

# Q & A with a Speech Language Pathologist!

Kristina Howatt Gerber is a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) who supports both the Community Stroke Rehabilitation Team and inpatient areas of the HPHA!

## What made you enter your field of work?

I knew in high school that I wanted to become an SLP. I was looking for a career that mixed medicine and education, and have found that my work blends these beautifully.

## What do you love most about your job?

I love that I get to spend time interacting directly with patients and families. It is exciting to be a part of someone's journey from hospital to home and see the changes they make along the way.

## Tell us about your most gratifying experience at HPHA

My most gratifying experience at HPHA has been the opportunities I've had for my own personal growth. I had two student placements with the HPHA (smallTALK with Julie and Sarah and adult speech-language pathology with Tina and Mary).

It has been rewarding to grow as a clinician and take on new and exciting roles in my home community.

## What's something you do in your role that others would be surprised to learn about?

People are always surprised when the speech language pathologist shows up to assess swallowing! Because speech and swallowing use many of the same muscles, it is within the SLP scope of practice. We even participate in swallowing assessment via x-rays, and can recommend swallowing exercises to strengthen swallowing muscles.

## What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you?

People might be surprised to learn that I'm a fairly new graduate. I graduated in 2016 and came straight out of my placement with Tina to a casual position with the alliance.

## What are your favourite ways to spend your free time?

In my free time, I do some volunteering with local brain injury support groups. They like to joke that I show up whenever there's a potluck! I also recently got a cat, so I'm having fun hanging out with her.



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