



A voice for Parkinsons



SUNSHINE COAST SPEECH Pathologists, Karen Malcolm, Cathy Shapter and Louise Williams, have just returned from visiting the Parkinson Voice Project, in Dallas, United States. Parkinson Voice Project is the only 501(c)(3) nonprofit organisation in the world solely dedicated to helping people with Parkinson's improve their speech and swallowing.

The Nambour-based Speech Pathologists received one of five international grants awarded by the Parkinson Voice Project.

Left: Speech Pathologists Karen Malcolm, Cathy Shapter and Louise Williams with Frank, SPEAK OUT! graduate and LOUD Crowd member at The Big Pineapple on a recent therapy group visit

Parkinson Voice Project's SPEAK OUT!® & LOUD Crowd® Grant Program provides professional training and therapy supplies to speech therapy clinics. The trip to the U.S. was an amazing opportunity for the three women to spend time with clinicians from the Parkinson Voice Project and other grant recipients from around the world, as well as individuals with Parkinson's and their families.

"From the first day of the 'Leading with Intent' symposium, we were overwhelmed by the generosity shown to us," said Louise.

"We were greeted members of The LOUD Crowd (individuals with Parkinson's that participate in a weekly speech therapy group program) and family volunteers. These Texans committed time and finances, and were passionate to meet and communicate the importance of this therapy to us."

The enthusiasm was contagious and Cathy, Karen and Louise have returned determined to increase patient access to this quality speech treatment.

Parkinson Voice Project has developed a two-part therapy approach that strengthens the muscles used for speaking and swallowing by combining individual speech therapy (SPEAK OUT!®) with ongoing group therapy (The LOUD Crowd®).

"The program emphasises speaking with intent and converts speech from an automatic function to an intentional act," explained Louise.

"SPEAK OUT! consists of individual sessions and The LOUD Crowd consists of weekly speech therapy sessions and provides camaraderie, support, and encouragement for this patient population that is battling a progressive, degenerative condition."

For more information or to find a SPEAK OUT!® provider please visit: parkinsonvoiceproject.org

ADVERTORIAL

Fall prevention

IN AUSTRALIA, one in three people over 65 experience a fall each year. If you think that's a worrying statistic, you're right. Falls are the leading cause of hospitalisation for Australian seniors, with an average of seven days spent in hospital following a slip, trip or stumble.

Falls are a major health concern for older Australians, and often the catalyst for a loss of independence. One incident turns into a fear of a falling, which then results in the person limiting their movements. Of course, this is counterproductive – avoiding activities means we become less active, and over time, we become weaker and increase our risk of falling.

It's important to recognise that falls are not a 'normal' part of ageing and are preventable.

For over 65s, the biggest risk factors for avoidable falls are: lower body weakness; mobility and balance issues; foot pain or bad footwear; vitamin D deficiency; vision problems; hazards around the home.

Thankfully, there are a number of tips to help you reduce your risk of falling.

Tip 1: Build your balance

Some activities that help you do that include Tai chi, yoga or aerobics, tennis or lawn bowls, or standing on one leg and other balance exercises. It's also important to address any foot issues that might be affecting your balance, so talk to a podiatrist.

Tip 2: Improve your strength

Muscle mass declines with age, so it's important to maintain your strength as much as possible, particularly in your legs. Some everyday strength training exercises include walking the dog, gardening, leaning the house, and swimming.

Tip 3: Give your body what it needs

A healthy diet and lifestyle ensures your body has all the nutrients and vitamins it needs to work as it should. Calcium is especially important for bone development, while Vitamin D is needed to absorb the calcium.

Tip 4: Improve your vision

Our vision tends to change as we get older. Since bad vision is a big risk factor for falls, make sure you have your



eyes checked at least once a year. Also, always wear your glasses when you're moving around, make sure your glasses fit properly and keep your glasses clean.

Tip 5: Remove hazards around the home

To reduce your risk of falling at home, you should: replace any loose or slippery tiles, especially in the kitchen, bathroom and laundry; keep loose cords and cables secure with electrical tape; install anti-slip surfaces in high traffic areas and stairways; rearrange furniture to give you more room to move around freely; keep all areas well illuminated, install motion sensors, use touch lamps or leave a light on at night; add hand rails to staircases or install ramps, and add grab bars and non-slip mats in the shower or next to the toilet.

Ask for help if you need it.

If you have any mobility concerns, make sure you talk to a health professional, like your GP, physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

They will evaluate your risk and discuss strategies to help you improve your balance and strength.

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