



Post Stroke Hobbies Exhibition

2016

*Launched at 10th World Stroke Congress
Hyderabad, India, October 2016*

“Having a stroke cannot stop us from enjoying different sporting activities. It also helps our rehabilitation and we enjoy every minute of it”

Tim Okolonji Well-being Support Worker.

An On-Line Exhibition of Post Stroke Hobbies from Throughout the World

“I soon understood that I could either give in to the despair that haunts many stroke patients or figure out a way to rebuild all those bridges in the brain that define who I am.”

Ron Smith - Writer

Foreword

I am delighted to introduce the Hobbies Exhibition prepared by stroke survivors, for our World Stroke Congress in Hyderabad. The brain, our most special organ, controls our motor and sensory functioning, thinking, memory, speech, vision, hearing, but perhaps most importantly, defines our individuality as human beings. It is the source of our thoughts, memories, hopes, aspirations and creative processes. There is life after stroke and survivors may continue previous hobbies or take on new interests. As stated eloquently by one of the exhibitors “this is my new reality, yet the person I was before the stroke still has a voice”; another that her hobby helped to organise the “chaos” in her head.

Despite the loss of some brain functions, stroke survivors often have special insights into the stroke process and indeed into life itself. People who have had brain injuries are often particularly creative and able to convey new insights into our perception of the stroke process. Stroke survivors are special people and I believe that their insights and creative processes, as demonstrated in this exhibition, can teach us a great deal about stroke and indeed lead to a better understanding and new advances in our field.

Stroke survivors demonstrate how their pursuit of hobbies is highly therapeutic. The hobbies in this exhibition include indoor and outdoor activities, such as bicycle spinning, bowling, dancing, exercise, games, handwork, music and writing, fishing, holiday clubs, gardening, golf hiking and sports. There are over 20 million stroke survivors worldwide and the positive messages conveyed by the Hobbies Exhibition provide hope and inspiration for stroke survivors, carers and also stroke professionals.

The quotes from the exhibitors say it all: ‘Art is a wonderful therapy. It gives a stroke survivor a feeling of accomplishment’; ‘I paint to release myself, to be in the present’; ‘Dancing makes me feel so good’; ‘It is a hobby that I can do just as well as normal people’; ‘I also need to have time for myself, to sit quietly and think and maybe try to catch a fish’; ‘I am proud of my lavender fields because they give me energy to move on’ and ‘I enjoy life’.

On behalf of the World Stroke Organization, I want to applaud Sandra Levy, the other organizers and especially the contributors to this wonderful Hobbies Exhibition and eBook, which I think is a wonderful enhancement of our World Stroke Congress in Hyderabad.

Stephen Davis



President World Stroke Organization

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Artistry

Youko Yamaguchi

Calligraphy - Japan

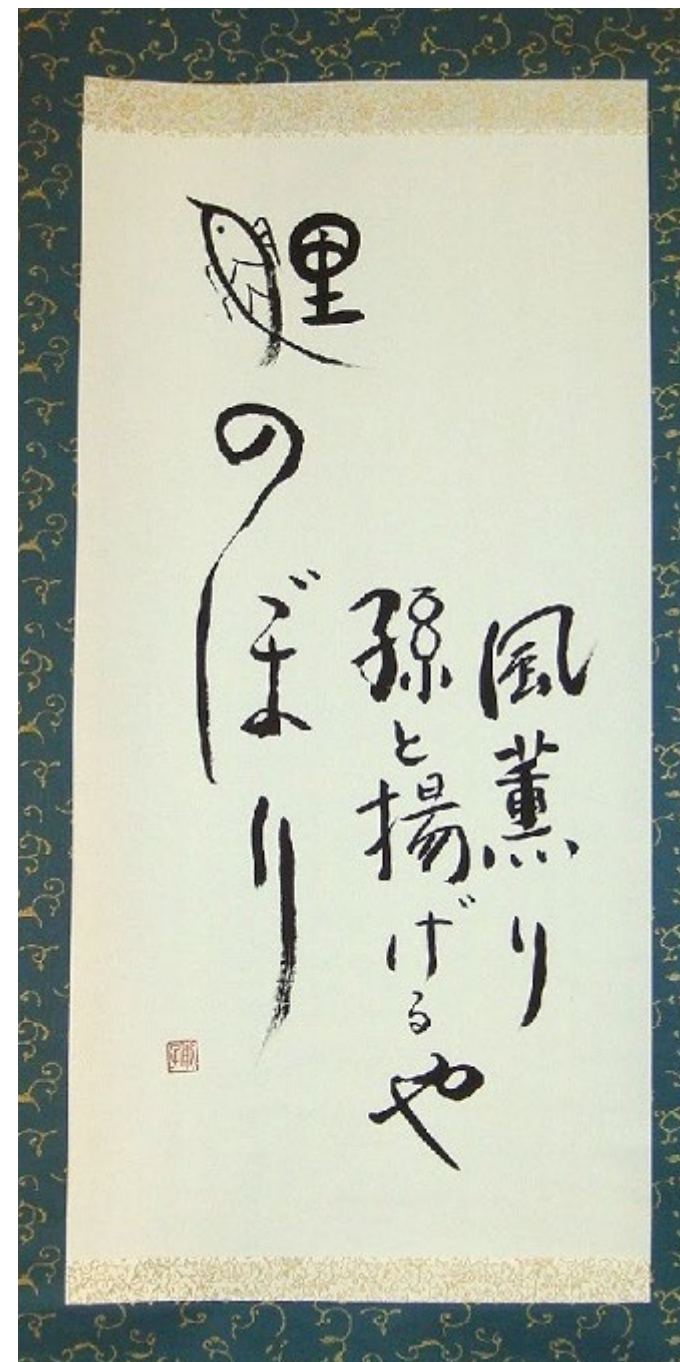
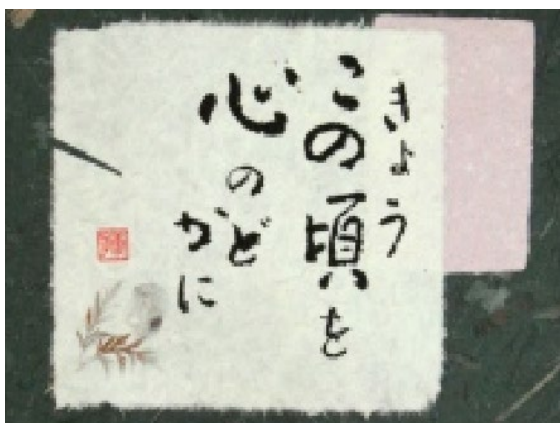
Youko Yamaguchi suffered a stroke 17 years ago at the age of 53 while traveling. During extensive medical and rehabilitative intervention, the speech pathologist advised her to join the calligraphy circle for those who had suffered aphasia.

This was organized by the Sport and Culture Center for handicapped persons, Yokohama Rapport, located next to the hospital.

For those who suffered aphasia, the purpose of joining this circle is not to create skillful and beautiful calligraphy work, but to create the works pleasantly and with interest.

The hesitation to communicate with each other does not exist and they can spend a happy time together. For creation of new works Youko is very busy, often referring to the dictionary and going shopping for calligraphy tools.

Calligraphy sits in the center of her daily life.



Angelos Art Group

Painting - Finland

It is not so easy to start painting after a stroke.

Most of our art club members have not painted since the primary school.

But it is fun now. It is also fun to paint together.



Cerar Marta

Painting - Slovenia

It was summer 1997 when I went to the mountains and hiking somewhere half way I had a stroke. My partner helped to come down to the valley and to the hospital. My life has suddenly changed completely; I had a lot of rehabilitation but was retired very soon after my stroke and only at age 31. I had two children to care for.

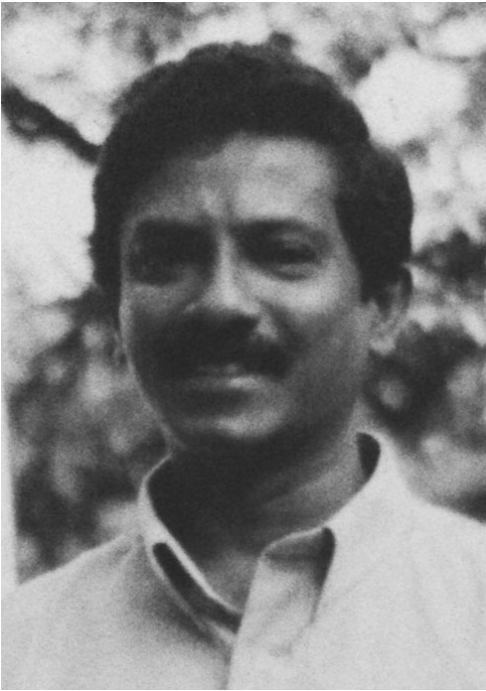
My right arm is only partly working, but soon after the stroke I started to ski, cycling, swimming and hiking in low hills. I was searching for more activities to fill in my life and attended a few courses. Painting, however always attracted me and I am now painting with my left arm, using different painting techniques.

I enjoyed it so much that often forget that I am using my left arm. I have been privileged to exhibit my artwork at the WSO Stroke Exhibition in 2014 and I am pleased to participate with my new paintings.



De Silva Shanthi

Painting - Sri Lanka



I am a designer by profession and enjoy creating works of art in my spare time. In April 2014 while I was designing a picture on the computer my right hand became locked over the mouse.

My fingers then went numb. That evening I was hospitalized at Ragama Hospital. I was told that I had suffered a stroke. I am right handed and as it was my right hand that was affected I was forced to give up my hobby for many months.

When I regained some control over my hand I picked up a paint brush and began to paint once more. Even today I do not have total control of my right hand but this did not deter me. Although I am unable to explain how or why, ever since the stroke the quality of my art has improved considerably and so has my output.

Before the stroke I had developed a single unique style of painting. Today, I am able to produce artworks that are stylistically diverse. While I used to create about two to three paintings a month I now produce four to six. In fact, I now have enough paintings to hold my own exhibition.

Freeman Sas

Painting - United Kingdom

Sas is a stroke survivor, born and living in the United Kingdom. In 2010 Sas experienced two strokes whilst in her mid-40s. Since her strokes she has written her personal biography 'Two Strokes Not Out' and become a mentor, motivational speaker and is passionate about raising stroke awareness and helping support other survivors.

In 2013, Sas was awarded the UK Stroke Association 'Courage Award' for her 'valiant efforts shown throughout her recovery' and is an Ambassador for the Association. Sas started painting at her local Stroke Club in 2012, something she had never done before, when a lady came along to give a morning's painting opportunity.

Sas's left hand had just about mastered a spider's attempt at writing so painting wasn't going to be a great deal better, but grabbed a paint brush and joined in with the others. At the end of the session, the lady insisted she take her work, along with 2 paintbrushes and have a go at home.

This new hobby has given Sas her independence back, is a tool to assist her brain recovery and helps raise money for charity.





Jerica Helena

Painting - Slovenia

I am a retired psychologist and survived my stroke in December 2013. Initially I was unable to sit, walk, eat and also had a lot of pain, especially during nights.

A year later I moved to a nursing home and joined the local stroke club and have also started to socialize with other stroke survivors. Painting used to be my passion before stroke and I've started to paint again.

I had a good supervision and art helps me to stabilize my mood, although there are times when I do not have enough energy to start.

Luiken Miranda

Painting - Netherlands



I live in Assen, and was born in the Netherlands 46 years ago. I suffered my stroke 5 years ago, whilst being treated with chemotherapy for breast cancer. I felt as if my life was over.

My left side is paralysed and so I felt I couldn't do anything anymore. So I became a member of Hersenletsel.nl to join a support group and found a new love, painting. I love to create something beautiful for people to enjoy, I hope you do too.





Moosbroek Jennette

Painting - Netherlands

I started painting four years after my stroke. I was a volunteer and board member in the patient association called hersenletsel.nl (which is Dutch for brain injury) and I started painting to empty my mind. I just started with nothing and I was my own teacher!

I really love happy and colorful pictures. The picture attached is my latest work.

It gives me a lot of pleasure that my paintings bring a smile on people's faces, then I am satisfied and that makes me happy, because I like to see people smile.....

Even when you've had a stroke life is too good to be sad! So smile and live your life!!!



Rigate Barry

Painting - United Kingdom

Art is a wonderful therapy.

It gives a stroke survivor a feeling of accomplishment. A period spent putting your thoughts and dreams onto a blank canvas helps to bring life to limbs that have been weakened through a stroke.

Therapeutically I found art brings a feeling of well being.

I have painted for more than fifty years and when I had my stroke depression was the abyss I fell into, that was until the Stroke Association and my family brought out my brushes and said paint.

It was not an easy road but it did ease the depression considerably and provided a light at the end of the tunnel.

Vroom Siemon

Painting - Netherlands (Marline Fritzius Foundation)

I would like to tell about painting with aphasia. The 'Marline Fritzius Foundation' funds studios where people can paint under supervision of professional artists. This is thanks to the legacy of Marline Fritzius who was a drawer, painter and actress. She got aphasia after an operation when she was 40 years old.

Marline discovered how stimulating and even healing it was to think in pictures while her language was affected. She stimulated other people with aphasia to express themselves through painting as well and wanted to use her studio in Amsterdam for this purpose.

However, she would never see the official opening happen. Marline died on December 23rd, 2006 when she was 70 years old. Her name lives on through the Foundation.

Although I used to be a sportsman who wasn't interested in arts at all, I went to the studio after my stroke. I had to find a new hobby because of my paralysis.

It turned out to be painting. People make such beautiful, moving pictures, despite their affected language. I paint with a group every Tuesday. We paint, have fun and sometimes wipe away a few tears.



Thastrom Jessica

Painting - Sweden



I suffered a stroke at 16, brought on by contraceptive pills. It caused all disabilities associated with stroke, except aphasia, such as: hemiparesis, sensory disturbances, visual field loss, chronic fatigue, attention disorder and neglect.

It took six years to find my way back to my art, and find my own techniques and motifs. I have gone from being a shy and timid girl – STROKE – to being hateful and depressed with no visions for the future, to speaking publicly about my experiences and finding my own voice. I feel as though I was meant to suffer all the effects except for aphasia; I was born to speak.

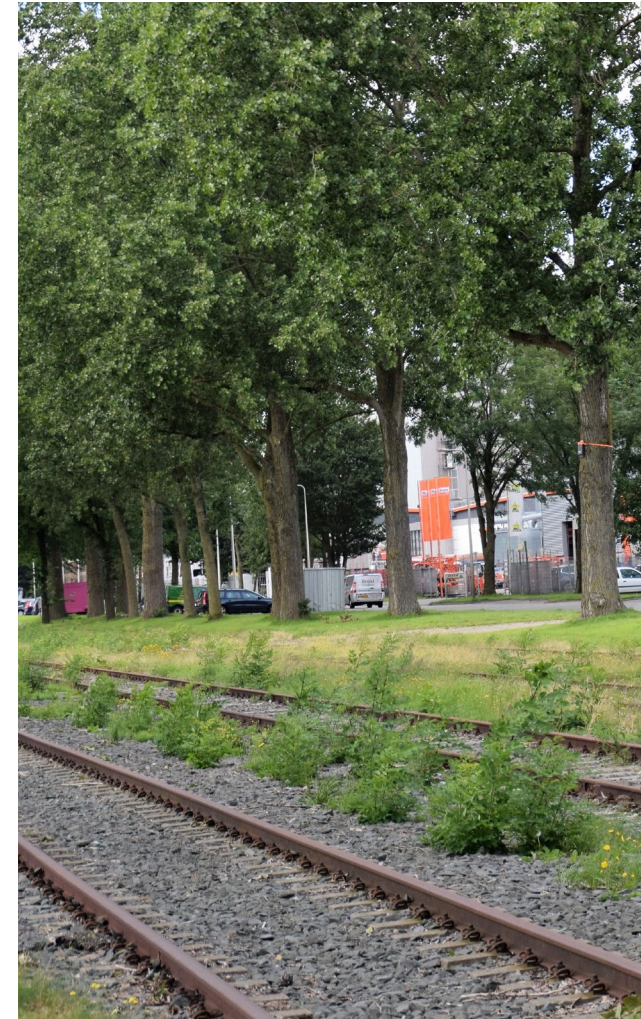
I paint to release myself, to be in the present, more than just a hobby - it has become a kind of a tool for me to handle my psychological illnesses (PTSD and BPD). I've always been very fond of China, the culture, art and music, so I think that passion has boiled up from underneath in these paintings.

I also enjoy writing - last year my first book was published and my second is almost finished. Other than that I enjoy music, reading books or traveling. The title of this painting is; 'Pain turns to triumph real quick'.





Nienhuis Angelique
Photography - Nederlands



I am Angelique. I live in Holland and am 48 years old. I took up photography when I had a stroke, one and a half years ago. I made photos from the age of 15, but am semi-professional right now. I have aphasia. Aphasia is a burden. I used to cry the first year after my stroke, a sudden change of my whole life, but I am alright now. I love landscape photography and photos from industrial areas.

Dasgupta Supriya

Photography & Painting - India

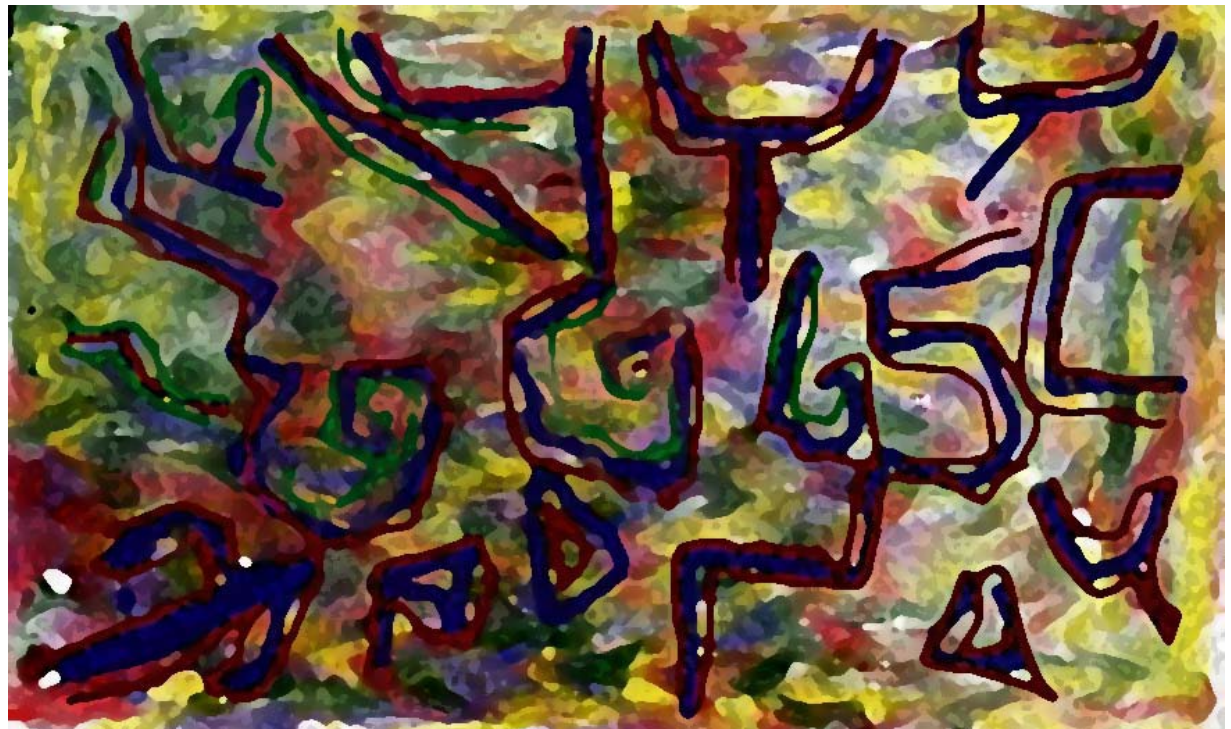
Post stroke recovery can become a time of reconnecting with interests you have thought lost. We all have our own ways. I found my self through walks in a heritage park close to my house, in taking photographs with a simple digital camera, in returning to sketching , in music, light gardening , reading, writing some stray memories, and simply in my own spirit self.

I became an avid photographer, using the 4km radius of the park as my canvas. The more I looked, the more I found. I also enjoy looking at slices of life around me, and a city which is in transition.

I also was (and am) an artist. My detailed pen and inks now had to be given a kinder, lighter treatment of simple pencil sketches.

I wont say that these exhibits are just “hobbies” or “pastimes”. Both words connote that the doer is filling in time gaps. To plan a theme, to plan your day, gives meaning, purpose and direction to your life, and that purpose is another step in recovery.

My message to those struggling to recover: keep your mind alive, and your body will become your enthusiastic friend and companion.



Laine Heikki

Photography - Finland

Photography has always been my dear hobby.
I have always loved to wander in the nature and I can still do it.



Rotenberg Enrique (Hershele)

Sculpture - Israel

I was born in Argentina and immigrated to Israel at the age of 20 to the kibbutz where I live to this day. I married, we had 3 wonderful children and today I am blessed with 5 grandchildren.

I served in many key positions in the kibbutz and was also an officer in the Israeli army.

At the age of 45 I had a heart attack, followed 3 years later by a severe stroke, leaving me very handicapped. Before the stroke I had no experience in creating art.

However, I began to paint with a teacher and today I also sculpture in clay and papier-mâché.

I enjoy great satisfaction from my creativity and am able to “console myself” with the fact that if not for the stroke, I would never have discovered my ability to create and enjoy this pastime.

Today I am already 19 years after the cerebral vascular accident and continue my creative activity with enthusiasm and great satisfaction.



Vrieling Miranda

Sculpture - Netherlands

Hallo. My name is Miranda Vrieling and I'm 41 years old . 3 years ago I had a stroke in my brain-stem. Since my rehabilitation I became familiar with modeling clay, painting and other really nice things to do.

And since 2 years I'm going twice a week to day care where I do my thing and that is where these things come out of me.





Indoor Recreation

Neomaqus Patricia

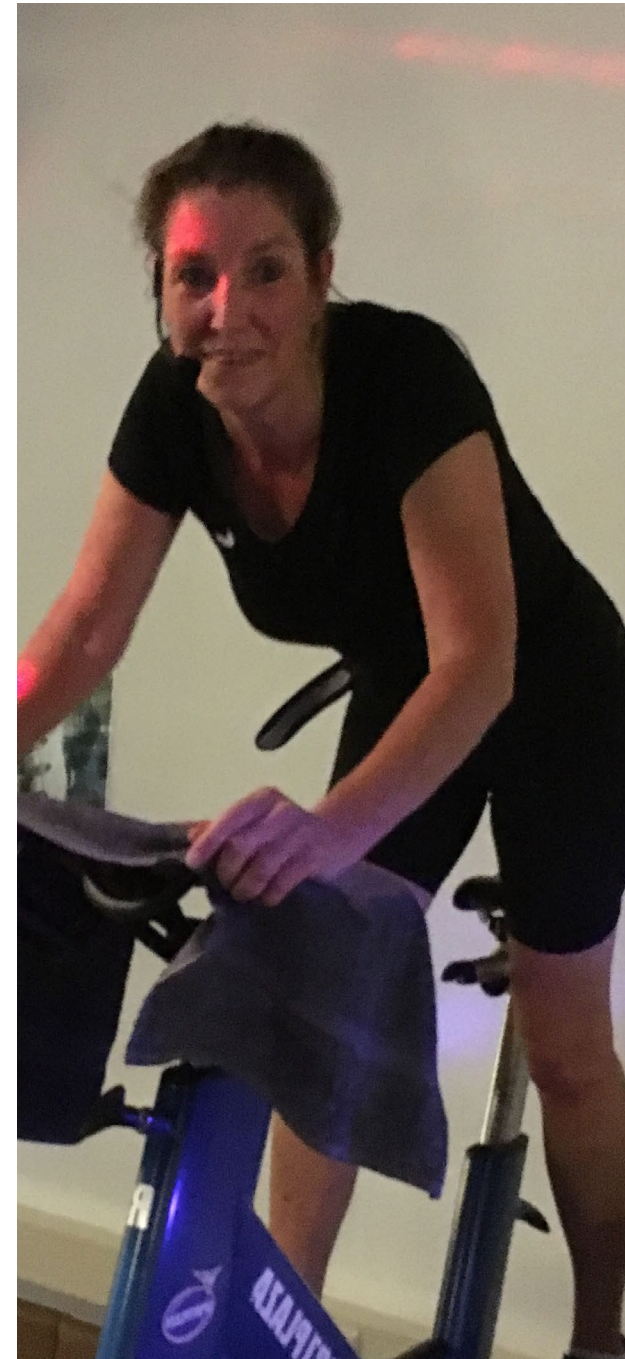
Bicycle Spinning - Netherlands

My cause of brain damage differs from cerebral stroke, but the consequences can be quite the same. About 30 years ago while cycling to school at age 16, I had a collision with a bus. As a result I ended up in a coma, had brainstem contusion and several bleedings. Later, I had a sudden urge and felt strong enough to start sports again.

That wasn't a big success! I capsized a lot due to my balance disorder and 'missed' balls due to double vision. It frustrated me so I quit the attempt.

About 10 years ago someone asked me to join in a Spinning class. I gave it a try. Spinning is cycling on a special bike together with a group. You pedal to music in different speeds, searching for your limit. That Spinning class inspired me to go on because I didn't capsize and my double vision didn't matter.

Now I actually teach spinning classes! Spinning gives me a lot of satisfaction, self-confidence, a better body balance and energy, which I need for my daily activities. It is a hobby which I can do just as well as 'normal' people. My message to you all is: "Just give it a try!"



Barkan Haim

Indoor Bowling - Israel

Haim had a well established business and a happy family with four children, when he suffered a stroke in the brain stem 17 years ago at the age of 47. Apart from physical handicap and speech impairment, the 24 hour daily cycle of sleeping and awakening went awry.

Nevertheless, with a combined family effort, he managed to be rehabilitated sufficiently to carry on the semblance of a “normal life”.

One of the activities he enjoys apart from his family, traveling and the weekly stroke club of Neeman is the early evening, weekly get-together at a local bowling alley. The owners are the sons of a double amputee father who claimed disability is in the mind - and went on to play soccer.

Consequently his sons are sensitive to the special needs of the handicapped and have allotted designated runways for the Neeman players. They allow for a very reduced fee for playing. Over the years, these meetings can include children, grandchildren and other stroke survivors who enjoy taking part in a “mainstream activity” together with others in the general community.





Dancing Group

Finland

Dancing makes us feel so good.
Salsa is a quite suitable dance after a stroke.

Cucek Milan

Dancing - Slovenia

I have been interested in cultural heritage since my primary school so therefore I became an active member of a Folklore group named "Folklor 63".

Since my stroke, my friends from this group and also from group "Bolnišnica Ptuj" helped me to re-learn again dancing steps and dances.

Because of the stroke, I hardly see anything around me, but I am happy to dance again. I also attend performances and am thankful to my friends who helped me regain back my dancing skills.



Onyinye Praise Orumba & peer-led group exercise

Exercise - Nigeria

In Nigeria, access to physiotherapy is not that easy. It is expensive and there are very few physiotherapists around. Stroke Action Nigeria offers Functional Rehabilitation and Exercise Training After Stroke to stroke survivors.

We are having younger stroke survivors of working age like myself coming to the centre for support, to regain confidence to come out into the community and courage to participate in activities. To my mind, exercise training is important for stroke survivors. I receive Functional Rehabilitation and Exercise Training from Lola the Physiotherapist who works part time for Stroke Action Nigeria in Abuja, and have learnt some skills that I feel that I can use to support other stroke survivors.

I have gained confidence in my role as a Stroke Ambassador supporting other stroke survivors that attend our 'Maitama Stroke Support Group' to have confidence and courage to practice and learn exercise skills that they can continue to use at home.

I find this really rewarding as I am helping them to learn things they can do in their own time which will also help their rehabilitation. We use the exercise to pass time at home and also work towards improving our mobility and independence. Our hope is to be able to gain meaningful employment in the future as this will be good news for all the hard work done by Stroke Action Nigeria to support us.

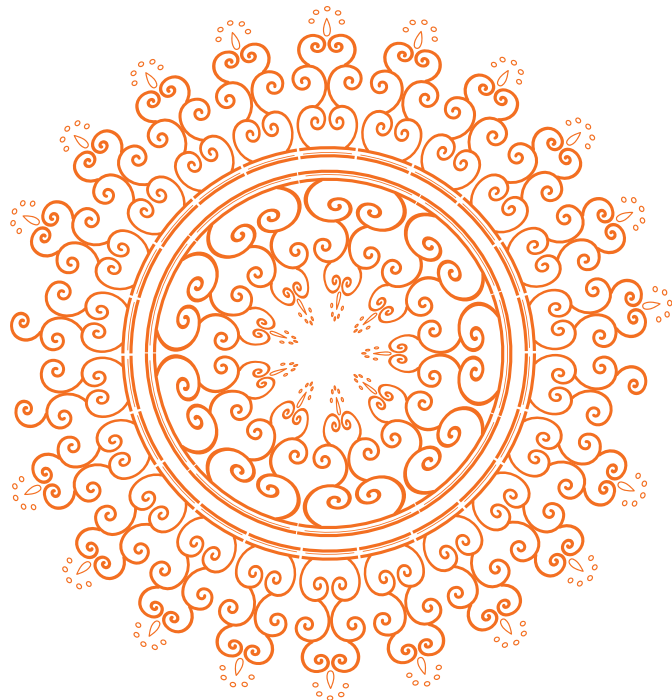
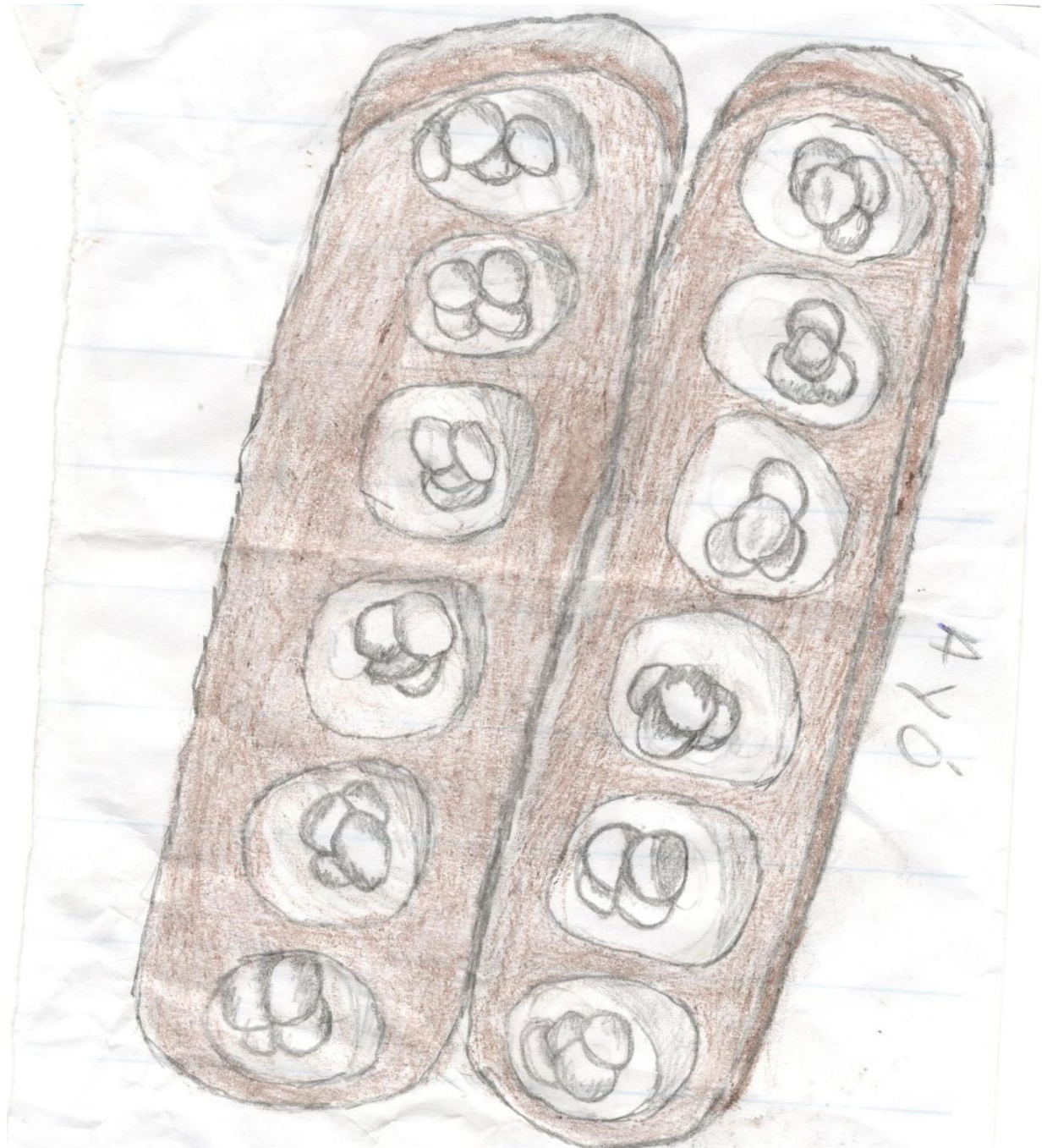


Adebayo Gomez Oludare

Recreation games - Nigeria

I had a stroke about 5 years ago and I have been able to improve my cognitive and mental alertness by taking up these hobbies as part of my regular activities in my leisure period.

They are called Ludo game and Ayo (Draft) game. They are games that give you pleasure while joggling your memory as well. It has really helped my mental activities.



Borg Marian

Handwork - Band weaving and crochet - Netherlands

I do band weaving where you can make a beautiful shoulder or bag strap.

It is also possible to link or sew them to each other and create a whole bag, but I have not progressed so far.

I'm also producing crochet bags, - it's not so fast but I do not care, it's a hobby!



Ivory Willae

Handwork - Beading precious stone bangles - USA

It initially feels as if a stroke grounds you. Doctor visits become the new norm. As soon as I could, I grasped each accomplishment and celebrated my growth.

During recovery, I began to feed my mind by purchasing precious stones like amethyst to develop awareness, agate to enhance courage and labradorite to protect my soul. I set out to increase my balance and strength of both the left and right sides of my body.

I used a double needle technique to bead these stones into bangles to ensure I was armed with this energy every where I went. I recalled the creative job role the stroke pulled me away from, and was determined to continue working toward what brought me joy.

I made apparel that reminded me of my bi-hemispheric stroke, incorporating relatable lyrics and images of my brain scans I now craved to understand. This is my new reality, yet the person I was before my stroke still has a voice. Still has strengths. Still lives.

I merged the old with the new to bring me through. My hope is to share this nugget of hope to push others through their stroke journey. Strive... Survive... Soar!



Kuijpers Sylvia

Handwork - Handcraft cards - Netherlands

I had a stroke in 2009 and again in 2016. Aphasia is a problem for me.

I also have trouble with reading and keeping my balance. Also, I can only use the right side of my body. I play tenor saxophone in an orchestra where they take my disabilities into account.

But I also started to create handcraft cards again. This helps me to organize the chaos in my head.



Tivadar Trena

Handwork - Maize husking - Slovenia

I had a stroke 6 years ago and going back to making different items out of dry corn leaves has brought happiness into my life.

Craft made out of maize husking has a long tradition in our region and I enjoy sharing this hand skill with our stroke clubs members in Lendava.

Since my stroke, I also have held several exhibitions around Slovenia.



Egriega Pieter

Music - Musician and Artist - United Kingdom

In 2013 Pieter from the UK had a haemorrhagic stroke losing mobility in his right side. He wrote a book in hospital and was desperate to get back to painting, but his arm didn't do what it used to. Despite this, he contributed a self-portrait to the WSO Stroke Art 2014. He was given the UK Stroke Association Life After Stroke Award for Creative Arts in 2014 .

“If you want to do creative things then inevitably you're going to want to recover. I wanted to communicate in so many different ways before the stroke and it is my contention that the best way to demonstrate to stroke survivors that they can recover from this horrible brain injury is to compete in the real world and not just operate in the world of stroke support..”

Apart from the music, Pieter appears in Arts Fringe shows performing a mixture of his songs and stories. In July 2016 he was awarded the best small ensemble performance at Buxton Fringe.

This year he produced an album of relaxing music 'Clouds' that takes you on a soothing journey around the world under different skies. It is a CD which is available on Amazon.com

<https://www.amazon.com/Clouds-Egriega/dp/B01BCUOTWQ>

It has been chosen as background music to this Hobbies Exhibition 2016 to be enjoyed by stroke survivors around the world.



Head Tom

Music - DJ - United Kingdom

In 1996 I first experienced Drum & Bass music whilst at university. It was a natural progression from going to nightclubs to enjoy the music to getting decks of my own and to start DJing in 1998.

I began by playing at house parties and university events and through self promotion soon got opportunities to DJ in nightclubs. I have played at a wide range of venues around the UK and abroad including a residency at HQ at The Cellar in Oxford, and at festivals, notably Leeds, Reading and Glastonbury. I have also DJed on various radio stations.

I held down a weekly show for a year on London's Rude FM, had a mix feature on BBC 1Xtra in the Breaking New Talent slot in 2005 and was a regular contributor to the Phuture Frequency website recording over 100 podcasts from 2007 to 2015. DJing has given me the opportunity to play the music I love to a wider audience who are unaware of my medical history.

I have never let my stroke stop me from achieving my goals and am proud that my strengths as a DJ, not my disability are recognised by others. Check out my website www.djvoid.co.uk



Nightingales Song Group

Music - Finland

The Nightingales is a song group that has given a marvelous possibility to its members to sing after a stroke.

Only a couple of singers have sung before in a choir. For many, the last time they sang was at school. It is nice to learn new songs and it is enjoyable to sing the old, familiar songs and to do it together.



North West Community Choir

Music - United Kingdom

The Stroke Association's North West Community Choir is made up of stroke survivors, volunteers, staff and local health professionals who all meet regularly to practice during term time in Stockport and Manchester. The Stroke Association created the singing group in 2014, aiming to enable stroke survivors and the local community to discover their musical side. Ann Williams, 67 from Stalybridge, is a member of the Community Choir, even performing her own original music at several Stroke Association events. Before she had a stroke in May 2013, Ann was a successful folk musician performing gigs across the North West alongside her daughter Shelley.

When more than 100 stroke survivors, carers, clinicians and scientists came together in 2014 to celebrate World Stroke Day at Salford Royal the SA Choir performed music composed and accompanied by stroke survivor Peter Egriega. The event was organised by the Trust's Hyperacute Stroke Research Centre, the Manchester Science Festival, the Stroke Association and the University of Manchester. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O63s8r0ZuOM>





Strike a Chord Cwmbran Choir

Music - United Kingdom - Wales

Strike a Chord Cwmbran is a choir for stroke survivors, carers and family members who meet each week to sing together.

A joint venture between the Stroke Association and Head4Arts, the choir is led by a musical director.

The choir has been running for 2 years and now has thirty members who have reported marked improvement in their speech, increased confidence and reduced social isolation as a result of attending the choir.

After funding from Arts Council of Wales ended, the choir has decided to set up independently from July 2016, which will allow them to continue fundraising and performing to a variety of audiences. Past performances have included their own Christmas Concert, Welsh Stroke Conference, Roald Dahl celebration event and community events and celebrations.

A video to demonstrate how the choir has evolved and what it means to its members is available here: https://youtu.be/HWYc1tk_KWI

Jinnouchi Takahiro

Technical Aides Invention - Japan

I suffered a hemorrhagic stroke years ago at the age of 51. I was hospitalized and asked to make a thick paper craft of a small hexagonal box as rehabilitation. I had a sense of attainment after having finished this task using only my right hand which is not affected by stroke. This experience brought me a joy of creation realizing my idea into a concrete object.

Returning home, I continued making craftwork as rehabilitation. Living home with hemiplegia, I often confronted problems of daily life. To resolve these problems, I made technical aids which later became my hobby. The photo shows a device to unlock a watch belt lock of an arm watch.

Making technical aids for daily life is an occupational therapy to me, but at the same time it is a hobby activity which makes my life rich and gives me a sense of satisfaction and attainment. Doing what you like and what you are interested in everyday, little by little, at the end of the day you say "I can do such a thing by myself."



Hayes Danielle

Writing-Photography - Canada

Photography has always been part of my life since my first memory at age two. I loved looking through old family photo albums and listening to the stories of the people in the photos, often very funny.

I realized how important photos are in recording my family history. Years later I studied photography and became a world-wide photographer working for the UN, World Bank, etc. I combined my photography with my writing skills to be more widely published and became a publisher as well.

When I had my stroke in 2010 it brought an end to my career as a photographer, but I decided to write my autobiography which I published in 2014. The title is: TRAVELING LIGHT, Photographic Memories of a Global Nomad. See <http://www.blurb.com/b/5693070-traveling-light>



TRAVELING LIGHT

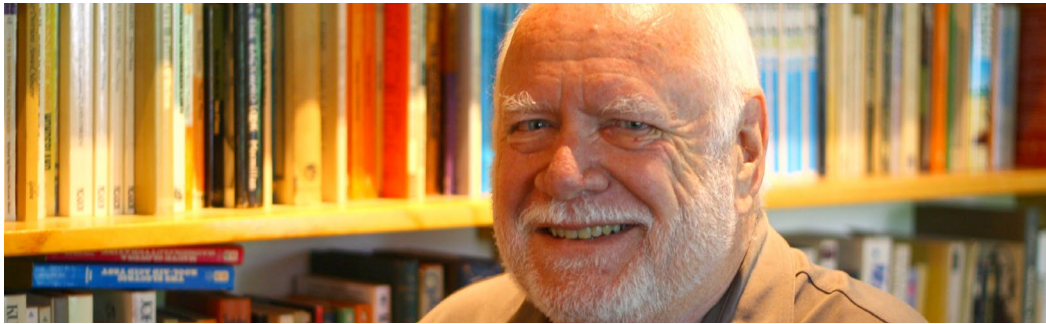
Photographic Memories of a Global Nomad



DANNIELLE HAYES

Smith Ron

Writer - Canada



Born and raised in Vancouver, Ron is the author and editor of several books in his pre-stroke life. For close to forty years he taught at universities in Canada, Italy, the States and the UK. In 2002 he received an honorary doctorate from the University of British Columbia and in 2005 he was the inaugural Fulbright Chair in Creative Writing at Arizona State University.

In 2011 he was awarded the Gray Campbell Award for distinguished service to the BC publishing industry where he has played an essential role in the growth of literary, historical and public policy publishing. He lives with his wife, Patricia Jean Smith, also a writer and now caregiver, in Nanoose Bay on Vancouver Island.

Ron suffered his stroke on November 19, 2012, at age 69. The written word had been a life-long vocation and avocation, so several months into his on-going recovery he decided one way back to discovering his former self was to write about his stroke experience. Immediately he began typing with the index finger on his left hand. Two years later he had completed a 350 page book. He considers himself lucky to have known the importance of story in all of our lives.

http://ronsdalepress.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/the_defiant_mind_sample.pdf

THE Defiant MIND

LIVING INSIDE A STROKE



RON SMITH



Outdoor Recreation



Can't Robin

Cycling - United Kingdom

Born in Colchester, Essex, U.K, currently living in the UK. Had a stroke nearly 21 years ago at age 50, on the 6.1.1996. Not currently linked to a particular stroke support organisation. Started cycling as persuaded by children/friends to try it.

Found cycling to provide excellent exercise and access to countryside. Photo: from a group cycling event organised in conjunction with a stroke research team at the University of Central Lancashire in Preston.

Giesen Wilco

Cycling - Netherlands

I have undertaken a fine new hobby after a stroke, - cycling which is not only therapy! I own a tricycle (USVA COMFORT) and sit on it almost daily. I combine my rehabilitation with a bit of freedom and a new way of cycling!

Having partial paralysis in one leg, I still manage to place it on the pedal, resulting in a passive or active support-training situation, by means of the other leg.

Several studies have found good results for cycling with various people afflicted with different disabilities. Several people made clear progress in their condition, improving the affected leg.

I feel I made a quantum leap. I have also achieved other improvements in strength, endurance and motor skills, not only in my affected leg but also my affected arm.

I completed successfully the Alpe d'Huez as a CVA patient on June 2015! I am planning for my first triathlon as a stroke victim on Saturday, August 27th, 2016 is the day!



Medved Neza

Cycling - Slovenia

I was born in 1928 and am a retired midwife. I had my stroke in January 2013 with severe left side weakness but have had an extensive rehabilitation and my children helped me a lot.

I am living on my own again and am the oldest member of our local stroke club. I am back to gardening, visiting cultural & historical events and I again cycle a lot. This June I participated at "Mini POLI Marathon" and received a recognition for cycling 21 km!

I enjoy life!



Sluga Jernej

Cycling - Slovenia

I have been involved in sports my entire life. As a child I was trained in hockey and I was enthusiastic about skiing, cycling, playing basketball and tennis. I have never given up on sports despite the responsibilities with school or family.

At the age of 39, in the highlight of my life and its creativity, I suffered a massive stroke. What followed was a long recuperation period and realising nothing will ever be the same. I was left with my will and communication skills as I have always loved spending time with my friends.

This was the reason I established the Sports and Party Section within the Society of Patients with Cerebrovascular Stroke of Slovenia to assist us in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. To successfully solve my financial issues, I have remained active in my company Pica International within the 4-hour workday.

You can follow my life on my www.cvb.si where there are descriptions of my adventures. I proved my passion to cycling on a 370 km long path from Hodos to Piran, which is longest path in Slovenia. The stroke population has to see what we can do and they have to believe in faith.





Fishing group

Finland

Fishing is probably the most important hobby for Finnish men. They can spend time together and relax.



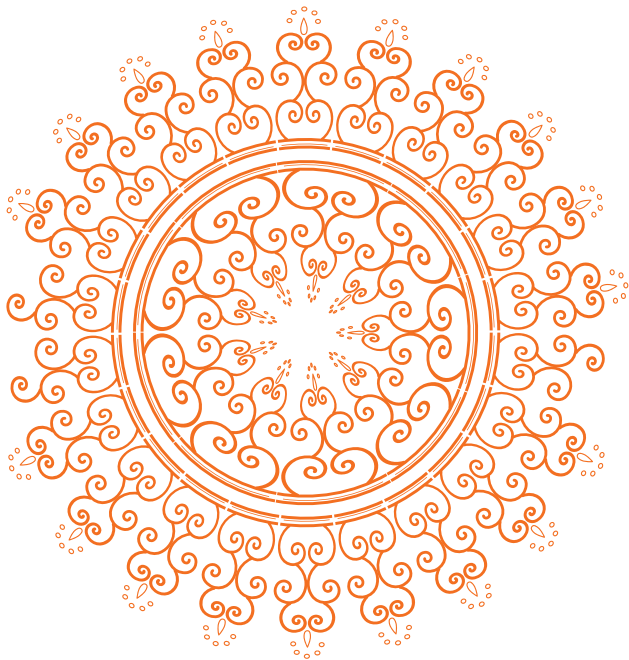
Gravef Peter

Fishing - United Kingdom

Peter uses fishing as therapy after his stroke. He was awarded a grant for equipment by the Stroke Association.

He enjoys creating the fishing hooks which is a very good cognitive therapy.

Fishing allows him to meet his friends and prevents isolation. He loves being out by a river and this helps him relax.



Pirkio Seppo

Hiking and Fishing - Finland

I enjoy hiking in the forest with my friends. I also need to have time for myself, to sit quietly and think and maybe try to catch a fish.



Mudhar Harvey & Gardening group

Gardening (Horticultural Therapy) - United Kingdom

As Volunteer Stroke Ambassadors, Stroke Action UK organised for us to receive training from the Gardening After Stroke Charity. I have always helped other survivors with indoor gardening activities at the Enfield Life After Stroke Centre. But then we wanted more, - some out-door gardening.

Stroke Action said it will support us. So when the Winchmore Hill Charity said we could have an allotment plot, we were excited. We chose two Tuesdays a month and the driver Junior Bryan would take us on Stroke Action's wheelchair accessible minibus. Stroke Action paid for the gardening tools and flowers. We had a bit of tuition from the Winchmore Hill Garden charity.

Our Trustee Mandy Lui even helped to strengthen my affected right hand and fingers with some massage and aromatherapy. Now, the rest is history. We have two beautiful blooming flower beds and even a raised bed for wheelchair users.

We are so proud of our achievement and enjoy our time out for 'Gardening After a Stroke'.

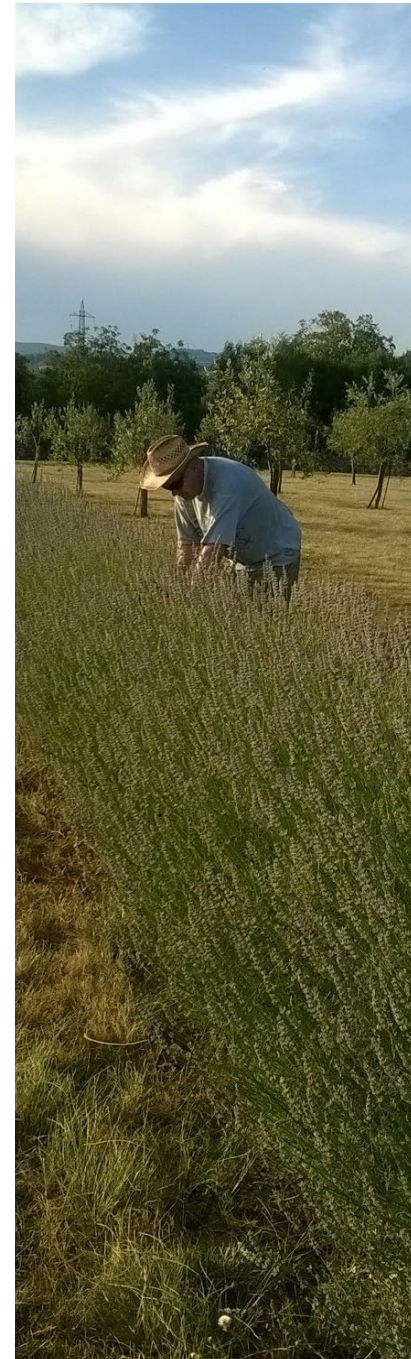


Mezinec Severin

Gardening - Slovenia

I had my stroke 20 years ago and have gone through a long and very demanding rehabilitation process. I have done many things, but cultivation of lavender is now my favourite hobby.

Lavender has long been known for its intoxicating scent and freshness and it calms me down, too. I am proud of my lavender fields because they give me energy to move on.



Outdoor Golf Group

Golf - United Kingdom

The Stroke Association in Crewe has teamed up with England Golf to provide golf courses for stroke survivors in Cheshire, UK.

At the weekly sessions, held at Malkins Bank Golf Course in Sandbach, eight stroke survivors have access to an hour's coaching session on a covered driving range. Hilary Belshaw, Information, Advice and Support Coordinator at the Stroke Association, said: "More people than ever before are surviving a stroke. But many stroke survivors tell us that after all the effort to save their lives they then feel isolated when they return home.

The golf course provides an opportunity for stroke survivors to meet others who are also experiencing a life after stroke, benefit from exercise, build their confidence and enjoy learning new skills. We're thrilled the first course has been so popular and have put on a second course due to the demand. So far 17 people have benefitted from this activity."

A Stroke survivor said "This course has been a great incentive to come and meet fellow stroke survivors and to appreciate how well we can all move on."





BeActive Holiday Club - Lily Maxwell

Hiking and traveling - United Kingdom

“It helps us to go on holiday each year despite having a stroke and have a fun time. We love it and look forward to the trips” Lily Maxwell Stroke Ambassador and club members.

It started as a local day out for two hours every three months. Then the stroke survivors said that they enjoyed being out and active and want to extend the sessions to out of London day trips and holidays. With the help of our local MP Mr. Andy Love and a Carer Ambassador Maureen Molloy who help to raise funds, this became a reality. Now thanks to the Enfield Council funding the Carers’ Time Out service, the carers come free too.

As a stroke survivor, I have been trained and coached by Stroke Action UK to become a Stroke Ambassador. I provide the administrative and organisation activities for the holiday club with the help of the Life After Stroke Centre Coordinator Lana Kravchuk.

I apply the skills I used for several years as a legal adviser in the City before I had a stroke and I am glad I am helping other survivors and carers to enjoy this hobby. It is really rewarding.

Hiking & Traveling Group

Hiking and traveling - Finland

We have made many kinds of trips and journeys during the last couple of decades. It is so nice to travel like before, see new places and have wonderful experiences. Almost all of us love hiking alone or with friends.

It does not cost anything to wonder the forests in Finland.



Rotar Tatjana and Hiking group

Hiking and traveling - Slovenia

I survived my stroke at age 21 and am now living with it for 21 years. Rehabilitation was challenging and very long and my stubbornness has helped me a lot.

The best move after stroke was when I joined the “Hiking group” in our stroke club. We have organized and supervised monthly walks around Slovenia’s hills and mountains. It was not always easy but the group has helped me to start enjoying the hiking and also life again. With every rise I said “I have overcome myself again”.

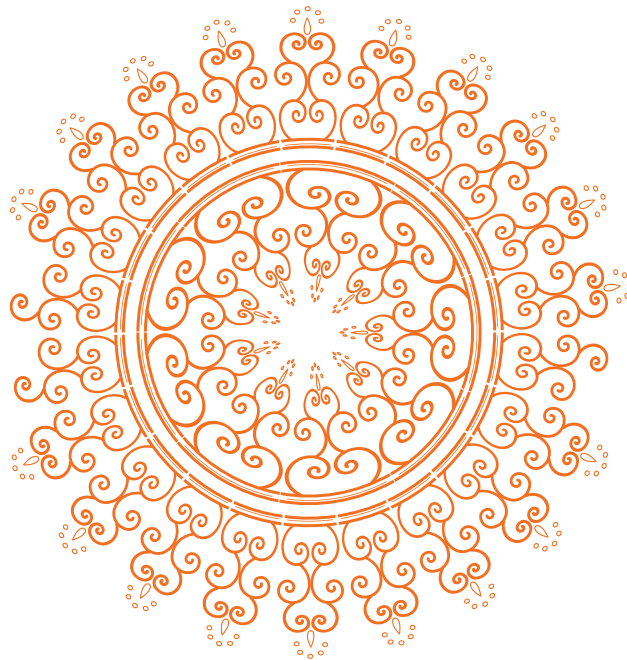


Whitehouse Claire

Varied Sports Activities - UK

Throughout my difficult journey I have upheld new challenges, adaptations and perspective like no other, enjoying that of simplicity... Nature!

From unable to walk and waking to a paralysing world, I now view everything in a different light. These simple images represent my travel and accomplishment as a survivor.



Okolonji Tim & Enfield Multi

Sports Activity League - United Kingdom

Stroke survivors often told us that they actively participated in sporting activities prior to having a stroke, and having a stroke limits this opportunity.

So when the Enfield Council told us that they have a partnership with Tottenham Hotspur to work with local groups we did not hesitate to set up a meeting between stroke survivors and Tottenham Hotspur Community Liaison Manager Allison Sharman.

She allocated a Coach John Abel who has helped the group develop several in-door and out-door sporting activities. The climax was a day trip to Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in London.

As the stroke survivors put it: "It is awesome to see first-hand what we have only seen on TV. Having a stroke cannot stop us from enjoying different sporting activities.

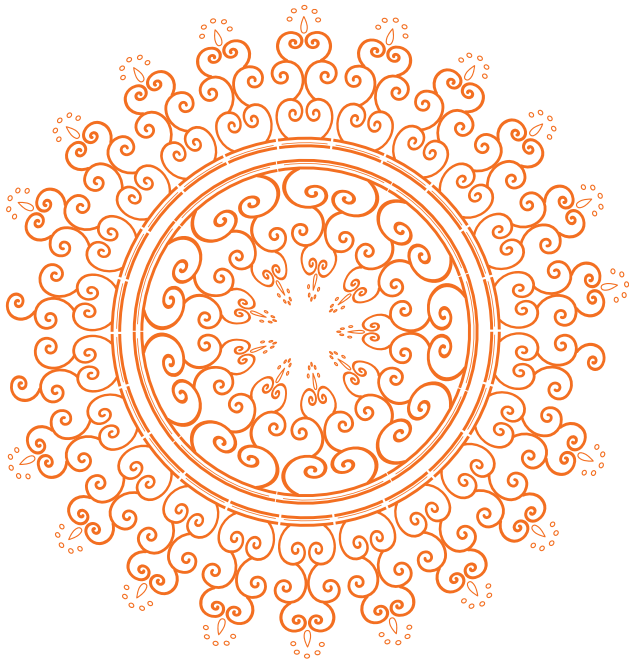
It also helps our rehabilitation and we enjoy every minute of it" Tim Okolonji Well-being Support Worker.



Honkasalo Hilkeka

Water sports - Diving - Finland

I wanted to push my limits and diving was it.



Leikas Lauri

Water sports - Ice Swimming - Finland

I started ice swimming to tolerate more cold after accident. Also cold water helps with spasticity.

At first I only dipped into water for a short time, but I decided to start staying longer in water.

I had a goal to stay far more than one minute in ice cold water to be able to swim one day 25 meters.

Since I am competitive, I was dreaming of Finnish Championship Winter Swimming.



Majuri Heiki

Water sports - Swimming - Finland

I love to swim. Swimming gives me also a possibility to move, when it's hard to walk.



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