A Message from the New Editor
Jan Kraft

Greetings Readers! It is my pleasure to take on the tasks of Editor for Figuratively Speaking. I have been working in the Augmentative Communication Service at Thames Valley Children’s Centre for 14 years. My interest in AAC began with a volunteer placement at Participation House in Binbrook, ON. There I met several awesome individuals who had the patience to work with me until I had a better understanding of what it means to use AAC. At the time, of course, I thought I was the one doing the teaching! This understanding continues to develop and is now a passion. I love to meet new people at Breaking the Ice. Last year I was a communication aide at the Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy conference so I was able to meet new people there and see some old friends. Can you imagine how excited I am for ISAAC 2016 in Toronto? I want to invite all of our readers to please submit articles to the newsletter. I hope in the future subscribers can read more articles written by AAC communicators. That way, similar to Breaking the Ice, we would have a newsletter written by and for people who use AAC (PWUAAC). Wouldn’t that be wonderful! All types of writing are welcome: essays, opinion pieces, letters, poetry, short stories, and biographies. How about interviewing someone you admire and sharing it with others? Photographers, submit your photos. I look forward to hearing back from our readership – please write to me with any feedback about our publication. New ideas and submissions are always welcome!

Thank you, Ben Adaman
Tracy Hunt

I would like to take this opportunity to officially thank Ben Adaman for the time he served as Editor of ISAAC Canada’s Figuratively Speaking newsletter – 2011-2013. Without his time and hard work brainstorming interesting articles, collecting manuscripts, editing articles, facilitating translation, and finalizing the layout of the final newsletters our members would not have been kept up-to-date on everything taking place. Although Ben has left Figuratively Speaking he remains connected with ISAAC Canada as our Manitoba Regional Representative on the National Council. Thank you again Ben!
Anne Warrick Breaking the Ice Conference Scholarship
Tracy Hunt

ISAAC Canada is excited to announce a new scholarship acknowledging Anne Warrick’s hard work, dedication, and many contributions to AAC and to ISAAC in Canada and globally. Anne devoted more than 50 years of her life to helping physically disabled children overcome speech and language difficulties. This scholarship was officially announced at the 2014 ISAAC Conference in Lisbon, Portugal during our ISAAC Canada meeting.

Anne was born in Harrold, England, and immigrated to Canada in 1957 with her husband. They initially lived in Vancouver where she worked as a Speech-Language Pathologist in a centre for children with cerebral palsy. They soon moved to Ottawa when her husband, who worked in the federal government’s Department of Transport, was transferred. Anne dedicated her life’s work to helping physically disabled children lead a more rewarding and fulfilling life. These efforts included her employment responsibilities as well as many volunteer and complementary activities such as memberships in professional associations, presentations at conferences and symposiums, and papers and articles on various aspects of speech-language pathology.

Her activities also transcended geographical boundaries, sharing her expertise and knowledge with countless associations and individuals in countries as diverse as Africa, India, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and the United States. Anne continued to be as busy as ever after her retirement in 1993, travelling to Ukraine, Zimbabwe, Poland, Calcutta, etc.

Anne pioneered the creation of the Developing Countries Committee of ISAAC, was its first chairperson, and did much to facilitate the development of Augmentative and Alternative Communication in these countries. She was instrumental in developing a firm foundation for AAC in India through the Spastics Society of Eastern India.

Anne was always active on a number of professional associations including CASLPO – The College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario; OSLA – Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists; BCI – Blissymbolics Communication International; ISAAC – International Society for Alternative and Augmentative Communication; CSIH – Canadian Society for International health; and OFCP – Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy. She also served as the Chairperson, Developing Countries Committee, ISAAC; Research Advisor, Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy, Calcutta, India; and Member, International Panel for the Development of Blissymbolics, BCI.

Anne’s accomplishments in the field of speech-language pathology are far too numerous to detail here.

The inherent caring and thoughtfulness that Anne demonstrated was intensified by a personal trauma. The detection of a neurological kind of cancer in 1967 resulted in the amputation of her right arm. While working at The Hugh MacMillan Rehabilitation Centre she was always available to talk with families about the issues of amputation and to demonstrate in an inspirational way, the way she was able to conduct her life despite this. Anne was hit again with cancer later in life and sadly lost her battle on November 17, 2014. The following is a link to her obituary:


Fortunately Anne was informed of the scholarship being established in her name this past summer. She was thrilled with the announcement and the following is her response:

“Thank you so much. To say that I was stunned would be an understatement but now, a few hours later, I am thrilled. Thank you so much, and thanks also to the friends and colleagues who have been instrumental in
awarding me the honor of this scholarship: the Anne Warrick Breaking the Ice Conference Scholarship. You caused me to reflect on the many AAC based friendships, worldwide and in Canada, that I have developed over the years; friends who worked cooperatively with me through AAC’s formative years and beyond, and who are still there for me now during my retirement. I am appreciative and thankful for them all. In addition I will always be grateful for the opportunity to be a member and a volunteer for ISAAC.

In common with so many of my AAC colleagues, going to ‘work’ was never work for me but rather an exciting, challenging and welcome event. The opportunity to know so many exceptional children and adults who rely on AAC to communicate, has given me a vast number of experiences and relationships to remember. I am grateful to them all.

As you will know Breaking the Ice, with its immediate focus on individuals who rely on AAC and their families, is a very special conference. The fact that Breaking the Ice will continue to develop is significant and important. I send very best wishes to the Ice committee for their continued commitment to the expansion of Breaking the Ice across Canada. To be awarded the honor of this scholarship is beyond anything I had dreamed of. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,
Anne.”

The **Anne Warrick Breaking the Ice Conference Scholarship** will be awarded to a consumer when a Breaking the Ice conference is held anywhere in Canada. The amount awarded will vary depending on funds available and needs stated with each successful submission. ISAAC Canada has committed $1500 to start the scholarship fund and others are able to donate to the scholarship fund if they wish. Currently, members will be able to donate to the scholarship fund when renewing their yearly ISAAC Canada memberships. Stay tuned for more details on how to apply in the future.

Tracy Hunt, Speech Language Pathologist
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**Breaking the Ice 2015**

Keep checking Facebook for upcoming news about the next conference:  
[https://www.facebook.com/groups/84888948124/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/84888948124/)

**AAC Awareness 2014**

*Au Québec*

Christine Valiquette

This is a link to the 24 hours challenge event, which aimed at increasing the public's awareness about people with complex communication needs. The poster can be downloaded from the website as well.

From B.C.
Anne MacCallum

In BC, we had a range of activities across the province. Up north, a highlight was an engaging article about augmentative communication for adults, including interviews with Bree-Anna Robertson and her CAYA speech-language pathologist Barbara Kayter, in the Prince George Citizen.


In the Lower Mainland, many school districts held AAC events. At Richmond school district's seventh annual AAC Awareness event, The Talk of the Town, the capability and independence of students who use AAC was the focus. District staff had an opportunity to learn about AAC and to talk with students who use AAC at this fun, well-attended event.

From Saskatchewan
Stacey Harpnell

3 C’s – Community, Communication using the Circles approach

Graduation ceremonies are meaningful, they mark transitions and as a society we need those markers to appreciate the changes we have made. For the 3 C’s (which stands for Community, Communication and Circles approach) a group therapy program at the Adult Speech-Language Center that is run out of Saskatoon City Hospital, graduation means going into a Safeway grocery store and asking an employee for help to find two items in the store. That might not sound particularly meaningful, a graduation activity of typical importance, but if you do not use words to communicate it changes your perspective on the big moments in your life.

A ‘circle one member’ of a client drew this cartoon. She presented this to the group at the end of last year. Each character was depicted with features relevant to them.

The 3C’s are starting their 5th year of existence. The group runs from September to April and matches 5 new clients that are primarily nonverbal with circle one members (life partners such as spouses, children or lifelong friends) with a trained communication volunteer and a SLP. In the beginning the whole group is taught by a specialist in the area what the science of Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) is and how 70-90% of what we communicate to each other is not in the words. The group learns that the science of AAC is in the gestures we make (with our face, hands, and body), how we look (or don’t look) at objects in our environment, the tone (loudness and prosody) of our voice, how we use pictures/word boards and technology (such as IPads) to open the world to our many forms of communication.

For various reasons (having a brain injury, stroke or cerebral palsy) people are left unable to speak or be understood clearly when using their words. The 3C’s creates new goals every week. Goals like lifting a wrist and vocalizing as a form of greeting or saying ‘hello’ to a friend (as pictured here). Don’t get us wrong the goals are hard work. Movement can be a big challenge to members of this group. Each week goals change and...
grow. Then the hard work happens, practicing the goals over and over again. Practice starts in a meeting room in City Hospital. Then after two weeks of practicing in different locations of City Hospital (the cafeteria, store and Central Therapies) the clients go into the community to use their new strategies.

Communicating in a different way (such as using an IPad or introduction card) can be intimidating. The group bonds over the different challenges they face. There are moments of fear and triumph and times where a member of the group steps in to help bridge a miscommunication. The group learns to support each other by learning to read each other’s gestures and words and then knowing when to step in and when to let the client communicate independently.

The volunteers make such a difference. They are often referred to as volunteer staff. The volunteers are usually university students going into graduate university in therapy positions (Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy or Speech-Language Pathology) or to become physicians. However, there is one special long term volunteer that has been with us for the whole 5 years.

Something magical happens in this group. An understanding and strong communication grows between all of the members. Learning that at times we all need support and that sometimes support means letting us try and fail, to try again and this time succeed. The 3Cs simply take turns helping each other use the knowledge we have at how to fix a communication breakdown. Volunteers, clients and their life partners all take turns spending time breaking down the barriers that exist when someone is differently abled. If you see us out in the community, we are the group laughing and pointing at things, drop in and smile. We will understand that means hello and that you want to visit for a bit.

![Image: Jordan and Miriam use eye gaze and gestures to greet each other](image)

**Update from Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC)**

**Barbara Collier, Executive Director**

**Online leader course**

With funding from ISAAC Canada, CDAC has hired five instructors who use AAC to support others who use AAC in taking our online training program. The instructors are Nola Millin, Jess Weber, Alicia Palmer, Emily Hutchins and Paul Marshall. So far three people have completed the course, seven are in process and approximately seven are waiting to start. The course is for adults over 18 years of age who use AAC, are literate, have access to a computer and email.

The course teaches people who use AAC about ways they can be leaders which could potentially increase their opportunities for work within the AAC field. The online modules are about effective communication, collaborative problem-solving, disability services and resources, communication rights, how to participate on committees and tips on how to make presentations.
Some people who use AAC are planning to do the course as a group guided by their service provider and connecting with our AAC instructors for feedback and support.

Contact Toni Southern at toni.southern@gmail.com if you know people who might be interested in taking the course either individually or in a group. Spaces are limited and filling up quickly.

Communication Access Now (CAN)

As most of you know, we are implementing a national strategy to increase awareness of accessibility to goods and services for people who have speech and language disabilities, including people who use AAC. This is an important initiative as many provinces are currently implementing or developing accessibility legislation that protects the rights of people with disabilities to equal access to goods and services. Without strong, consistent and inclusive messaging, the accessibility needs of this population will continue to be omitted or inadequately represented within this legislation.

Nationally, we have the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) that sets out the civil rights of everyone in Canada. We also have the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that Canada ratified in 2010. On a provincial level, we have human rights legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Some provinces also have accessibility legislation that describes what businesses and organizations have to do to make their services accessible for people with disabilities. Ontario has the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005 and has since implemented standards or regulations for accessible customer service, information and communication, transportation, employment and built environments. Manitoba has The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, 2013 and is in the process of developing its accessibility standards. British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador are currently developing their accessibility legislation. Other provinces have guidelines in place based on their human rights laws but no specific accessibility legislation at this time.

CAN regional coordinators and representatives who have communication disabilities are busy having meetings, attending public consultations and sharing CAN resources with government groups, public policy makers and accessibility committees across Canada. Specifically we are proposing that they use a definition of communication that includes the needs of this population such as understanding what is being said; having their messages accurately understood; using their preferred communication methods such as speech, gestures, writing, pointing to objects or pictures, spelling words, typing on a communication device or human assistance; receiving written information in ways they understand and can use and signing documents, taking notes and completing forms in ways that are accessible to them. Our messages are inclusive of all people who have communication disabilities, regardless of their disability, or their communication methods and while we present a generic approach to communication access that applies to everyone, we always stress the need for individual accommodations.

Many of you have joined us in promoting awareness of communication access by sharing the CAN videos and resources within your work environments as well as using our online toolkits to support your clients in understanding and negotiating their accessibility requirements. The communication access symbol can now be seen across the country in hospitals, police stations, retail settings, restaurants and coffee shops.
Please contact your local CAN coordinator if you are interested in participating in the CAN project or if you know people who might want to get involved. We need people to lobby their government representatives, participate on accessibility committees, and educate businesses and organizations in their communities. We can provide you with contacts, CAN information and brochures. To connect with your regional coordinators go to http://www.communication-access.org/can/can-team/

Communication Access to Justice Services
In January 2015, CDAC is hosting free online trainings for Speech-Language Pathologists who want to support people with communication disabilities within legal and justice situations. We need more intermediaries who have a background in AAC. So please check out our communication intermediary rosters and register for these webinars at http://www.access-to-justice.org/trainings/training-schedule or contact me for more information.

We are always interested in hearing from you at cdac@bell.net

Barbara Collier
Executive Director
Barbara.collier@sympatico.ca
Communication Disabilities Access Canada
www.cdacanada.com

Communication Access Now Presentation
Jan Kraft and Linda Dubé

Linda Dubé, Tracy Shepherd (SLP) and Jan Kraft (CDA) presented information about Communication Access Now at Thames Valley Children’s Centre (TVCC). Linda Dubé is a data entry clerk at the Centre. She used her speech generating device to talk about some of her own experiences communicating with people in her community. Attendees included staff and parents from TVCC as well as people from outside the centre who work in health related areas. One person requested a presentation for his own volunteer organization. Word is spreading!

We were very fortunate to have Linda join us to talk about her first hand experiences. In her own words: “As a user of a communication device I was pleased to see the turnout of interested people eager to learn more about how to communicate with people who use different ways to communicate. It can be very frustrating at times for the person trying to communicate as well as the person trying to understand. Sometimes people think they hear something totally different when I communicate using my voice so I need to type it out on my LightWriter® or IPhone to make myself understood.

I’m very excited to see the new Communication Awareness Symbol and look forward to a less frustrating future for people who communicate using devices or with any type of speech difficulties once people have the information and take the time to learn how to make things easier for everyone involved.”
Kilometres For Communication
Tracy Hunt

I would like to remind you about the two funding opportunities as a result of the partnership between ISAAC Canada and Kilometres For Communication. As you may remember, Kilometres For Communication took place from May through August 2011 when Skye Wattie cycled across Canada to raise awareness and funds for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Two new grants for augmentative communicators were developed as a result of the fund-raising.

1. Communication System funding
2. Attending Conference/Course Funding

To date we have been able to help six individuals attend the Breaking The Ice conference. One individual published a book, and four individuals purchased communication systems. The following was received from the parent of one of the recipients:

“I am writing in appreciation for the funds given to my son who is 5 years of age. He has autism and is non-verbal. He says very few words and struggles to communicate at school. By joining ISAAC Canada we were able to access the funds needed to purchase the device to help him communicate with his friends and teachers. Thank you ISAAC Canada and Kilometres for Communication for helping my son speak more clearly.”

Please see the attached funding applications for details and specifics on how to apply. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

AAC Outcomes for Kids Research Alliance
Tracy Shepherd

In early 2014, researchers and clinicians at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital (Toronto) and Thames Valley Children’s Centre (London) created the AAC Outcomes for Kids Research Alliance to identify, generate, and mobilize AAC research evidence. Currently, members include local knowledge users from 22 AAC clinics for children, youth, and young adults with complex communication needs (CCN) from six provinces.

The goals of the Alliance include:

- creating a collective of researchers and knowledge users committed to improve communication services for children and youth with CCN
- developing a richer understanding about the effectiveness of AAC interventions
- informing members about new research initiatives and how to get involved
- learning more about emerging evidence that supports improvements in AAC systems and services

Contact Steve Ryan (sryan@hollandbloorview.ca) to learn about how to join. Membership includes access to: the alliance website, new research initiatives, webinars, and more!

**Facilitated Communication Position Statement**
Tracy Hunt

ISAAC International has issued a position statement regarding Facilitated Communication. The position statement was made official at the executive board meeting in Lisbon at ISAAC 2014. The statement is available in the members section of the ISAAC website (https://www.isaac-online.org/english/members-only/) and in the latest AAC journal. A copy has been attached to this issue of Figuratively Speaking for your convenience.

**Book Review**

**Out of My Mind** by Sharon Draper
Conor Age 13

I read this book called Out of My Mind. I really enjoyed reading this book because I can relate to it really well. My mom is a speech pathologist and that means that she works with people that can't talk and they use a communication device, just like in the book.

The main character, Melody, has cerebral palsy and can't talk or walk. I am really glad that I chose this book because it is sad at parts - I almost cried when her little sister was hit by a car. It can be also really happy at some parts, like when she got her own communication device when she was 11 and she was able to talk. I think it would suck to not be able to talk, but be able to think just like a regular person, it would drive me crazy to just have all these thoughts and not be able to say them.

I think the relationship between Melody and Mrs. V. (her neighbor and babysitter) is very interesting because before Melody got her communication device she was able to make out what she wanted by just her movements. She would put her thumb up when she had to go to the bathroom or point to the couch if she wanted to sit down. I just really like their way of communicating!

When I was reading it, it made me think of my mom’s friends because they are like Melody and sometimes I get to see them. So that helped me to visualize the story a bit better. When I get to see them it's really fun because if you know how to talk to them it's really fun and it puts a smile on their face.
Dr. Stephen Hawking was the recipient of ISAAC’s Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2014 Conference in Lisbon. This link is to his acceptance speech: https://www.isaac-online.org/english/conference-history/conference-2014/isaac-2014-videos/

“The Theory of Everything” – A movie about Stephen Hawking’s early life and career. Check out the trailer. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUpl0HDGq1Q

Attachments:

- SGD Funding application - ISAAC Position Statement March-18-1.pdf