

SSEEO NEWS

Our mission is to provide advocacy, support, education & resources for stroke survivors and their families.

World Stroke Day Regional Event Held

Saturday, October 29th SSEEO held an event for the community at Advocate Sherman Hospital on the ***Healing Power of Music and Stroke is Treatable.***



Mary Helen Ekstam of Journey Care took the audience on a journey to enhance one's mind, body and spirit through music. She used the power of music in a special relaxation technique.

Donna Kruse, Stroke Coordinator at Advocate Sherman Hospital shared facts about the human brain, stroke and the warning signs and risk factors of stroke. A special thank you to the four members of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra who played during the event.



Stroke Can Happen at ANY Age Event

SSEEO presented Stroke Can Happen at ANY Age (SCHAA) at the Midwest Stroke Action Alliance's 4th annual stroke symposium. Brain Herbst, Michael Victor and Michelle Jordan (young stroke survivors) shared their stroke story to healthcare professionals on Saturday, November 5th.



During the Q&A the audience asked many questions and also asked how they can help the patient and their families when diagnosed with a stroke. They thanked the panel many times for sharing their stroke story.

Phyllis Weiss, moderator and Mark Egelston (also young stroke survivors) shared SSEEEO's programs and details about the Stroke Survivor2Survivor (SS2S) telephone support program.



SCHAA is a SSEEEO presentation which is comprised of a panel of young stroke survivors, a neurologist and SSEEEO representative. The panel is equipped to present to businesses, hospitals and other organizations to help raise awareness and prevention of stroke. For more information on this program please visit sseeo.org.

Survivor's Corner... **Barbara Ellen Jaeger**

It's been 8 ½ years since my first stroke, which left me with some aphasia. At that time, I worked as an air traffic controller supervisor at O'Hare control tower. A month later I had another mild stroke, which was followed by a massive ischemic stroke leaving me unconscious and on a feeding tube for two weeks. It was bad, bad, bad! I had no memory, and was unable to talk or identify my family. I was at ground zero.



I recall very little from my month at Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (RIC), and it was four months after my stroke before I was able to recognize my family. Putting pictures of the important people and events in my life in an electronic picture frame helped me to remember because I could look at the images over and over again to get my brain connecting to the things I should know. After being dismissed from RIC, I started day rehab at RIC in Northbrook where I received speech, occupational, and physical therapy for one year. Luckily, my parents lived in the area and they took me to Northbrook everyday; however, the irony is that my parents moved back to Vernon Hills so I could help take care of them!

I had setback after setback over the next few years with four surgeries, some with complications, and each one making it difficult for me to move. With each setback I kept telling myself, "I'm alive!" and that's what kept me moving forward.

I continue with all of my therapy at Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital and Grayslake locations and I am currently receiving speech therapy at Marquette University where I am making progress in forming complete sentences. I have learned to write again with my left hand and my husband says my handwriting is better than his! He also tells everyone that my positive attitude is unbelievable. My husband and I continue to look for therapy opportunities, information on stroke, and devices that might be helpful.

SSEEEO has been a great resource for us. We have met many great stroke survivors and caregivers at the SSEEEO regional event and stroke support group meetings at Lake Forest. I am motivated to continue with my therapy because I keep getting better and I want to become independent. I've learned to take one day at a time knowing that I improve every day.

I want to tell other stroke survivors - **NEVER GIVE UP THE FIGHT!** Recovery can be frustratingly slow. If I had accepted my progress after one year and stopped, I would not be able to walk, talk, write, read or drive a specially equipped car. For eight plus years, I have been getting better every day. It takes effort from **YOU** to give your body the opportunity to recover. Continue with your therapies while constantly searching for new

recovery concepts that you can take advantage of. Stay focused, positive, and determined; it is the formula for winning the fight.

Expressing Gratitude: *A Way to Give Thanks and Make You Happier*

With the holiday season approaching, our thoughts may initially focus on family gatherings, traditions, food, and preparations. However, individuals and their families who have experienced a stroke may feel sadness, anxiousness or even depression. Researchers have found that expressing gratitude or thankful appreciation for what a person receives and the goodness in one's produces positive emotions, helps the individual to focus and appreciate good experiences, improves health, makes facing adversity less stressful, and creates strong relationships.

So, let's put gratitude on the menu this holiday season and make it one of our traditions - gratitude for how fortunate we have been in our past, the good that exists in our current lives, and the possibilities that await us in the future. Being thankful and expressing it can make the person acknowledging gratitude happier and it can also make others happier as well.

Some ways to express gratitude every day:

- Write a thank-you note, email, or text.
- Thank someone personally.
- Keep a gratitude journal.
- End each day with reflections and even conversation with someone on all the good that happened.
- Create conversations with others around the topic.
- Take a picture or find a picture that captures a moment and/or person for which you are thankful. Share the picture with them along with an explanation of what it means to you.



Some ways to express gratitude during the holidays:

- Nametags on gifts can include a comment of gratefulness.
- Construction paper leaves can decorate a Thanksgiving table and can also be used for each person to write about the things for which they are grateful. Each person can share at some point during the meal.
- Create a gratefulness "tree" that can hold thankful comments (e.g. hang the leaves from the Thanksgiving table on the tree).

Many of the ideas in this article are from: ***"Giving Thanks Can Make You Happier,"***Healthbeat. Harvard Health Publications. November 2011.

November is National Family Caregiver's Month *Share your gratitude with a caregiver!*

Express your appreciation for all that the caregiver in your family does and remind other family members to do the same. Something as simple as a thank you can go a long way

in helping caregivers to know that you recognize the loving care, sacrifices, and added responsibilities they have taken on for your loved one.

In addition to expressing all the reasons you are thankful for the caregiver in your family, this website has ideas for other ways to show you appreciate his/her hard work. Visit [Caregiver Thanks](#)



Upcoming Events

Teleconference

"TIPS FOR HOLIDAY CAREGIVING"

Wednesday, December 14th

7:00 - 8:00 pm, CST

For more information, please see the flyer

[Tips for Holiday Caregiving](#)

SSEEO's 5th Annual Walk/Run for Stroke

Saturday, May 6th, 2017



P.O. BOX 855 LOMBARD IL 60148 US
1-888-988-8047

Together WE Can Make a Difference!

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