

# ABI Know How cont'd



## A Chance to Speak Again

By Aviva Cohen, wife & entrepreneur

It has been more than seven years since my husband Steve had a devastating stroke. In that time our baby girls have grown into young ladies and Steve has regained a great deal of cognitions and movement.

Despite his progress, almost five years after his stroke Steve could only say

10 words and they were not always the ones he wanted. Like so many families, we could not afford a private speech and language therapist, so I felt I had no choice.... I had to come up with a solution myself.

In the summer of 2011 I started working on ideas to help people with communication difficulties. I was determined to find effective, low cost ways for people to rehabilitate at home. I was joined by a fantastic team and together we won a place on LaunchPad accelerator program, then we won prestigious awards from both the Arthur Guinness Fund and Social Entrepreneurs Ireland. With their help we built four Talks around IT apps, to help people with word finding difficulties. They are based on Semantic Feature Analysis (SFA), a standard therapy used with communication issues. We also created nine short videos, to help friends and family to interact more easily with a loved one. In November 2013 we officially launched our apps and videos with the support of Minister Sean Sherlock.

*"I warmly congratulate Aviva and her team in bringing to fruition an idea that will help improve communication in the lives of those unfortunate to suffer stroke, brain injury and a range of other conditions".*

Minister Sean Sherlock

Steve has been using Talk Around IT apps every day for the last few months and he has added three new words to the set of ten he already knew. He wakes up every morning with a new enthusiasm and often works on the apps with our eight year old daughter. She is very proud to help her daddy with his speech. Now we want to help as many people as possible. We have based the apps on a tried and tested therapy, and research shows that the more time you spend engaged in that therapy the more potential you have for gaining benefits. We want to go further and show that Talk Around IT apps can make a real difference. So we are working with speech and language therapists to measure their impact- early indications are very positive and we will publish our research next year.

Neuro Hero Website: <http://www.neurohero.com/>

Ashortvideointroducingourappsandvideos: <http://vimeo.com/79882684#at=0>

## My Film Making Days

By Ger Tobin, ABI Ireland Dublin

Two years ago my wife and I contacted Aviva Cohen through the Neuro Hero web site. Then last year Rachel Moore the Speech and Language Therapist at Neuro Hero contacted me to see if I would be interested in shooting four short films. Obviously I said "yes" as I would be helping people in Ireland that don't have a voice, because of their communication difficulties.

The films were made over three days, one in January and two in May. Students from a film and media course were working on it too, they made me feel comfortable on the set. The most difficult part of the filming was the repetitive nature of takes; every scene needed about three or five different angles! Hopefully people will be downloading the apps and I trust that people will look at the apps before visiting someone with communication difficulties.

## Mark Mulhall enjoying family life in his chosen community



## My Story

By Mark Mulhall, Home & Community Services East Region

I first came into the service of Acquired Brain Injury Ireland in September 2002, when it was called Peter Bradley Foundation and the head office was upstairs in Anvers on Adelaide Rd. I was only 16 at the time and was attending a service in the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dun Laoghaire. Soon after that I became the first person to move into the new house at 69 Adelaide Rd - it was for young people.

I lived in 69 Adelaide Rd for seven years and one of my fondest memories of living there is when we all went to Donegal for a week, in the summer of 2004. After that I moved to 223 Rochestown Ave for a few months before moving to bray to live with Vanessa, my partner of eight years, and my son Kian who was 3 at the time. Since then we now have another son Reece who is now 1.

I now live independently and receive a community service 3 days a week which suits my needs now.

Since moving in with Vanessa and the boys we have had many adventures and good times. One big event which I am looking forward to this year is moving into a house that I have brought for all the family in Bray. After passing the theory test I also hope to get my driving licence and be really independent!

## Castleblayney Carers

Family members, who have a loved one with an acquired brain injury (ABI), are invited to come along to a Carers Support Group on 4th March (2.00-3.30 pm) in the C.R.A.N.O.G HS E Resource Centre, Bree, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan. The aim of the group is to give families an opportunity to meet other families affected by ABI and share experiences. No need to pre-book your place and event is free.

Contact Kathleen Brennan, ABI Case Manager, 0872659566, kbrennan@abiireland.ie