

SCC Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2
March, 2008

Director's Message



Welcome to Spring. In the last issue, I focused on The Tipping Point for the Center in the coming year. We have started our

first quarter with a bang. We ran 20 groups per week in our first session, almost all of them fully booked. Our computer lab is in use 4 days a week, with a different mentor each day. We have set up a partnership with O'Brien Technologies, a Virginia-based

corporation, to help them perfect a communication device and provide them with expertise and input for their website. Some of our members will be participating in a feasibility study of the device. We are also conducting some collaborative research with Dr. Anna Barrett, Director of Stroke Rehabilitation Research at the Kessler Medical Rehabilitation Research Center in New Jersey. Our holiday solicitation funding campaign was very successful. In 2007, 38% of our income was contributed support, and all of that money

goes directly into our programs. Thank you to all, and please continue to keep us in mind throughout the year. We are excited about being featured in upcoming editions of two national publications. We'll provide more about this in our next newsletter. With these and our other activities, it surely looks as if the Center is beginning 2008 tipping in the right direction. The Tipping Point column on page 2 of this issue notes some of the Center's other recent activities.

Darlene Williamson

SCC Group Programs: Writers Revisited

One year ago we featured the creative writing activities of the Monday Writing Group. At this time last year, the Group was experimenting with creative writing and haiku poetry. From that they moved on to everyday writing for personal needs, and syntax rules for subject-verb agreement.

Another recent project of the group was inspired by Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech. Individuals wrote about their dreams for themselves, our leaders, and what would inspire them to march as Dr. King did. Group members used Dr. King's dream to incorporate dreams of their own. Carrie Harris dreams that one of the rewarding things she will find to do in life is to participate in the three day Avon Cancer Race. Lynn Morris, a musician herself, says, "A true leader is knowing the music, and knowing the people." And Eugene Bedell has a dream that "land of liberty rings."

What a difference a year makes. Now, Center members have begun writing for the **SCC Newsletter**. We will feature their stories with by-lines in this and future Newsletters. On page 2, Karen Rasmussen reports on the Center's February bowling event. Greg Foote has contributed to our **Resources You Can Use** column, on page 3.



Center members Patrick Knight, Karen Rasmussen, and Gert Roosen prepare for a writing session.

CENTER RECEIVES MAJOR DONATION

The Freedman Boylan Family Foundation has donated \$10,000 to the Center. Marie Boylan and Jeff Freedman had heard about the work we do and decided to provide generous support. We are grateful to the Freedman Boylan Family for enabling us to move toward our goals.

Calling All Volunteers

We are looking for volunteers who can:

- 1) Provide transportation for our members to their Center appointments
- 2) Serve as computer mentors for our members.

Tipping Point News

Our December 2007 issue talked about our 2008 “Tipping Point” year. Throughout this important year we will report on progress toward our goals for this year and beyond.

You will notice the insert listing donors. Our Holiday Solicitation was successful, and we think it is important to acknowledge our donors’ support to everyone who reads the Newsletter.

The Giving Circle of HOPE provided a generous year-end grant that will enable us to work on one of our significant goals—our *apraxia** program. The Giving Circle is like an investment club for philanthropy; members pool their money for charitable causes.

Brooke Hallowell, Director of the School of Hearing, Speech and Language Services at Ohio University

visited the Center. She is noted for her efforts in bringing services to underserved populations in the U.S. and India. She shares the mission of our Center, and this friendship with Brooke brings some new and creative opportunities as we expand the reach of the Center.

We have begun the process of negotiating expanded space for the Center, including more space for our computer lab program.

As always, we continue to work on fundraising activities, particularly expanding our corporate donors.

**Apraxia of speech:*
Loss of the ability to use the muscle movements (lips, tongue, etc.) necessary for speech - despite having the physical ability to perform them.

Spotlight on...



EUGENE BEDELL is one of the younger members of our Center. He had a stroke in May, 2007 at the age of 23. Eugene was born in Raleigh, North Carolina. He moved to Virginia with his parents and his younger brother and sister when he was two years old. He graduated from high school here. He then went on to Wesley College in Delaware for one year before transferring to West Virginia University, where he played cornerback on their nationally ranked football team. Eugene also

was active in his fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon. However, his pursuit of a business degree was interrupted by his stroke. He now spends his time working on his physical and speech rehabilitation and hanging out with his friends. Like most young people, Eugene spends a lot of time on his computer, and plays computer games with his friends. He is an active member of the Center, and is making steady gains in his writing and speaking.

Eugene has applied to George Mason University, where he hopes to continue towards his undergraduate degree. Following that, he plans to attend law school to achieve his goal of becoming a professional sports agent.

Eugene has been encouraged by seeing other Center members getting their driver’s licenses, and has begun working towards regaining his license.

Center Events

February Bowling Party

by Karen Rasmussen
SCC Member

On February 9, 15 people from the Center met at Bowl America on Lee Highway for an afternoon of loud music, fun, and bowling with friends and family. All had a good time, with Greg Foote’s favorite part of the day seeing everyone so happy. Melissa Richman’s favorite part was a bowler in the next lane cheering for us! The high scores were: Greg Foote (88) and Ruth Paynter (63). Darlene Williamson said she liked how everyone got excited for and supported everyone else.



About Our Staff

Jill Gradofsky, our current Intern, is originally from New York. Formerly working in fundraising and development at the Epilepsy Foundation of Long Island, she returned to George Washington University for a Master’s Degree in Speech Language Pathology. She will graduate in May. After spending the summer backpacking in Europe, Jill hopes to find a job in the DC area.



Resources You Can Use

The “**Resources You Can Use**” column selects one or two topics and pulls together the available sources of assistance in our area.

In this issue, *Greg Foote*, one of our Monday writing group members, eloquently recommends a solution to his shoe problem.

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The problem: How do I get my shoes on? You see, I had a stroke. My right arm is pretty useless. I can't tie my shoes with only one arm. Sure, I could use the laces, but that is pretty dull.

The solution: A new kind of shoe called the “Upper Box multi-adjust lacing system.”

What it means is the tension of the laces is controlled by a “button.”

I slipped on the shoes; I pushed the button; and I ratcheted down the “lacing.” These shoes were tight.

I bought them from Nordstrom. Warning: They aren't cheap! They are around \$80 a pair. After getting them, I searched the Internet and found that shoes with this type of lacing system are manufactured for all kind of shoes: running shoes, women's trail, snowboard boots for men, women, and kids. In other words, everyone wears them—not just me or other stroke survivors.



Greg Foote's sneaker with the multi-adjust lacing system

Foot Drop Demonstration

Foot Drop is one of the physical effects that may impede stroke survivors' ability to walk. The NESS L300 Foot Drop System helps create a more natural and faster walk.

Jessica To, a physical therapist and the Director of Body Kinetics Rehab in Annandale, recently visited the Center to explain how the System works. She showed a video, then demonstrated the product. The device delivers electrical signals to calf muscles, allowing the foot to be raised at the correct time. This prevents foot drop and helps balance. The System is only available through physical therapists and requires a prescription from a doctor. It can be expensive, but insurance sometimes pays for part of it. Potential users need an evaluation, and Body Kinetics has offered to provide free evaluations to Center members. Their phone number is (703) 639-0950.

Documenting Progress

From 2005 to 2007, the Center has moved from providing 900 to 3,200 hours of member services, a 255% increase!



Our Book Club Recommends

Tortilla Flat. John Steinbeck. (1935) Having enjoyed Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, the club voted to read Steinbeck's first critically successful novel, an affectionate tale of young ne'er do well men in Monterey, California during the years between World War I and Prohibition.

World's Fair. E.L. Doctorow. (1985) A memoir-like novel of a very young boy growing up in Depression-era Bronx. While it culminates in the 1939 World's Fair, it is a story of family and neighborhood life from the boy's point of view.

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More information? Call 703-255-5221

Stroke Fact

On average, every 40 seconds someone in the United States has a stroke.

American Heart Association, 2008



We could use...

The Center would like to establish sustaining sources of supplies. Both our financial planning and our day-to-day administration can benefit from increased certainty about sources of supplies.

If you know people or have business contacts who might consider donating supplies over a specific time period, we would love to hear from you.

At the top of our list is bottled water. We provide it to all members, and use about a case a week—a growing overhead cost.