



Rebuilding communication. *Transforming lives.*

# ACC Connection

Volume 17 Issue 2 ♦ Fall 2014

*“To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world.”*

--Anonymous

## Unbroken Bonds

By *Samantha Spina*

*Samantha Spina, a high school senior, wrote the following article about her grandfather, Tom Purbaugh. Tom, trained as a chemical engineer, started attending the ACC in early 2014, about 18 months after his stroke. Tom currently attends a weekly conversation treatment group and has participated in the ACC art class as well as the ACC KeyStrokes Aphasia Choir. It has been really wonderful to see Tom blossom at the ACC as he learns that there is life after aphasia!*

*Roberta J. Elman, Ph.D.,  
President & Founder*

“Just when you think you have life figured out, it throws you a curve ball”-- my grandpa told me this a week before he had a massive stroke. My grandpa’s

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*ACC Participant Tom Purbaugh with his granddaughter, Samantha Spina*

stroke occurred two years ago, in the left hemisphere of his brain, affecting his speech and language as well as the motion of his right arm and leg.

My grandpa was a motivated, intellectual entrepreneur, who is still to this day one of my number one supporters and motivators. Before his stroke, he spoke to me about my future, and my potential to thrive in life. He became a mentor to me, pushing me to be motivated and to find my passions. He created extraordinary scenarios of the great achievements I would attain, all of them showing his loving support and belief in my ability to be exceptional in whatever I choose

to pursue.

After his stroke, I was speaking to him about college and careers. I began to describe my wishes for my future and looked to him for approval, as I always had before his stroke. This time, I saw something new: I witnessed his emotional support for my future, more support than any words could have expressed. In his eyes and his emotions, I saw his encouragement and his joy for my enthusiasm about my future. He cried.

I could distinguish his sadness and fear; he was afraid that he wouldn’t get to see my aspirations come true. In this moment, I decided

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**Our Mission Statement:** *The mission of the Aphasia Center of California is to enhance communication skills, quality of life, and overall well-being for all those affected by aphasia.*

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**January-July 2014**

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## Unbroken Bonds

*Continued from page 1*

to show him what he had always seen as possible for me. In my junior and senior year of high school, I made a decision to increase the rigor of my curriculum at school. I signed up for classes that would test my intellectual and emotional strength. I struggled through many classes, sometimes reaching a mental breaking point. But I was motivated to show my grandpa the future he had always inspired in me, and this kept pushing me to

achieve more.

Because of my grandpa's stroke, I have developed a passion for the sciences and for medicine. I have begun to orient my extracurricular activities and my classes to fit my passions. I have participated in his speech-language therapy and also completed a hospital internship to broaden my understanding of his and other medical conditions. And I have learned from his stroke that life can change in a moment's time.

My grandpa's support has helped me strive for what I most enjoy, and to pursue whatever my

passions are. My grandpa continues to improve, but he is still living with aphasia and apraxia. He sometimes struggles to communicate, but in every conversation I have with him, he is able to express his love for me and his joy for my future. He has accompanied me on many of my college visits, allowing me to share these experiences with him. I know that even if I don't achieve all of my goals, I will always remember to appreciate my life and my talents. I hope that someday, I will be able to influence someone's life the way my grandpa is still influencing mine.





## 2014 Walk to Talk

An enthusiastic group of more than 130 people joined our 12th Annual “Walk to Talk” at Lake Merritt on June 28th to raise aphasia awareness and funds for the ACC. Together, we raised more than \$46,000 for aphasia programs and services!!

Special thanks to John Jankowski, who for the 4th year in a row, brought in the most donations! We had a host of people who raised more than \$500: Esther Akiba, Mary & Bob Anderson, Anita Cox & Family, Bill & Donna Crist, Roberta Elman, Mark Estigoy & Family, Nancy & Peter Farber-Szekrenyi, Terry Flanagan,

Mark & Teresa Gardner, David Giacomelli & Family, Joyce Jones, Mary Jane & Rich Laufenberg, Julie & Vince Lindgren, Enid Meyer & Sid Dommies, Michael Miller & Family, Pat Terry Olson & Friends, Kathy Ott, Tom Purbaugh & Karen Spina, Jim & Patty Santanna, Pat & George Springer, Philip Tien, Don & Vicki Welcome, Bill Wong & Family, and Derrick & Suzanne Wong. To you and the many donors who sponsored you, thank you for your generosity and efforts in supporting what we do at the Aphasia Center!

The event couldn't take place

without all of our hard working event volunteers, including our wonderful musicians, Susan Musicant, Sharon Medary, and Howard Zugman; our amazing event co-coordinator, Enid Meyer; and our volunteers on event day--Sid Dommies, Vicki Welcome, Marina Chang, Amanda Vang, Krista Cardenas, Rachel & Ben Agron, Allison McConnaghay, Cristine Bjork-Hilsinger, Nicole Rodgers, Olivia Noceda, Sue Ewing, Loran Tolbert, Steve Fry, Tessa Fisher, Blair Schwab, Maia Olson, Pat Terry Olson, Doug Olson, Bob Lewis, Rachel Heinitz, Scott Canady, Mary Lew, Bill Wong, and Esther Akiba. ACC volunteers and donors make everything possible—thank you so much!

## Walk to Talk 2014 Donors

A big thank you to all of our “Walk to Talk” donors! It was a record setting event with more than 130 walkers at Lake Merritt on June 28th. Be sure to join us in 2015!

(Space limitations allow us to list donors who made contributions of \$50 or more.)

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# Aphasia Center News

## Want to Stay Up to Date?

Did you know that you can stay up-to-date on ACC news by “liking” us on Facebook? We post photographs and information year-round on our Facebook page. Recent posts include photographs from our newly formed art class and the ACC KeyStrokes aphasia choir. You can directly access our page from the Facebook icon on our website: [www.aphasiacenter.org](http://www.aphasiacenter.org) Or search for “Aphasia Center of California” the next time you are on Facebook!

## Make a Recurring Donation by Credit Card!

Did you know that you can make a donation with your credit card to the Aphasia Center? It’s easy to do! Just click on the Donate button at the top of the Aphasia Center of California’s website at [www.aphasiacenter.org](http://www.aphasiacenter.org) You can make a one-time donation or a recurring donation. Your donations help us

make a critical difference in the quality of life for those affected by aphasia.

## The ACC Makes the News!

Did you read the great article about aphasia and the ACC by health reporter Erin Allday published in the San Francisco Chronicle newspaper? If not, you can read it online at [www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com) Just search for the word “aphasia”!

## Great News! The Aphasia Center Accepts Vehicle Donations

The Aphasia Center of California has teamed up with Donate For Charity, a company that specializes in processing vehicle donations for nonprofit organizations. Donate For Charity arranges for vehicle pickup, handles all the DMV issues, sells the vehicle at auction, and distributes the net proceeds to the ACC. You’ll avoid the headache of selling a used vehicle

and help the ACC fund its ongoing efforts and receive a tax deduction. When you’re ready to donate, or if you have relatives or friends who wish to donate, simply call Donate For Charity toll-free at (866) 392-4483 or click on the Donate button at [www.aphasiacenter.org](http://www.aphasiacenter.org).

## Do you shop at Lucky, FoodMaxx or Savemart?

Lucky, FoodMaxx, and Savemart will donate money to the Aphasia Center of California every time you shop! Just call the Aphasia Center and ask us to mail you a Shares Program card. It’s super simple, doesn’t cost a thing, and you don’t need to give any personal information. Each time you buy groceries, you just hand your Shares Program card to the clerk, and 3% of your total grocery bill will be donated to the ACC. To get your Shares Program card, please call us at 510-336-0112.

[www.aphasiacenter.org](http://www.aphasiacenter.org)

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