

# Embracing CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER. Our Community

A newsletter produced by the Department of Community Health and Education at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

## Aphasia Community Group Brings Hope To Those Who Struggle To Communicate

**Imagine living a life in which you understand what people around you are talking about and you want to communicate with them, but when you open your mouth to speak, more often than not, the wrong words spill from your lips.**

When people don't understand, and ask you to repeat yourself, you try again and again but just can't get the right words out even though you know exactly what you want to say. After a while, people around you — even your friends and family — slowly begin to exclude you from conversations because of the difficulty and time it takes for you to speak. Talking becomes too much effort and over time you find yourself withdrawing from social situations, eventually becoming overwhelmed with feelings of isolation, loneliness and a sense of being trapped within your own thoughts. That can be the frustrating existence of a person living with aphasia.

Aphasia is a language disorder that results from damage to portions of the brain that are responsible for language. The disorder usually occurs suddenly, often as the result of a stroke or head injury, but it may also



The Cedars-Sinai Aphasia Community Group

develop slowly, as in the case of a brain tumor. Aphasia impairs the expression and understanding of language, as well as reading and writing. While symptoms of aphasia can improve significantly with speech therapy, typically it remains a chronic condition and individuals often benefit from group support to help them transition back into community life.

Bill Horwitz has struggled with aphasia since he experienced a stroke. Each Friday morning he attends Cedars-Sinai's Aphasia Community Group led by Speech-Language Pathologist Sherry Washington, who also is the hospital's Outpatient Therapy

supervisor. "I started coming to this group eight years ago and I haven't missed a meeting yet," Horwitz said. "Everyone in the group respects each other's right to talk no matter how well they speak," he continued.

For the past 20 years, Washington has worked with individuals who have aphasia. She understands the difficulty and frustration those living with aphasia must face every day. She launched Cedars-Sinai's Aphasia Community Group in 1997 and every week works with about eight members. "Our group offers a safe and comfortable environment for the participants, some of whom feel

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As a leading academic medical center, Cedars-Sinai is home to some of the most knowledgeable and skilled health professionals in the world, dedicated to compassionate and pioneering patient care, research and teaching. Fortunately, these physicians, nurses and

other health professionals are equally dedicated to our community health and education programs, bringing their expertise and commitment to our communities in thousands of programs each year.

Whether it's one of our diabetes experts giving a Wednesday night seminar at the Park La Brea apartments on new ways to manage the disease, or one of our health educators sitting with a second-grade class at Pio Pico Elementary School to teach them about choosing healthy foods, or one of our nurses giving a cholesterol screening to a group of seniors at in the Crenshaw district — you'll find Cedars-Sinai experts in an incredible variety of locations throughout Los Angeles providing an incredible variety of education and screening programs.

In addition to articles highlighting several examples of Cedars-Sinai's health professionals working closely with our community partners, this issue of Embracing Our Community also highlights the expertise we offer the community through our long-standing partnership with the City of West Hollywood. West Hollywood is a city of 34,000 citizens who come to Cedars-Sinai for 54,000 patient visits per year. As you will see in the article inside, our continued work with the City of West Hollywood, as well as community providers like the Los Angeles Free Clinic and Jewish Family Services of Greater Los Angeles, strengthen the health of the community in important ways.

The close working relationships we have with our community partners, combined with the expertise and commitment of our Cedars-Sinai team, provide a strong foundation for our continued work together on behalf of the community's health.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Priselac  
President and Chief Executive Officer

# Helping Children Thrive After Trauma

**In 1981, Suzanne Silverstein, MA, ATR, a clinical art therapist, co-founded the Psychological Trauma Center, an affiliated program of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, to help children through traumatic events. Today, the Center's school-based "Share and Care" outreach program in which counselors use art therapy to help children who have experienced violence and tragedy express their feelings, serves 13 elementary schools located in low-income and high crime areas throughout Los Angeles. The program has helped more than 10,000 students cope with traumatic issues in their lives.**

The statistics are sobering. Many of the children the Center works with live in gang-infested areas and have witnessed violence. Almost half of the children have an incarcerated family member due to criminal activity or substance abuse; and about 25 percent of the children who work with the Center have lost family members and friends to domestic and/or gang violence.

Most of the children the Center works with have no one to talk to and no place to go to express their worries and concerns. When many of these children lose a brother, sister, father or mother to divorce or family crisis, their life falls apart.

This is where the Psychological Trauma Center steps in. School personnel notify Share and Care if a traumatic event in a child's life occurs, and time is made to meet with the student. When the child is ready, he or she joins one of the Share and Care groups, which is offered at no cost to the participant. Once the child feels he/she can trust the group members, they begin to open up and share their story using art to express their feelings. The group becomes a support system and the counselor becomes a mentor and trusted friend.

"We want to reach the children before they begin to fall behind. The art therapy eases them into expressing themselves verbally," says Silverstein. "Our goal is to help the children develop coping skills to deal with the traumatic events in their lives. We want to help build their self-esteem so that the children can become more confident and succeed in school."

Silverstein says Share and Care works to stop the cycle of violence by targeting young elementary school children. She is hoping to expand the program because data that the Center has collected shows that 70 to 80 percent of the children enrolled in the program improve from it, including their improvement of well being, social skills and functioning within family and school environments.

For more information about the Psychological Trauma Center, visit its website at [www.ptcweb.org](http://www.ptcweb.org) or call (310) 423-3506.



James, a third grader who is part of the Share and Care program at his school, drew this picture to explain his feelings after his mother died from cancer. He also wrote "Thank you Share and Care for helping me feel better."

## West Hollywood Partnerships:

# Caring For Community

**Cedars-Sinai Medical Center (CSMC) has had a long-standing partnership with the City of West Hollywood. The Medical Center partners with health care and community service organizations in the city to provide educational services, outreach, and care to members of the community.**

### City of West Hollywood

Under the direction of Logan Williams, Manager of Community Health and Education at CSMC, the hospital sponsors and co-sponsors many community health programs. "We have an excellent collaborative relationship with the City of West Hollywood. We're able to discuss and evaluate programs that are in place and adapt them as necessary," Williams said.

West Hollywood has a large population of senior citizens and many of these seniors are Russian immigrants. "It is wonderful that the city has taken the initiative to translate many of the materials we use into Russian. They also provide headsets at the events that translate what our speakers are saying into Russian," Williams said. Many of the senior-focused programs in West Hollywood take place at the West Hollywood Comprehensive Service Center in Plummer Park or at the Senior Services Building which houses the Freda Mohr Senior Center and the Eichenbaum Fitness Center on Fairfax Avenue. Both sites are programs of Jewish Family Services of Greater Los Angeles, also a long-time partner of Cedars-Sinai.

City of West Hollywood's Social Services Program Administrator Leslie Isenberg appreciates the partnership with CSMC. "The hospital is the closest major medical center to our city and has become our 'go to' resource for health care speakers for all of our health-related education programs," Isenberg said.

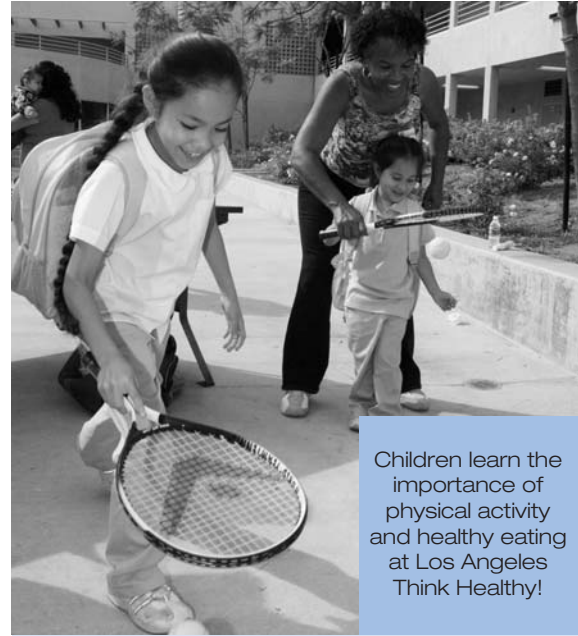
Following are some of the many programs in West Hollywood that include CSMC's partnership:

- The annual Senior Health Fair drew 500 people who had the opportunity to hear from the expertise of 14 different departments at CSMC. Screenings included diabetes, clinical breast self exam, and blood pressure.
- CSMC provides breast health awareness programs several times per year for individuals to receive free and low-cost mammograms at the medical center along with clinical breast exams.
- The CSMC Health Lecture Series brings CSMC physicians and staff out into the West Hollywood community to speak about topics relevant to seniors including cardiovascular health, diabetes awareness, and depression.
- Free education and immunization programs occur throughout the fall and into the winter for Flu and Pneumococcal shots.
- Cardiovascular screening programs and diabetes education and screening tests are offered several times per year.
- Depression education and depression screenings are administered along with any necessary referrals.
- For more information about programs for senior citizens, please contact Logan Williams at (310) 423-9581.

### Los Angeles Free Clinic

The City of West Hollywood has helped fund The Los Angeles Free Clinic since the Clinic began, and the Clinic has a long history of providing services to West Hollywood residents.

Dedicated to providing dependable and affordable quality health care and human services in a caring environment for the underserved, The Los Angeles Free Clinic is celebrating its 40th anniversary of service to those who are



Children learn the importance of physical activity and healthy eating at Los Angeles Think Healthy!

### COACH for Kids and Their Families®

## Los Angeles Think Healthy!

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center's COACH for Kids and Their Families® (Community Outreach Assistance for Children's Health), brings no-cost, quality healthcare services to low-income children throughout Los Angeles County. At the core of the program are two fully equipped mobile medical units that are essentially "clinics on wheels." The mobile medical units are staffed by Cedars-Sinai professionals who provide preventive care such as immunizations and screenings in addition to diagnosis and treatment of acute illnesses.

In September 2007, COACH for Kids and Their Families® reached out to more than 300 children and their families at the second annual Los Angeles Think Healthy! event held at Queen Anne Elementary School in Mid-City Los Angeles. The event was co-sponsored by The Children's Health Fund, MetLife and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation. The COACH for Kids and Their Families® staff provided children and their families with education about healthy food choices, nutrition and the importance of exercise through activities such as tennis, hula-hoop, yoga, dancing and sampling healthy snacks. COACH looks forward to participating in Los Angeles Think Healthy! again next year.

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## Aphasia...

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socially isolated and have few opportunities to venture out of their homes to communicate," she said.

According to Washington, "The effectiveness of our group is measured by the longevity of our participants. After they've been with us for a while, it builds their confidence to communicate and we encourage them to become more active again out in the community. Over the years several of the people in our support group have gone on to become volunteers in the hospital."

Horwitz reports that, "This group is so important that one of our members who is 82 years old, travels almost two hours each direction by bus with her caregiver so that she can be here."

Washington, who leads the group as a volunteer, is the driving force behind its success. Horwitz speaks very highly of her saying, "There aren't many people who know an angel but I know Sherry Washington and she's an angel. She saved my life."

For more information about the Aphasia Community Group at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, please contact Sherry Washington at (310) 423-3136.

## "Embracing Our Community Fair" Attracts Cedars-Sinai Employees

The warm sunshine was a wonderful backdrop for Cedars-Sinai's third annual Community Benefit Fair: "Embracing Our Community" that was held outside on the Plaza Level earlier this year. Employees learned about the many different programs that Cedars-Sinai's employees and medical staff provide in partnership with community organizations to improve

health for those in need as 18 exhibitors from the community and medical center shared information about their programs and services.

The Community Health and Education Department would like to thank California Pizza Kitchen, Le Pain Quotidien, Mishima and Subway restaurants that donated raffle items for the fair.



## West Hollywood Partnerships

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in need. CSMC has partnered with the Clinic for many years by providing medical residents to treat the Clinic's patients through a Physician in Training program and by providing free and subsidized diagnostic services and treatment at the hospital.

"Our partnership with The Los Angeles Free Clinic is a 'win-win' for both of us," said Neil Romanoff, M.D., M.P.H., Vice President of Medical Affairs at CSMC who serves on the Clinic's Board of Directors. "The Clinic benefits from the exchange of knowledge and experience with CSMC, while at the same time we expand the education of our medical residents by providing an opportunity to practice medicine in a community-based setting."

Abbe Land, co-chief executive officer of The Los Angeles Free Clinic agrees, "The partnership has served both of our organizations well. For example, it allows our pre-natal patients to receive care from Cedars-Sinai medical residents who provide excellent ongoing care to

patients. At the same time, the Internal Medicine residency training program has helped several Cedars-Sinai residents decide to practice at the Clinic when their residency is completed."

"Through the physician training program, our medical residents have an opportunity to care for their patients from diagnosis through surgery," said Jonathon Solnik, M.D., Director of CSMC's Center for Minimally Invasive Gynecologic Surgery. "CSMC and the Clinic have developed a gynecologic surgery program that allows patients an opportunity to receive surgical services here at the hospital."

In addition to the surgical residents, psychiatry residents also rotate at the Clinic. "We typically see from four to six patients per day for mood disorders such as depression and anxiety disorders," said Waguih William IsHak, M.D., Director of the Psychiatry Residency Training program at CSMC. "The Clinic provides our fourth-year residents with a

tremendous opportunity to use our established models of treatment to work with patients." According to Lina Augjus, M.D., M.P.H., a fourth-year resident in the psychiatry program, "It has been very meaningful to reach out to those in such dire need. Mental illness is often magnified by lack of resources and intervention is essential to allow quality of life."

The Community Health and Education Department at CSMC also works with The Los Angeles Free Clinic to share health education outreach programs with the Clinic's staff. "Capacity building has been a cornerstone of how we work with the Clinic," said Cindy Levey of CSMC's Department of Community Health and Education. "If the programs we develop are a good fit for the Clinic, we schedule trainings and provide curricula so that the Clinic can implement the same health education programs with their community partners."