

Sunday, June 17, 2007

Hi everybody! Glad to see you all there for our last regular meeting before summer. The next get-together will be at the Loughnan's for our July 21st picnic.

NEW FACES

- Luana Talltree-Mitchell from Bellevue visited for the first time.
- Dotti & Dick McDonald were there, too. I must have missed them last time, so here is an official welcome.
- Rebecca came for the first time, along with her sister and parents. They left before I could get their last name and contact info, so I hope they come again.

Welcome to you all! We're glad to see you showing such great initiative, and we hope we can help and see you again soon.

APHASIA PRESENTATION

Megan Caldwell, speech therapist from Northwest Hospital, gave us a presentation on aphasia to mark National Aphasia Awareness Month in June. Here are some of the highlights of her talk and the ensuing discussion:

- She showed a short video segment dramatizing the way your entire life shifts when language abilities are lost.
- There are two active groups for aphasics now at Northwest: *Let The Games Begin* for playing card and board games, and *Read All About It*, a reading and discussion group. Northwest has also had workshops for writing and movie discussion.
- The Star Center was mentioned for adaptive equipment to aid writing, but I can't find any specifics on this. I will do some more research.
- There is a new service called 'speech-to-speech relay', which involves an interpreter between an aphasic and someone they wish to speak to on the phone. The aphasic calls the interpreter and explains what they want to say, and the interpreter calls the second party and does the talking. The aphasic can listen in while their call is being relayed like this. It is still a new service and I don't know how it is being provided, but it sounds like a great idea for someone who has difficulty with phone conversations.
- Family training is as important as re-training the aphasic. There are many skills which family members need for effective communication, it is not only the aphasic's responsibility.
- Megan had some handouts about effective communication hints and the Northwest programs. Contact her at megan.caldwell@nwhsea.org if you would like copies.
- A trick for getting difficult words out is to tap your fingers along with the syllables as you say them. For example, you would go tap-tap-tap-tap along with saying "an-es-the-tic". This helps the rhythm of the word as it's being spoken.
- When in a noisy group, get someone's attention when you speak by calling their name. "JANE, please pass the gravy" works much better than a simple "please pass the gravy".
- A regular conversation group among aphasics is very helpful. It is important to have this in a quiet place like someone's house. This is great exercise for conversational skills and doesn't cost a thing. A couple of our group members have done this and found it very beneficial.

Thanks to Megan for the helpful presentation!

OUTDOORS FOR ALL NEEDS HELP

This is a great organization which provides outdoor activities for the disabled. I urge you to check out their website or give them a call: www.outdoorsforall.org, (425) 462-0978. They are losing their lease at the end of this month, though, and they need help finding a new place fast. From their website: *We've established a Task Force to help us address this urgent situation and find a solution to the matter. Would you or someone you know be a resource to us in assessing our options? If so, please contact Will Niccolls, Development Director or Ed Bronsdon, Executive Director, Outdoors for All Foundation; office 425-462-0978.* So if you or anyone you know can help, please contact the foundation.

PICNIC VOLUNTEERS

If anyone can help Donna set up or clean up for the upcoming July picnic, please give her a call at (206) 440-7527 and offer your services. She has been great all these years providing our July picnic! If you can, pitch in and give her a hand.

SAILBOAT CRUISE

Our annual Sailing Heritage cruise is coming up Sunday July 29th, from 10:00 till noon. This cruise is free of charge. We still have some spots available – contact me if you want to go. You must be able to get up about four narrow steps with help. One guest can come along too.

FOOTLOOSE SAILING BLAKE ISLAND OVERNIGHT

Footloose Sailing is having their annual overnight sail to Blake Island, July 7th and 8th. Contact Liz Riggs at Footloose, liz@footloosesailing.org or (206) 789-7624 if you are interested. There is a small fee for this event.

STROKE CAMP FOR APHASICS AND FAMILIES

Portland State University is sponsoring their annual Stroke Camp for Families Living With Aphasia. John and Jan Mantle attended this camp last year and enjoyed it very much. The camp is Saturday August 25th only for \$50 per person, or both Saturday and Sunday August 25th and 26th for \$100/person. Scholarship help is available if cost is a barrier for you. Contact Melinda Pomeroy at 503-725-3070 for more information and a registration form.

OUR LIBRARY

Duane Retel, our group librarian, is keeping track of any material you want to lend or borrow. This includes books, videos, tapes, DVDs, etc. Duane is bringing the material each meeting so you can browse through it. He can be contacted at 206-772-5477 or dr_leterwood@comcast.net.

Next month is the July picnic at the Loughnan's, right across the street from Northwest Hospital. I'll be sending out a notice with maps around July 1. I won't be able to make the July picnic, but I'll see you all in August.

Gerrit