



# Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference Newsletter

www.midatlanticaphasiaconference.org

Volume #1

Issue #3

July 2024

## From The Editor's Desk:

This is already our 3<sup>rd</sup> issue!

Thank you for being a part of the Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference community!

We hope you enjoy the new features and we'd love to hear your feedback.

**As June is National Aphasia Awareness Month, it was a very busy time for us all!**

I was invited to speak in San Francisco / Oakland, California at a symposium hosted by the **People Living with Aphasia Network (PLAN)**.

<https://aphasiaplan.org>

It was a **1-day conference on Aphasia and Technology** with 2 Technology Discussion Groups, a delicious hot lunch, and a Keynote Presentation by yours truly, *Dr. Denise Mendez, Aphasia Advocate/Educator & Stroke Thriver*.

Tech presenters were **Lyssa Rome, MS CCC-SLP** and **staff** from the **Center for Accessible Technology, Berkeley, CA**.

I was pleased to meet face-to-face friends from Zoom sessions (from the NAA and San Fran State Univ. Gray Matters Lab).

The community there is friendly, generous, and welcoming. Our yummy meal was provided by the family of a member or the local aphasia community. His family owns a local Thai restaurant!

My presentation was graciously received, and many participants shared positive feedback. I plan to post the video of my presentation on my website ([www.morethanaphasia.com](http://www.morethanaphasia.com)) and a link on the MAAC website as well.

As always, I look forward to more opportunities to spread aphasia awareness and support the aphasia community.

*Denise Mendez, Editor*

## **MAAC President – Mark Harder Always on Time**

Last month on June 10, 2024, we celebrated the first **"Talk Slow Day"** with intentions for better spoken communications. We asked people to join our campaign. It is an unofficial day, but the struggle is real.

### **Receptive Aphasia**

Communication can break down in various conditions – cannot hear because it is **too loud, too many voices** in a room, **not face to face**, and **talking too fast**.

**Talk Slow Day** explains talking slowly helps people with neurological communication disorders like *aphasia- caused by stroke, head trauma, brain tumor, brain infection, or diseases like multiple sclerosis, Alzheimer's, or cerebral palsy*.

Talk SLOW, but remember, don't talk like a baby.

### **Facts**

#### **When ?**

Monday, June 10, 2024

Tuesday, June 10, 2025

Wednesday, June 10, 2026

#### **What's the official website?**

<https://midatlanticaphasiaconference.org/talk-slow-day>

#### **What's the hashtag?**

#TalkSlowDay #Aphasia

#midatlanticaphasiaconference

**When was it founded?** June 10, 2024

#### **Who founded it?**

Mid-Atlantic Aphasia Conference

### **Benefits for Talking Slow**

- Speaking slower offers numerous benefits, both for the speaker and the listener.
- By speaking slowly, individuals can project a sense of calmness.
- Clear speech is a way of speaking that means every word, sentence and idea is spoken clearly and simply.
- Speaking slowly can help ensure that your message is clearly understood by others.

## Healing and Hiking & a New Local Aphasia Program!

### *Jim's Story-Part 3*

**Wow! I know you have been waiting to read the rest of Jim's story. Jim and Debbie certainly worked hard to ensure that Jim would rehab as well as possible.** Be sure to see the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> editions of the newsletter on the MAAC website if you missed any part of Jim's story.

"As I was improving day by day, I asked Debbie if I could hike the Appalachian Trail; she said yes but suggested that I should hike with another person and that I might not want to tell other people that I had two neurosurgeries.

Well, after a year of hiking with a backpack on my back, - on April 1, 2017 I started hiking **1,300** miles on the Appalachian Trail. I hiked **on my own**.



As I hiked, I spoke with other people who were hiking, and they told me about cancer that they had and other problems and I told shared what I had gone through. It was a remarkable experience!

While I was recovering, I went to Magee Rehab. Aphasia Program in Philadelphia. My speaking improved and I felt so much better as time went on. It was then that I realized that such an aphasia program should take place in the Trenton, NJ area-closer to my location.

Another fellow with aphasia and I approached **Capital Health Hospital** and strongly suggested that we open a program in this hospital. With the help of a great number of people at **Capital Health**, about six years ago we started the **local aphasia program**.

The people in **Capital Health-Hopewell** were exceptional and we all worked helping people with aphasia, challenges with communication, improving their speaking, writing and reading. I always suggest to people who have aphasia, to go to aphasia programs in their area and find that they will improve with their communication skills.

Anyone who would like to get involved in a local aphasia program or if you know a person who has aphasia from a stroke or neurosurgery, I am happy to contact with them.

Feel free to email me at: [jim.burd@gmail.com](mailto:jim.burd@gmail.com). I will gladly assist you in any way possible."

Thank you, **Jim Burd** 

## MAAC Connects with the Aphasia Communities Aphasia Awareness Month - June 2024

Salus University-Melrose Park, PA



PACT (Temple University)- Philadelphia, PA



Capital Health – Pennington, NJ




## The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual MAAC Aphasia Get-Together (Bristol Township, Senior Center)




## Handling The Heat!

Summer weather is great! But, we need to be sure to stay safe in hot, humid weather.

When outside:

- Bring water with you 
- Wear light and breathable fabrics
- Do activities before 10am and after 4pm when the sun is not as intense.
- Stay in the shade.
- Use sunscreen!

Inside your home:

- Keep the blinds or shades closed to keep the house from heating up.
- Have a safe cool place to go in case the power goes out. (mall, church, library, a friend's house)
- Cool down- take a cool shower  or place a cold compress on your forehead.

Summarized from Update of [ibxmedicare.com](http://ibxmedicare.com)

## Staying Hydrated – Drink More Water!



**Flavor Your Water! Add...**

- thin sliced cucumber
- sliced lime and strawberries
- chopped seedless watermelon cubes and fresh basil leaves
- crushed blueberries and sliced lemon

## Aphasia Does Not Discriminate!

*By Crystal Laughlin*

One thing about aphasia is that it does not discriminate. A person can acquire aphasia in various ways, not only through a stroke. Aphasia can be acquired through **epilepsy**. Epilepsy is a brain disease where the nerve cells don't signal properly -causing a seizure. Seizures are uncontrollable bursts of electrical activities in the brain. It can change behavior, muscle movement and sensations. It is like an electrical storm inside your brain.



Seizures look different in everybody. A seizure can be a single event due to an acute cause, such as medication. When a person has **recurring seizures, this is known as epilepsy.**

Signs of a seizure include:

- Dizziness
- Breathing problems
- Confusion
- Uncontrollable jerking
- Headache
- Loss of consciousness
- Out of body sensations
- Stiff muscle
- Numbness or tingling
- Slurred speech

**3 million** Americans develop epilepsy in their lifetime. A person can develop epilepsy through various ways. It is often with another neurological disorder. There is no apparent cause for **50%** of the people who have epilepsy.

If someone is having a seizure...

- Stay calm
- Call 911
- Keep the person safe
- Roll them over on their side
- Protect their head
- Loosen any tight clothing
- **Note the time** of the seizure
- Reassure the person when they gain consciousness of where they are.

# QUESTIONS WITH TIE!

## Tie Can't Figure It Out!



Tie asked me, "If I am a K9, what is a human?"

Well, God is A1 and humans are 2B...  
2B patient, 2B fair, and 2B kind.

But Tie, we did a 10K.

Actually, **we walked**, and **you** were in the dog-stroller for 9K's out of 10.

**Letters and Numbers** are hard for me too.

**Anomic aphasia (anomia)** is a type of aphasia characterized by problems recalling words, names, and numbers.

It seems that I have a variety of types of aphasia like - **Broca's aphasia, Wernicke aphasia, Conduction aphasia, and Anomic aphasia.**

Sometimes I said, "7", and I meant "11".

"Forty" came out of my mouth instead of "50".

Even worse is trying to understand what people are saying.

Tie said, "What do you mean?"

I said, "Eye No. Right??"

He said, "That's Mean!"

<https://www.thoughtco.com/homonyms-homophones-and-homographs-a-b-1692660>



## Aphasia Awareness Duck Campaign

In June- MAAC started a **new aphasia awareness campaign** - with **DUCKS!**



- The rubber ducks with tags will inform people about aphasia.
- Find a duck and take a selfie with it!
- Then hide the duck again with its tag to inform a new aphasia aware person! (or you can KEEP the duck-be sure to share on social media).
- The ducks have been hidden in airports, hotels, stores, doctor offices, universities, buses, trains, and recreation centers in the Mid-Atlantic area!
- Good Luck- hope you find one soon!

## Drivers with Aphasia, This is for You!

### **The BLUE Envelope Program**

Purpose: to help vehicle drivers

- who have Aphasia and other communications challenges
- autism spectrum disorder
- dementia
- anxiety
- or other conditions that might impair their ability to communicate easily during a traffic stop, car accident or other on-the-road interactions with police officers.

The program raises **awareness among police regarding this population of drivers and the kind of driver reactions they may observe** during a traffic stop.

Traffic stops are a high-stress situation for most drivers and that stress might even be magnified in drivers with aphasia or other communication challenges.

The outside of the Blue Envelope indicates whether the driver is verbal or non-verbal and *instructs the driver to inform a police officer that they have a Blue Envelope when the officer approaches the vehicle.*

#### **Driver:**

- Keep your hands on the steering wheel unless told to move them
- The officer may shine a flashlight in your car
- When asked for your vehicle/driver documents, **hand the officer the BLUE ENVELOPE!**

#### **Officer:**

- Driver may show signs of anxiety due to bright lights and noises
- Driver may have difficulty communicating and may not maintain eye contact
- **Clearly tell the driver when the stop is over and that they can leave**

**Get YOUR BLUE ENVELOPE AT YOUR LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT!**

## Technology and PWA

(people with aphasia)

On June 18<sup>th</sup> I learned useful information at the P.L.A.N. (People Learning about Aphasia Network) symposium in Berkeley, Calif.

I learned how to use AI (artificial intelligence) **Chat GPT** as a tool.

Website: <https://chatgpt.com/>

At the website,

- create a log-in
- create (and SAVE) a password

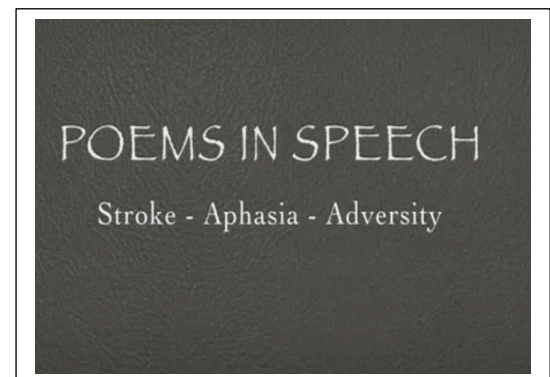
Now, use ChatGPT!

- Write a message
- Click the arrow and let the magic begin!

#### **Sample "messages" for ChatGPT**

- Make a list of \_\_\_\_\_ (*ways aphasia is acquired*)
- Tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_ (*strategies to improve word recall*)
- Translate into \_\_\_\_\_ (type the language needed)
- What should I say to make a \_\_\_\_\_ appointment? (dental, doctor, etc.)
- Summarize this article. Use bullet points. Use simple language. Use short words.

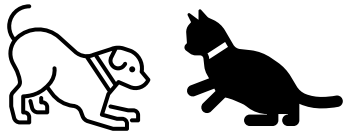
(Copy and paste the text of the article you want summarized).



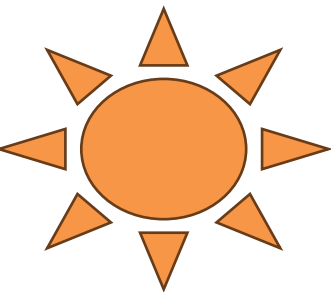
# Laughter Is Good Medicine

**Question:**  
Why can't dogs operate MRI machines?

**Answer:**  
No one knows... but CATscan!



## The Pets of MAAC!



## Three Monkeys Café At Torresdale Station

**Three Monkeys Cafe**  
**EAT, DRINK, & BE MONKEY**  
 Come for a unique dining experience. Pick your habitat: Risdon Ferry Dining Room, Monkey Court, Tree Bar & more!  
 9645 James St, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19114  
 @ 3monkeyscafe.com

July							August							September						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30					

## The MAAC Quarterly Calendar (July, August, September)

**MAAC Support groups  
for persons with aphasia  
Virtual (on ZOOM)  
Monthly  
every 2nd Mondays at 7pm**



**MAAC Caregivers Support groups  
Virtual (on ZOOM)  
Monthly  
Thursdays (after 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays)  
at 7pm**

Date	Session	Topic/Guest
Monday, July 8 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	Joint Support Group for people with aphasia AND caregivers <b>(on ZOOM)</b>	<b>Achola Simkins</b> UPRISING ACM <b>"CHAIR YOGA"</b>
Thursday, July 11 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	Caregivers Support Group <b>(on ZOOM)</b>	Open to all caregivers
Monday, August 12 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	Support Group for Person's with Aphasia <b>(on ZOOM)</b>	<b>Brooke Allen</b> Stroke Survivor Can, Inc.
Thursday, August 15 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	Caregivers Support Group <b>(on ZOOM)</b>	Open to all caregivers
Monday, September 9 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	Support Group for Person's with Aphasia <b>(on ZOOM)</b>	<b>Gillian Velmer</b> Founder & Executive Director <b>Sing Aphasia!</b>
Thursday, September 10 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	<b>MAAC in the Big Screen</b> <b>*In Person*</b> <b>"Phillies Game" at Citizens Bank Park</b>	<i>Aphasia Awareness Event</i>
Thursday, September 12 <sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm	Caregivers Support Group <b>(on ZOOM)</b>	Open to all caregivers

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



*SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION!*