THE NEW MAAC NEWSLETTER CHARACTERS!!



This MAAC Newsletter is sponsored by the letter, “L” and spelled by **Alphie, short for Alphabet, our Spelling Genie!**

The letter, “L” helps us spell words like, “light”, “lamp”, “look”, “learn”, “lead”, “like”, “love”, “logic”, and “level”.

A level is used to measure whether a surface is perfectly horizontal (flat/level) or vertical (plumb). It can also be a grade in school or position of rank.

Level is a “**Palindrome**”. It a word, phrase, number, or sequence of characters that reads the same backward as forward, ignoring spaces, punctuation, and capitalization. L-E-V-E-L

Lamb is a young sheep. Lamb has a silence letter called a “**ghost digraph**”. The ghost digraph in the word lamb is “**b**”. Is that dumb?

An “L” word that is hard to spell is “**Liaison**”. Those triple vowels can be very tricky. It’s often misspelled as *liason* or *leazon*. A liaison is the communication, cooperation, or connection between different people, groups, or organizations. **Crystal is the MAAC Inclusion Liaison.**



BONK!



Hiya! My name is Bonk. I always hit my head because if someone says, "DUCK!", I jump right up! (**Bonk!**)

I have aphasia and have problems with **opposite words** and **directions**.
In or out, on or off, near or far, under or over? I get confused.

Little words trip me down, I mean trip me **UP!** . We can talk more about it *last* newsletter - I mean, *next* newsletter.

Our friend **Alphie, the Letter Genie**, can help you with *prepositions, adverbs, and conjunctions*.

Do you put your socks on **after** you put your shoes on?

TIP:

Body Movements:

Have the person physically **do the action** if they can. *Stepping in* a room or *out of a room* uses body memory to find the word.



Hi! I'm Matt. I am the mathematic mascot for the MAAC group! I can help my friends with aphasia remember numbers, measurements, comparisons, counting, and all things mathematical!

I helped my friend Denise relearn/remember what fractions were and how to use capacity when cooking! Everyone was relieved when she could use fractions correctly in her delicious pasta recipes. $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt was very different from $\frac{1}{4}$ cup!

Did you know that there are only 10 digits that can be used to make an infinite number of numbers!?

Digits: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (these are used to make numbers - sort of how letters are used to make words)

Numbers: numbers tell "how much". A number can be made of a single digit (0, 2, 5, etc.), or a combination of digits (18, 250, 3,456, etc.) or a concept like "infinity".

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APHASIA? WHICH TYPE?

Aphasia is a communication disorder caused by a stroke, brain injury, or, more rarely, a condition called Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA).

The extent of the impact of aphasia on a person is highly dependent on the cause of the aphasia, the location in the brain injury, and the extent of damage.

Through your aphasia journey, you may have heard different types of aphasia, like Wernicke's or Broca's or Global. In this feature, we will discuss the different types of aphasia and the differences in them.

Conduction aphasia is a rare, fluent language disorder caused by damage in the part of the brain that connects between the speech production (Broca's) and language comprehension (Wernicke's) centers.

Individuals can understand language and speak fluently but struggle significantly to repeat words or sentences and frequently make sound-based speech errors.

The symptoms of conduction aphasia include **difficulty**:

- Repeating words and phrases that someone else says to you.
- Finding the right words to name objects (but you can identify the word you're thinking of on a list).
- Talking without having time to plan what you're going to say (as a result, you might substitute or mix up words in a sentence).



Information and Opportunities

"The Opposite of Language" Poetry Club

Join us for a poetry discussion and poetry writing group based on readings of "The Opposite Game: Poems" by Brendan Constantine.



Who?
Open to all individuals with Acquired Brain Injury!

Where?
ZOOM - email keeganl@moravian.edu for link

When?
Wednesdays from 4-5pm
July 15, 2026
July 29, 2026
August 5, 2026



MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY | Speech-Language Pathology

MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY | Speech-Language Pathology | MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY A&L ARTS & LECTURES



Aphasia Awareness Walk

Hosted by:
Moravian MS-SLP and Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference

What to expect:

- ✓ **Stops at Local Businesses**
Explore local businesses that are partnering with us to raise awareness and support the community
- ✓ **Learn from MAAC Advocates**
Hear firsthand experiences and insights from individuals living with aphasia and those who support them
- ✓ **Bake Sale & T-Shirt Sale**
Purchase homemade treats and event merchandise to support aphasia awareness and advocacy efforts
- ✓ **Basket Raffle**
Enter for a chance to win baskets and prizes generously donated by local businesses and community partners

Event Details:

- 📅 **Wednesday, July 22nd**
- 🕒 **5:00 pm - 7:00 pm**
- 📍 **Begin at Clewell Hall; 342 Main Street, Bethlehem, PA 18018**
The group will then walk to Bitty and Beau's, then back to Clewell Dining Hall



Scan/use link to sign up for the walk.

<https://forms.gle/6pbRcqvJbg8a6xA9A>

Moravian University encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact Suzanne Moyer at moyers@moravian.edu or 610-861-1491 at least one week prior to the event.

COMMUNICATION PARTNER TRAINING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND (COPTUM)



The workshops include discussions, seminars about aphasia and communication, and one-on-one conversational coaching carried out by graduate students.

Presented by Dr. Faroqi-Shah



<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/communication-partner-training-at-the-university-of-maryland-coptum-tickets-1991652768043>

July 21st and 28th at 6:30PM ET - 8:00PM ET



MAAC QUARTERLY SCHEDULE/CALENDAR
July, August, & September 2026

Date	Session	Topic/Guest
2 nd Monday, July 13 th at 7:00pm	MAAC Support Group For people with aphasia and care givers/care partners On Zoom	<i>Special Guest</i> Dr. Donald "Doc" Cunnigen
Wednesday, July 22 nd 5 pm-7 pm	MAAC & MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY Moravian One Mile Walk In-Person	
4 th Monday, July 27 th at 7:00pm	MAAC Conversational Group Combined group for people with aphasia and care givers/care partners Topic: TYPES OF MEASURE On Zoom	
Thursday, July 30 th At 12 noon ET	MAAC ABROAD! Our International Virtual Support Group Special Guest: Lisa Kenny, Ireland	
2 nd Monday, August 10 th at 7:00pm	MAAC Support Group For people with aphasia and care givers/care partners On Zoom	<i>Special Guest</i> Michael Obel-Omia
4 th Monday, August 24 th at 7:00pm	MAAC Conversational Group Combined group for people with aphasia and care givers/care partners On Zoom	
2 nd Monday, September 14 th at 7:00pm	MAAC Support Group For people with aphasia and care givers/care partners On Zoom	<i>Special Guest</i> Trish Hambridge
Sunday, September 20 th 10 am -3 pm	5th Annual MAAC Get-Together & 1st Aphasia "Walk and Talk" <i>Bristol Township Amphitheater</i> <i>2501 Bath Road, Bristol, PA 19007</i>	
4 th Monday, September 28 th at 7:00pm	MAAC Conversational Group For people with aphasia and care givers/care partners Topic: To Be Announced On Zoom	

Riddle Me This:
What is always on its way but never arrives?