

Talk Around It offers speech therapy for stroke survivors



Aviva Cohen with her Talk Around It app

BY CARL NELKIN

► DUBLINER AVIVA Cohen has received €50,000 (£37,000) from Enterprise Ireland to help families whose loved ones have speech and language difficulties following stroke, brain injury, dementia and other chronic conditions. In 2006, the former university lec-

turer's partner, Steve O'Connor, survived a stroke that robbed him of speech, movement and cognition. The family were told there was little chance of improvement.

"Our daughters were one and six years old," Dr Cohen, 49, said. "I just had to do something."

Using her research skills, she pro-

duced a free online resource, Research and Hope, explaining cutting-edge stroke therapies. As Mr O'Connor tried various treatments, his condition improved – stem-cell therapy enabled him to move his right arm after three years of paralysis and therapy improved his cognition.

Yet Mr O'Connor, 63, who had been a karate instructor, still had no speech. Unable to afford ongoing speech therapy, Dr Cohen worked with speech and language therapists to create Talk Around It apps, providing home-based rehabilitation for people with conditions such as brain injury, dementia and autism. Her social enterprise, Neuro Hero, has produced apps in English, Spanish and Hindi.

"Everyone should have access to rehabilitation no matter what their financial position," added the Dublin Hebrew Congregation member. "Our latest award means that we can translate these apps and help people in other countries."

Enterprise Ireland's judges agreed it was "a really interesting early stage project, addressing a real need and is a very socially worthy project".

She has been awarded funding by a number of other institutions.

www.neurohero.com; www.research-andhope.com

► GRAND BIRTHDAY WISHES FOR SELMA!

PHOTO: PAUL LANG



Selma Arwas celebrated her 100th birthday with her family at Jewish Care's Ella and Ridley Jacobs home in Hendon. Among the gathering were granddaughter Laura Thurlow with her son, Jake, who was born 12 days earlier

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