# **Chuck Close**

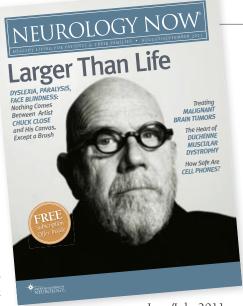
I gasped aloud when I saw Chuck Close on the cover of the August/September 2011 issue of *Neurology Now*. I've always been a fan of Mr. Close's work, but I didn't learn more about the man himself until after my diagnosis of a glioma at the age of 21. Reading your article about how Mr. Close's experiences and coping mechanisms have led to his masterpieces was a joy, but then to get a sneak peek of his newest work—a portrait of my next-favorite modern artist, Kara Walker?—what an absolute treat!

Thank you for the fine issue and for highlighting Mr. Close. He is real proof that neurologic imperfections need not be hindrances to leading a great life. It was a thrill last year to tell him in person at a farmer's market what a fan I was of his contributions to the art world, and I'd like to thank him once again for his contributions to the neurologic community.

—Lindsay Wilczynski New York, NY

## **ADHD**

Thank you for your article, "Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Causes Motor Skill Problems," in the



June/July 2011

issue. My mother passed it along to me after reading it.

I was diagnosed with ADHD after I very hesitantly took my oldest son, Andrew, to the doctor to be reviewed for the condition. Andrew and I both have mirror-hand image problems. For years (well before the time my oldest son was born), I was told by doctors that I was either making up the problem with my hands and wrists or that I had some "wires crossed" in my brain.

My son is now 17 years old and makes adjustments for his mirror movements. He plays the bass guitar and uses this as a form of therapy. Andrew has difficulty writing but can type as needed. His 504 plan at school allows him to receive a copy of the teacher's notes and bring home any written work. I will be passing this article along to his physicians and teachers.

Thank you for making the connec-

tion between motor skill difficulties and ADHD, and specifically for finding the link between mirror movements and ADHD. Just knowing this makes it a little easier to deal with.

> —Pamela McLendon Salisbury, NC

# The ABCs of Aphasia

I read the June/July 2011 article on "The ABCs of Aphasia" with interest. Another way to get people with speech disabilities to talk more and be socially active is to let them know they can communicate on the phone. This intervention can help people with speech disabilities express themselves better, restore a sense of self-sufficiency, and broaden their world.

As someone who has a speech disability, I know how encouraging it is to find out that communicating by phone is possible. Speech services are available to enable people with speech disabilities to make phone calls. Two such services I know of are Speech-To-Speech and Hearing Carry Over. Every state provides these services free of charge.

Speech-To-Speech provides the assistance of a specially trained operator who understands the speech patterns of the speech-disabled and can "revoice" what that person is saying.

Hearing Carry Over allows a person with a speech disability to hear the person being called and then type his or her end of the conversation, which is read to the other person by the relay operator. For more information, visit my Web site, **beckyspeaks.org**.

—Rebecca Ladew, B.S, M.S. Speech Disabled Representative Baltimore. MD

# The Power of Acceptance

I received my first copy Neurology Now and want to thank Dr. Brey for her in-

# SHARE YOUR STORY: Enter the Neuro Film Festival!

As a *Neurology Now*® reader, you understand the important role research plays in finding a cure for brain disorders. Help the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) Foundation raise awareness by submitting a short video to the 2012 Neuro Film Festival®, telling your story about why more research is needed into finding cures. Winners could receive up to \$1,000



and a trip to New Orleans to see their film shown at the Neuro Film Festival. Complete contest rules and a video showing how to submit are available on the Neuro Film Festival's Web site (www.NeuroFilmFestival.com). The deadline to enter is January 31, 2012.

Now in its third year, the Neuro Film Festival is a contest by the AAN Foundation that aims to raise awareness about the need to donate money for research into the prevention, treatment, and cure of brain disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, stroke, autism, Parkinson's disease, and multiple sclerosis. Last year, more than 100 films were submitted and more than 100,000 votes cast.

spiring article, "The Power of Acceptance" (August/September 2011). I learned about Elizabeth Kübler-Ross in the early 1980s and have her books. Your article brought back things I needed to hear at this time. I am a caregiver for my partner, who has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

—Donald R. Beck

On April 28, 2009, my husband was diagnosed with ALS. After many months of testing-during which I had held on to the hope that Hank would be cured of the symptoms he was dealing with-I was devastated. I cried many tears and went through the phases of grief. My joyful husband comforted me, and I realized that he was not going to let this destroy him. As the disease quickly progressed, I was able to cope and care for him, and we spent some of the most wonderful and peaceful times in our marriage together. His passion for life and the love that he had for his family helped me to accept the diagnosis.

Hank died on October 18, 2010, and the grief began again. This time acceptance did not come as easily. While I know that he is now in heaven where he can walk, run, and dance again, I miss him very much, and I go back and forth between accepting and finding it difficult to cope with the loss. Thankfully I have his memory and his spirit to inspire me.

—Socorro Alonzo-Hughes

# **NEW GUIDELINES FOR DIABETIC NEUROPATHY**

In the June/July 2011 issue of Neurology Now, we featured actor Jerry Mathers, who has diabetic neuropathy. For a summary of the new American Academy

of Neurology guidelines on diabetic neuropathy, go to aan.com/practice/guideline/uploads/481.pdf.

In the August/September 2011 issue of Neurology Now, Dr. Brey invited readers to share how they have dealt with issues of major disease or their approaching death. I am a 72-year-old woman with Parkinson's disease (PD), and I would like to tell you how I am dealing with it. I have often observed in other people how such experiences tend to make a person better or bitter. Now it is my turn to make

The worst thing about PD is the fact that it progresses. For example, I now have to use a cane to walk plus have someone support me so I won't fall. Nobody wants to fall. I've also discovered that canes are a nuisance. But then much of life is spent learning how to handle such nuisances.

I have noticed, however, that the changes I dislike the most are the ones that teach me the most. My experience with PD has revealed more about myself than I ever wanted to know. Sometimes the lesson is about my strengths; sometimes the lesson is about my weaknesses.

Either way—better or bitter, strengths or weaknesses, health or disease—life is as crazy as it is precious, and the closer we come to end of it, the more precious it becomes. I am especially aware of that as I approach my twentieth year with this disease.

Problems don't wait to be invited into your life; they just walk through the door whenever they please. As much as I dis-

like them. I've also learned over the years that it is because of their presence that I have learned some of life's most important lessons, like how much people need each other and how much we all need God.

—Marjorie Ward Bottorff Virginia Beach, VA

# NEUROLOGY NOW

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#### YOUR VOICES

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PERSONAL ESSAYS: The SPEAK UP essay is a forum for people who live with neurological conditions and those who care for them. Submissions should be kept to 600 words and sent to the addresses above.

ASK THE EXPERTS: If you have a guestion for a doctor to answer in our Ask the Experts department, send it to the addresses above.



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