



VOLUME 28, ISSUE 1

ACC CONNECTION
Spring 2025

June is Aphasia Awareness Month!

It's that time of year again—June is Aphasia Awareness Month! Time to share stories, educate others, and **make aphasia part of the conversation.**

We're excited to share a few of the ways we can all help bring aphasia awareness to people around us.

In this newsletter, we feature the inspirational story of one of our

members who is advocating at the California State Senate. We also share resources to help people with aphasia advocate for themselves, and spread the word to family and friends!

So this Aphasia Awareness Month (and every month!), we hope you will have a few more **resources in your pocket to spread the word about aphasia.**



NATIONAL
APHASIA
AWARENESS MONTH

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

The Aphasia Center of California is excited to welcome **Sarah Burton**, our new **Executive Director**.

Sarah started in December and has been overseeing operational, fundraising, and administrative tasks since Dr. Roberta Elman's well-deserved retirement in March.



Sarah received her Master's degree from Northeastern University in Boston. She brings **over 15 years of nonprofit administration and management experience** in clinical, education, and community development settings across the Bay Area.

She brings a wealth of knowledge in fundraising, organizational development, operations, and program management. Welcome, Sarah!

Working directly alongside Sarah is **Giti Cira, M.S., CCC-SLP**, our new **Clinical Director**.

When asked about her work here, she said, "I am so proud to be a part of the ACC team and the aphasia community. When I facilitated my first group in 2016, as a student, I knew I had found something special. **Groups are everything.** I've seen firsthand how they help people get back to their lives."

Giti is an experienced speech-language pathologist with experience in hospital, acute rehabilitation, outpatient, and community-based settings. She also taught a graduate-level course on neurogenic communication disorders at Cal State East Bay.



**Let's stay
connected!**

**Let us know about your questions,
concerns, and ideas:**

sarah@aphasiacenter.org

giti@aphasiacenter.org

info@aphasiacenter.org

(510) 336-0112

Member Spotlight: Megan Dahle, CA State Senator



Senator Megan Dahle was elected to represent California's 1st Senate District in 2024 after serving in the California State Assembly since 2019. Megan and her husband Brian Dahle are third-generation family farmers in Lassen County.

Megan **had a stroke** in December 2023, while she was hospitalized for heart complications.

Immediately after her stroke, Megan started an intensive rehabilitation regimen to rebuild strength in her right side and retrain neural pathways critical for language and speech.

By early February, only weeks into therapy, Megan was back in constant contact with her legislative team, monitoring bills and district issues. She credits her tremendous progress to rigorous therapy, prayer, and unwavering community support.

Before Megan's stroke, she and her family knew almost nothing about aphasia and apraxia. Learning how to live with aphasia and apraxia still presents daily challenges. Megan has **found community and incredible support through the Aphasia Center of California**, where she attends a group for young stroke survivors. Megan's peers in the group encouraged her to use her voice to advocate for stroke survivors with aphasia and apraxia.

Within six months of the stroke, Megan made her official return to the Assembly floor. Though she acknowledged lingering fatigue, she immediately resumed her legislative responsibilities. Her experience has deepened her advocacy for rural access to healthcare and stroke prevention and recovery, **turning a personal challenge into a renewed legislative advocacy mission.**

In May, Senator Megan Dahle presented Senate Resolution 40 declaring May as Stroke Awareness Month in California. It was her first extensive speech on the Senate floor since her stroke.

Megan's story is a testament to resilience.

**Check out Megan's
inspirational Senate speech on
YouTube!**

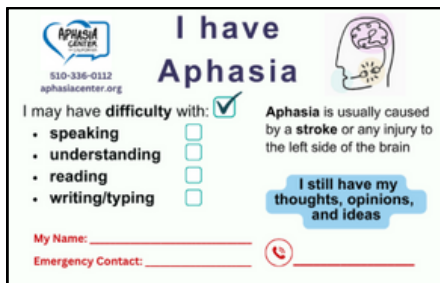
<http://bit.ly/3FxihCB>



New ACC Resources for People with Aphasia!

Check out these resources on our website at
<https://aphasiacenter.org/learn-about-aphasia/resources-links>

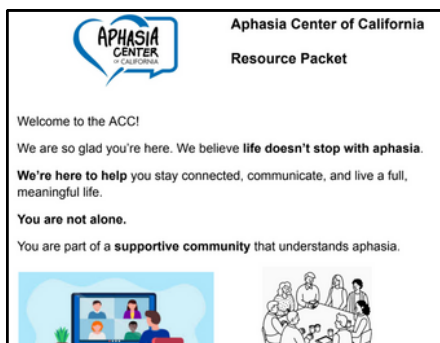
You can also email us info@aphasiacenter.org or ask your group Speech-Language Pathologist for your own copy of these new tools.



The image shows a foldable ID card for people with aphasia. It features the Aphasia Center of California logo and contact information (510-336-0112, aphasiacenter.org). The card is titled "I have Aphasia" and includes a checklist for difficulties: speaking (checked), understanding, reading, and writing/typing. It also states that aphasia is usually caused by a stroke or injury to the left side of the brain and includes a blue box saying "I still have my thoughts, opinions, and ideas". At the bottom, there are fields for "My Name:" and "Emergency Contact:" with a phone icon.

ID Cards - Aphasia and PPA

We now have ACC-branded Aphasia ID cards for Aphasia and Primary Progressive Aphasia. This foldable card also has helpful hints on how to best communicate with the individual!



The image shows the cover of the "Aphasia Center of California Resource Packet". It includes the ACC logo and a welcome message: "Welcome to the ACC! We are so glad you're here. We believe life doesn't stop with aphasia. We're here to help you stay connected, communicate, and live a full, meaningful life. You are not alone. You are part of a supportive community that understands aphasia." There are two illustrations: one of people on a video call and another of a group of people sitting together.

ACC Aphasia Resource Packet

Hot off the presses! This resource packet has it all—an overview of aphasia, explanation of our services, communication supports, visual aids, and the new ID card. This is a must-have for people with aphasia, their families, and care partners.

Getting the word out about Aphasia!

How can you help in building aphasia awareness in your community?
There's lots of ways:



Share ACC stories, resources, and info on social media with friends and family

Invite people to events like our online Author Chat with Jon McGregor on **June 18**: <https://bit.ly/ACCAuthorChat>

Save the Date for our fall fundraiser on Saturday, **September 13th**!

Say Hello to Our Staff



Emma Borba
Office Administrator



Sue Ewing
M.A., CCC-SLP



Carly Millanski
M.S., CCC-SLP



Amanda Olson
M.S., CCC-SLP



Lyssa Rome
M.S., CCC-SLP



Gabby Saucedo
M.S., CCC-SLP



Michelle Lee
M.S., CCC-SLP



I'm so thankful and excited to work at the ACC! My father has aphasia, and he inspires me every day to advocate for greater awareness of what aphasia is—and isn't—and to help create inclusive spaces where everyone has access to the supports they need to communicate.

Thank You to Our Generous Donor Community

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Don't see your name? Let us know!

Some December 2024 checks were recorded in 2025.



Scan me



Your gift is essential for us to continue this work.

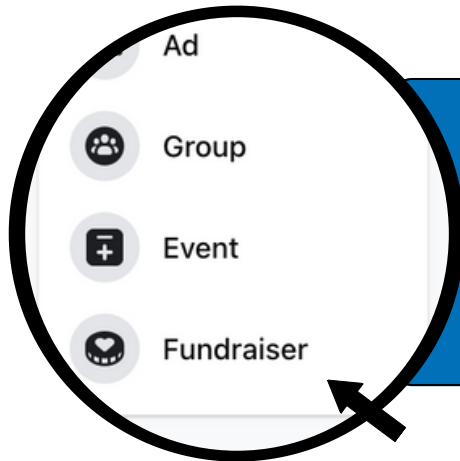
Donate online: aphasiacenter.org/get-involved/donate

Send a check: 55 Santa Clara Ave Ste 175, Oakland CA 94610

Start a Facebook Fundraiser (see how on the next page!)



Steps to Make a Facebook Fundraiser for the ACC

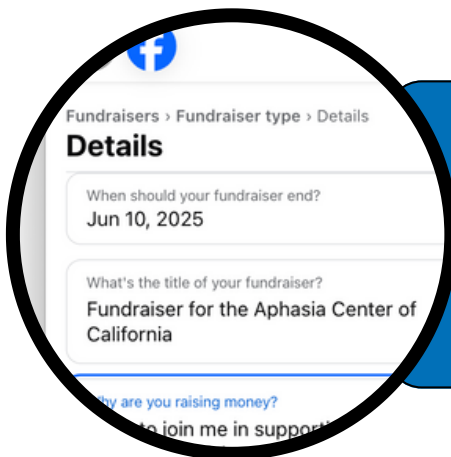


1. Go to Fundraisers on Facebook

- On Facebook, go to the **menu** (top right dots)
- Tap **fundraisers**

2. Start a Fundraiser

- Tap **"Raise Money"**
- Choose **"Nonprofit"**
- Type and choose **"Aphasia Center of California"**

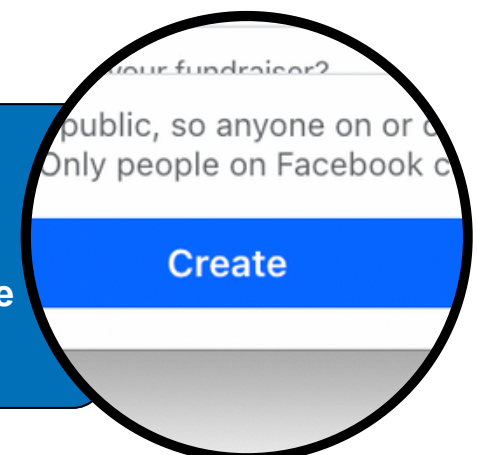


3. Add Details

- Write a **title** and **short message** (why you care)
- Set a **goal amount** and **end date**

4. Create and Share with Friends

- Tap **"Create"**
- **Share** your fundraiser on **your Facebook page**
- Ask friends to donate and share



More News...

Our **website** is getting a facelift! Stay tuned for a new and improved (and easier to navigate) website coming in the next month!



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Contact Information

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[https://aphasiacenter.org/get-
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