From the Director’s Desk

I’d like to express my sincere gratitude to all who have helped to make the Central Pennsylvania Aphasia Center a success! The Center could not exist without our volunteers, donors, members, families, friends, and colleagues who have committed to supporting our mission. I am continually inspired by the generosity and encouragement of our aphasia family.

During the fall semester at the Aphasia Center members continued to improve speech and language skills, build friendships, and break down the “walls of limitation”. Artist Gary Prall taught a pencil sketching class at the Center. The group traveled to Bloomsburg University’s art gallery as a complement to this class to view artwork by Eun Kang Koh. Members also volunteered with the Danville Community Christmas Tree Project by donating clothing, toys and non-perishable foods as well as helping to sort and organize donations for pick-up by local families in need.

This is an exciting time for the Central Pennsylvania Aphasia Center. In addition to moving to a larger space, goals for 2012 include establishing a vocational program for individuals with aphasia who have the potential to return to work and exploring research opportunities.

Once again, thank you for taking an interest in the Aphasia Center. I wish you and yours a happy holiday season!

Robin Petrus
Executive Director

We’re Moving!

The Central Pennsylvania Aphasia Center is moving to a new location. As of January 1, 2012 our address will be 128 Mill Street, Suite B in downtown Danville. This new space triples the square footage of the Aphasia Center, allowing for expansion of services. Also, we will be able to accommodate many more members in this larger space.

We are excited about the downtown location, as we will truly be a visible part of the community. Members can easily access other Danville businesses including the library, the pharmacy, unique shops, and restaurants. Parking and a handicap accessible entrance will be in the rear of the building.

If you are in downtown Danville, please stop by to see our new space and say hello!
Member Profile: NANCY MESSERSMITH

Nancy has been a member at the Aphasia Center since April of 2011. A native of Columbia County, Nancy has lived with her husband at Cedar Hollow Farm in Mooresburg, Pa. for the last 40 years. She has always had an interest in animals, particularly cats and horses. At Cedar Hollow Farm, Nancy and her husband have cared for standard bred trotters and pacers, training them for harness racing.

Nancy is 65 years old. She suffered her first stroke that affected her ability to communicate five years ago. At the time she had been attending Bloomsburg University where she hoped to obtain a bachelor’s degree in nursing. Nancy had always been a nurse, receiving her RN degree in 1967 from Reading Hospital School of Nursing. Nancy worked as a nurse with all populations and ages from neonatal intensive care to nursing homes and enjoyed her career. However, she felt a bachelor’s degree would provide more opportunity in the administrative world of nursing. Besides, as Nancy frequently reminds us, she “likes a challenge.”

Over the years Nancy dabbed in many interests and hobbies. She taught EMT classes in Columbia and Montour Counties and at one time was President of Liberty Township Fire Company. Despite her accomplishments, Nancy maintains she is most proud of being a mother to her two sons. “They turned out wonderful,” she said.

Before coming to the Aphasia Center Nancy was “pulling back” from her friends and avoiding socializing. Having aphasia made her feel like she wasn’t who she thought she was. She had mixed emotions about everything she was previously sure of. It was a confusing time. Nancy shared, “Since coming to the Center I’m not confused anymore. I can talk again and even start the conversation.”

BU Students Learn about Aphasia

The Aphasia Center was pleased to host speech-language pathology/audiology students from Bloomsburg University during the fall semester. These undergraduate students observed aphasia therapy at the Center to fulfill requirements for the Clinical Observations class. Students in this class are required to observe 30 hours of therapy provided by a licensed speech-language pathologist or audiologist.

Many of the students are sophomores and are not yet sure what area of study they would like to specialize in. Observing at the Aphasia Center and other clinical settings allows the students to explore various options, learning from experienced speech-language pathologists and audiologists. Christa Irzinski, Alexanne Shorts, Dana Pysarenko, and Cailee Carmella gained first-hand knowledge about symptoms of aphasia and appropriate treatment methods.

Karly Stepper, a Junior at Bloomsburg University, came to the Central Pennsylvania Aphasia Center initially as an observer but continues as a volunteer during our computer lab on Thursday mornings. Thank you Karly for donating your time to the Center!

Aphasia (AH-fuh-ZHYOOH) is a communication disorder resulting from damage to the speech and language center of the brain. It impairs a person’s ability to verbalize, comprehend words, read, and write while intellect is generally unaffected.
Fall Fundraiser a Success

Members and friends of the Central Pennsylvania Aphasia Center gathered at the Spyglass Ridge Winery in Sunbury, Pa. Saturday, October 22 for the 1st annual winetasting fund raiser. The evening was as enjoyable as it was successful.

Many thanks to our sponsors, attendees, volunteers, and folks who donated to our cause whether or not they attended. The band, Mahoning Creek, donated their time and talents to provide live acoustic music for our enjoyment. Members of the band are Brian Crane and John and Kristin Keller. Andi Griffith baked and donated many dozens of cookies and other homemade goodies. Brian Crane created the visual presentation shown at the fund raiser (which now can be viewed on our Web site, www.aphasiacenterpa.org). Many volunteers contributed to the preparation and success of the event. Sponsors are listed below. (See last page for a complete list of donors.)

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Bronze Sponsors $150: Danville Pharmacy
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Darryll Purnell
Kristin & Brett Smiley
Hédi Guidiche
(left to right) John Keller, Brian Crane, & Kristin Keller
(left to right) Scott & Karen Govern, Heather & Dan Thomas, Michelle Jochum.
Nursing students, Barbara & Katrina
Kim Reich & her uncle, Jim Swinehart
Larry & Barb Gray
Gary & Chris Krick
(left to right) JoAnne Fisher, Robin Petrus, Kathy & Randy Morgan
Fishing for Words . . . and finding them!
Articles written by members of the Central Pennsylvania Aphasia Center

Return to Driving

I am 72 years old. I got my driver’s license in 1955. I watched my cousin drive. My mother was furious because she thought I was unsafe. I took the test at Lykens Police Test Center and passed right away.

Now I miss driving.

I took a test at Gibson Rehabilitation in Williamsport, Pa. on November 7, 2011. The test was to find out if I can drive again. The pre-driver testing costs $87. The community re-entry driving test costs $300. You must pass the pre-driver testing before being taken out on the road.

The test consisted of two parts. Part I included a vision test, answering questions about street signs, and reacting to traffic light changes on a computer program. Part II was driving the car in the parking lot, then through town. The car was adapted for someone who’s had a stroke.

I passed the test. This was excellent! I have to have my car adapted too, with a steering knob and a left-foot gas pedal. Then I can practice driving. It’s a new life!

This test is important. I recommend it to others who aren’t sure if they can go back to driving after a stroke.

Frequently Asked Questions

by Nancy Messersmith, Kim Reich, & JoAnne Fisher

Q: Is aphasia like being derailed or off track?
A: Yes, because our words are lost! The knowledge is there, but we can’t retrieve it. We just can’t talk correctly.

Q: What is important to a person with aphasia?
A: We want to be taken seriously and respected. We also want support for our families close to home.

Q: How has having aphasia changed you?
A: We have more patience now. We can relate better to people with disabilities and are more likely to lend a helping hand.

Q: Why go to the Aphasia Center?
A: At the Aphasia Center we are accepted “as is.” We have good friends and fun. The other members understand our frustrations. We have support while improving speaking, learning to read and do math again.

Members Top 10: Winter Favorites

1. Holiday traditions
2. Winter festivities
3. Hot cocoa with marshmallows
4. Fresh home-made cookies
5. Quiet winter evening walks
6. Winter aromas (baking, wood fires, fir trees)
7. Tea parties
8. Snowmen and snow families
9. Vacations in warm places
10. Snuggling up on winter evenings
Raising Funds for Aphasia

by Greg Moroz

I recently attended the Wine Tasting Fundraiser at Spyglass Ridge Winery. It was about raising money for the organization—Central Pennsylvania Aphasia Center.

Aphasia is a complicated disorder which can cause a person to have many problems. From forgetting people’s names and other words to difficulty with numbers, deductive reasoning, reading, spelling and numerous other problems. The Aphasia Center can relieve some or many of the problems. I think once you see what the Center is like you will go permanently.

There was a diverse group of people at the fundraiser, about fifty, from the Aphasia Center members to others who just want to give. It was a great gift. The music was a live band, three people who played guitar and sang. They played great. The wine was excellent. It was from the Spyglass Ridge Winery.

Everything was great! I especially liked how everyone had a good time and got along together.

Greg Moroz enjoying the fundraiser with Gary & Chris Krick.

Cycle Rebuild, Part II

by Darryll Purnell

My son and I are working on the old motorcycle. We recently had to move. In the middle of the stress of moving I worked on the frame for a couple of hours to calm me down. I think our project will help me and my son to enjoy being together. The frame needed cleaning, sanded, and we will have to fix the parts. Then it gets painted. Now we will put the past behind us and start fresh like the new coat of paint on the bike.

“Now we will put the past behind us and start fresh like the new coat of paint on the bike.”

Darryll’s motorcycle frame

Wonderful Words

by JoAnne Fisher

I love words and their definitions. When I found a new word I would learn it, use it, categorize it and file it in my mind. Then I had my aneurysm and my words became scattered, lost and made no sense. I did realize that to be able to speak I had to internally put these words back together.

It seemed to me the best way of doing this was crossword puzzles, using my thesaurus and my dictionary. I had to have specific words to fill the blanks in the crossword puzzle. The thesaurus was a place to find a group of similar words. The dictionary held the definitions and correct spellings. It was very slow and difficult yet it was working. The files in my mind were being reorganized and put back together. Finally, I began to “sense” results.

Years later, I still do crossword puzzles everyday. The difference is that while I still am taking care putting existing scattered words together, I am also learning new words and processing them with no problem.

Now I am loving words again and using them in order to speak. Believe me—this is FUN!
The Center’s Wish List:
Visitors – come see us!
Flat screen TV
DVD player
Projector screen
Craft/Art supplies
Office supplies
Vacuum cleaner

Honor someone special
by making a donation to the
Center to help celebrate a birthday, anniversary or other occasion, or by remembering a loved one with a memorial gift to the Center.

Donations and Grants

With gratitude, we recognize the generosity of the following donors.*

**Individuals:**
Anonymous (2)
Christopher & Michelle Benjamin
Reynold & Mary Beth Crane
Beth Else
Katherine Hartnett/James Reese Sr.
Dave & Debra Horn
Gary & Chris Krick
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Richard J. Oldfield CPA — gold sponsor

**Grants:**
Walmart $400

*Gifts received between Sept. 16 and Dec. 1, 2011.

Donations in any amount are welcomed and appreciated. Checks should be made payable to the Central Pennsylvania Aphasia Center.