

# THE STROKE AID SOCIETY

P O BOX 51283, RAEDENE, 2124  
PBO No. 9300531845

OFFICE TELEPHONE: 011 485 0235

Acting Chairman: Ms Kim Lewitte, BSC (OT) Cell: 083 302 9156

Office Manager/PRO: Mrs Sandra Colombick Tel: 011 485 0235

Secretary: Ms Sharlene Zinman Tel: 011 485 0235

[Strokeaid@telkomsa.net](mailto:Strokeaid@telkomsa.net) / [sharlenezinman@gmail.com](mailto:sharlenezinman@gmail.com)

[www.strokeaid.co.za](http://www.strokeaid.co.za)

## NEWSLETTER: January – February 2016

### UPDATE FROM THE STROKE AID SOCIETY

Members from our 3 Centres attended (Jabula, South rand and Soweto) our end of the year celebration which was held on the 8th December 2015, at the Jabula Recreation Centre. All our members enjoyed the festivities.

The following article showcasing our celebration, was published in the NORTH EASTERN TRIBUNE  
Week ending: 18 December 2015, Page 14

## Christmas party for Stroke Aid Society

HEIDI GIOKOS

[heidig@caxton.co.za](mailto:heidig@caxton.co.za)

THE Stroke Aid Society, together with the Soweto Aged Home and South Rand Hospital, hosted their Christmas party on 8 December at Jabula Recreation Centre.

Sandra Colombick, the co-ordinator of the event, welcomed all the groups. "We would like to welcome Soweto Aged Home for coming so far to enjoy this day with us."

A hot meal with some well-deserved dessert was offered to all who attended the Christmas party. With the Stroke Aid Society assisting those who have suffered a Stroke, many are unable to use some parts of their body, depending on the Stroke suffered. Therefore, the gifts given to the different groups were well thought out.



*Edenvale Senior Citizens Choir entertain guests from the Stroke Aid Society, Soweto Aged Home and South Rand Hospital.*

The three different groups at the Christmas Party enjoyed performances by the Edenvale Senior Citizens Choir group who sang carols and staged a few plays for the different groups to enjoy.



**Guests who attended the Christmas party enjoy the Christmas carols sung by Edenvale Senior Citizens Choir.**



**Daphine Mnyandu is the event coordinator for functions at the Soweto Aged Home and is all smiles at the Christmas party.**

**REFERENCE:** [www.northeasterntribune.co.za](http://www.northeasterntribune.co.za)

© We have not yet received feedback from Lotto whether our application for funding has been approved. Our current finances are becoming depleted and will only keep us going for another 6 months. We therefore need to find other means of fundraising ASAP.

If anyone has ideas of how we can raise significant funds or knows of a company that will support us, please let us know.



**A POEM COMPOSED BY FELICITY GERBER**  
**FELICITY GERBER IS A MEMBER AT OUR JABULA GROUP**

*Unsung heroes abound  
Where stroke survivors are found  
With cheerful smiles and jollity  
Getting on with life are we  
Coping with our disability*

**\*\*\* DEDICATED TO STROKE AID AND ALL STROKE SURVIVORS**



**FELICITY GERBER & SANDRA COLOMBICK**



## WHAT'S NEW IN THE TREATMENT/PREVENTION OF STROKE

### SKIPPING BREAKFAST MAY RAISE STROKE RISK

Featured online, on the WebMD Website – (15 January 2016)



A new study, published in *Stroke* (Journal of the AHA) in January 2016, proposes that eating breakfast every day may help prevent Strokes, particularly the brain haemorrhage type.

For the study, 82,772 Japanese men and women aged 45 to 74 years without a history of heart disease or cancer were followed from 1995 to 2010.

Participants were asked about their breakfast-eating habits and were grouped as having the morning meal 0 to 2, 3 to 4, 5 to 6, or 7 times per week.

During the 15-year follow-up, there were a total of 3,772 Strokes, including 1,051 of the brain haemorrhage type, and 870 cases of coronary heart disease.

Analysis of the data showed that those who never ate breakfast had higher risks for heart disease and Stroke, and a particularly higher risk for Brain Haemorrhage Strokes, compared with those who ate breakfast every day.

*A major risk factor for cerebral haemorrhages is high blood pressure -- especially an increase in blood pressure in the morning.*

With regards to blood pressure, several previous studies have reported drops in blood pressure from eating breakfast and other studies have shown that Brain Haemorrhage Strokes happen more frequently in the morning.

The researchers in this study therefore deduce that people in their study who ate breakfast every day were probably less likely to have high blood pressure compared with those who skipped the meal.

Breakfast skippers may be more likely to have other unhealthy habits, too.

Previous reports from both Western and Asian countries have shown missing breakfast has been tied to a higher prevalence of obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and high blood sugar levels, which are well-known risk factors for heart disease.

Researches note their study was observational and there may be other factors they didn't take into account.

REFERENCE: <http://www.webmd.com/Stroke/news/20160115/breakfast-Stroke-risk>

## INTERESTING TRUE STORY

### WALKING TECHNOLOGY MAKES STRIDES IN HELPING STROKE PATIENTS

*Published online, 25 January 2016, on the **Sacramento Bee** website.*

Nearly four years ago, Michael Bejar was lifting weights in a gym when he felt a distinct pop in his head. It was a Haemorrhagic Stroke, followed later by two blood clots in his brain. He was left paralyzed from the neck down. At one point, doctors told his wife that Bejar would never walk again.

But, little by little, over months and years of aggressive physical therapy at home, hospitals and gyms, he's been slowly, painstakingly recovering. The former security guard has had to relearn everything, from tying his shoes to navigating the stairs at his two-story home. Today, at 61, his left side is still 'numb' but he can stand and walk, albeit haltingly, with two canes.

Despite his hurdles, the father of two grown children has a single-minded goal: "I want to walk around (independently) by baseball season. I'm a Giants fan, so my goal is to be able to walk into the stadium without any assistance: no cane, wheelchair, nothing."

Toward that ambition, he's going twice a week to SCI-FIT, a physical therapy center in Sacramento that specializes in treating individuals with Stroke or Spinal Cord injuries. Recently Bejar helped a trainer strap his impaired left leg into a **Kickstart**, one of the newer rehabilitative technology tools designed for patients such as him. Leaning on a cane, he took a wobbly but complete walk around the carpeted room.

"My left leg is kind of numb so I didn't feel all of it," Bejar said afterwards, "but I thought it did a pretty good job. ... I'm more than willing to try anything."

For years, university researchers and companies worldwide have been testing and developing new types of exoskeleton technology to help Stroke and Spinal Cord patients regain or improve their mobility. Originally designed with motorized systems to help military soldiers lift heavy loads, they've become more common to help those with neurological damage learn to walk again. With names such as ReWalk or Ekso Bionics, most are robotic devices that use computerized hydraulics to lift a leg into a walking step. Their biggest drawback has been cost.

Nancy Byl, professor emeritus in the Department of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science at the University of California, San Francisco, has worked in physical therapy for 50 years and said some robotic devices can cost upward of \$100,000, making them out of reach for most patients.

But newer technologies, such as Kickstart, she said, are beginning to change the face of therapy, providing more affordable, accessible alternatives.

“The materials are lighter, more biomechanically aligned to a normal joint, more comfortable,” said Byl, who works with clients at the UCSF Health and Wellness Center.

She did a clinical study of the Kickstart device on three patients, two of whom were a decade or more past their initial Stroke. In all three cases, after a year of follow-up, “walking speed and endurance improved dramatically,” according to a study published last year.

Decades of research have shown that sections of neurons in the brain can be trained to replace those damaged by Stroke or other neurological issues, Byl noted. It requires steady, repetitive motion over months, if not years. That’s why there’s a need for wearable technology that can be “integrated into a person’s everyday life to get improving function,” she said.

Affordability is part of the plan, as is helping people lose their self-consciousness about wearing such devices at work or out in public.

Brian Glaister, president and CEO of Cadence Biomedical in Seattle, started developing the Kickstart model as a graduate student at the University of Washington where he worked on “really expensive” prosthetic limbs and other projects. Most of these were too costly to ever be used by individuals outside a clinical lab, he said.

Working with several researchers at two universities, he focused on developing a lighter, exoskeleton device that did not rely on cumbersome, expensive robotics. His company debuted the Kickstart in 2012. Today, he said, it’s used in about 20 clinics across the country. Another 100 have been sold to individual patients at roughly \$2,500 each, covered by Medicare or private insurance, according to the company.

Weighing about 7 pounds, the device is belted around the waist, then padded cuffs are fastened at the thigh and calf. Acting like an external, elongated tendon, it relies on a coiled spring that stores and releases energy to let patients swing their impaired leg and normalize their walking gait.

“Our goal,” said Glaister, “is to have everybody graduate out of it and never need it again.”

“There’s no quick fix. It’s repetition. It’s the idea that movement breeds movement,” said Dumas, who’s spent the past 10 years recovering from his own Spinal Cord accident. At 31, while he was vacationing with his wife in Hawaii, a rogue wave knocked him into a rock, breaking his neck. Waking up in the hospital, Dumas was immobile from the shoulders down.

He embarked on a painful, slow progression out of paralysis. Starting with only the slightest flicker in his index finger, he worked years to regain mobility in his hand, then his arm. “I started there. I put my life on hold to walk again.” Moving to San Diego, he spent two to three hours in therapy, five to six days a week, for about three years. Eventually he took his first step. It took another five years before he could abandon his wheelchair.

Today, the 41-year-old father of two walks slowly with a cane. Lean and fit-looking, the Bay Area-based entrepreneur turned his own recovery regimen into a business in late 2007. With his wife and a partner, he co-owns three SCI-FIT physical therapy centers – in Pleasanton, Berkeley and Sacramento. Each is stocked with multiple specialized pieces of apparatus designed to help clients with Stroke and other neurological impairments. The Kickstart, which he calls “one tool in the war chest,” is one of the newer additions to his clinics, which include treadmill harnesses and bikes fitted with electrodes to stimulate nerves in the arms and legs.

On a recent weekday in Sacramento, a half-dozen individuals, including Bejar, were working one-on-one with SCI-FIT “neuro-exercise therapists.” Some clients are covered by workers’ compensation insurance, but most pay out of pocket anywhere from \$75 to \$100 per hour.

One of them is Bejar, whose family was told three years ago that he might need to be institutionalized. Refusing that prognosis, his wife, Tami Wood-Bejar, said they’ve worked relentlessly over the past three years to reach the point where he can climb stairs – with help – at home and walk on his own into the kitchen. “Every day, I see improvements,” she said. “Some are minuscule, but they’re still improvements.”



**The Kickstart**



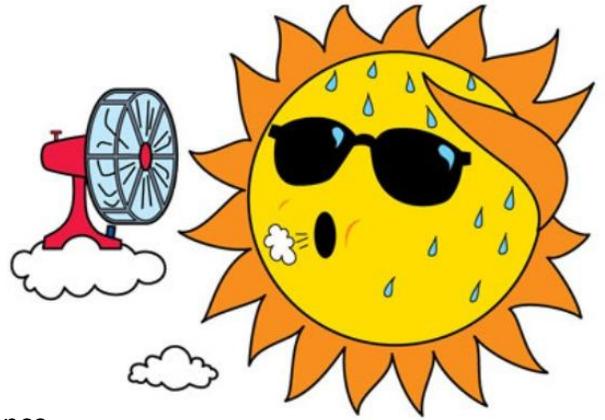
**REFERENCE:** <http://www.sacbee.com/entertainment/living/health-fitness/article56488478.html>

*\*\* The Sacramento Bee is a daily newspaper published in Sacramento, California, in the United States. Since its founding in 1857, The Bee has become the largest newspaper in Sacramento, the fifth largest newspaper in California, and the 27th largest paper in the USA.*



## ON A LIGHTER NOTE ...

### **SOME HUMOUR DURING THE HEATWAVE**



You know it's hot in SA when...

- 1) The best parking spot is determined by shade, not distance
- 2) Hot water comes out of both taps**
- 3) You learn that a seat belt buckle makes a pretty good branding iron
- 4) The temperature drops below 32 degrees C and you feel chilly**
- 5) You know that in January and February it only takes two fingers to steer a car
- 6) You discover you can get sunburnt through your windscreen**
- 7) You develop a fear of metal door handles
- 8) You break into a sweat the instant you step outside at 7am**
- 9) Your biggest bicycle accident fear is "What if I get knocked over and end up lying on the road, getting cooked?"
- 10) You realise that asphalt has a liquid state**
- 11) Farmers are feeding their chickens crushed ice to prevent them from laying hard boiled eggs
- 12) The trees are whistling for dogs**
- 13) While walking back barefoot to your car from any event, you do a tightrope act on the white lines in the car park
- 14) You catch a cold from having the aircon on full blast all night long**
- 15) You realise that Shopping Centres aren't just Shopping Centres - they are temples where we worship Air Conditioning
- 16) Sticking your head in the freezer and taking deep breaths is considered normal**
- 17) A cup full of ice is considered a great snack
- 18) A black out is life threatening because your aircon and your fans no longer work**
- 19) No one cares if you walk around with no shoes on
- 20) You keep everything in the fridge, including potatoes, bread and clothing**
- 21) People have enough left over beer cans to make a boat and compete in a regatta
- 22) The effort of towelling yourself off after a shower means you need another shower right away**
- 23) You will wait patiently until the day it starts raining to go on a run
- 24) You worry your ceiling fan is spinning so fast it will fly off and kill you**
- 25) You laugh because this list is so accurate.

A PICTURE IS WORTH .....



Until next time  
Cheers  
Sharlene

