

Caring for Communication: *Rosemary Scott*

by Lisa Domyancic

Speech-Language Pathologists do much more than correct lisps. "Today, I have one lab group for voice, one for stuttering and one lab group for acquired brain injury," Rosemary Scott, coordinator of the Speech-Language Pathology Assistant Program, replied on an early Monday morning as



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she looked over her schedule for the day. "Between those I will be working on the Associate Degree program here at Pasadena City College." Ms. Scott is responsible for treating 43 students on her campus who have c o m m u n i c a t i o n disorders. Fortunately, she has three invaluable Speech-Language Pathology Assistants (SLPA's) by her side to help with her stuttering, voice disorders and

acquired brain injury laboratory classes.

On this day, Ms. Scott may, at one moment, be discussing the progress of a 50-year old man with Broca's Aphasia. This man came to her program after two strokes unable to even say his own wife's name; now he is able to speak publicly about his favorite movies. Perhaps later she will sit in on a guest speaker. Today it is the father of a child with Cri-du-Chat syndrome. He brought tears to the eyes of the SLPA students when they learned about the child's successful non-oral communication through a picture/communication board called "PECS." Rosemary Scott might decide to join the current events lab held by students with Autism, Asberger's syndrome, ADHD, hearing loss, and neurological difficulties where they are debating the controversy of cloning.

When asked about her reflections on helping others communicate, she simply conveys that, "their victories are our victories, working as a Speech-Language Pathologist is really worth the work because our field is the foundation for many things..." The ability to express yourself confidently

and to improve your quality of life by doing so; she points out that "communication is the name of the game." Everyday she has the honor of helping people do just that. Can you imagine being the father of the child with Cri-du-Chat syndrome who finally gets to have his daughter communicate to him, "I love you"? We are a much better world because of speech-language pathologists like Rosemary Scott.

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When asked about a particularly proud moment in her career as a Speech-Language Pathologist, Ms. Scott remembers a man who had suffered from two acquired brain injuries. This resulted in a severe Global Aphasia, the inability to understand others and be understood himself. Thus, he was truly living in his own painful little world; unable to share anything with anyone around him. Assisted by a family member, he came to Ms. Scott's program full of rage, anger, and a wide range of intense emotions. Because of the severity of the situation, Rosemary Scott remembers wondering if he would even be able to join one of their groups. In time, with the guidance of Ms. Scott and her staff, plus his hard work in the speech-language therapy sessions, this man is now a cherished member of his Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) group. In a recent meeting he cheerfully communicated that he wanted to learn how to ride a bus!

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing..." Ms. Scott is truly doing work worth doing, and our world is a better place because of it. ♦