



# Austin Speech Labs

NOVEMBER 2010 NEWSLETTER

## Our Mission

Our mission is to improve the quality of life of stroke survivors and help them to reengage in their social and professional lives.

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## What We Accomplished This Year— October 2009 to November 2010

In September of 2008, Austin Speech Labs opened its doors to four stroke survivors. We amassed our collected materials and set out to offer hope, support, and intensive therapy to those still in need. To date, we have served 56 clients.

We watched individuals go from dependent care to living independently, listened as a young client proudly spoke her wedding vows, and cheered as a client reunited with his singing group. It has been a thrilling and hectic year and we want to share with you all the great things we were able to accomplish:

- November 2009: Raised \$8,000 at a fundraiser hosted by the McCarrolls
- December 2009: ASL was awarded a grant of \$45,000 from the St. David's

Community Health Foundation.

- December 2009: Moved into our own office
- January 2010: Missy McCarroll joined the Board.
- January 2010: Added the Brain Fitness Training Program
- January 2010: Started Telecommute Therapy
- February 2010: Launched a new and improved website, [www.austinspeechlabs.org](http://www.austinspeechlabs.org)
- March 2010: Developed a promotional video
- April 2010: Established an Advisory Committee

*continued on page 2*

## Austin Speech Labs 2009-2010

### Board of Directors

- Shelley E. Adair
- David Little
- Missy McCarroll
- Shilpa Shamapant
- Venu Shamapant

### Advisory Committee

- Sherrie Frachtman
- Thomas A. Hill, M.D.
- Kacy O'Hare
- Sandy Rogge



Spring 2010 Book Club (from left): Richard Alexander, Gabriela Saenz, Shelley Adair, Tom Hilgendorf, Casey Gwinn.

## Our Accomplishments (*cont.*)

- April 2010: David Little (former client and current board member) was interviewed on KVET radio for National Stroke Awareness Month. David also promoted Austin Speech Labs' *One Word at a Time* event.
- April 2010: ASL Co-Founder Shilpa Shamapant and client Lacy Coleman were featured on KXAN news.
- May 2010: ASL was awarded a grant of \$10,000 from the Austin Community Foundation for development of a computer lab.
- May 2010: Our first annual *One Word at a Time* event raised over \$55,000.
- May 2010: ASL became a therapy provider for DARS (Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services) in Texas.
- June 2010: Established a training program in speech and language pathology with the University of Texas

*Shelley and Shilpa*



Dick and Missy McCarroll, Co-Chairs of ASL's *One Word at a Time* fundraising event May 20, 2010.



The Fundraising Committee for *One Word at a Time*. Bottom row, L-R: Pam Ferguson, Shelley and Piper Adair, Missy McCarroll; middle row, L-R: Judy Provost, Shilpa Shamapant, Debbie Fincher; top row, L-R: Dee Vargas, Pat Saunders, Laurie Hall.

## How to Help/ Wish List

Sponsor a client for one boot camp.

Donate:

Office chairs

Microsoft Office software

Therapy materials

Notebooks (8.5" x 11")

Computer desks

Printer paper

Paper towels and tissues

Whiteboards (2)

Electric pencil sharpener

Headphones (4)



# One Word at a Time

On May 20, 2010, Austin Speech Labs held its first annual *One Word at a Time* fundraiser. The event, held at the Renaissance Hotel, was attended by approximately 250 people.

We were honored to have Mack Brown headline the event. He delighted the crowd with tales about football and his duty as a coach to challenge and inspire his players. He quoted Lt. Colonel Gadson (U.S. Army): "You don't always get to decide what circumstances you get. You decide how you must handle them and then turn them into a positive." As we do here at ASL, Mack Brown inspires his players to be winners every day. He not only spoke to our guests but also signed two footballs that were auctioned off by the exuberant Tim Herman.



Another highlight of the evening was an informative presentation by Dr. Thomas Hill on stroke prevention and the impact of strokes on patients and their families. Dr. Hill has been a faithful friend to ASL and we deeply appreciate his guidance and support as we continue to grow our organization.

Under the chairmanship of Missy and Dick McCarroll, we were able to raise over \$55,000 through *One Word at a Time*. This money will help provide continued services for Austin and Central Texas stroke survivors in speech, language, and cognitive therapy.

A special thanks to *One Word at a Time* Committee members Shelley Adair, Pam Ferguson, Debbie Fincher, Laurie Hall, David Little, Judy Provost, Pat Saunders, Shilpa Shamapant, Venu Shamapant, and Dee Vargas for creating

such a memorable, enjoyable, and successful event.

We want to thank everyone who supported us this year with their contributions and attendance. A special thanks is in order to our *One Word at a Time* underwriters, listed below. Our fundraiser became a reality thanks to your generous donations.

## *Touchdown: \$5,000*

Bill Little and Kim Scofield

## *Field Goal: \$2,500*

Elizabeth Ashcraft and Larry Tu

David and Amy Little

Brown McCarroll, L.L.P.

McGinnis, Lochridge, and Kilgore

Scott and Kacy O'Hare

Rogge Capital Management, LP

Melinda and Barry Twomey

Vinson & Elkins LLP

## *First Down: \$1,000*

Georgia Erickson

Escalate Capital Partners

Graves, Dougherty, Hearon & Moody, P.C.

Mr. and Mrs. Allen Gwinn

Laurie and Franklin Hall

Howry Breen LLP and Mary and Tim Herman

Kidd Law Firm

Vijay Mahajan

Maxwell Locke & Ritter LLP

Mr. and Mrs. Aditya Mishra

Dick and Missy McCarroll

Chris Pacitti

Judy and Lloyd Provost

Strasburger & Price, LLP

Anonymous

Anonymous

## *Cheer Squad*

Shelley and Brent Adair

Shilpa and Venu Shamapant

Anonymous

*Special thanks to Lucian Childs and Martha Moore for designing the invitation to One Word at a Time*

## Richard's Story: The Beginning

When I “stroked-out” almost six years ago, I had no indications, no warnings, no symptoms. I was working for a client in my home office one morning when I noticed a minor headache. I got up and walked to the bathroom to get an aspirin, but by the time I got there I felt very weak. I walked out and headed for a kitchen chair, but didn’t make it. I collapsed on the kitchen floor. From feeling a bit odd to being a near-comatose, unintelligible babbler lying crumpled on the floor took less than fifteen minutes.

My youngest son, Ben, then a junior in Anderson High School, was the only other person home that morning. He heard me from his bedroom on the second floor, and came to see what was the matter. I couldn’t make him understand me. I remember only fragments for a short time after that—Ben on the phone, the EMTs attending to me, hearing questions and knowing answers but being unable to utter a response, the ride to Seton Hospital in an ambulance—but I do remember, very vividly, that Ben was my hero. After that, nothing.

Three days later, I woke up in a room full of people, most of whom I knew but whose names I couldn’t fathom. But the most important people in the world were there—my best friend (and also my wife) Kathi, and my four kids: Rob, then 30, the oldest; Meredith, two years younger than Rob; Brooke, three years younger than Meredith; and Ben, who is nine years behind Brooke. I knew them. I was closer to them than anybody with the exception of their mother. But I pronounced their names “asparagus,” “Merry Christmas,” and some other things that I wouldn’t want repeated here.

I was not aware of my condition yet. I knew that my right arm and leg would not move, and I knew that my voice was weak—besides, it didn’t make any sense when you heard it. But I didn’t know what Rob and Meredith had learned from the doctors who had treated me: that I wasn’t expected to walk ever again; that I wasn’t expected to talk ever again; that I wasn’t expected to move my right arm ever again; and, most importantly, they didn’t expect me to live.



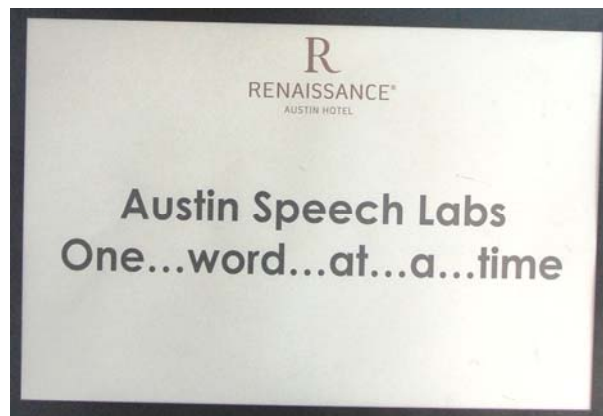
Richard Alexander, stroke survivor, in discussion group at Austin Speech Labs.

Suffering a stroke turns your whole world upside down. Once that fact seeps into your crippled brain, you know you have a survival decision to make. Either you spend the rest of your life—whatever it may be—sitting on the sidelines and feeling bitter and sorry for yourself, or you take charge of whatever is left and make the most of it. I am not a person who judges what other people do with their lives, but for me the answer was clear: Go for it! You will see how I went about it and how I still go about it, from relearning speech to scuba diving, in the next newsletter.

*Richard Alexander, Stroke Survivor*

### 2010 Projected Financial Statement of Operations

<i>Revenue</i>	
Grants	\$55,000.
Contributions	\$ 1,929.
Fundraising	\$74,000.
Service Fees	\$30,000.
	Total Projected Income \$160,929.
<i>Expenses</i>	
Therapy Expenses	\$95,828.
Management and General	\$25,048.
Fundraising	\$19,000.
	Total Projected Expenses \$139,876.



## A Volunteer's Perspective

"Spell *people*." This spelling task is my first memory of volunteering at Austin Speech Labs. As a volunteer, I am expected to provide support for the patients. But this stumped me. How could I help someone spell *people*—a word with a silent *o* and *e*? Clearly, sounding it out wasn't going to get us past *p-e*.

And once we got there, I noticed the patient's growing frustration and began to feel uncomfortable. Shelley stepped in and suggested the letter *o*. Immediately, a light went on, and the patient continued spelling *people* successfully. Seeing the patient's satisfaction at spelling a difficult word was both rewarding and exciting. A year later, I still grin whenever we encounter the word *people*.

Being at ASL has been like the spelling task—challenging and rewarding. I have spent the last year gaining valuable knowledge and experience that I will carry with me when I become a speech pathologist. I learned how to modify treatment to guide the patient in the most efficient and understanding way.



Underwriter Bill Little with Board Member Missy McCarroll, *One Word at a Time*.

Shilpa and Shelley have taught me how to put the patient first, to always have the patient's goals and feelings in mind. They have showed me how to handle challenges that arise when treating stroke victims. But most important to my experience are the connections I have made.

I came hoping to learn about aphasia and make a difference in a population that interested me. Yet, in the end, it is the *people* at ASL that have made the experience so rewarding.

*Chiara Mercado*

Dear Friends,

Your continued support for stroke survivors encourages us every day. Because of your partnership, we are able to help over 50 stroke survivors communicate again. I'm writing to update you on our strategy, tell you where we are, where we are going, and to thank you for helping us change our community. It isn't easy but we are doing it, one stroke survivor at a time!

Stroke leaves millions of young and elderly Americans with communication deficits and the need for long-term care is growing. Stroke survivors discharged from rehab do not have any other opportunities available in the community. Many cannot afford private therapies due to the financial burden and insurance limitations.

Stroke survivors arrive at different levels when they start therapy at Austin Speech Labs. Some communicate with one or two sounds, while others can communicate using single words to short phrases. They need long-term therapy to simply express their thoughts and ideas to family and friends. Sometimes all they want to say is "I love you" or "thank you" to their loved one. It is through your investments we are able to help them expand their communication skills and reengage their communities. Austin Speech Labs implements this through (1) an intensive boot camp session, (2) discussion groups to further expand communication skills, and (3) a computer lab, to work on cognitive skills.

The experience we have gained over the past two years has allowed us to continuously refine our strategies and methodologies. Today we have over 400 donors, 40 volunteers, and two dedicated therapists helping stroke survivors in and around Austin. Our focus at Austin Speech Labs is threefold:

1. To provide a social atmosphere and facilitate conversation in a structured environment for elderly stroke survivors;
2. To help young students (18–30) who suffered stroke get back to college; and
3. To reengage young adults (25–60) in their social and professional lives.

We encourage all our generous donors to visit us at our office and meet our Austin Speech Labs families. We are blessed to have wonderful friends like you to help stroke survivors regain that vital human characteristic—communication. Happy Holidays!!

*Shilpa Shamapant, President*

Stroke affects 4 out of 5 American families and recovery is a lifelong process. For many, formal rehabilitation is restricted by fixed incomes, high medical costs, and insurance limits.

Austin Speech Labs helps stroke survivors and their families continue to pursue the therapy they need at an affordable cost.

*Please help us continue to provide speech, language, and cognitive therapy to stroke survivors in Austin and Central Texas.*

Thank you for your support.



Dr. Thomas Hill, *One Word at a Time.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

*Method of Payment:*

- Through our website: [www.austinspeechlabs.org](http://www.austinspeechlabs.org)
- Checks should be made payable to *Austin Speech Labs.*
- Charge to \_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_ Visa

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_  
 Account # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exp. Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_  
 Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 Credit Card Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_

# Thank You, Donors

*We want to extend a heartfelt appreciation to all of those who have supported us this past year.*

**Grants**

Austin Community Foundation  
 St. David's Community Health Foundation

**Donors**

Craig Adair  
 Richard & Kathi Alexander  
 David & Cheryl Armbrust  
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 Social Thinker

**In Kind Donations**

Alan Bickerstaff, Laurie Pompa, and William B. Dillard of Andrews & Kurth L.L.P  
 Anand Raj (Inexro Enterrises) – website maintenance  
 Diana M. Holford and Ryan Bohls of Jones Lang LaSalle  
 Sherrie Frachtman – furniture  
 Suzanne Batchelor – newsletter  
 Suzanne Rollen – administrative work  
 Volunteers from UT Austin