

Regaining a Voice with a Lingraphica Device

**SUCCESS STORIES FROM
COMMUNICATION DEVICE USERS: VOL. 2**



An eBook from

 **Lingraphica®**



As your partner for the aphasia journey, we've heard many stories of diagnosis, care, and success. Now, we bring you a few more stories to inform and support you along the way.



MEET JACK:

**A retired district sales manager
with primary progressive aphasia**

Name: **John “Jack” Brunetti**

Age: **68**

Location: **Scranton, PA**

Years Since Onset: **2**

When primary progressive aphasia began to steal his words, Jack Brunetti found new hope in communicating with a device from Lingraphica. This is his journey to successful communication.

John “Jack” Brunetti’s story began in Scranton, PA. He received a degree in History from the University of Scranton, but used his education to work in his hometown as a Produce Manager for Acme Markets and then as a District Sales Manager for Nestle Food, from where he retired after 35 years. Jack and Diana recently celebrated 50 years of marriage and are blessed with two sons, Steven and Mark, and three grandchildren. For many years, Jack’s life was enriched by a love of Penn State football (Saturday home game ticket holders from the 1970s until 2007) as well as charitable work with UNICO, the largest Italian-American service organization in the world. He spoke fluent English and Italian for decades, until eight years ago when he began having language difficulties.

Jack began mixing up his pronouns and dropping verbs from sentences. The Italian was disappearing from his vocabulary. He struggled to find words. As his language impairment progressed, his wife Diana took him to a doctor near their home in Scranton, PA. Jack underwent a battery of neurological tests, but doctors found nothing conclusive and said that he had a mini-stroke. Diana and their son, Steven, sat with this news for a while, but believed that something else was going on.

“We knew that the initial diagnosis of a mini-stroke wasn’t the answer. Something else was going on with Jack,” said Diana. “So Steven decided to seek out a neurologist.”

Steven took Jack to Philadelphia to the University of Pennsylvania, and within 10 minutes, the skilled neurology department determined that Jack, who was 66 at the time, was not having difficulties due to a stroke. He had a neurological disease called primary progressive aphasia.



Primary progressive aphasia, or PPA, is a form of cognitive impairment that involves a progressive loss of language function. PPA is caused by degeneration in the parts of the brain that are responsible for speech and language (the frontal and temporal lobes), and it usually affects people who are under age 65. It begins slowly and initially presents as difficulty thinking of common words while speaking or writing. PPA progressively worsens to the point where verbal communication by any means is difficult, as well as the ability to read or understand what others say.

In the fall of 2016, Jack's neurologist prescribed speech therapy, and it wasn't long before Jack and Diana met with Debbie Belfanti, a speech-language pathologist working at Allied Services in Scranton. Belfanti was familiar with PPA and after evaluating Jack, started him on a free trial with a Lingraphica TouchTalk™ communication device. Jack loved the device and began using it to help him communicate.

Since that time, Diana has been a strong advocate for Jack using his communication device. A few weeks ago, Diana made "cheat sheets" for the steps that are hard for him to remember, and she encourages him to use his TouchTalk often. Jack spends several hours at a time working on his device—creating words and phrases that speak on his behalf when touched.



"These machines have so much potential. It's been a wonderful tool for Jack."

"These machines have so much potential," Diana said. "It's been a wonderful tool for Jack."

Jack lost his ability to speak due to PPA. But with the help of his TouchTalk, he hasn't let a lack of verbal communication slow him down. He goes to lunch outings with friends—some of whom have also had strokes, picks up groceries, and answers phone calls. Jack even used the device to say the prayer before the Thanksgiving meal. He also loves to read [TalkPath News](#) on his device.

One morning in January 2017, Diana was working in the kitchen, and Jack was sitting at the kitchen table on his device when she heard, “I want to take a walk with Taser.”

To Diana's surprise and complete joy, Jack independently constructed a complete sentence on his TouchTalk and used it to communicate about their dog, Taser.

“It was a huge breakthrough. I almost couldn't believe what happened,” Diana recalled. “Debbie (Jack's SLP) told me to be patient with him, and now, we're both so thrilled at his progress. It keeps him involved with the activities of daily living, and he's getting better with the device each day. He diligently strives to improve his communication skills and takes a lot of initiative with the TouchTalk after seeing how well it works for him. I cannot say how pleasantly surprised we are at how the Lingraphica TouchTalk actually expanded his ability to communicate with friends and family with such a great degree of satisfaction.”



One morning in January 2017, Diana was working in the kitchen, and Jack was sitting at the kitchen table on his device when she heard, “I want to take a walk with Taser.” To Diana's surprise and complete joy, Jack independently constructed a complete sentence on his TouchTalk and used it to communicate about their dog, Taser.

Do you have a device success story like Jack's?
Submit your story at devices.aphasia.com/my-story



MEET JO:

A retired director of special education services

Name: **Ruby “Jo” Free**

Age: **82**

Location: **New Braunfels, TX**

Years Since Onset: **15**

Cause of Aphasia: **Stroke**

Fifteen years after a massive stroke left her with severe aphasia, Jo Free, at 82, found “freedom” with a device from Lingraphica. Here is her remarkable story of determination and discipline.

Ruby “Jo” Free was born in Lorena, TX in 1935. She grew up in Fayetteville and has lived in New Braunfels for the last 56 years—a lifelong Lone Star state resident. Jo met her husband Richard, who passed away eight years ago to cancer, when they attended the University of Corpus Christi (now part of Texas A&M). Together, they were a fitness force to be reckoned with: Jo ran and cycled; Richard played football, basketball, and volleyball for the U.S. Army, and had a stint in minor league baseball. They were married, had three children (Richard, John, and Nancy), have nine grandchildren, and the first great-grandchild arrived in November.

At the beginning of her career, Jo worked as a diagnostician in the field of education. Always an advocate for those with special needs, she advanced through the years and retired as the Director of Special Education Services with Comal County. While in retirement, Jo was active as ever, running five miles 3-5 times each week and participating in a weekly spin class. At age 66, Jo—the determined, fit, and independent woman who lived life on her terms—had a massive stroke.

For 15 years, Jo had about 15 words in her vocabulary, including her favorite phrase, “Golly today!,” which she used all the time, for no apparent reason.

“The doctors told us that if she had not been in such excellent health, she would not have survived,” said Nancy, Jo’s daughter and full-time caregiver.

After her stroke, Jo went through a period of therapy and rehabilitation for two years, but her progress stagnated, and the therapy stopped as Jo and her family were told “there wasn’t much else that could be done” to help her speech.

For 15 years, Jo had about 15 words in her vocabulary, including her favorite phrase, “Golly today!,” which she used all the time, for no apparent reason. In April 2016, she became ill with the flu and required hospitalization. At that time, Jo was placed in a rehabilitation hospital where she received therapy services for two weeks. Upon discharge, Jo was referred to speech-language pathologist (SLP) Julie Lindenau from Advanced Home Health.



With 25 years of experience as an SLP, Julie began working with Jo in June 2016. After almost six months of therapy and practice, Jo increased her vocabulary to about 30 spontaneous words, but Julie knew that there was more Jo wanted to say.

“After a few months, I realized that Jo could benefit from using a Lingraphica [speech-generating] device,” said Julie. “I’ve been a fan of Lingraphica for years. The AllTalk™ is user-friendly and easy to use, and I’m not very good at technology, but even I can figure it out.”



After a few months, I realized that Jo could benefit from using a Lingraphica [speech-generating] device,” said Julie. “I’ve been a fan of Lingraphica for years. The AllTalk is user-friendly and easy to use, and I’m not very good at technology, but even I can figure it out.”

So Julie and Jo began a trial period with a Lingraphica AllTalk, and by December 2016, Jo had her very own device. Jo’s daughter had some initial concerns about Jo’s ability to navigate through the device, but those quickly faded as she saw the progress her mother made.

In six month’s time, the woman who had been speaking 15 words for 15 years after her stroke now speaks in full sentences with the help of her AllTalk and prompting through visual mouthing cues. She now has several personalized pages on her AllTalk, including a page called “All About Jo,” which features her sons, daughter, friends, hobbies, health, and food. Jo practices with her AllTalk every day, pressing an icon over and over again to hear it speak a word to her until she can say it herself.

Nancy is a strong advocate for Jo using her device to communicate. When Jo cannot recall or say a word on her own, Nancy encourages her to get out her AllTalk to find the word.

“Jo is now better at communicating her wants and needs to me, which lessens the guesswork on my part,” said Nancy. “There’s a give and take, and she attempts to speak on her own whenever she can. I want her to talk without gestures, so I ask her to use her device when she needs to. She loves her AllTalk, and her determination to speak for herself drives her to practice each day.”

Julie believes Jo’s incredible progress is due largely to the AllTalk. “We use the AllTalk to stimulate her speech,” said Julie. “She uses it if she wants to give details. Not being able to speak is the unspeakable, and now, Jo has overcome the unspeakable.”

As Julie and Jo’s therapy sessions draw to a close this summer, everyone believes that Jo will continue to thrive in her communication with her AllTalk.

“She’s doing great, and with the help of a family advocate like Nancy, Jo will add more pages and words and phrases to her device that will allow her to say even more,” said Julie. “I’m so proud of and happy for her.”

Nancy echoed Julie’s sentiments: “My mom is so determined...she was only able to say a few words for so long, and now, she’s able to say most anything with her device. It’s given her a freedom and sense of independence, and her personality is shining through again. It’s just amazing. And if it works for my mom who has severe aphasia and apraxia, I believe it can be beneficial for almost anyone.”

Jo rarely says the random “Golly, today!” anymore. But with a single verbal prompt at the end of each day, she looks at Nancy and says, “Good night, and I’ll see you in the morning.”



Julie believes Jo’s incredible progress is due largely to the AllTalk. “We use the AllTalk to stimulate her speech,” said Julie. “She uses it if she wants to give details. Not being able to speak is the unspeakable, and now, Jo has overcome the unspeakable.”

Do you have a device success story like Jo’s?
Submit your story at devices.aphasia.com/my-story



MEET ROSANNE:

**A former Alzheimer's worker
with aphasia**

Name: **Rosanne Knapp**

Age: **66**

Location: **Kingman, AZ**

Years Since Onset **2**

Cause of Aphasia: **Stroke**

In May of 2015, Rosanne Knapp of Kingman, AZ, suffered a severe stroke. The former technology recruiter, Alzheimer's facility worker, and author of the book *Southern Wind* was 64 years of age and retired at the time of her stroke. Following the attack on her brain, Roseanne spent several weeks at Kingman Regional Medical Center where she met speech-language pathologist (SLP), Melanie Bradle, and then a full year in rehabilitation extended care at Desert Highlands Rehabilitation Center.

"The TouchTalk is so intuitive. Rosanne has severe aphasia, and she's just so excited to use it. She uses it to practice her speech mouth movements, and it's helped her pronounce words and letters...It's just been wonderful—I just can't believe it."

"When I first met Rosanne, she had no language at all," said Melanie. "She couldn't point, and she was in a lot of pain. She had hemiparesis and was dysphagic. Roseanne was in a tough place. But I could tell she was very bright...she had a light that shined through, and I knew she could understand more than she could say."

After the year in extended care, Rosanne returned to her home with her husband of 46 years, Ray. Believing that more could be done to help his wife, Ray, a retired aerospace engineer who designed a special ramp for his van to transport Rosanne to physical and speech therapy, reached out to Melanie, asking for her help.



Melanie recommended a Lingraphica device for Rosanne based on her experiences with a few other clients on her caseload. Rosanne has only owned her Lingraphica TouchTalk™ for about three months, but the Knapps and Melanie are already wildly encouraged by what they've experienced.

“The TouchTalk is so intuitive,” said Ray. “Rosanne has severe aphasia, and she’s just so excited to use it. She uses it to practice her speech mouth movements, and it’s helped her pronounce words and letters. She’s always anxious to show Melanie what she’s learned at each new visit. It’s just been wonderful—I just can’t believe it.”

Melanie echoes Ray’s sentiments: “Rosanne is already finding things on the device, and Ray helps her to load their own photos. She just gets it. The TouchTalk is fantastic. I just love it, especially for aphasic and apraxic patients. And the Knapps are a great example of what can happen with a device like this. They just don’t give up, and they are so thrilled with Lingraphica.”

When it comes to technical support and customer service at Lingraphica, Ray couldn’t be happier. “I’ve called Lingraphica a few times to ask questions about the TouchTalk, and the tech support team has been fabulous to deal with,” said Ray. “I love the attitude of everyone I’ve spoken to at Lingraphica.”

As a speech-language pathologist, Melanie also had high praise for the Lingraphica device.

“Lingraphica should be very proud,” said Melanie. “They set the standard for speech-generating devices when it comes to people with aphasia and apraxia. They are not only helping patients, but also the SLPs. Lingraphica devices will open up a very closed world for these patients.”



“Lingraphica should be very proud. They set the standard for speech-generating devices when it comes to people with aphasia and apraxia. They are not only helping patients, but also the SLPs. Lingraphica devices will open up a very closed world for these patients.”

Do you have a device success story like Rosanne’s?
Submit your story at devices.aphasia.com/my-story



MEET BUTCH:

**Former logistics
employee with aphasia**

Name: **Arthur “Butch” Goodwin**

Age: **43**

Location: **Jacksonville, FL**

Years since onset: **4**

Cause of Aphasia: **Stroke**

On December 6, 2013, Arthur “Butch” Goodwin had a stroke at age 39. With the help of a device from Lingraphica, a loving family, and a determined speech-language pathologist, he’s learning to communicate again and meeting his goals.

In December 2013, Butch Goodwin of Jacksonville, FL, suffered a severe stroke. The former logistics employee of Walmart was working at the time of his stroke. Butch experienced a left-sided ischemic stroke, which affected his motor function and communication. He worked with a speech-language pathologist in an inpatient setting, at home, and at a neurological day treatment center through Brooks Rehabilitation in Florida. Currently, Butch attends Brooks Rehabilitation Clubhouse—a full-time day program that provides for long-term recovery needs for individuals who have suffered from an acquired neurological injury—as well as the Brooks Rehabilitation Aphasia Center.

While going through speech therapy, Butch was encouraged by his therapist to use his Lingraphica TouchTalk™ device in order to help with his expressive aphasia and apraxia. Working with his speech therapist, he used his device for scripting and practicing his speech mouth movements.

“I really feel whole-heartedly that Butch exemplifies strength, resilience, motivation, and compassion,” said Jodi Morgan, the speech-language pathologist who manages the Brooks Rehabilitation Aphasia Center and completed Butch’s initial evaluation before he attended the center. “Butch does everything to make people feel better about themselves, and he always puts other people first, in spite of everything that he’s endured with his stroke.”

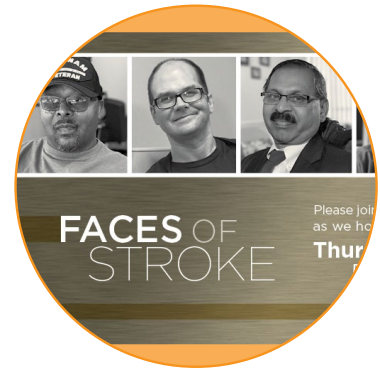
While going through speech therapy, Butch was encouraged by his therapist to use his Lingraphica TouchTalk™ device in order to help with his expressive aphasia and apraxia. Working with his speech therapist, he used his device for scripting and practicing his speech mouth movements.

When Butch meets new people, he tells them about himself with an introduction that he programmed and personalized on his TouchTalk. With the push of a button, the TouchTalk says: “My name is Butch Goodwin. Nice to meet you! I had a stroke. I have aphasia. Loss of words.” In addition to being able to communicate with others, the Lingraphica device has helped him to better pronounce his words and letters. It has also helped others to understand what he wants to say.

Butch has been able to use the device for many different personal achievements. As an usher at his local church, Butch uses his device to greet people as they enter the services. With the help of his TouchTalk, he can take public transportation independently to the Brooks Rehabilitation Clubhouse and Aphasia Center. Now, he also attends adaptive sports events and workouts through the Clubhouse and can confidently participate due to his device.

In 2017, Butch was recognized by Brooks Rehabilitation as one of their “Faces of Stroke,” a prestigious award given to stroke survivors who exemplify motivation, strength, and compassion during recovery and return to day-to-day life. Butch used his Lingraphica device to script a speech that he gave at the presentation of this award in front of hundreds of people.

“Butch’s hard work and determination are just remarkable,” said Jodi. “He doesn’t quit and works toward better communication and better understanding of the world around him. It’s amazing to see him use his device in ways to help him meet his goals as well as to help others. He’s a real inspiration.”



In 2017, Butch was recognized by Brooks Rehabilitation as one of their “Faces of Stroke,” a prestigious award given to stroke survivors who exemplify motivation, strength, and compassion during recovery and return to day-to-day life. Butch used his Lingraphica device to script a speech that he gave at the presentation of this award in front of hundreds of people.

Do you have a device success story like Butch's?
Submit your story at devices.aphasia.com/my-story

Do you suffer from aphasia or know someone who does? We can help.

Lingraphica's communication devices are designed specifically for adults with speech and language disorders. Backed by 30 years of research, our devices help adults regain communication and language skills.

HOW TO GET STARTED

If you are ready to try a communication device, call Lingraphica at 888-776-4898. Here's what will happen next:

- 1. Checking your eligibility:** Lingraphica offers an upfront, [full benefit check](#) that includes a complete review of your insurance benefits to ensure you have sufficient coverage to start a device trial. After our review, we will call you to discuss the results, any out-of-pocket expenses, and the status of the face-to-face visit with your physician.
- 2. Starting a Lingraphica communication device trial:** If you qualify for a free trial, we will ship a loaner Lingraphica device to your SLP free of charge.
- 3. Wrapping up the trial:** Lingraphica will check in with your SLP to ensure the device is an appropriate fit for you. If you and your SLP agree to move forward with the device, Lingraphica will work with your SLP to get the correct authorization and paperwork for the placement of the device.
- 4. Customizing the communication device:** Once the device has been recommended and approved, Lingraphica will manufacture and customize the device specifically and uniquely for your needs.



Ready to get started? Call us at 888-776-4898!

Lingraphica provides tools and services to help individuals with language and cognitive disorders connect with family, friends, and communities. Working in partnership with clinicians and caregivers, our mission is to meet those individuals wherever they may be in their journey to improve or regain their communication skills.

Whether you have a speech, language, or cognitive deficit or you're the parent or caregiver of an individual with a deficit, we will help you find an effective solution to help you communicate. Our clinical team is here to guide and support you every step of the way.

We're Your Partner for the Journey.

For more information about Lingraphica visit

www.aphasia.com

or call us 888-776-4898!

