



# AUSTIN SPEECH LABS

stroke recovery one word at a time



## 2017 Boot Camp Dates

January 17<sup>th</sup> - March 10<sup>th</sup>

March 27<sup>th</sup> - May 19<sup>th</sup>

June 5<sup>th</sup> - August 4<sup>th</sup>

September 4<sup>th</sup> - October 27<sup>th</sup>

November 1<sup>st</sup> - December 15<sup>th</sup>



I Amplify Austin: because Learning NEVER stops... and I REFUSE to give up!

Ashley Marnell M.S. CFY-SLP

## Little by Little

Last week a caregiver called to say that her husband arrived home from therapy, and for the first time in three years he was able to convey this message: “I have something for you in the car.” These eight simple words, a complete thought articulated easily and clearly, are the things we celebrate around here. Our clients work hard and they trust us to guide them in their recovery. Thanks to our supportive community, committed staff members, and the fierce spirit of the stroke survivors, many of our clients are able to see progress beyond what they thought was possible. We are excited about the continued growth of Austin Speech Labs. There is a lot of great news to share about what we have been up to this year and what we plan to accomplish in the coming one.

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# Austin Speech Labs...More Than Just Therapy

“I may not be there yet, but I’m closer than I was yesterday.” – Jose N. Harris

This is what keeps me going at Austin Speech Labs every day. Over the past years, working with stroke survivors and caregivers, I’ve learned that speech and language recovery is more than just intensive therapy. Regaining language skills after stroke involves:

- Needing a caregiver to provide the support through this life changing event
- Learning to adapt to a new body, brain and limitations that are the result of a sudden stroke
- Dealing with financial instability while learning to understand and talk to others
- Adjusting to the realization that they cannot fully communicate their needs or thoughts, and most importantly,
- Staying motivated for 12 – 13 hours, every day for years, even when the stroke survivors and caregivers can not see progress on a daily basis

Your hard work as an advocate, donor or a volunteer of Austin Speech Labs has provided stroke survivors as young as 19 years old, up to the age of 85 years old, with an opportunity to receive therapy at a sliding fee scale.... a minimal cost of \$10/hour or free therapy to many. Our accomplishments this year are due to your generous donations and/or your loving volunteer time. In 2016 each dollar you donated, each hour you volunteered helped us

- Provide over 15,000 hours of intensive speech therapy at low cost to over 500 stroke survivors
- Start a Caring for Caregiver program to include caregivers in the recovery process
- Add a LiveStroke program for stroke survivors that need a place to socialize through conversations and book club discussions
- Receive the RAISE 2016 Most Impactful Award by the National Stroke Association for Raising Awareness about stroke
- Work with our community to help stroke survivors find jobs while continuing to recover their language skills
- Partner with the American Stroke Association to check blood pressures for stroke survivors and caregivers to keep them healthy
- Receive over 7000 hrs of in-kind services from speech therapy undergraduate and graduate student volunteers from universities Texas and across the country.
- Increase our staff to accommodate the growing number of stroke survivors
- Conduct four research studies with our Scientific Board Members to understand language recovery, post stroke
- Provide a group counseling pilot program to help stroke survivors deal with sudden life changing trauma due to stroke

On behalf of our Board Members and staff at Austin Speech Labs, I would like to thank our grantors, donors and volunteers for your continued support in helping us provide a basic human need, *communication*, to our stroke survivors ONE WORD AT A TIME.

From all of us, we wish you a wonderful holiday season!

Shilpa Shamapant  
Co-founder, President, Speech Therapist





# Austin Speech Labs Growth



## 2014-2016



\*ASL has adjusted the efficiency of our volunteers, allowing us to get more work achieved with less volunteer hours



# One Word At A Time

Austin Speech Labs hosted their seventh annual One Word At A Time event on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016. Over 450 guests attended the event at the Four Seasons Hotel in Austin honoring Dr. Everett Heinze and Dr. Tom Hill. Dr. Heinze and Dr. Hill are both Austin neurologists who have served on the advisory board of the organization from the inception and have been an integral part of the growth and development of Austin Speech Labs. We were so excited to be able to honor them and all that they have done for stroke survivors.

The audience was also privileged to hear Lindy Jansky and Bill Hrcir, stroke survivors and former clients, each share their amazing story. They have both graduated from the program and are leading happy, fulfilled lives. Lindy is a communication partner for Austin Speech Labs and connects to clients in the office from her home in Corpus Christi using Skype. Bill and his wife Deedee, have started the Laredo Stroke Group. Bill also manages several businesses in Laredo and is writing a book about his experiences, "I Just Can't Read My Own Mind." Lindy and Bill have fought their battle with courage and dignity. We can't thank them enough for taking the stage and bravely sharing their stories.

The success of this year's event would not have been possible without the co-chairs, Sherrie Frachtman and Julie Stansberry. With their leadership and dedication, we were able to raise over \$250,000. It was truly an amazing evening. Thank you to all of you who supported this exciting event!

**2017 One Word at a Time update:** Please mark your 2017 calendars for Wednesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> for what we hope will be another inspiring evening with Austin Speech Labs. We are thrilled to announce Dr. David Paydarfar, Chair of Neurology at Dell Medical School at the University of Texas at Austin, as the keynote speaker. For more information or to become a sponsor, please visit [www.austinspeechlabs.org](http://www.austinspeechlabs.org) or call (512) 992-0575.





Caregivers: Anne Garrison, Ann Busby, Kandy Spillar, Denise Burke and Winkey Singh



Caregiver team: Leah Van Hee, Megan Bunsey and Mayra Carrera

## Caring for the Caregiver

I was blessed by an amazing gift this past summer: fourteen hours of sharing, training and practice about how to de-stress my life as a Caregiver for my post-stroke husband. Imagine nine weeks of focusing on just ME and my needs! I did not have to arrange for a sitter for Bob; the class was held during his therapy time at the Austin Speech Labs offices by two of our favorite therapists. Kudos to Megan Bunsey and Leah van Hee! Thank you both for teaching, listening, and sharing.

During the classes, I learned many new ways to de-stress my life: relaxation techniques like deep breathing, the beauty of music to

calm the soul, the benefits of journaling your feelings, the power of positive self-talk, and the need for plenty of restful sleep, good food and exercise to keep my body at its best. I have applied many of these techniques in our home and am excited each time I can see and feel the results of how easy it is to make these simple changes. I fully realize now the importance of Caring for the Caregiver. I know it's okay to ask for help, and it really is okay for there to be times when you stop putting everyone else first, and just do what's best for you.

This class is like any other in the sense that you get out of it what you

put into it. I am committed to doing some things for me and have signed a contract with myself as to what I will work on this next year. I look forward to evaluating my progress. Our graduation gift was a book called "Daily Comforts for Caregivers," and it already has become a close friend of mine. I am drawn to its words for comfort and guidance. I also have another group of friends I can turn to, all caregivers of clients at Austin Speech Labs who shared the class with me and who truly understand what our life is like now. Thanks, Austin Speech Labs for taking such good care of Bob and ME!

Ann Busby

## Shop to Give

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## Melodic Intonation Therapy

A number of individuals with stroke induced aphasia have been observed to sing more easily than they can speak. To channel this skill, neurological researchers developed Melodic Intonation Therapy (MIT) in 1973. Researchers have hypothesized that undamaged areas of the brain are recruited through MIT to build new neural pathways for language.

MIT uses a series of steps consisting of rhythmic tapping and melodic singing to train functional phrases such as: “How are you?”, “No, thank you.”, and “I need the bathroom.” Initially the client sings the phrase with the therapist while simultaneously tapping out the rhythm with his or her unimpaired hand. As they progress, the therapist’s voice begins to fade, and the client begins to sing the phrase independently. Eventually, the phrase is prompted and the client produces the phrase independently without the melody.

Recently our music therapist conducted a small pilot study with four clients using the Melodic Intonation technique. Over the

course of the study, Austin Speech Labs clients trained 30 unique phrases based on need and client preference. Phrases began at a three syllable length and increased to a maximum of five syllables. Some clients trained for over 20 hours during the eight week boot camp session. Clients received pre and post-testing to measure their ability to repeat the phrases, and verbally produced them when prompted with a question. Post-test results showed that all clients improved in their ability to repeat multisyllabic phrases as well as to verbally produce their trained functional phrases independently.

MIT is a technique that has been researched heavily since its development, but we still do not understand its full potential. Based on the data acquired during our pilot study, the technique and the outcomes seem promising.



## Community Partnerships

“Alone we can do so little, together so much.” Helen Keller

Since 2008, our board members and advisors have challenged us to create partnerships in the community to help us grow our organization and continue to serve our mission. This year we are excited about two new partnerships: Capital Area Counseling and Texas Tower PR.

Capital Area Counseling has graciously offered to start a small group counseling session for our clients. They are meeting with a group of our clients for one hour a week for six weeks. The sessions will focus on the clients learning the tools they need to deal with the multiple ramifications of stroke recovery. Capital Area Counseling will provide this six-week program for free. We are so thankful for the time they have spent getting to know our clients and for preparing a personalized program for them.

Texas Tower PR is a professional, student run PR firm from The University of Texas who assist local non-profits. Each semester, a team of five students will help run our events and broaden our outreach through social media, the local news, and word of mouth. We are so excited to have a group of creative students dedicated to helping us serve stroke survivors!



Fall 2016 Texas Tower PR Team

# Delvin

August 22, 2010 this is a date that I will never forget. I was waking up around 8:00 am at home and all of a sudden I felt strange. I was hot and cold and I didn't know what the problem was. My Mother and sister Mattie were in the kitchen. I went to tell them what happened and my mom was going to call the doctor. I went to lie down and all of the sudden I couldn't speak at all but I thought I was fine. Ten or fifteen minutes later the ambulance came and I couldn't move but I could hear and knew where I was. The doctors at my house were asking me questions about my blood pressure and various other things. They told me that my heart was beating very fast and it wasn't normal. So I was rushed to the hospital in an ambulance and I blacked out. I woke up two weeks later at the hospital with hoses and plugs all over me. The head doctors told me that I had a left hemisphere stroke, which affected my motor skills speech and language. Bouncing around to different rooms in each week. The first room was the most difficult I woke up hooked up to machines and had tubes everywhere. I didn't know the room I was in or where I was. My right side was paralyzed and it was different because I didn't know what had happened. There were lots of doctors and nurses coming to see me and I didn't know who they were. The food was awful. I wasn't able

to drink water for a month and could only eat thickened food. At the second room my arms were bound to the bed. One day I tried to escape because I wanted to leave so bad. I broke my arms free and in my head I was ready to break free. I found myself on the floor not being able to move or know what to do. I was taking seven or more pills a day. The pills made me happy and then tired. The third room was on the fifth floor room 531. This was the first 531 room I was able to remember the #. I saw various doctors, OT, PT, SLP, psychologist, neurologist. I was brushing my teeth for the first time and I got to take an actual shower. After one week, I was functioning again but it was difficult at times. Two and a half weeks just sitting staring out the same window I called Sam and asked him to bring my computer. So I could write and listen to music. I felt so overjoyed to get my computer back. I sat in a room and it was reliving all of my life before.

I was getting better everyday two weeks later I was able to finally go home. I could say one or two words and was regained motor skills on my right side. I was going to OT, PT, and SLP everyday to continue my rehabilitation.

My speech therapist, Stephanie Coker referred me to ASL. I had my first session was Shelley Adair at ASL two months after my stroke. I was only able to speak in single words when I started at ASL. This place really helped me and changed my life. Recovery has been a long six years and it's still hard but I am still gaining skills. I am now able to carry on conversation and speak in full sentences. My goals for the future are to be able to read and write screenplays, DJ, and continue to do what I was doing before my stroke and more!



Delvin Crenshaw at our 2016 annual fundraiser



“The word comes like a light bulb in a comic strip-then it gets away and I can't find it. And it frustrates the hell out of me; it pisses me off. It's like I just flushed the toilet.”

**Joe Schechter (stroke survivor)**



“Language is the house that man has built for himself and I take great pride in sheltering those who need it most. It means a lot to me to be apart of this wonderful experience.”

**Lauren Ontiveros (volunteer)**



“I come here because it gets me out of bed and gives me purpose. I need to be here for my family and for me. I come feeling bad but leave knowing it's going to be okay.”

**Robert Meredith (stroke survivor)**

# Enhancing Therapy Through Research

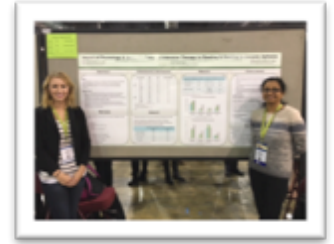
The Austin Speech Labs research team has been working to develop new therapies to more effectively aid language recovery after stroke. In 2016, with the help of our Scientific Board Members, we designed, developed and conducted three research studies.

The first was a pilot study designed to combine intensive speech therapy and Melodic Intonation Therapy. With the help of our talented music therapist, Brianna Rocha, we designed a protocol to investigate the role that melody plays in speech recovery. For more information, please refer to the article on page six entitled “Melodic Intonation Therapy.”

The second study sought to find an effective method to improve reading, a skill that is often lost following stroke. This study included 12 participants overall and took place over several months. We presented this program at the 2016 American Speech and Hearing Association Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The results are promising, and we look forward to molding the treatment to fit the individual needs for our clients at Austin Speech Labs.

Our last study examined if transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) coupled with intensive speech therapy could result in a better overall recovery of language. TDCS is a non-invasive form of brain stimulation that has been successfully used in recent clinical studies. This study was designed with the help of Dr. Dylan Edwards, Co-Director of Brain Stimulation at the Burke Research Rehabilitation Institute in New York and Dr. Thomas Marquardt, professor at the University of Texas at Austin. The New York team is currently analyzing the results, and we are excited to share the results in the near future!

We would like to thank our clients and caregivers for giving us this unique opportunity to learn about stroke recovery. We also want to thank our dedicated Scientific Board Members across the country for their guidance, mentorship, and collaboration.



Sarah Bennett and Shilpa Shamapant  
Presenting research data at the American  
Speech and Hearing Association Conference



Elise Boutin providing therapy for tDCS  
study.

Austin Speech Labs received

The RAISE award for *The Most Impactful Organization* of 2016 by

The National Stroke Association.

Thank you for continuing to support our efforts to improve the lives of  
stroke survivors, caregivers, and students...







# One Word at a Time



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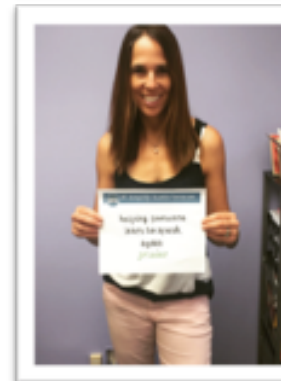
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I Amplify Austin because...  
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*Priceless*

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## One Word At A Time Sponsors



# One Word At a Time Sponsors



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