

Survivors Speak: Angela Wright

“Buddy, you have NO IDEA who I am!”

That’s what Angela Wright thought when, after surviving a stroke, she was told that she’d never live independently or hold a job again. She was 38 years old at the time.

Two years later, she spent four months traveling around India, Nepal, and Bhutan. Alone.

It wasn’t an easy road. Angela describes the process of recovery and rehabilitation as long, difficult, and miraculous. A confessed Type A personality, she had trouble with the non-linear nature of stroke recovery. “I’ve struggled with the fact that just pushing harder can not only deliver fewer results, but also can actually create setbacks.”

(continued on page 2)



Angela Wright

Visit our new stroke recovery website!

Our new stroke recovery website is up and running!

The site provides information organized into three broad categories to support stroke survivors and caregivers: successful transition from hospital to home, successful transition from home to community, and advocacy and research.

Visitors who register on the site will receive monthly newsletters with new content targeted to their needs and interests.

Check it out at www.afterstroke.marchofdimes.ca – we’d love to know what you think!

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One of the most difficult challenges, Angela says, is that there was no peer support available. Most of the groups and resources out there are geared towards more mature stroke survivors, and they just didn't meet Angela's unique needs as a younger adult.

So she took matters into her own hands.

"I created Young Stroke Survivors (YSS), which is a group for anyone who self-identifies as a young stroke survivor." The group provides some of the support and information that Angela couldn't find after her own stroke. "I've been using my own network of professionals to address the group on a monthly basis on various topics they've expressed interest in." YSS is part of the Stroke Recovery Association of BC, an affiliation of March of Dimes Canada.

"The need is great," she adds. "Most young survivors I've met share the same frustrations of a medical

system that doesn't really know yet how to handle the changing demographics of a stroke."

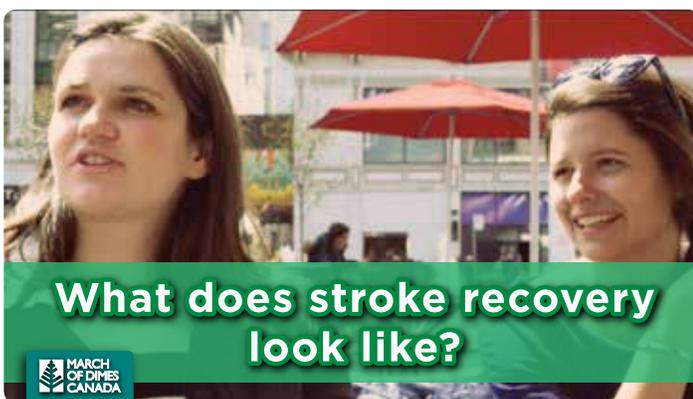
Angela is working to change that by working with organizations like Stroke Services BC and the Provincial Steering Committee for Stroke. She was also one of the featured survivor stories in the Heart & Stroke Foundation's 2017 Stroke Report.

"These public advocacy roles have been hugely rewarding for me personally, and surprisingly cathartic in my efforts to heal myself emotionally," she says.

They've also set her up as something of a poster child for young stroke survivors, and created a pathway for others to reach out for help. It wasn't what she intended, but Angela isn't about to quit now.

"If it helps others, I'm happy to keep playing that role."

It's that time of year again! May is Stroke Recovery Awareness Month



Hard to believe, but it's that time of year again: Stroke Recovery Awareness Month is just around the corner!

This year we're going to be focusing on physical activity, because it has such a huge impact on every aspect of stroke recovery.

Keep an eye on our social media for further details on our campaign, and how you can get involved!

For information on stroke recovery, call the Warmline at 1-888-540-6666 or visit www.afterstroke.marchofdimes.ca

Get ready to WALK'N'ROLL!



It's spring! And that means getting out in the fresh air and shaking off the lazy winter months with some invigorating physical activity. Whether you walk or roll, you can participate in our annual Walk'n'Roll campaign, with events scheduled in several cities and SRABC representing British Columbia.

We all know that staying active is important to our overall health, so volunteers and participants in MODC's stroke, polio, acquired brain injury, and aphasia programs will be hitting designated courses

in local malls. The goal: to raise awareness and money for the MODC programs that support them in independent, engaged, active lives.

New communities are always welcome to join the Walk'n'Roll experience, so please visit our website for details on dates, locations, how to participate, and other ways to support Walk'n'Roll: www.marchofdimes.ca/walknroll

See you there!

Generously sponsored by Canada Cares

Second edition Caregiver's guide to Stroke Recovery now available!

We're very excited to announce that the second edition of our Caregiver's Guide to Stroke Recovery is here!

English and French versions are available in print and online. You can find English and French versions online at our website: www.afterstroke.marchofdimes.ca under Information and Resources.



We're back with emergency preparedness tips!



Your weather when it really matters™

Ever wonder if you're really prepared for an emergency? We've got you covered! Once again, MODC has partnered with The Weather Network to share emergency preparedness tips.

Tune in to The Weather Network to check out our tips!

The challenges of being a young stroke survivor

In contemporary Canadian society there's a widespread belief that stroke is a disease of old age. Another popular belief is that disabilities worth taking seriously are readily visible. Stroke can happen at any age and can result in hidden impairments. Research from the Heart and Stroke Foundation indicates that stroke amongst youth has risen. Some studies predict that stroke amongst younger adults will double in the next 15 years.

Young adults are often defined as those between the ages of 18 to 45. Stroke can happen in infancy, childhood and adolescence too. Strokes are more common in seniors, so anyone under the age of 65 in acute care is usually considered a young stroke survivor. Having a stroke when you are young presents unique challenges, but rest assured the brain is a remarkable and resilient organ!

March of Dimes Canada provides information, resources and support, and there are Young Stroke Survivor support groups across the country. Stroke Recovery Association of BC holds monthly groups in British Columbia which can also be accessed via teleconference. There is also very useful information online that people can access, such as the excellent guidebook on Stroke in Young Adults for survivors and their families by the Canadian Partnership for Stroke Recovery. Young stroke survivors should talk to their doctor, nurse, rehabilitation therapist, or social worker to find out more about services and resources in their region.

What are the main challenges of being a “young” stroke survivor?

No two people are alike and no two strokes are alike, but a brief search of the literature, and regular interaction with young stroke survivors, tells us that there are broad areas of identified need. These are:

- Return to Work

Stroke often happens to people once they are

out of the workforce, so there hasn't been a great focus on this area. Young stroke survivors often need to get back to work as soon as possible for personal and financial, and require professional help to realize this goal. For instance, the Employment Services Program at March of Dimes Canada provides support to young stroke survivors throughout this process.

- Relationships

Stroke doesn't only impact one person. It affects the whole family and social network. Relationships, responsibilities, and changing family roles can be stressful. For young stroke survivors, care often falls on a spouse or a family member. However some young stroke survivors may not have a marriage, stable relationship or a regular partner. Their concerns may revolve around rebuilding confidence, meeting new friends and dating.

- Parenting

Young stroke survivors can also have the worry and responsibility of looking after young children. Sometimes a spouse or partner must take on more childcare duties and in other cases this has to be delegated to a family member or friend. It can be challenging for children to understand why their parent isn't how they used to be.

- Depression

Post-stroke depression may be a psychological reaction to a life-altering event, as well as a biological alteration to the brain that may disrupt the movement of neurotransmitters. Treating depression is very important for your recovery. If you or someone you know is experiencing feelings of low self-esteem, sadness, social withdrawal, sleep disturbances, low motivation, or other common symptoms of depression please speak to a professional.

- **Functional Capacity**

Regaining lost abilities is so integral to recovery. A young stroke survivor's ability to be independent in daily functioning is crucial for his/her self-esteem and in achieving other recovery goals, such as resuming driving or getting a job.

- **Fatigue**

It is not unusual to feel extreme fatigue after stroke and to need a lot of sleep. The combination of the after effects of stroke and the

accompanying emotional, physical and mental strain is exhausting and. It's often harder for a young person who is used to having lots of energy to deal with this limitation.

Note: In Ontario, there are currently Young Stroke Survivor groups in Hamilton, London, and Durham Region.

For information on groups across Canada please email aftersroke@marchofdimes.ca or call 1-888-540-6666.

SRABC volunteer honoured with Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers!



Longtime SRABC volunteer Annie McMorris has received the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers!

Given out by the Governor General, this award celebrates volunteers who have demonstrated exemplary commitment through their dedicated volunteerism. This certainly describes Annie.

Since 1990, when her husband had a stroke, Annie has been involved with every aspect of SRABC. She helps to organize the Strides for Stroke fundraiser every June – which raised an amazing \$7500 last year – as well as an annual free hot dog BBQ. She also decorates for special events, shares news from provincial office, manages Friday meetings, and keeps track of changes in members' status and health.

Annie's dedication and commitment is amazing, and we're so glad that she's being recognized is such a big way!

Congratulations, Annie – you've earned it!

Almost time for Aphasia camps again!



It's time to start thinking about our annual Aphasia Camps!

Offered every fall in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Nova Scotia, these weekends offer a relaxing retreat for people living with aphasia, as well as their families and friends.

Aphasia Camps are a chance to get away from the hustle and bustle of daily life, and build connections between people who are sharing similar experiences. It's also an opportunity to enjoy traditional camp activities like natural walks, and rock climbing, as well as less traditional things like photography, yoga, golf, and music therapy.

When one camp participant was asked what they liked best about the experience, they said 'Being with other people who have aphasia. Seeing friends from other camps. Activities!'

For details about the various camps, including dates, locations, and prices, please visit our website at www.marchofdimes.ca or contact Alexis Dickson at 1-800-263-3463 ext. 7756 or adickson@marchofdimes.ca

Registration opens in August 2018 – get ready to book your spot!



50,000 CANADIANS HAVE STROKES EVERY YEAR

**March of Dimes Canada
is here to help –
After Stroke.**

Help us continue supporting stroke survivors. Please consider a gift in your will.

“When I talk to other survivors, I urge them not to give up. I tell them there is life after stroke.”

Tom Rideout
Stroke Recovery Canada Participant



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Reader's Survey

What did you think of this issue?

- Excellent! Keep up the good work
- Could use more information on (check the appropriate box)
 - Medical research and treatment
 - Sexuality and dating
 - Depression
 - Family caregiver issues
 - Rehabilitation options
- Other: _____

Comments



After Stroke® Program
A program of March of Dimes Canada
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Your donation to Stroke Recovery Canada® will help us continue to provide education and support.

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