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Kerstin Tönsing

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Ensa Johnson



**Centre for Augmentative
and Alternative
Communication**

CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

National Newsletter

Weather lessons: Is 'snow' on your communication board?



My colleague Ensa and I stood in the pick-up zone of OR Tambo International on the evening of Monday, 6 August freezing our toes off after a 28-hour journey from Pittsburgh. We had had the privilege of attending the 15th Biennial conference of the International Society for AAC (ISAAC), but the warm memories of the conference were quickly fading in the bitter cold August night.

When I woke up the next afternoon after sleeping like a log, my jet-lagged daze evaporated instantly as I heard the neighbours' kids shrieking in the complex parking lot – 'It's snowing!!' And there it was – the fairytale soft white veil of snowflakes dancing, twirling, floating.... Absolutely beautiful. As I was enjoying the scene of the kids racing about, trying to catch the flakes, I thought about all the kids in South Africa (and specifically Gauteng) using AAC – would 'snow' be on their communication boards or de-

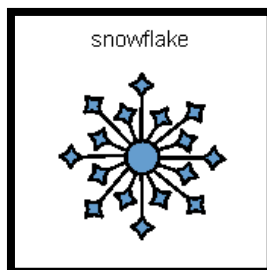
vices? How many teachers would have 'snow' represented in their visually supported 'weather' lessons?

I guess that is what the weather teaches us – to expect the unexpected. Weather forecasts may be right – and they may also be totally wrong. In spite of increasingly better technology to predict the weather, the weather has still successfully resisted being 'boxed'. In the same way, our expectation of a person with a disability may be right, or it may be completely wrong. The trick is not to let your expectations become self-fulfilling prophecies, but to be open-minded and expect the unexpected.

Another 'weather lesson' is that it doesn't last forever. Two weeks after our 'snowstorm', we are basking in sunshine and 29 degrees Celcius here in Pretoria. Seasons come and go – the only thing we can be certain of is change. Working with children with disabilities can sometimes feel like 'nothing will ever change for this kid'. But the truth is, it will. Maybe slower, maybe in a different way than we hope and expect. Kids will grow, and learn and change.



Interface promotes communication for people with little or no functional speech by supplementing existing communication with gestures, communication boards and assistive technology (thus, augmentative and alternative communication)



And lastly, the weather challenges us to find beauty and joy in every season. Winters in Gauteng tend to be dusty and dry with icy cold nights, but have you ever seen the beautiful sunsets? (Yes, I know it is all the dust in the air, but it is still beautiful).

And every 30 odd years you get the benefit of a little snowfall! Just as every season has its challenges, so will it have its marvels. Sometimes those diamonds are hidden away under a layer of rock, but they are there... So, enjoy the season – be it the season of your life, of your family, of your child, your clients, your class or your school... and dig until you find its joys and inspirations!

We hope that you will also enjoy the variety of reports and articles in this newsletter edition, submitted by teachers, therapists, parents, academics and people using AAC. We hope it will bring some fresh perspectives – like that promising spring breeze blowing gently outside your window.



Kerstin Tönsing
Editor, Centre for AAC

Interface KZN News

From the chair

News following on from our AGM is that Leandra Hinds resigned as Chairperson, as she had completed her two-year term, and Trevor Weppelman as Treasurer. Our current committee includes Elaine Byrne, Tarryn O'Brien, Jocelyn Mngomezulu, Pat Frow, Maggie Naidoo, and Merle Brown, our Fundraiser. We are happy to welcome new members to our committee: Caroline Richards, an Occupational Therapist at Ethembeni School and Avishana Sewrajan, Speech and Language Therapist in private practice who is already involved in providing AAC intervention for our clients. We welcome Trevor Macdonald to our team

as Treasurer. Trevor is a retired accountant, who worked for many years with the Natal Society for the Blind, and therefore has a wealth of experience working in the NGO sector.

After many years of dedicated service on the Interface KZN committee, Dr Margi Lilienfeld has resigned. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Margi for everything she has done as an office bearer on the committee. Margi has held various portfolios over the years, including Chair and Vice Chair, and more recently the position of Treasurer, and has worked tirelessly and passionately to raise awareness about AAC, provide training and AAC intervention, and to ensure that our dream of having a centre and resource library became a reality. Although Margi is no longer a committee member, she is still assisting with AAC intervention and training, and we are very thankful for her ongoing involvement.

We have various projects that are ongoing, including the Communication Circle, the isiZulu Literacy Project, the Sisizakele Special School Project and Project Storm (now renamed Project Hepburn). Jocelyn has just attended the ISAAC Conference in Pittsburgh, and having received funding from ISAAC, BUILD Committee towards her conference costs, we were happy to be able to assist with her travel costs. On her return, Margi and Jocelyn will be implementing our intervention project at Sisizakele Special School in September, which will take place over a period of 4 days.

Upcoming training workshops are planned for schools in Durban and Pietermaritzburg in August and October. These will focus on an Introduction to Boardmaker; Boardmaker Curriculum for the Classroom; Introduction to AAC; and Aided Language Stimulation. For further information on these workshops, please contact Trudi at our centre.

We will be selling Casual Day stickers as usual this year, so please feel free to support Interface KZN by purchasing your stickers through Trudi. Contact our office with your order!

Felicity Jonck
Acting Chairperson



Project Hepburn

I refer back to article in the Interface/CAAC newsletter December 2011. “Robert Storm House Project”

What begun as “Project Storm” in Robert Storm House now has to be renamed the rather less dramatic Project Hepburn as the residents of the unit have moved to the more spacious Hepburn house still within the same residential facility. Adjusting to the new name is made sweet by the fact that I now have a room dedicated to OT sessions. Of course like many OT rooms I am now fighting to keep the space against an ever growing pile of disused wheelchairs.

Interface continues to attend there regularly however in the person of myself, Jocelyn Mngomezulu, OT. Hepburn is at a local residential facility and holds a unit for children and young adults with cerebral palsy and significant physical impairments. The unit caters for 25 individuals, all of whom have little or no functional speech. All except one or two are seated in buggies and wheelchairs and another two or three are seldom taken out of bed due to frailty and severe contractures.



One of the clients there, a little girl of 8 years, is growing in leaps and bounds. She currently attends Pathways Kloof by kind sponsorship arranged by Jenny Head of Pathways. Now with her own communication booklet she is learning to navigate herself through and is becoming quite determined to get her message across. Initially a very compliant and eager to please young girl, she will now actively refuse to comply until you work out with her what it is she wants to say. What a delight!



Another little boy of 4 years who had learnt to make his wishes known through tears and protesting now knows that his choices are made through PCS and auditory scanning...or there are no choices.



Work with the other residents here is mostly done in small groups which are in three general levels—which I like to think of as extremely challenged, very challenged and quite challenged. In case you were wondering, the key word is challenged. However, we are here to attend to these and

find a meaningful moment.

Jocelyn Mngomezulu
Interface KZN



Getting creative with crayons and paint



Fun and games with water



Communication circle



The communication circle continues to run on a monthly basis at Interface. This group for teens and young adults meets in order to provide our AAC users with a peer group, while continuing to develop their

communication skills. The group is lead by our mentors - Dan and France who are AAC users themselves, both proud graduates of the FOFA project. Our circle contains set activities such as a monthly presentation by one of the participants on a topic of their choosing as well as social time which includes one of our current favourites - card games!



If any AAC users from the age of 14 upwards would like to join us, please contact interface KZN for the next date.

Kirsty Nourse
Interface KZN

School news

Pathways – Polokwane

Staff and parent development – AAC workshop: Our parents of our non-speaking children were invited on the 5th of May to come and build and make augmentative communication devices for their children to use in their everyday lives. We had so much fun making PECS communication files and e-trans to mention but a few. We would like to thank our parents who attended for sacrificing their Saturday morning, and we hope that your hand-made devices have been used well at home and are making a difference in your child's ability to communicate!

Lesedi trotting the Globe! Lesedi Makgato was a student at Mitchell House Enrichment Centre. He graduated at the end of 2011. Lesedi is a bright young guy with a gregarious personality and a love for life and all life offers. He has Athetoid Cerebral Palsy. This limits Lesedi in all he does.

Lesedi's schooling included both an adapted national curriculum in mainstream classes as well as development of Life Skills. His last two years at school focused on getting a DJ business and Motivational Speaking Business.

Lesedi, with training and support, sent funding proposals out last year. Jacaranda Cares donated a laptop, external hard drive and music to Lesedi. He still needs a mixer and speakers to be able to DJ at functions. He accesses his DJ software by using his adapted switch.

Lesedi presented his Motivational Talk to many schools in Polokwane. His message is honest and moving and he has inspired many already. Lesedi presented at the National Conference for Augmentative and Alternative Communication in Boksburg last year. This is where he was



Lesedi and his facilitator, Sam at the 15th Biennial ISAAC conference in Pittsburgh, PA, USA

approached by an Academic in the field to visit Pittsburg, USA in 2012 for the 15th Biennial ISAAC Conference.

With the help of many individuals and organizations, enough funds were raised for Lesedi and his facilitator to attend the ISAAC conference, and this was an unforgettable experience for both of them!

I (Kerstin) interviewed Lesedi and he shared some of his experiences. He indicated that, for him, the highlight of the conference was the presentation “New Beginnings” where people with disabilities shared about their different methods of communication. He said that he was motivated to teach others about these different forms of communication. By the sounds of it he was intending to keep the internet quite busy by communicating via facebook and email with all the new friends he made from many different countries.

Snoopi Botten, who composes and produces music and also programs synthetic voice to ‘sing’, showed Lesedi some DJ’ing tips which he is planning to use for his DJ business. When asked about Pittsburgh, he said, ‘Lovely people and lovely places!’ He said he had visited the Baseball stadium and the Sculpture museum amongst others. He is definitely aiming for the next ISAAC conference in Lisbon in 2014!

***Renate Wieferring, Pathways Polokwane
Kerstin Tönsing, Centre for AAC
Lesedi Makgato***

CAAC news

Staff matters

As usual a lot of things are happening at the CAAC, with people coming and going.....

Prof Kitty Uys will be on sabbatical until the end of the year, as she is in the process of writing a book on the intervention of children with severe disabilities. Although we miss her, we wish her all the best and it is with great expectation that we look forward to the new book.

In the meantime, Simon Sikhosana will be putting in a few extra hours per week, as he is appointed in a full time position until the end of the year, where one of his tasks would be to coordinate the whole FOFA project. Good luck Simon!

Welcome

We are very happy to welcome two new colleagues who will be working at the CAAC until the end of the year, Sandy Klopper and Robyn Williams.



Sandy has been a school based Speech Therapist for most of her career, her last post being Head of Therapy Department at The Gateway School, which caters for learners who have severe disabilities. This is where her interest in AAC began. Sandy also does consultations at Frances Vorwerg School, assisting their learners with LNFS in the implementation of AAC strategies. Sandy is also interested in research and is hoping to further this matter in the near future. She has an 8-year-old son (Braedon) and a 15-year-old stepson Tynan.

Robyn is a teacher by profession who used to work privately for families and their toddlers, developing individual tutor programs for toddlers with special needs and assisting them in becoming ready for school. She is also currently busy with her Masters in AAC at the CAAC. She was first introduced to AAC techniques 5 years ago in the UK when working with adults with brain injury. Robyn is happily married to Robbie and hopes to open her own special needs nursery school one day.



We hope that you have a most memorable time at the CAAC and that you will feel right at home!

***Enid Moolman
Centre for AAC***

A legacy that echoes for more than just 67 minutes- Nelson Mandela Day at the Centre for AAC

Being innovative is what we are known for here at the Centre for AAC. Because Nelson Mandela International Day fell smack bang in the middle of our MECI and MAAC onsite training weeks, we were challenged to think of a way to still be involved in this project amongst the teaching and learning commitments. For our readers outside of South Africa: Nelson Mandela day urges South Africans to give 67 minutes of their time (one minute for each year that Mr Mandela spent working to make the world a better place) to a local charity or serving our community.

To make our 67 minutes count for something we were further challenged by a recent article appearing on the NEWS 24 website <http://tinyurl.com/67minutesLegacy>. The author questioned whether 67 minutes are really enough to leave a legacy, as meaningful social change takes time and long term commitment. Too often, he opined, the day becomes one of volunteerism for the feel-good factor rather than doing something that actually achieves long-lasting and sustainable change. OK then - challenge accepted! How could we make an impact that would go beyond just a few minutes of our time? Who better to consult than President Mandela himself. "Education," he said, "is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Then a friend in Portugal posted this picture on facebook. The speech bubble translates to something like "Wouldn't the world be a wonderful place if libraries were more important than banks"



A h a ! An idea was born! We're into education... We're into adapting books for children with disability... Why not use the time to teach our students this skill and donate said books to an organization/school who would be able to benefit from them? So that is what we did! We asked our students to each bring a children's book and during our lunch break on the 18th of July, Ensa Johnson, our resident book adapter, gave a brief demonstration. Out came the page fluffers (to add space between pages), glue and various textured fabrics and materials (to provide a multisensory experience when



reading). Not forgetting the ever trustworthy Velcro, pull-off PCS symbols were added to make stories understandable to children who use AAC. As with anything new, the students were at first a little bit



1st year MAAC students enjoying the book adapting experience

anxious but after discovering their latent creative talents, they quickly became so absorbed that it was difficult to get them back into the afternoon's

academic session. All in all we adapted 25 children's books.

We will be donating these to a local organization/school coupled with an in-service training on how to use these books with the children they serve. Based on feedback from our students we believe that our 67 minutes were well spent as they learnt a new skill that will bear fruit for many years to come. They were excited to implement this within in their own therapeutic practices and classrooms - illustrating the truth of the Chinese proverb that says "Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere."

If you would like to know more about adapting reading books for children with special needs you can visit the following websites.

CAAC: <http://tinyurl.com/Ensa-Johnson-Books-adaptation>

The AAC Institute: <http://tinyurl.com/Adaptingbooks>

The Bridge School: <http://tinyurl.com/Bridge-Adaptingbooks>

A-Z of Adapting books: <http://tinyurl.com/A-Zadaptingbooks>



Alecia Samuels
Centre for AAC



1st year MECI totally engaged in the activity

Sweden visit: June 2012

Staff and PhD students from the Centre for AAC visited Jönköping University in Sweden for 3 weeks in June to participate in the GEDS course. The GEDS course focused on research about the development of both typically developing children and children with disabilities and centered on themes concerning risk factors, family environments, educational inclusion, and preschool. Staff and student participants came from around the world, including countries such as Germany, Portugal, Sweden, the USA, and South Africa.

Prof Juan Bornman presented the preliminary results on a collaborative project between the Centre for AAC and the CHILD group from Jönköping University that examined whether the rights of children with intellectual disabilities in South Africa were being met. Dr Dana Donohue, a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for AAC, presented research that was based on her PhD work that examined how risk factors and adaptive behaviors influenced the reading and language growth in children with intellectual disabilities over one school year. At the end of the 3-week seminar, the PhD students gave presentations about what they had learned and how this can relate to their own research.

Overall the PhD students from the Centre reported that it was an intense 3 weeks, but one of the best learning experiences that they have ever had. We are all incredibly grateful to have had this opportunity to learn from experts from around the world in the fields of child development, disability, and education.

Dana Donohue
Centre for AAC

Student feedback:

"This course was superbly organised by a team of learned experts in the field of ECI. The identified topics were enlightening, informative and very well structured. Engaging with international PhD students and the academic staff most certainly assisted me in acquiring a fresh new perspective in the field of early childhood intervention. I am now capacitated to read and understand the literature in a more improved ana-

lytical manner. This course also allowed us the opportunity to form a network across many countries which we plan to sustain. More courses of this magnitude will certainly assist in expanding the field of ECI internationally."

Usha Ojageer, PhD student



"A big thank you to Prof. Juan Bornman for the opportunity to attend this course. Without her belief in us (Ph.D students), we would not ever have been granted this opportunity to gain new information by learning from the greatest in the field of ECI, disability and AAC. It was good to meet and befriend leaders and future leaders in the field of ECI, disability and AAC. We are looking forward to work with them in future. Furthermore, it was amazing to experience the healthy lifestyle of the Swedish people and the walk up-hill every day was used as a time to reflect and de-stress after a full day of lectures. Last but not the least, we would also wish to take this opportunity to thank Prof Mats Granlund and Prof Eva Björk-Åkesson from CHILD who made this opportunity possible. We will treasure this experience for the rest of our lives!"

Ensa Johnson, PhD student

"Gaining international perspectives on policy, practice and research traditions in ECI through the GEDS course has been a fascinating experience – the contexts represented by the diverse presenters have quite distinct approaches with strengths falling in different areas (e.g. theoretical depth, methodological integrity, clinical/practical significance of research). This has challenged me to critically reflect on the significance and integrity of 'local' research, the relevance and standard of our student training, and the accessibility and sustainability of services in the field."

Kerstin Tönsing, PhD student

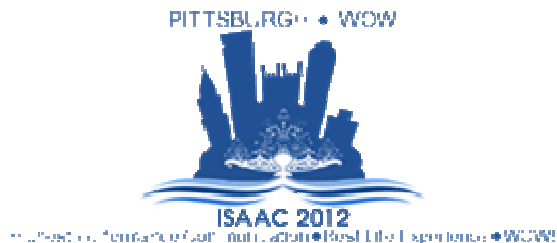


"Attending the course in Jönköping, Sweden has been such a privilege. All the wonderful social events (fika, ferry and Friday party), the emotional highs (singing 'We are family'), physical distress (THE HILL), and above all the challenging and inspiring intellectual presentations and discussions will be part of me for life. Thank you so much for this academic adventure."

Liezl Schlebusch, PhD student

ISAAC 2012

Wonderful... Outstanding... Worldwide ... Wow!



The 15th Biennial ISAAC conference recently held in Pittsburgh, USA from 30 July to 4 August really did have the WOW factor! It was attended by more than 1200 delegates from 53 countries with over 700 presentations, with the largest exhibition of any previous ISAAC conference, offering something for everyone. Pittsburgh with its 446 bridges is aptly known as “the city of bridges” symbolizing the potential of ISAAC to build bridges between people from different parts of the world, between people who use AAC to communicate and people who use their natural voice to do so, between clinicians and researchers, between manufacturers and therapists... an endless list.

As a South African, this ISAAC was also special in many ways... 17 South Africans attended, including two AAC users! Erna Alant, the former Director of the Centre for AAC was the 2011 and 2012 ISAAC President and she made us all proud. Martin Pistorius, who also worked at the Centre and who now lives in the UK with his lovely wife Joana, received the ISAAC Presidential Award. The purpose of this award is to acknowledge extra ordinary support of ISAAC by an individual... something like a Gold Olympic Medal in AAC. What an amazing achievement – if you haven't yet read Martin's biography, *Ghost Boy*, make sure that you get hold of a copy...today!

Following ISAAC, a couple of interesting, new initiatives that you can be on the lookout for, include:

- An “*Introduction to AAC*” PowerPoint that will be available for free download on our website for all AAC practitioners that need information when they need to do a presentation about AAC.
- To translate the 400 word Glossary list developed by ISAAC which contains the most frequently used AAC terms into all 11 Official languages. These lists will also be freely available on our website. Do I see any volunteers putting up their hands?
- Do participate in the International AAC Awareness Month in October... we want to encourage you all to do a project to celebrate this initiative, no matter how big or how small... as Nike would say “*Just do it!*”!! If you can send us a short description of your project with accompanying photographs, we'll compile it and share it with ISAAC. Look at what a Canadian family did :

www.kilometersforcommunication.com

- We want to translate the “Communication Bill of Rights” into all 11 official languages and have an AAC user read them... and place that on YouTube. If you know of any AAC users who can do this, please let us know.
- We are busy compiling a guide on AAC App's to assist clinicians with decision making when wanting to use this affordable, available and accessible new technology.
- We have used Talking Mats extensively in South Africa during the past few years since Dr Joan Murphy visited us. One can now do a formal 4-month Talking Mats course online. Those who are interested, make sure to visit www.talkingmats.com
- A couple of our international friends have confirmed their commitment to helping expand AAC in developing countries... So watch out for a couple of exciting new workshops that are planned for 2013!

As always, ISAAC afforded all who attended a unique opportunity to interact with colleagues from all over the world who share the same passion and energy , to share experiences and knowledge and to learn from one another ... because this is the only way in which we'll be able to ensure that communication becomes a reality for everyone.



Some of the South Africans at the ISAAC conference



Martin Pistorius, recipient of the 'President's award', and Joana, his wife.

ISAAC (cont)

The 16th ISAAC conference is planned for Lisbon, Portugal in 2014 (during July/August). Those of us who have had the privilege of having attended an ISAAC conference have already started saving again, and for those of you who have not yet had this opportunity, start planning today. Don't miss the opportunity to join the rambunctious ISAAC group!

Juan Bornman
Centre for AAC

“Child Justice Workshop”

On the 1st and 2nd of August, Joan van Niekerk, the Director of Childline, presented the Child Justice Workshop at UNISA. It was invigorating and insightful to learn about the new child laws in South Africa and how it applies to children with disabilities. The workshop was centred around: The Children's Act, The Criminal Law Amendment Act (Sexual Offences Act) and the Child Justice Act. As Joan mentioned, law and policy are important in child protection as it helps us protect the children's and parents'/educators' rights, develop prevention activities and to know what to do when children are abused or hurt. Regarding Children with disability (CWD), Section 11 in the Children's Act was discussed. A few aspects of this section were highlighted, such as the fact that, firstly, it must be made possible for CWD to participate in social, cultural, religious and educational activities while recognising the special needs that the child may have. Secondly, CWD must be provided with conditions that ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate active participation in the community. As we are all aware, the majority of children who have communication disabilities are prone to loss of independence and abuse, and we as professionals, family and caregivers should be aware of the rights that children with disabilities have, so we can be “advocates” for them, and guide and teach them to stand up for these rights. As was so passionately mentioned by Joan van Niekerk, “The most powerful right is that EVERYONE has the right to a voice!” Doesn't that just fit in so perfectly into the field of AAC?

Robyn White
Centre for AAC

Various

Speak2Me

Speak2Me is an AAC focused practice in the Western Cape passionate about liberating minds that are often locked up in unco-operative bodies. We play . . . , a lot! We believe therapy should be fun and just because the froggie is green, wears a raincoat and sings

Broadway, does not mean it isn't serious therapy that gives great results. Repetition is the key to learning, however making therapy fun, is the pathway.

When your client sees you coming they need to smile, show excitement and indicate a desire to work. Out of an internal desire to do something, come the greatest achievements. This is one of our major philosophies. All we do and create is aimed at making sessions fun. We use a lot of singing, dancing, crazy toys to get children to request activities. Once the child has established a desire to request something, we give them

the means to do so through cards, signs, speaking buttons, etc. Initial communication is not always easy and can be quite confusing, but if a child really desires something they learn incredibly fast.



Amber using her Tobii eye tracker to order up more pudding

We have found a range of fun activities that encourage children to interact, from singing toys, break-dancing cars, remote controlled trains to kiddies kitchen equipment, where they can make their own milkshakes and puddings. After the initial desire to communicate has been established, it

becomes a little more difficult. Now how to make repetition fun...? We sometimes change the toys providing new stimuli, working on the same action, using repetition for learning, but keeping it fresh and fun.

“Necessity is the mother of invention.” Okay, so we have not invented anything, yet! But we have modified

some stuff, taken some apart, put them back together again. If we can't find it or it is too expensive, we do our best to make it. Usually it isn't rocket science. That's how we created our range of modified toys and made our own AAC switch. Although there is so much great software out there, access to the controls is often a problem and so we have developed a few pieces of software, and released Bash Those Balls (free download from our website) as a head / eye control driving game.



Ruan flying a radio controlled fish

If you would like to find out more of what we do, please get in contact with us through our website

(www.speak2me.co.za) or
on email
(sonja@ speak2me.co.za)

Sonja Higham
Therapist



Tessa deciding which toy to request next

User Forum

Charmoné kyk na 'n blink toekoms

Charmoné is 'n 5 ½ jarige dogtertjie, die jongste van 3 kinders en haar boeties se liefing. Soos enige ander dogtertjie hou sy van popspeel, teepartytjies en natuurlik, Hannah Montannah! Sy is mal oor rowwe speletjies soos om saam haar broers rugby te speel of trampolien te spring. Kom dit by vakansie-oorde, sukkel jy om haar uit die swembad te kry, en maak sy jou moeg op die supertube. Sy gly ook soms, tot mamma se frustrasie, saam met haar boeties op matrasse by die trappe af, en geniet dit vreeslik om saam hulle tube te ry op die dam. 'n Doodgewone rabadoe 5 jarige... maar daar is een verskil. Charmoné kan nie hardloop nie, sy kan nie loop nie, sy kan nie kruip nie, sy kan nie sit nie... sy kan ook nie self haar koppie optel nie. Charmoné het Serebrale Parese.

Sy is gebore op 25/40 weke, het 890 gram geweeg en was vir die eerste 2 jaar permanent op suurstof en tot op hede ongeveer 40 keer opgeneem in die hospitaal. Sy het al 4 operasies ondergaan, ondermeer twee kogliëre inplantings, want Charmoné is ook doof.

Hoewel ons sukkel met 'n stukkende lyfie, is daar niks met haar intelligensie verkeerd nie. Sy het 'n goeie sin vir humor, en lag uit haar maag uit as haar boeties begin laf raak. Sy is vanaf Januarie 'n permanente leerling in Nuwe Hoop se kleuterafdeling. Vir haar kogliëre inplantings het ons R400,000 in 6 maande ingesamel.

As gevolg van die feit dat sy nie kan loop nie, is haar ruggie en heupe besig om skeef te groei. Sy het toe 'n rolstoel gekry wat haar die hele tyd 100% reg laat sit. Die stoel is deur 'n ortotis in Rivonia gepas en aanbeveel. Die stoel word van oorsee bestel, en die raam het 'n lewenslange waarborg. Daar is bande en kussings wat haar so perfek ondersteun dat sy selfs sonder kopkussing heeltemal regop sit! Die stoel kos 'n ongelooflike R54,000!

Charmoné praat met kaartjies, en maak haar keuses met haar oë. Omdat sy nie genoeg beheer oor haar arms en hande het nie, sukkel ons om haar geleer te kry om 'n knop te gebruik om die rekenaar mee te werk. Sy maak haar keuses baie vinnig en kan haar soms vererg as jy haar vra om dit te herhaal. Ons het haar by die Sentrum vir AAK by TUKS gehad om haar te toets op die Tobii C12 and CEye oogstaar AAK sisteem – dit is 'n rekenaar wat met behulp van oogstaar werk. Charmoné het sommer binne die eerste 5 minute presies geweet hoe dit werk, en deur die speletjies gedrafstap! Daar het ons gesien sy ken haar kleure – selfs pienk en pers! Sy het legkaarte gebou,

getel en sommer lekker gespeel, alles net met haar ogies. Toe sy die rekenaar eers verstaan, het sy presies geweet hoe om die bladsye om te blaai as sy nie op hulle wou speel nie. As hulle nie wil blaai tot sy klaar is met 'n aktiwiteit nie, dan is sy woeps uit by die deurtjie! Toe die dame ons iets anders op die rekenaar wil wys, moes sy naderhand die oogstaar toegang afsit, want Charmone maak al wat 'n program is op die desktop oop! Aan die einde van die sessie was daar 'not a dry eye in the house' – dit was net ongelooflik hoe gefokus sy was en hoe die res van haar distonie bewegings verdwyn as sy konsentreer op die rekenaar!



Om te dink dat sy uiteindelik met die rekenaar kan praat, eposse stuur, speletjies speel, skoolwerk doen en ook selfs die TV se kanale verander! Die rekenaar word dan op haar stoel gemonteer, en dan kry sy ook 'n stem. Dit was ongelooflik om te sien, en nog ongeloofliker om te dink sy kan dalk so met ons praat!

Ons is 'n doodgewone gesin. My man, Hendrik, het sy eie besigheid in Centurion, en soos dit maar met eie besighede gaan, is finansies op en af soos 'n wipplank. Ek het twee jaar terug opgehou werk, en gaan nou in die oggende na Hendrik om sy besigheid se boeke te doen. Ek het ook nog twee ander kliënte wie se boeke ek in my af tydies doen. Charmoné kom net so na een huis toe. Sy het 'n onderwyseres wat elke dag saam met haar moet skool toe gaan, sowel as monitors wat die skool as voorwaarde gestel het, wat ons tans huur, wat saam met haar gaan. Haar skoolpakket werk ons dus ongeveer R9,000 per maand uit. Haar broers, (Francois 11 jaar en Reghardt 9 jaar) is twee doodgewone seuns, speel rugby vir hul skool en Centurion klub, doen karate na-ure en wees stout die res van die tyd. Charmoné ry 4 x per week perd en met dit alles hou ek my middag besig.

Sy is al so baie in die lewe ontnem, dat ons so graag die stoel en rekenaar vir haar wil gee. Dit sal fantasties wees as sy, (al is dit met 'n rekenaar stem) Mamma kan se! Ek hoop uit my hart uit dat ons 'n manier kan kry om vir haar die Tobii te gee – dit is voorwaar 'n AMAZING rekenaar wat haar hele lewe in 'n oogwink sal verander en soveel gestremdes die reg om waarlik te leef in die samelewing gee! Bravo julle – dit is die beste ding wat julle vir ons engelkindertjies kon doen!!

Dianne Foord
Ma van Charmoné
diannefoord@gmail.com

Kuruman Children with Disability Centre Re na le bokgoni



When I came back from Fofa last year, I went to Gelukspan hospital near Mafikeng in the North West province. At Gelukspan hospital I volunteered as co-facilitator in one of the projects in Reakgona centre.

I met three mothers who have disabled children at the centre. They went to Reakgona centre for a course on cerebral palsy (CP). In the course mothers are guided in how to take care of their children with CP. The three mothers and I had conversations, and decided that when we get home to Kuruman, we will start up a centre similar to Reakgona centre, because Gelukspan hospital is too far from Kuruman. The mothers spent lots of money on transport and some of taxis drivers even charged money for transporting the wheelchairs.

So we started the Kuruman Children with Disabilities Centre, an organization which aims at assisting children with childhood disabilities (mainly CP) to have a place to be exposed to stimulation and learning situations. The centre plans to have three projects with different but related foci, these being:

- Stimulation Day Care Centre
- Wheelchair Repairs
- CP course to enhance abilities of care givers and parental training

The stimulation day care centre will focus on young children with disabilities, and will aim to prepare them physically and mentally for possible schooling and to develop their potential. The Parent Guidance Centre Reakgona has been requested to assist with training parents in short CP courses.

We have set up a shanty for temporary use to start the centre and its stimulation program, as we felt the urgency to start to assist children. The centre is accommodated by the Mocumi family, but we intend to move to a public place as soon as a site is allocated to us. We are liaising with the local leadership in this regard.

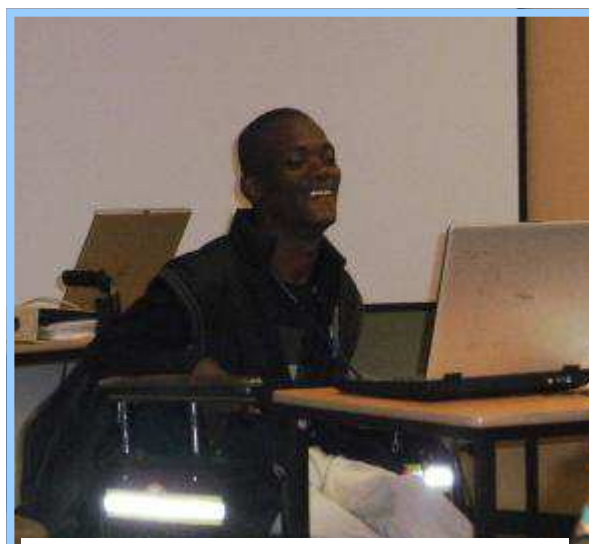
Another aim of the organization is to overcome negative attitudes towards people with disabilities. In many other villages around Kuruman, people have still attitude barriers towards pupils with disabilities. They fear children with disabilities. It seems that there are still a lot of prejudices and lack of knowledge, traditional beliefs around the area. Professional staff at some places are also displaying some unhelpful attitudes. In other places they are more positive.

In terms of support, the special program desk of the Kuruman municipality assisted with transport for us to attend the second leadership course at the Parents Guidance Centre from 09 -13 July 2012. We are grateful for their support and look forward to future collaborations. Several local business people have also pledged support, and Rekathusa Funeral Service donated R1000 towards the first leadership course transport in May 2012, for which we are very grateful.

Due to my own experience of growing up with a physical disability, my vision is to provide more adequate services and also to spread the idea of empowerment of persons with disability by providing relevant services.

It is not easy to start an organisation such as this, but through the commitment and the dedication of the founding members, we have already made some strides. For more information you are welcome to contact me at 073 017 7775 (please sms I can't speak well) or to send an email to myself (lebosehako@gmail.com) or my co-worker (keituboyesen@ovi.com).

*Lebogang Sehako
Project Manager:
Kuruman Children with Disabilities Centre*



Lebo presenting during the Fofa-week of 2011

Tech Talk

Dedicated vs. mobile devices with AAC Apps? What's the verdict?

During the ISAAC Research Seminar one of the strands was about Apps and AAC. It is a tendency in America (and in some other countries as well) that parents (or even schools or school districts) decide to buy mobile devices for children with disabilities without any assessment by Speech Language Pathologists or other AAC experts. The result is that some of the mobile devices are not used for communication purposes at all because they do not meet the individual needs of the children with disabilities.

Dr. Amy Finch from Fort Hays State University in the USA gave a presentation on "i"Devices. The participants at the research seminar immediately decided not to refer to "i"Devices (as the "i" is the brand name of Apple company) and for the purpose of her discussion she then referred to mobile devices (which include iPads, Androids or any other tablets).

Dr Finch gave a detailed comparison between dedicated AAC devices with the tablets and Apps currently available on the market:

Table 1 Dedicated Dynamic and mobile devices (i.e. tablets)

Features	Dedicated Dynamic Devices	Mobile devices and AAC Apps
Aided	+	+
Symbols	+	+
Digitized speech	+	+
Synthesized speech with choices of voices	All	Some
Text-to-speech for creating novel utterances	Some	Some
Techniques for access (Direct selection versus indirect selection ; Dwell)	+	+/-
Strategies Prediction/Rate Enhancement	+/-	+/-
Portability	+/-	+
Access to other programmes (email, social media, educational programmes, games)	+/-	+/- Access issues
Detailed list of features	+	+/-
Language bases	+/-	+/-
Technical support	+	Limited
Training for communication partners and user	+/-	Limited, primarily web based
Cost of high technology devices	Range from R40 000 to R70 000 = R55 000 (Note: does not include eye control systems)	iPad = +/- R6 000 Average cost of AAC Apps R800 =R6 800

The comparison in Table 1 shows many similarities with the exception of:

- Access – the mobile devices have limited access, but it is quickly changing at least for AAC apps. Scanning is already available on approximately 8 Apps but this number is growing on a daily basis; Access on Android may also have more options than the iPads due to the open source platform.
- Access for other functions on the mobile devices is still a challenge, but some AAC Apps are building the access in.
- Strategies for rate enhancement - these are more limited on mobile devices.
- Cost – mobile devices are much cheaper.

Due to the big cost differences, parents opt for mobile devices for their children without any input from therapists or experts in the field of AAC. Other reasons parents gave for choosing mobile devices are that it "seems normal" (in comparison with a dedicated AAC device) and that there are many Apps available (although these Apps may not be used for communication purposes!). Due to the fact that the mobile devices are much cheaper and in many cases thus more affordable for parents, it was decided to conduct an international survey on the use of mobile devices and AAC Apps. The CAAC will be the South African contact for this survey. We hope that all with experience in mobile and/or dedicated dynamic devices will consider participating as this information can help us



move the field forward to ultimately benefit the persons in need of AAC and their communication partners.

Ensa Johnson
Centre for AAC

The GoTalk Express 32 Product Review !

The staff at the Centre of AAC were very excited to receive a donation from the Attainment Company at the ISAAC Conference of the GoTalk Express 32. The GoTalk Express 32 is a full featured voice output communication device. The GoTalk Express 32 has two operation modes, Express and Standard. In Standard operation, messages play when the keys are pressed. In Express operation, up to 8 messages are stored as the keys are pressed which can then be played in sequence when the key is pressed.

It offers full surround LED's for visual scanning and an exciting new feature is the auditory scanning option. Often users who have visual impairments have been limited to touch when accessing a communication device, but this may be a problem if the user also has a physical impairment. The auditory scanning features



now enables access of the device for these users. A short 1,5 sec message or a sequence of beeps can be played to cue each message, with or without headphones, which the user can then select. Each key records up to 9 seconds, which can be played in sequence seamlessly in the order selected, simulating typical conversation. Capabilities of the device include: Visual cueing, auditory cueing, switch access (single or double), 2, 4, 8, 16 or 32 messages and scanning adjustments (e.g. by row, column, scan every other message and speed).

Sandy Kloppers
Centre for AAC

Various

Aware Bears

Meet Helen the Bear! She's cuddly, she's cute, and she has hemiplegia. Helen is part of the Aware Bears project. The aim of this project is to create awareness and a better understanding of Cerebral Palsy for those living with it and their families. Thus, children with cerebral palsy or their families can invite Helen to come and stay for a few weeks. Helen can help the child talk about the cerebral palsy, and what it is like to live with this condition. Helen can accompany the



child to clinic visits, to surgery or therapy, or even to a new school. A scrap book accompanies Helen, where the adventures together with the child she is visiting can be documented.

Accepting a disability is a process with many ups and downs and Aware Bears wants to help families and others to focus on the positive.

Aware bears hopes to provide comfort and support during difficult times whether it be during therapy, classroom environments or in public. Children tend to identify with more easily with characters and the hope is that Aware Bears will allow them to freely express their negative feelings towards their disabilities.

For more information about Helen or the Aware Bears project, please contact Lesley at lesley@neverendingstories.co.za.

LesleyPotgieter
Aware Bears Project

Student and Alumni Corner

Congratulations!

The Centre for AAC would like to congratulate Aurellia Gonasillan on her engagement! Aurellia completed her Master's in AAC last year. We are so excited for you, and wish you much joy and happiness as you prepare for sharing your life with that special person.

Ange Beringer, who graduated from the Master's in AAC last year, and Alice Huguet, who will do so in September this year, are both expecting their first baby! We trust that their second 'M' ('M' for mother) qualification will be a truly joyful and positive experience, and wish them health and energy as they prepare for their new family member.

We are happy to announce that our MECI students continue to carry on the tradition of new babies. This must be one of the most "fruitful" programmes as ever since this programme has started there has always been a pregnancy or new baby born in each of the years. Congratulations therefore goes out to Cameron Dalling (MECI 2) and her husband on the recent birth of their baby boy, Jack. In between the "hectiness" of a new baby we hope he brings you many hours of joy.

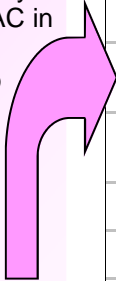
Alecia Samuels and Kerstin Tönsing
Centre for AAC



For your diary...

Seminars on language development in toddlers

Prof Mary-Ann Ronski, Head of the Speech Therapy Department at Georgia State University, USA, is currently collaborating with the Centre for AAC in a research study on the language development of toddlers with neuro-developmental delay. Prof Ronski will be presenting a seminar on the topic of language development in toddlers. Some sessions still have openings. See dates, times, venues and contact details from bookings as indicated on the notes pad.



FOFA: Write to life

On Friday, 21 September, participants of the annual Fofa project will be giving presentations based on the skills learnt and processes undergone during the week. The theme for the week is 'Write to Life', and we look forward to some creative outputs! This event is always inspirational and a great opportunity for younger AAC users to see some role models in action. The presentations will take place at the University of Pretoria (venue to be announced), from 10h30 – 13h30. Snacks will be provided. Entrance is free, but please RSVP to Simon Sikhosana by 12 September 2012 at simon.sikhosana@up.ac.za or call 012 420 2620 or 012 420 2001.



Notes:
SEPTEMBER
<p>Seminars on language development in toddlers:</p> <p>13 September: 11h00 – 12h30 Steve Biko Hospital RSVP: Anneli Lloyd -Jones on 012 654 2714</p> <p>14 September: 10h00 – 11h00 Dr George Mukhari Hospital RSVP : Safia Saleh on Safia.Saleh@gauteng.gov.za</p>
<p>17-21 September: Fofa week</p> <p>21 September: Fofa Programme Open Day: Write to life</p>
OCTOBER
<p>12 October: 20th Multi-Professional AAC Research Symposium</p> <p>ICF-CY Webinar (date still to be confirmed)</p>



APPLICATIONS FOR POST GRADUATE DEGREE STUDIES

Should you be interested in studying for the BA Hons (AAC), MA (AAC), M(ECI) or Ph.D (AAC) degrees at the Centre for AAC, University of Pretoria, please contact us for further details at saak@up.ac.za, or tel 012 420 2001.

20th Multi-Professional AAC Research Symposium

The Centre for AAC is hosting the annual research symposium on the 12 October 2012 which is aimed at providing a platform for researchers and practitioners to share the latest research in the field of AAC and disabilities. Entrance is free. Delegates will receive CPD points for attendance. A detailed programme will be sent out on our e-mail lists soon. For more information and to register, please contact Sandy Klopper at 012 420 4190 or 012 420 2001, or email her at sandy.klopper@up.ac.za