



APHASIA CENTER OF CALIFORNIA'S

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025





# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

2025 was a year marked by both continuity and new beginnings for our organization. As I stepped into the role of Executive Director, I had the privilege of working closely with our Board of Directors to reflect on our strengths and thoughtfully plan for the future, while honoring the legacy that shapes our work.

Building on this strong foundation, we developed a strategic plan, renewed our focus on fundraising, and implemented best practices that will strengthen programs at the Aphasia Center of California. Our work is grounded in a shared commitment to stewardship—preserving what has long made this

organization so meaningful while positioning us for continued growth.

I am deeply grateful to be part of this next chapter and to carry forward the mission with such a dedicated community of staff, Board members, and supporters. The progress we made in 2025 reflects not only where we are today, but the strength and promise of what lies ahead.

**SARAH BURTON**

*Aphasia Center of California,  
Executive Director*



*The mission of the Aphasia Center of California is to improve communication, quality of life, and overall well-being for individuals and families affected by aphasia.*

## ABOUT US

The Aphasia Center of California (ACC), founded in 1996 by Dr. Roberta J. Elman, was the first independent nonprofit in the U.S. dedicated to providing direct services for people with aphasia.

Our programs follow the Life Participation Approach to Aphasia (LPAA), which focuses on the whole person – not just their language abilities.

We provide personalized, evidence-based conversation groups and programs that enhance communication skills, quality of life, and overall well-being for those affected by aphasia.

# 2025 IMPACT



Our clinical research studies have demonstrated that individuals who participate in aphasia communication groups show significant improvement in their communication skills and quality of life. ACC provides 10 different types of conversation groups for people with aphasia and their care partners, conducting up to 18 groups in a week.

## 496 COMMUNICATION GROUPS

These include conversation groups for all levels of people with aphasia, Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA) groups, Young Stroke Survivor groups, and News Forum.

## 66 BOOK CLUB GROUPS

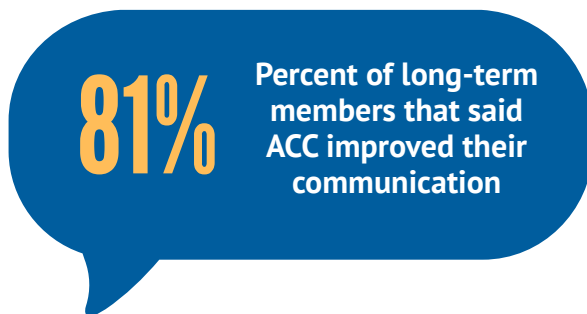
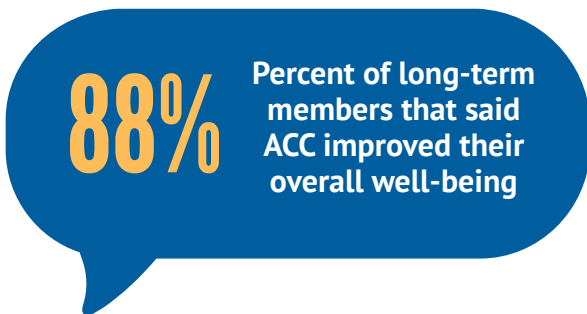
Our Book Clubs read *Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett and *The Monk of Mokha* by Dave Eggers.

## 37 CARE PARTNER GROUPS

A safe, non-judgmental place for discussion and problem-solving for those who care for people with aphasia, both stroke-induced and primary progressive aphasia.

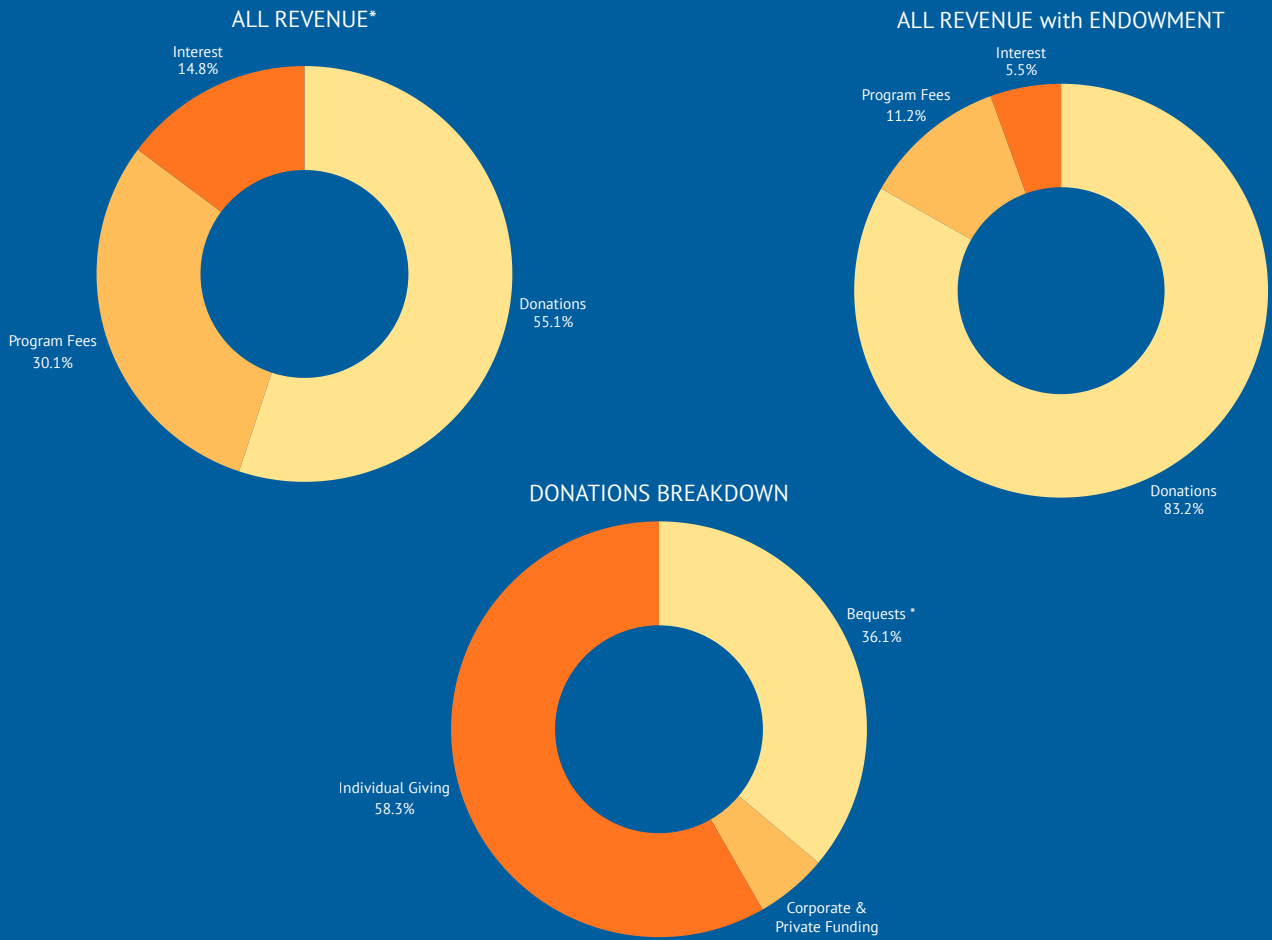
## 82 ENRICHMENT GROUPS

These include free Music groups, free Fitness and Movement & Mindfulness groups, and free Family Game Nights.



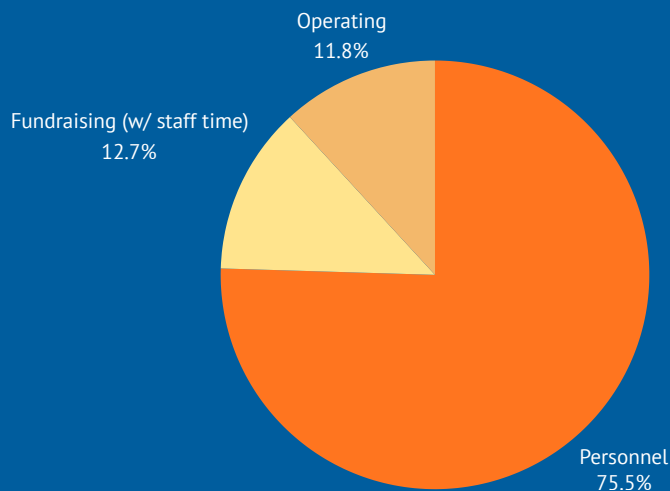
# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## INCOME BY PERCENTAGE



\*Breakdown does not include \$507,000 endowment bequest from Roberta Elman

## EXPENSES BY CLASS



# ROBERTA J. ELMAN LEGACY ENDOWMENT

After the loss of our founder, Roberta J. Elman, last May, all of us at the Aphasia Center of California have been reflecting on how best to honor her extraordinary legacy.

In her characteristic generosity and foresight, Roberta made a final gift to the ACC—one that opens the door to lasting impact. In response, our Board of Directors established the Roberta J. Elman Legacy Endowment, a permanent fund dedicated to advancing our strategic priorities, strengthening our community impact, and securing the future of the organization she built.

The endowment will focus on the strategic priorities voted on by the Board of Directors in November 2025:

- Fundraising & Public Relations
- Programs Development
- Governance & Board of Directors
- Human Resources & Staffing

If you're interested to learn more about our [2026-2028 Strategic Plan](#), please visit our website at [www.aphasiacenter.org](http://www.aphasiacenter.org) to download a copy of the plan from our home page.



Dr. Roberta J. Elman (June 1, 1958 - May 29, 2025), Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BC-ANCDs, was a visionary leader in speech-language pathology. She was instrumental in establishing the life participation approach to aphasia and made a lasting impact on the field. In 1996, she founded the Aphasia Center of California, where she served as President/CEO and Clinical Director, building it into a nationally and internationally respected model for treatment, research, and professional training.

An ASHA Fellow and recipient of the highest honors from both ASHA and the Academy of Neurologic Communication Disorders and Sciences, Roberta dedicated her life to giving voice and hope to those living with aphasia and other neurogenic communication disorders. Her work shaped generations of clinicians and researchers, leaving an enduring legacy.

# WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE SAYING

The aphasia groups make me feel more with it—and alive.

I feel like I have people who understand me.

It has made my life so much better. It's given me a routine and people I can rely on. I look forward to [my groups].

I feel like I'm not alone.

[ACC] gave me more confidence to talk and interact with people.

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Carly Waterstraut, RN, FNP-BC, RYT-200

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Transforming Lives.*

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