



VOLUME 27, ISSUE 1

ACC CONNECTION ANNUAL REPORT

Spring 2024

Happy Aphasia Awareness Month!

It's been a momentous year for the Aphasia Center of California. This newsletter includes executive leadership updates, our 2023 Annual Report, introductions to the Aphasia Center staff, and a member spotlight.

Our online programming continues to expand, and we hired a new team member to support our growth. Group members and staff report they are happy with our virtual services. We formally ended our office lease at the Downtown Oakland Senior Center in December, but we hope to bring back in-person services in the future! We welcome your insight on this journey!

This June, we invite you to spread awareness about aphasia and the power of aphasia groups—now and throughout the year. A shirt or tote bag from our Bonfire store can help you spread the word!

We are so grateful for your continued support.

- The Aphasia Center of California team



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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.

Executive Team Updates

Dr. Roberta Elman founded the Aphasia Center of California and has worked tirelessly for over 25 years, doing everything from the smallest administrative tasks to conducting research and presenting at international conferences—all while ensuring that every Aphasia Center member receives the best care possible.

As many of you know, Roberta is on a Leave of Absence from her role as Executive Director. We wish Roberta well during this time, and look forward to her return.

Until then, the Board of Directors is working hard to make sure that the Aphasia Center runs as smoothly as possible. Board member Grace Harvey, is the Interim Executive Director until Roberta's return.



Looking to make a donation?

There are many ways to support us!

One-time or monthly donations
Facebook fundraisers
Vehicle donations
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Text "ACC24" to 44-321

After volunteering at the Aphasia Center, pursuing her career as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and co-founding & directing a counseling clinic, Grace joined our Board in the fall of 2023.

The entire Board of Directors cares deeply about the clients, therapists, and operations of the Aphasia Center. They are confident that we will continue to provide exceptional services during Roberta's absence.

For questions or concerns about programming, services, or fundraising, please email Grace at grace@aphasiacenter.org.

Welcome Vanessa!

Hello! I'm your new Office Administrator. I hold a Bachelor's degree in English, Language, and Discourse from CSU East Bay, and am hoping to become a speech-language pathologist. Feel free to contact me at vanessa@aphasiacenter.org if you have any questions regarding payments, inquiries, or donations. I'm here to assist you!



Member Spotlight: Peter Landreth

“I had a stroke in March 2022 when I was 45 years old. In the first couple weeks, I couldn’t feel my right side, but I was lucky and my sensation started to come back. After a couple months, I could walk, and now my right side is just a bit numb. But my vision was impaired, so I have a field cut (~40% on my right side). That was hard to navigate for a while, but now I’m pretty good. I can’t drive yet, but I’m going to try soon. But the biggest challenge is my aphasia (and apraxia). It’s a long slog. It took a long time to find basic words like “dog” or “cat,” and every day I get better. Speaking and writing are not easy—writing this was a big challenge!

I was a lawyer, so I can’t work, but I focus on what I **can** do rather than what I can’t. So, physically, I try anything! I walk a lot, work out, run, hike, bike, golf, fish and ski if I can get there. I went back to skiing 9 months after my stroke. My kids are 14 and 17, and my wife works full-time, so I’m busy. Lots of

chores, and I’m getting good at cooking, which is also good for my aphasia (sequencing, sorting, finding words, etc.). And I love to travel! We went to Japan and Fiji last summer, and my son and I went by ourselves to the Galapagos. We’re going to see colleges with our daughter this summer.

Every day I work on speech. The Aphasia Center is a big part of my journey—trying to push myself and having people who understand aphasia. I know that my recovery is long-term, but I keep trying and having patience with myself is key.”



Peter was also the top fundraiser for the 2023 Aphasia Center Challenge!

Did you Know?

2023 fun facts about ACC!

- Communication Groups: 2052 individual encounters
- Care Partners Group: 22 total sessions, 130 individual encounters
- TED Talks Groups: 27 total sessions, 171 individual encounters
- Book Club Groups: 36 total sessions, 285 individual encounters
- News Forum Sessions: 45 total sessions, 303 individual encounters
- Virtual special events visits - ACC's Got Talent: 57 participants
- Help Center: 556 encounters

Overall, we had **4425 encounters** in 2023!

Get to Know Our Speech Therapists!

Sue Ewing

ACC has been an important part of my life since its inception in 1996.

My SLP practice began in Michigan in 1976 where I too started groups for those with speech and language difficulties. I moved to CA in 1994 and was thrilled to find Roberta starting an Aphasia Center. Currently I facilitate one group and help when needed.

Carly Millanski

I lived in California for 5 years, and now I live in Austin, Texas! My wife is also a speech pathologist, and we are having a baby girl in August. We have a sweet dog named Romeo, and he is 13 years old.



Lyssa Rome

I started volunteering at the Aphasia Center when I was in graduate school, and have been on staff for almost six years. Getting to know participants and facilitating groups brings me a lot of joy.



Amanda Olson

I facilitated communication groups in Menlo Park before having a baby (who is now 6!) and moving to Colorado. I am back in California AND at the ACC, and could not be happier!



Gabby Saucedo

I am from Oakland. I love traveling and spending time outdoors- whether hiking, biking, or kayaking. I joined the ACC team last June and have enjoyed getting to know the group members and watching how they support and encourage each other. I am grateful to be a part of such an incredible community.



Madison Fox

I enjoy facilitating the ACC's music club. I am a musician myself and I believe music has a lot of power to help us express ourselves. My 4-year-old budding musician loves to turn every drive into a sing-along!

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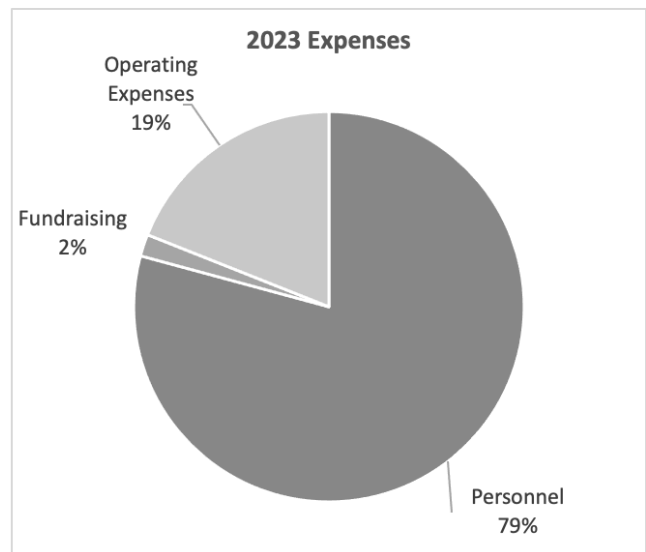
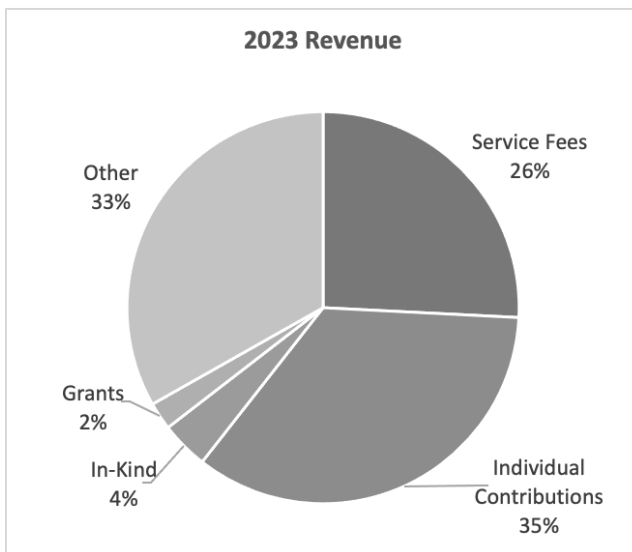
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Please note that 2023 In Memoriam and Honor designations were not visible at the time of this newsletter while we updated our record-keeping process. Acknowledgement cards were sent to honorees.

Annual Report



Annual Report, Continued

Last fall, a generous donor offered a **\$10,000 match** to your year-end donations!
That \$10,000 grant provided:

**One full year of services for six members,
20 communication group sessions, AND
Innovative Book Club curriculum development!**

Your monthly and one-time gifts change lives! Thank you for your continued support!



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