



# Between Us

## Fun and Therapy: On the Lunch Menu at Beth Abraham's ADHC

Lunch with friends at a restaurant is an everyday event for most people. But it is a challenge for people with speech or memory problems. That is why the Communication Group at Beth Abraham ADHC takes therapeutic field trips to restaurants and other places of interest. The Communication Group is comprised of adults with brain injuries who all have speech, language, and/or memory deficits. Such deficits can result in problems in performing daily activities. "Planning an event involves a lot of cognitive and communication processes and most of the group members need to work on exactly those areas," reports Carolyn Falconer, speech-language pathologist. The group plans and attends four trips per year. The most recent one was lunch at Sunset Cove restaurant overlooking the Hudson River.

The group elects a chairman to head up each trip, whose responsibilities include

understand when I tried to communicate on the phone. I had to get information,



The Communication Group at the Sunset Cove Restaurant in Tarrytown.

choosing potential sites and reporting back to the members. Hilda Sadaah, the chairman for the Sunset Cove trip, called the restaurant prior to the trip and recalls, "I felt worried that people wouldn't be able to

find out about the place we were going and if it is accessible for wheelchairs." After the successful call

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## Apple Picking: Physical & Recreation Therapy Together

Ah, Autumn! Spectacular foliage, crisp apples fresh from the trees! Registrants at Beth Abraham ADHC with limited mobility and/or balance problems enjoyed both at Keepsake Farms in Hopewell Junction, accompanied by Sue Lance, Recreation Therapist, and Carolyn Hoffman, Physical Therapist.

Notice that we said autumn, not *fall*. Some of the regis-

trants on the trips are members of the Physical Therapy Balance Group, and



Enjoying Autumn at Keepsake Farms.

have had falls or are mobility limited due to fear of falls from impaired balance. On this trip they were able to practice walking on uneven terrain in the orchards, reaching up to the trees by hand and using an apple picker, reaching down to the ground, carrying bags of apples, and staying safe with guarding as needed.

The apple picking trip provided opportunities for challenging and enjoyable balance, reaching, and ambulation training.



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she remembers feeling encouraged and claims, "I am more comfortable speaking on the phone now."

Anticipation of the trip is also good for the memory. Angel Ortiz, a Communication Group member, states, "It helps your memory to be involved with planning the event. You have to remember dates, addresses, locations, and times."

Once at the restaurant, each person orders his own meal. According to Falconer, "The goal is for the clients to be able to successfully communicate what they want to the waiter. If this occurs it positively rewards their attempts and makes them more likely to speak in other public situations." Albert Spatola went to Sunset Cove twice and reports, "The first time I went, the waiter asked the speech pathologist what I said, but on the second trip he understood me

all by myself."

The restaurant setting provides a natural opportunity for social communication

**"It makes me feel more independent and more normal."**

- Ovi Fortes on the benefits of the trip.

and allows people to practice appropriate conversation in a real world environment. The conversations don't stop at the restaurant either. "For weeks after the event, people still talk about the food they had, the sights they saw and how it helped them. This targets long term memory and initiation of communication." says Falconer. Ovi Fortes states, "It makes me feel more independent and more normal."

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