

HAPPY TALK

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Editor:

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GREATER ATLANTA

VOICE MASTERS

March 2007

*“Dance as if no one were watching, Sing as if no one were listening,
And live each day as if it were your last.”
~ An Irish Blessing.*

GAVM February 8Th, 2007 meeting

Our February meeting went really well even though we didn't have a laptop for our speaker to do her power point presentation. Our guest speaker was Dr. Inge Thomas, Speech Pathologist at the VA in Decatur. We were so glad to have Dr. Thomas come and speak to us. We have heard a lot about her from some of her former patients, Willard Brown, Robert Pitts and Robert Morgan. Dr. Thomas has been at the VA for 20 years now and loves working with Laryngectomees. Before she worked here in Atlanta she was in Oklahoma City. Dr. Thomas feels it's very important to educate laryngectomees before and after surgery. She also does a seminar to educate the staff at the VA on how to care for a laryngectomee before and after their surgery. Dr. Thomas believes in a team approach in educating and caring for a patient.

It takes not only the medical team, but, the family, and community to care for a laryngectomee.

It's very important as most of you already know to wear a medic alert bracelet with your medications and medical conditions listed. Also, get to know your local fire department or paramedics and educate them on your new breathing situation. In an emergency they don't always look at your bracelet to see that you're a neck breather and they may try to resuscitate you thru your mouth. This happened not to long ago to a laryngectomee who was having a heart attack and the EMT's kept trying to put the oxygen on her mouth. Having an up to date medical record at your home or a file for life, is also important. That way EMT's and Paramedics can see your medical history right there in an emergency situation So, Dr. Thomas stressed that we should educate everyone we know about how a laryngectomee breathes, the equipment that is needed to maintain the stoma, etc. Dr. Thomas has quick reference 3 part poster that she made for the nurses and medical staff that take care of new laryngectomees at the VA. She makes sure it's on the floor that patient is on after surgery. Dr. Thomas gave us all a wonderful handout with useful information on TEP hygiene, changing the prosthesis and how to use voice instruments. We hope that Dr. Thomas will come back and talk to us again. We all enjoyed meeting her and having her come to the meeting. Thank you Dr. Thomas!

We also had a small award ceremony for Dan Lewis for his years of being the Relay for Life captain for GAVM. Janice Hayes, GAVM President, presented Dan with "The King of The Relay award. We had 19 people at the February meeting. Which is a great turnout and we hope to see you at the meeting on March 8!

*"It's not what we take up, but, what we give up, that makes us rich.
~Henry Ward Beccher*

President's Corner

I would like to thank everyone who made donations to Voice Masters. We have monthly costs with the newsletter and the meetings. Every donation helps! If you enjoy the newsletter, please help with the expense.

The Greater Atlanta Voice Masters is very thankful for the generous gift we have received from the estate of Charlie Ruppe (former president of GAVM). We loved Charlie and will put this gift to good use by helping rehabilitate laryngectomees. The GAVM board is planning on purchasing some voice instruments for the GAVM loan closet, which are badly needed, with the donation from the Charlie Ruppe estate. We miss seeing Charlie's smile and gentle welcoming ways at every meeting.

GAVM has started the New Year with success and we look forward to all the fun activities that will be coming up in the spring, with the ACS Relay for Life and The Yul Brynner Survivors Banquet. I hope to see you all at these events.

-Janice Hayes, GAVM President

"Make no mistake, my friend, it takes more than money to make a man rich."

~A.P. Gouthey

Relay For Life 2007

We have a team together again this year to participate in the Relay for Life at Adams stadium on May 18th at 6pm. We need 3 more people to sign up for our Voice Masters team and pledge to raise at least \$100 each. For The American Cancer Society. The theme this year is "Celebrate Holidays". So, we have decided to decorate our tent with valentines and hearts. The Voice Masters Team motto this year is "have the heart of a survivor." Melissa Thompson is the relay captain again this year. Please plan on

bringing lawn chairs to sit in and all survivors will get a free dinner. If your not a survivor plan on bringing dinner for yourself. We will have bottled water. We hope that you will join us for the Relay for Life. It's a great night to honor cancer survivors and to remember those we have lost to cancer. The Relay is also about hope. That one day we will find a cure for cancer. If you are a cancer survivor and would just like to participate in the survivors lap and dinner, you may do that also. If you wish to sign up please contact Melissa Thompson at 770-788-3882 or mjcthomp@bellsouth.net.

"It is the heart that makes a man rich. He is rich according to what he is, not according to what he has."
~Henry Ward Beecher

3rd Annual Yul Brynner Survivors Banquet

The 3rd annual Yul Brynner Survivors Banquet will be on April 12th at 6:30pm The banquet will hopefully be at a restaurant in Decatur. There will be invitations sent out to you and please be sure and RSVP. Alma Owens, Speech Pathologist at Emory, says we should all plan on wearing our "glad rags." This is a wonderful event where you can meet and mingle with the nurses, doctors and speech therapists. The Jane Del Vecchio Inspiration Award will also be presented that evening. We hope that you will be able to attend this joyful event that is sponsored by the Yul Brynner Head and Neck Cancer Foundation.

"If a window of opportunity appears, don't pull down the shade."
~Tom Peters

IAL Covention, July 11-14, 2007

The International Association of Laryngectomees will be having its annual meeting and convention in Burlington, VT on July 11-14.

Janice Hayes (GAVM President) and Tina Long (GAVM Treasurer) will be attending as delegates and as IAL board members. GAVM always sends members from our group to be delegates at the convention. This is a great way to meet laryngectomees from all over the world and learn about all the new products and procedures for laryngectomees. If you would like more information about the IAL convention, please call Janice Hayes at 404-259-5897 or jhaze1071@aol.com.

*“A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.”
~Sir Frances Bacon*

Donations

The monthly newsletter that you have been receiving is costly to produce. We are asking that anyone who enjoys the newsletter to please make a donation to help cover GAVM's expenses. If you wish to make a donation please make a check or money order to: Greater Atlanta Voice Masters. You should mail your donation to Tina Long, GAVM treasurer, 2051 Little River Drive, Suwannee, GA. 30024. We appreciate any and all donations to help with the production of Happy Talk. We would like to thank the following people who have made donations: Margaret P. Dobbs, M.S. Shelnutt, Claire Lee Overmyer and Annette Miller a speech pathologist from Florida! Thank you so much for the donations! We are still accepting donations and we greatly appreciate them.

*“Not he who has much is rich, but who gives much.”
~Erich Fromm*

Signs of a Stroke

Stroke: Remember the 1st three letters STR

A stroke scenario:

During a BBQ, Stella stumbled and took a little fall-she assured everyone that she was fine (her friends offered to call 911). Stella said she had just tripped over a brick because of her new shoes. The friends got Stella cleaned up and got her a plate of food. While she did appear a bit shaken up, Stella went about enjoying herself the rest of the evening. Stella's husband called later that night telling everyone that Stella had been taken to the hospital. She passed away that evening. Stella had suffered a stroke at the BBQ. Had her friends and husband known how to identify the signs of a stroke, perhaps Stella would be alive today. Some stroke victims don't die, but, they end up in a helpless, hopeless condition instead.

A neurologist said that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours that the effects of the stroke might be reversed. The trick is getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed, and then getting the stroke victim medically treated within 3 hours is sometimes very hard to do. You can recognize a stroke by remembering the 3 steps, **STR**. Sometimes symptoms of a stroke can be difficult to identify. Lack of awareness of the signs can spell disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking 3 simple questions:

S* Ask the person to smile

T* Ask the person to talk or speak a simple sentence.

Example: It is sunny outside today

R* Ask the person to raise both arms

Another sign of a stroke is this: Ask the person to stick out their tongue. If their tongue is crooked or goes to one side or another, this is an indication of a stroke.

If the person fails to smile or the smile is crooked or lopsided

If the person can't talk or it seems slurred

If the person can't lift their arms or can only lift one arm

Call 911 immediately and tell the 911 operator the symptoms the person is having. You can save someone's life!

Loan Closet

The GAVM loan closet is in desperate need of donations of new or used voice instruments. Many new laryngectomees must pay for a voice instrument out of their pocket and then get reimbursed after the insurance claim is paid. This can take up to six weeks. If you have a voice instrument that you no longer need or use please donate it to the GAVM loan closet ASAP! You may do so by contacting- Melissa Thompson at 770-788-3882 or mjcthomp@bellsouth.net. These donated instruments help give new laryngectomees a "new voice" after surgery.

GAVM Meeting March 8th, 2007

Our March GAVM meeting will be at Budd Terrace at 7:30 pm. We are happy to have Cathy Longino, from the American Cancer Society come and talk to us about the Relay for Life. Cathy is the Atlanta Area Manager for the Adams Stadium Relay for Life. We always look forward to seeing Cathy and she will show a DVD on The Relay for Life. We hope that you will all join us!

Upcoming Events

April 12th- Yul Brynner Head and Neck Cancer Foundation Banquet, 6:30pm.

May 10th meeting - 7:30pm at Budd Terrace

May 18th Relay for Life at Adams Stadium, 6pm

June 14th meeting-7:30pm at Budd Terrace

July 11-14 IAL Convention in Burlington, VT