Dear Friends,

The beautiful spring weather has inspired us to make plans for our annual summer barbeque! It wouldn’t be summer without getting to see all of you, so we hope you can join us at Nancy Boyd Park in Martinez on Wednesday, July 13th from noon to 3 pm. All the details can be found on page 4. We hope to see you there!

In other news we’re excited to have two newly funded research grants we’ve begun work on. The first looks at why most individuals with aphasia have difficulty understanding what others say to them, ranging from trouble understanding a few sentences to a more severe problem where even simple phrases are not understood. Some people recover very well from this disorder, while others do not, and the reason why is unclear. This study will use state-of-the-art brain imaging tools to examine the underlying brain structures important for recovery of language comprehension. The second study is looking at stress reduction techniques that may have a significant impact on improving functioning and quality of life for those suffering from chronic stroke symptoms.

We’re very fortunate to have several new research collaborators visiting us from time to time including Elke DeWitte from Belgium and Jet Vonk from the Netherlands. In addition we’d like to welcome Matt O’Neal who is currently helping out with the Aphasia group. Meanwhile our very own Rita Barakat will be starting Graduate School at USC in the fall, Vitoria Piai has taken a Senior Research position at the Donders Centre for Cognition in the Netherlands, and Stephanie Ries will be starting as an Assistant Professor at San Diego State University. While we’ll be very sad to see them go, we’re excited for each of their new opportunities and we know they’ll have tremendous success in all their future endeavors. And our door is always open for return visits.

We hope all is well with you and your loved ones. We have missed seeing many of you and hope that we get to enjoy your company again soon.

Sincerely,

Nina Dronkers, Ph.D.
Director
Center for Aphasia & Related Disorders
Summary of Research Programs at our Center

Treatment Interventions for Stroke

One of our treatment intervention studies involves comparing two different brain health classes with respect to their ability to improve psychological and cognitive functioning following stroke. These 8-week courses include lectures, hands-on practice, and group discussions about health and wellness.

Our other treatment study targets a specific speech disorder, apraxia of speech, which affects many individuals following a left hemisphere stroke. The 5-week treatment is designed to improve individuals’ ability to speak and articulate, and we are also measuring associated brain changes with MRI before and after the treatment.

Behavioral Neuroscience and Stroke: Language

This study investigates the brain areas involved in specific components of language. Lesion analysis, functional MRI, and event-related potentials assess the functional roles of particular brain areas in language, the time course with which they are recruited into the language system, the ways in which these areas interact with each other, and how they interact with other areas that support the skills necessary for language.

Voxel-based Lesion Symptom Mapping

A new type of neuroimaging analysis we have developed permits us to analyze stroke lesion data similar to ways used in functional neuroimaging so that the relative contributions of different brain regions to a given cognitive or linguistic function can be analyzed. This technique is allowing us to visualize networks of brain regions responsible for various language and cognitive abilities such as sentence comprehension and problem solving.
Summary of Research Programs at our Center (cont’d)

Language Disorders due to Fiber Tract Disconnection

This project uses diffusion tensor and diffusion spectrum neuroimaging to understand how communication skills are affected after injury to fiber tract pathways and how these deficits differ from those arising from damage to the cortex of the brain.

Primary Progressive Aphasia

The aim of this study is to investigate the brain basis of a progressive form of aphasia that is caused by degeneration of different brain areas over time. Unlike aphasia caused by a stroke, progressive aphasia leads to a unique set of language and cognitive deficits in patients with this disorder. This project also involves using neuroimaging techniques such as MRI to help understand the changes that occur in this degenerative disorder. This work is done in collaboration with colleagues at the University of California, San Francisco and is headed by Dr. Maria Luisa Gorno-Tempini.

If you would like more information about our work, please contact Nina Dronkers at the Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders, 150 Muir Road, Martinez, CA. Tel: 925-372-2925.
Stroke Support Group

Annual Summer Picnic!

When
Wednesday, July 13th, 12:00-3:00 p.m.

Where
Nancy Boyd Memorial Park, 261 Church Street corner of Church St. & Valley Ave. in Martinez

What to bring
A dish or drink to share if you can.

Questions? Call Juliana at (925) 372-4649

Directions to Nancy Boyd Park:
♦ From Hwy 4, take Alhambra Ave. exit
♦ Go South on Alhambra Ave. for 3/4 mi.
♦ Turn left on Truitt Ave.
♦ Make first left on Valley Ave. to park
**TOP 10 SUMMER HEALTH TIPS**

**DRINK WATER**
Water helps prevent illness, keeps your bones and muscles healthy, helps maintain your weight and best of all, water fuels your activities throughout the day!

**EAT FRESH**
Reserve a place on your plate every meal for fresh produce and you're sure to reap the tasty rewards.

**TRANSFORM ACTIVITIES INTO EXERCISE**
Activities like going to the zoo or visiting a park can become exercise if you use the stairs, take the long route or add stretches and strengthening exercises along the way!

**LIFESTYLE MODIFICATION**
The summer is a great time to try a new exercise routine, kick-start a new healthy eating plan and quit smoking.

**SEE YOUR DOCTOR**
Schedule an appointment for a check-up to make sure pain or injury doesn't sideline you this summer.

**STAY SHADY**
Try to limit your time in the direct sunshine between 10am and 4pm, and always wear sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses.

**PLAN A PERSONAL VACATION**
A vacation to get away from it all is a must this summer. Take some "you" time this summer to relax and rejuvenate.

**DISCONNECT**
Disconnect from the internet, put down those smart phones and see a world without selfies, hashtags and videos.

**SLEEP WELL**
Getting enough quality sleep at the right times can help protect your mental and physical health, safety and quality of life.

**STAY COOL**
When it's hot, do what you can to stay cool! Go swimming at your neighborhood pool and visit local air-conditioned attractions.
Summer Word Search

Find the summer words:

B F G X H E S Q T L T J E X I
A B U O N I B S S I T U W B N
R O T U X C Y V U C S L L E D
B W J C L A I H G S W Y K A E
E B I L D R U O U U D E K C P
C Q M Y E Q T Z A N H L G H E
U T Z M S I O V A C A T I O N
E A M Q E W H Y I J D V E L D
L U C A M P I N G S J U D O E
S X F O I M M M S B Z D A O N
Z R H V Z I H T M D I Y N P C
A P P O E L R J O I I P O F E
K C V B G O P I W G N I M D D
P T C K H F V J L D H G E P A
D X O S H U B D T Y F D L N Y

July  Pool  Sun
Vacation  Independence Day  Hot
June  Swimming  Shorts
Summer  Beach  Barbecue
August  Lazy Days  Lemonade
Camping
# Stroke Recovery Resources

## Stroke and Aphasia Web Sites
- **American Stroke Association**: [www.strokeassociation.org](http://www.strokeassociation.org)
- **National Stroke Association**: [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org)
- **StrokeNet**: [www.strokenetwork.org](http://www.strokenetwork.org)
- **Aphasia Software Links**: [http://www.aphasiasoftwarefinder.org/](http://www.aphasiasoftwarefinder.org/)

## Stroke Support Groups in East Bay

**Stroke Support and Communication Group at VA Martinez**
150 Muir Road (126R), Martinez, CA 94553  
*Contact*: Juliana Baldo, (925) 372-4649, meets every Wednesday 1pm-3pm in Building R4  
*Email*: juliana@ebire.org

**California State University East Bay Aphasia Group**
*Mailing Address*: Cal State East Bay, Speech, Language & Hearing Clinic, MB# 1097A  
*Communicative Sciences and Disorders*, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward, CA 94542  
*Contact*: (510) 885-3233.  
*Email*: ssimrin@csuhayward.edu

**Aphasia Center of California**
200 Grand Ave., Oakland, CA 94610  
*Contact*: Roberta Elman, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BC-NCD, (510) 336-0112.  
*Email*: RJElman@aol.com  
*Website*: [www.aphasiacenter.org](http://www.aphasiacenter.org)

**Stroke Support Group of Contra Costa County**
Mt. Diablo Medical Center, Concord, CA 94520, or John Muir Medical Center, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek, CA 94596  
*Contact*: Ann Dzuna, B.S., MBA, (925) 376-6218. Email: ADZUNA@COMCAST.NET

**Stroke and Head Injury Support Group**
Washington Hospital, Washington West, Anderson Auditorium C, 2000 Mowry Ave., Fremont, CA 94538  
*Contact*: Karen Benedetti, (510) 818-6253  
*Mailing Address*: Karen Benedetti, Washington Hospital, Rehab Dept., 2000 Mowry Ave., Fremont, CA 94538-1716

**Cal State University Sacramento Aphasia Group**
Maryjane Reese Language, Speech, and Hearing Center  
6000 J St., Shasta Hall 172, Sacramento, CA 95819-6071  
*Contact*: Darla Heggie, Clinic Coordinator, 916-278-6601

## Stroke Support Groups in North Bay

**Interpersonal Skills - Stroke Support Group**
College of Marin, Disabled Student Services Program, 835 College Ave., Kentfield, CA 94904.  
*Contact*: Maureen Green, M.A., CCC-SLP, (415) 457-8811 ext. 7702

## Stroke Support Groups in SF/Peninsula


**CHMC Community Health Resource Center**  
2100 Webster Street, San Francisco, (415) 923-3155.  
*Stroke/Communication Group/Acquired Brain Injury Program* City College of San Francisco, John Adams Campus, DSPS Dept., 1860 Hayes St., San Francisco.  
*Contact*: Judi Kaplan, M.S., CCC-SLP or Joyce Foreman (415) 561-1005.  
*E-mail*: jforeman@ccsf.org

## Exercise Program for Individuals with Physical Disabilities

**Project Recovery, Family YMCA, Mt. Diablo Region**,  
*Contact*: Libby Luxemberg (925) 687-8900.

## Bay Area Clinical Trials

(Universities frequently run various clinical trials with individuals who have experienced a stroke. You may find one you are interested in learning more about/participating in. We do not promote any organization’s clinical trials, but offer these for your information only.)

**UCSF**: [http://www.ucsfhealth.org/clinical_trials/index.html](http://www.ucsfhealth.org/clinical_trials/index.html)  
**Stanford**: [http://med.stanford.edu/clinicaltrials/](http://med.stanford.edu/clinicaltrials/)  
Aphasia News

Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders
150 Muir Road 126 (R)
Martinez, CA 94553

http://www.ebire.org/aphasia

Newsletter Information
If you would like to receive this newsletter or you have comments/suggestions, e-mail Juliana at juliana@ebire.org, call her at (925) 372-4649 or write to:

Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders
VA Northern Calif. Health Care System
150 Muir Road 126R
Martinez, CA 94553

We welcome your comments and questions!

Center Members & Affiliates
Nina Dronkers
Juliana Baldo
And Turken
Krista Schendel Parker
Brian Curran
Janet Patterson
Carl Ludy
Stephanie Ries
Tim Herron
Vitoria Piai
Selvi Paulraj
Maria Ivanova
Giana Cirolia
Rita Barakat
Kevin Dalziel
Matt O’Neal
Jet Vonk
Elke DeWitte

We would also like to thank the members of the Stroke Support Group and their families, the Speech Pathology staff, and all of our wonderful research participants.

The Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders is supported by the VA Northern California Health Care System, the VA Medical Research Program, the National Institutes of Health, and the University of California at Davis and San Diego, as well as through generous donations from private foundations and individuals. Please feel free to contact Dr. Dronkers at (925) 372-2925 if you would like more information.