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**Centre for Augmentative
and Alternative
Communication**

CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

National Newsletter

Special Edition:

2nd Regional African AAC conference

Welcome to this special edition of the CAAC/Interface newsletter, dedicated to bringing you feedback from the 2nd Regional African AAC conference. Well, what an occasion it was. If you missed it, we hope that this issue can give you a taste of it, an inspire you to come next time! If you were there, you may find some info on sessions you could not attend, get some useful contacts or simply (hopefully) be 're-inspired'.

At the top of my list of impressions and memories from the conference is the positive hum that seemed to characterize the whole conference. Every tea time people from a variety of backgrounds could be seen meeting up, sharing, networking, and just generally enjoying each other's company. Engagement and communication is, of course, a must at a conference on AAC – a field where these skills are high priorities! During presentations, the audience clearly 'lapped up' the information given and the stories shared. Presenters shared on topics that were relevant and inspiring as the lively question time typically proved. The fact that parents, AAC users, researchers, educators and therapists all 'shared the stage' ensured a holistic picture within which AAC could be positioned.

The conference kicked off with a day-long research seminar, followed by the 3-day long main conference. After each morning's plenary, the delegates were able to select presentations from three concurrent strands – education, health and empowerment. Skillshops aimed at practical skills and resource production were presented

More about the research seminar and each of the strands in the pages following.

Apart from the content-related programme, some social events provided more time for getting to know people better (and to discover totally new sides to people whom you thought you knew quite well!), and to have some fun under African skies.

Personally, I felt proud to be part of the African AAC community. Yes, we have challenges (and we can talk about those at length), but many inspirational presentations and personal chats proved to me once again that challenges, on close inspection, are really opportunities. Opportunities for growth, change, innovation and for making a true positive difference. One might perceive this difference to be small, and maybe even insignificant. However, by sharing it with others it has the potential to reach so many more lives.

So, thank you for sharing your successes and your challenges, your wisdom gained through hard work and experience, and your courage and perseverance in making a difference. Keep the flame burning and continue carrying the torch forward.

Kerstin Tönsing, Editor, Centre for AAC



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)

Research Seminar

The conference started with a whole day focussed on research, specifically ***“Ethical Considerations in Disability Research.”*** What is ethical behaviour? Is it only about principles, obligations and or motives? Is it about “going with your gut feeling” ?

One thing that all 60 participants agreed upon was that ethics guides our behaviour and impacts on how we treat one other. Therefore it implies an understanding of how our behaviour impacts on others as well as a process of making ethical judgements. Dr Benda Hofmeyer from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria introduced Emmanuel Levinas, a contemporary French philosopher. Levinas philosophized that because, as humans, we can be affected by others, this makes us uniquely human. Ethical actions therefore ask of us to choose to take our responsibility towards others. We have to acknowledge that we need face-to-face encounters with an inward impact, as these are the encounters that actually change us.

Prof Erna Alant from Indiana University in Bloomington, USA then addressed the topic of “Ethics in Communication”. She expanded on the theories of Levinas and explained that the communication of ethics has to be negotiated between *“the other”* and *“the face”* (who you are). For true communication to take place, one needs an effective announcement (the process of opening up and sharing information) as well as some understanding of the whole communication process. Then one can have true communication or discourse. Without this in place, communication is simply reduced to rhetoric (which is essentially manipulative or self serving) or to eloquence, which seduces the listener in comparison with the straight forwardness of everyday speech. In both rhetoric and eloquence lies the grave danger that “the other” can be silenced, which is, of course, the exact opposite of engagement of “the other” which is an es-



sential part of justice and ethics.

Ms Alida Naude, a lecturer at Medunsa and a PhD in AAC student, acted as respondent to Prof Alant. She explained that ethics should be seen as a process and that as therapists we should also think of our “companionship role” and that intervention should not always be about keeping distance. Hence attitudes and beliefs are brought into the encounter. A lively discussion and debate followed in small groups, before ideas were shared in the larger group.

After agreeing that ethics has implications for research, assessment and intervention, Prof Mats Granlund, from Jönköping University in Sweden brought the issue of ethics a bit closer to the research realm with his paper “Considering risks and benefits for people with disability in research.” He emphasized that research should prove respect for human dignity and that human rights and fundamental liberties must be taken into account. He also justified this by saying that the welfare of individuals should always take precedence over the needs of society. He stressed that a consideration of risks and benefits should be taken during all the different steps of the research process: in identifying participants, in obtaining consent, during data collection, when implementing intervention, when analyzing and storing data and when presenting the results. Following the reply from the respondent and the small group discussions and feedback to the whole group, the fourth session started.

This session “Informed consent: ethical considerations” was presented by Prof Eva Björk-Akesson from Jönköping University in Sweden, who explained that consent was “the process of agreeing to participate in a study based on access to all relevant and easily digestible information about



what participation means, in particular in terms of harms and benefits.” In her presentation five specific issues were highlighted: i) adhering to the needs of the participants, ii) ensuring ongoing consent/assent, iii) handling the relationships that develop during the research process, iv) managing un-anticipated distressing emotions and v) addressing unexpected revelations. In order to account for this, exhaustive documentation is required. Prof Marj Concha from the University of the Witwatersrand responded by explaining the South African context. She highlighted specific factors that restrict a person’s ability to give consent, such as language restrictions, cultural aspects (e.g. the role of the chieftain in rural villages as part of the consent process), the apartheid legacy (e.g. participants who answer in a way they think will please the researcher), as well as judging how much information should be provided in order to give consent.

The last session of the day was presented by Prof Diane Bryen from Temple University in Philadelphia, USA, entitled “Ethical Issues in Conducting Research Involving Persons with Disabilities: A View from the Past and some New Challenges.” This presentation started by showing that vulnerable populations (such as people with disabilities) had been treated in history as convenient research subjects, and that research projects on vaccinations (such as the small pox vaccine and the polio vaccine), sterilization and radiation had all been conducted on people with disabilities before being accepted as “safe practices”. Stigmatization with isolation is a recipe for disaster as this leads to dehumanization putting these groups of people at great risk for inhumane treatment – a lesson from history that we should never forget. Dr Daleen Casteleign from the University of the Witwatersrand, who happened to also be celebrating big birthday (congratulations!), acted as the discussant. She continued on the topic by explaining that today’s society is driven by human rights, and that everybody has these rights, as protected in the South African Constitution. However these laws and codes and declarations will be to no avail if the accompanying attitudes, knowledge and competence do not reflect a deep-rooted respect for human dignity.

At the end of the day, all concluded that if research does not bring answers and real benefits – it is wasted effort. All people, and also those with severe disability have to be provided with opportunities to communicate and the real power of communication lies in being heard.

Prof Juan Bornman, Centre for AAC

Health Strand

The health strand at the 2nd Regional African AAC conference saw approximately 15 presentations over the duration of the main conference. I had the privilege of chairing some of the sessions and I was amazed by the diversity of topics which were presented. I think it was evident to anyone who attended these sessions that the health care professionals who presented their work in the field of disability, must clearly value versatility, adaptability and creativity if they are to provide the quality of service delivery which we saw showcased during these sessions. In this strand we covered issues around theoretical frameworks and systems helpful in understanding and streamlining assessment and intervention efforts; innovative ways of training other medical professionals; the importance of ethical sensitivity in decision-making during intervention and many other topics. Some of the presentations targeted a specific aspect of rehabilitation such as the importance of correct positioning, how to develop a stimulation program to increase cognitive development as well as how to assist parent to facilitate literacy and play in young children with disabilities and provided valuable guidelines to the audience. The presentations are available for download on our website www.caac.up.ac.za so I would strongly encourage you to log on and have a look at the sessions that you were unable to attend!

*Dr Michal Harty
Centre for AAC*

I wish everyone could communicate and be heard in the modality of their choice, by everyone else



Empowerment Strand

Changing the world through the power of me

When you ask the people who attended the 2nd Regional African AAC Conference, their most memorable impression was the positive impact the AAC users made through their presentations. The 1st African Regional AAC Conference was held 9 years ago and there was only one AAC presenter from South Africa. This year we were proud to host 7 South African AAC presenters in the Empowerment Strand. Their stories touched the hearts of all the conference participants and spoke of resilience, courage, and empowerment. Many of the AAC presenters have come through the Fofa empowerment programme for young adults with severe communication disabilities that started 6 years ago at the CAAC, University of Pretoria and therefore our hearts swelled with pride and admiration.



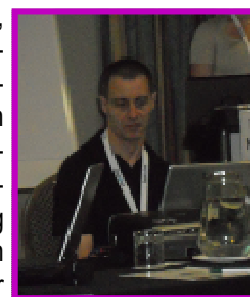
Lesedi Mkgato is a pupil at The Mitchell House in Polokwane and this was his first attendance and presentation at a conference. Dan Ncgobo, Lebogang Sehako, Constance Ntuli and Tsholofelo Phiri are all four participants of the Fofa programme and they gave authentic descriptions of their life journeys. Dan, the man, entertained the audience with his sense of humour and positive outlook on life. Dan is also the President of Interface, a parent support group for AAC users. Lebogang explained how he, Rachel Moseane, and Undine Rauter took the lessons learnt at Fofa and started a similar programme in Gellukspan, Limpopo. Lebogang is a real leader in his community, Kuruman where he is the chairperson of Kgalegadi People with Disabilities. Constance is living in Mamelodi and she is using a nifty little iPod (the cover of which she varies according to the colours of her outfit) as her AAC device. Constance is a real charmer and she is always dressed as if she is going on a million dollar date. This plus her shiny personality makes her an instant winner with the audience. Tsholofelo hails from Krugersdorp and although she is mak-



ing use of 2 switches to scan an alphabet grid, she has already written her life story in a book format. She wants to get it published so that other people with disabilities can see that giving up is not an option! Tsholo is also the lady with the shoes – fashion sense that shames the best of us! Cival Mills is an entrepreneur, artist, writer and sportsman. Besides the two books that he already published, he has an art project and draws the most amazing pieces which are also transferred onto sports caps, aprons and t-shirts. His deep sea diving excursions off the east coast of South Africa are inspiring people with disabilities to set themselves free from their wheelchairs for a while. What an exhilarating experience!



Alan McGregor hails from Scotland, UK. He is an AAC user and he explained the competitive road he travelled with his able bodied twin brother. Experiences like participating in the Paralympics and representing his country in swimming opened doors for him and gave him a positive injection to reach higher levels. Oh, how I remember the evening when we danced till late! Allen is working hard on becoming a composer, using specific software and therefore he appreciated the Karaoke with all the songs from Africa.



The road to become empowered as a person with a disability starts with the family, and here Desirae Pillay, a mother with a child with a disability reminded us of the importance of choice making opportunities and voicing preferences. Her daughter participates in all decision making processes of family activities, thereby facilitating development of empowerment.

Alecia Samuels closed the empowerment strand by presenting the “voices” of the Fofa participants through photographs that they took while on campus. Photos give us the opportunity to see the world through the AAC user’s eyes and are a powerful medium to tell stories without using words. Stories of isolation were highlighted, but the positive attitudes of the participants came through clearly. Humorous photographs made us all laugh – for example Dan next to a stone sculpture of a person’s head with the subscript of “...who do you think has nothing upstairs?”

In conclusion, the golden thread of the empowerment strand was “The fact that I cannot talk, does not mean I have nothing to say”. Congratulations to everyone who participated in this strand and may we hear a lot more of your inspiring stories in future.

Prof Kitty Uys, Centre for AAC

Education Strand

“AAC opens doors for so many, my wish is for even those in the most rural parts of SA to be able to access AAC.” (delegate to 2nd Regional African AAC Conference)

“You’ve opened up a whole new world to me!! Bless you and the wonderful work you do.” (Ethembeni KZN)

Teachers (and other professionals) left the 2nd Regional African AAC Conference with renewed passion to make a difference in the field of AAC at their workplaces. This is because many local and overseas AAC specialists and students shared their knowledge:

Dr. Annalu Waller, a senior lecturer at the School of Computing at the Dundee University in Scotland gave a very interesting lecture on the future possibilities of the use of the computer by children in need of AAC. Belinda Bukhari shared her story of implementing AAC in her country, Ghana, with us.

Dr. Margi Lilienfield reiterated the importance to never give up hope when she told the story of the a little girl who was in an accident and her journey from a deep coma to classroom achiever. The importance of collaboration between the mother, teacher, therapists and AAC specialists was highlighted during this presentation. Dr Lilienfield also discussed how educator training can promote the inclusion of learners requiring AAC in the classroom. Another presenter, Dr. Gillian Lloyd, discussed how teachers can support learners with chronic illness to cope at school, whereas Mrs Lauren Butler introduced an transitioning planning programme which was developed for children with cerebral palsy in the Eastern Cape.

Successful implementation of AAC in schools was also addressed by speakers from different schools in South Africa. The support of the Centre for AAC in this process was also underlined.

Students, Kerstin Tonsing (PhD), Magdel de Klerk (PhD), Shaheenda Boda (MA AAC) and Nolette Maré (MA AAC) discussed their research findings with us in such a manner that each delegate could learn from it and implement some of the findings at their workplaces.

Two successful skill shops were done, one on book adaptations for AAC users by the teachers at the CAAC and another one on the use of graphic and manual symbols in classrooms for learners with autism spectrum disorders.

We cannot summarize the influence of the conference better than Edith, one of the delegates: *“The AAC conference and presenters succeeded to open eyes, bring about mind shifts, unlock ideas - bridging gaps, unchaining possibilities ... Wow, amazing.”*

Ensa Johnson
Centre for AAC

Cocktail Evening and Gala Din-

After the hectic days at the conference, we tried to focus on relaxing and having a bit of fun during the evenings. The conference cocktail was held on Tuesday evening in a lovely venue, made even more appealing by Dr. Cival Mills’ exhibition of his artwork entitled “An attempt to shift perceptions about communication.” Cival states about his artwork:

By June 2010, nine and a half years since my accident, I had written two books in an effort to keep me sane...but it was not enough. There were images, and fantasies, and experiences that I could not express in words. These images and fantasies and experiences also needed to be shared so I started to use some coal and white paper to unleash them from my mind. I am not a writer, I am not a painter, I am not really an artist; locked into my own body I create with the two fingers of my left hand. Motionless and without a voice I am still a man on the move.

For more information on Dr. Cival Mills, please see his website: www.civalmills.co.za/

On Wednesday evening, the gala dinner was held. The theme was “A night under African skies,” but also may have been called “A hilarious night with a karaoke machine.” That’s right; the entertainment was well...ourselves! Perhaps some of us were a bit sceptical at first, but by the end of the evening the attendees agreed that all gala dinners should include a karaoke machine. It was indeed a night to remember!

Dana Donohue, Centre for AAC



Feedback from Delegates and Presenters

Prof Erna Alant, USA



Congratulations to all who participated in the AAC conference on a most interesting and successful event. The four days of the conference were organized, planned and executed in a highly professional and competent way. It is indeed difficult to fully understand how a couple of staff members at the CAAC and the rest of the AAC community in SA are able to sustain this fine quality of work!

The introductory remarks by Bishop Tutu were most touching and relevant. The Opening by Prof Cheryl de la Rey, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Pretoria, reflected great support and understanding of the complexities surrounding the implementation of the mission of AAC in South Africa and in particular, the position of the CAAC within this mission.

This is my third year of work at Indiana University, which gives me some distance from my involvement with the AAC community in South Africa. It is against this background that I would like to make the following comments:

The energy with which the AAC community in South Africa continues to engage with communities and their own students is reflected in amazing progress in AAC implementation within rural areas and other schools in the country. The new programs being implemented by Pathway Schools and other similar centres are humbling, to say the least.

The impact that the project "Fofa" has made was clearly visible in the separate strand of the conference dedicated to these young AAC users and their families and to "give them a voice." I sat there listening to quite a few of these presentations, and knowing where most of the AAC users had started from around six years ago I could hardly believe the level of empowerment they have achieved.

The quality of the students' research as reflected in the posters was also most revealing. As the adjudicator of the posters,



I must admit this was a daunting task. I can only congratulate all the supervisors and the students for the fine thinking and professional manner in which these posters were presented and developed.

In conclusion, I felt very proud to be still associated in some way with the AAC community and the CAAC – and in particular with the impact it is making into the communities in our country. The international AAC community is most fortunate to have this group as part of the activities of the International Society of AAC (ISAAC).

The next ISAAC Conference is in 2012 and I sincerely hope that a significant number of South Africans (professionals and AAC users) will be there to showcase their work. See you there!

*Erna Alant (D.Phil)
President
International Society for AAC (ISAAC)*

Prof Diane Bryen, USA

After a few months of preparing for the pre-conference research seminar and the main conference, my colleague from Israel and I arrived at Boksburg, SA. I traveled from the US to Israel, and then to Pretoria, and to Cape Town, and finally to the conference site near Johannesburg. My first response was how large the conference center, Birchwood, had grown since the first conference. I was somewhat anxious that the intimacy and networking of the conference would be hampered by the vastness of Birchwood. I was certainly wrong about that.

The research seminar on Ethics and Research involving people with disabilities was powerful. As a presenter, not only did I have a chance to hear the reactions from others, but to learn from others as well. I personally loved the challenging and important topic focused on Ethics in Research. What's more, the format of the seminar was great: Four 30 minute presentations with each presentation followed by a reaction paper posing 4 questions to which small groups responded and then shared with the whole group. The information along with the sharing of ideas was personally and professionally fulfilling.

As we registered for the main conference, friends greeted friends. The conference area was filled with professionals from SA, from Sweden, from the US, Scotland, from Israel and from Ghana. But more striking to me was the number of conference delegates who use AAC. What a difference from the 1st Regional Conference where only one or two individuals who use AAC were in attendance. I could see how far AAC had come in South Africa. I couldn't help feeling pride in all the new and bold voices that were to be heard throughout the conference.

As I reflect on the conference, here are a few of my most vivid and favorite memories:

- The cool mornings and the beautiful blue African sky welcoming us;
- The opening session with Wave Your Flag, CAAC staff welcoming us with their visible South African Scarves, and Archbishop Tutu's videotaped welcome to the delegates (PLEASE, make his speech available to all by either posting it on your website or as a YouTube video);
- Reconnecting with FOFA participants and attending most of their powerful presentations;
- Spending precious time with my friend and colleague, Graham Clarke;
- Making new friends (especially with Ruth from SA, Annalu from Scotland, and Belinda from Ghana) and reconnecting with friends that I rarely have the chance to spend time with (especially Maureen, Munyani, Margi, and Erna);
- Dancing and singing ala Karaoke one evening;
- Diverse and interesting sessions presented by educators, researchers, parents, SLPs, and people who use AAC; and
- Finally, watching the wonderful staff of the CAAC constantly in action. What an amazing group. I feel blessed to know them.



Alecia Samuels stated in her presentation, "a picture is worth a thousand words." I agree fully with her, so I would like to share a few visual favorites of mine from the conference.

Happy Birthday, CAAC!! I look forward to the next conference and your next chapter.

Diane Nelson Bryen, Professor Emerita, Temple University

Dr Glenn Goldblum, SA

Dear Juan

Just a note (as I set off to the bush with my overseas family) to thank you and your exceptional team for a really special, thought-provoking day yesterday. So well organized, hospitable, and the quality of the papers were absolutely superb, developing our thinking, through a lot of participation about ethical issues from a theoretical to practical perspective. It was an outstanding day of ethics – with a very constructive format, with very relevant content for all participants across the diverse range of work contexts.

You and your team can be proud. I'm sure the remainder of the conference is going to be just as superb.

Dr Glenn Goldblum,



Graham Clarke, SA

Although the death of my dear mother numbed my experience of the 2nd Regional African AAC conference to a degree, it was great being with users, therapists, parents and interested parties again. I was amazed to see so many users using their AAC devices and, using them so well too. Obviously, I concentrated on attending lectures given by the users themselves, but, glancing through the three day programme, a wide range of lectures were offered.

I would like to thank all those people and organisations that were involved in getting me up to attending the conference. It is much appreciated.

Graham Clarke, AAC user



May you continue to bless SA with communication and learning. Kirsty

Sarie Odendaal, SA

Baie geluk met 'n duidelik suksesvolle kongres wat julle aangebied het!

Ons het dit baie geniet om ook deel daarvan te wees.

Wat 'n ongelooflike omgewing is die AAC nie. Julle doen inspirerende werk. Welgedaan.

Sarie Odendaal

Interface KZN: Experiencing the 2nd Regional African AAC Conference 2011

It was a great privilege for me personally to be surrounded by people from all different spheres and walks of life. People with different professions, backgrounds and cultures, all with the common theme: being passionate about AAC.

People's passion was not of a 'medical nature', driven by trying to find out what is wrong. Not that that is necessarily a bad thing as anyone who has had the source of their pain determined can attest. But neither were they passionate in a socially obligatory way giving off the feeling that it was simply because "well, we really ought to". I did not find a person who judged a person's ability to communicate based on their disability or diagnosis; rather I found people passionate about AAC in a way that speaks entirely of being human. An attitude that says, "we want to know you, who are you? Let's find a way so that we can talk."

Spread over the three broad themes of Empowerment, Education and Health; there were lectures, seminars, personal stories and 'skillsshops'. Each of these presented a wealth of



information, new knowledge, or explorations of old knowledge. A story of another's 'empowerment' leaves us empowered. Some presented new technologies, others new methods of getting old knowledge across. It was about client centred practice; about core vocabulary; about Minspeak versus Proloquo2go; it was about challenging behaviour; about literacy, early literacy, manual signs and inclusion; about Pixon, PCS, parents and grandparents; it was about ethical issues, abuse and protection issues. But it was amongst all of these terms, technological advances, concepts and methods that one thing became clear; there is a beauty to the simple philosophy of finding the thing that works and doing that.

Interface KZN had assembled for display an array of paper based AAC boards and books all in the most used language of our province, isiZulu. The great challenge any AAC user, whose language is perhaps not in a global majority, became apparent, I think, by the looks of dawning comprehension on people's faces as I explained to them that these were for use in an isiZulu context.

To be unable to speak in itself already an alienating factor – how disheartening then when, once having found a method of expression, the very people with whom you most desperately want to talk do not understand the language of the system you use. In KZN we have multi-faceted challenges - I suppose much like the rest of the country and of the developing world, not only in a variety of languages but also in literacy of the general population making speech output devices all the more important. Now if only these could speak how we speak!

*Mrs Jocelyn Mngomezulu
Occupational Therapist, Interface KZN.*

**Thank you for the valuable conference!
It was informative and inspiring! Elsie**

Congratulations! Well done on a wonderfully organized conference. Feel very motivated & inspired! Val

Download the conference presentations from the CAAC website at <http://tinyurl.com/conference-presentations>



Thank you's

Exhibitors



A conference is not a true conference without exhibitors! We were privileged to have 12 exhibitors from all over the country who exhibited their products. Delegates thus had the opportunity to browse between the tables, spend a few rand or just get some information on the latest products. These products ranged from high technology equipment such as the eye tracker (Inclusive Solutions) and the Smart Board (Edit Microsystems), to low technology products made by hard working and committed staff members or even some of the AAC users themselves. Thank you to all the following exhibitors who added value to the AAC conference by exhibiting their products:

Inclusive Solutions: Ed & Lisa Ellis;
ed@inclusivesolutions.co.za

Edit Microsystems: Pieter & Jenny Labuschagne;
jenny@editmicro.co.za

Shona quip: Ruth Stubbs & Lindsay Brown;
ruth@shonaquip.co.za

AAC4AFRICA: Elmarie van der Merwe;
aac4africa@yahoo.com

SASHLA: Erika Bostok & Kirsty Pullin;
admin@sasla.co.za; erikaB@social.mpu.gov.za

Down syndrome South Africa: Roxanne Scholtz;
Dssa.odo@icon.co.za

Pathways Pretoria: Tammy Greyling & Danita Nel;
tammyot@mweb.co.za; danitanel@yahoo.com

Interface Kwa-Zulu Natal: Margi Lilienfeld & Jocelyn Mngomezulu;
ifacekzn@saol.com

Opkyk Pathways therapy and Educational Centre: Drika Kruger;
opkykpathways@vodamail.co.za

The Purpose: Paula Louw; Paulalouw1@gmail.com

Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication: liezl.maasdorp@up.ac.za

Margi Lilienfeld from Interface KwaZulu Natal also handled the SILENT AUCTION, where delegates could bid on certain products. Margi, who was a presenter, exhibitor and delegate, had the following to say about the conference:

"In a word: "fascinating". The diverse topics represented the enormous depth of the field of AAC. There was so much to learn; from the inspirational presentations by "AAC consumers" to challenging topics including abuse and disabilities, supporting chronically ill learners to exciting developments in eye gaze technology. A highly professional conference yet made so enjoyable by the special touches added by the CAAC staff".

*Enid Moolman
Centre for AAC*



Thank you to our sponsors

A conference is wonderful....inspiring.... exciting.... and one of the great things about it is the take home goodie bag! The Centre for AAC would like to thank the following companies for sponsoring our lanyards, conference bags and/or some of the lovely contents such as magazines, notebooks, pens and posted notes:

Audio Medi Hi-tech (AMHT)

Autism South Africa

Bestmed

Baba en Kleuter

Rolling Inspiration

Spar

We (and all the delegates) truly appreciate your generosity!

*Conny Simelane
Centre for AAC*



To the delegates, and sponsors of delegates

Last but not least.....

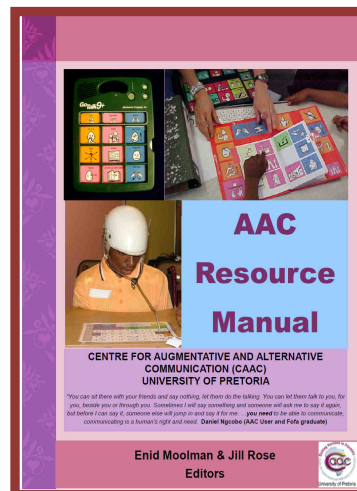
THANK YOU TO ALL OUR WONDERFUL DELEGATES!! Without you, the conference would never have happened. Thank you for finding the time and money to journey all the way to Birchwood - in days when many budgets are tight. It speaks of your commitment and dedication. We would especially like to thank the following departments for sponsoring delegates who would not have been able to afford to attend otherwise:

- National Department of Health
- Gauteng Department of Education
- Northern Cape Department of Education
- KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

So, to all our old and new friends – thank you for coming and hope to see you again!



AAC Resource Manual



In celebration of the Centre for AAC's 21st birthday, the Centre staff in collaboration with other AAC professionals, published the AAC resource manual.

Easy-to use AAC information and tools that are appropriate for the South African context are sorely needed amongst families and professionals working with people with severe communication problems. Clients and service providers that are situated in remote areas often cannot access support services easily. The AAC resource manual (in electronic and hard copy format) was specifically developed to provide a 'portable', easily accessed resource for families and professionals who are involved in AAC intervention. The manual covers 67 themes around AAC strategies, techniques, devices and resources in user-friendly summaries of 4-5 pages each. This format also allows continuous updating of information.

The manual was launched at the 2nd Regional African AAC Conference, and will hopefully become a useful tool in the toolkit of families and AAC service providers.

Prof Erna Alant, president of the International Society for AAC, commented on the manual as follows: *"I would like to congratulate the Centre for AAC team for an excellent product and can only hope that this manual will find its way into the hands of all those in need of this message and guidance."*

The manual is available on order from the CAAC at the following prices (excluding postage and packaging):

CD	R 230.00
Black-and white copy	R 330.00

AAC. THE TORCH that has been that has been hindered to show light. Light up

Cutting the cake!

During the last day of the 2nd Regional African AAC Conference, we also celebrated the 21st birthday of the Centre for AAC.

Being able to look back at 21 years is an amazing privilege. We, as the current staff of the Centre, are filled with gratitude – towards the pioneers who have gone before us, on whose shoulders we can stand today; towards the AAC users and their families, who have inspired us and taught us so many things; towards our students, who keep us on our toes; towards our colleagues and friends, national and international, who have freely shared their expertise and their support; and towards all the wonderful service providers out there who are doing the hard work of implementing AAC. All these people have been part of getting us to where we are today! We trust and hope that we will be granted the privilege to continue to live out our passion of helping the voiceless find their voice, and ensuring that every South African with little or no functional speech can find a way to speak up and speak out.



Happy Birthday. Thanks 4 all the lives you have changed and the hard work. Dedree (NC)

A winning TEAM. Happy B-Day. Salla



For your diary...

October is AAC awareness month...

So join us as we **WALK FOR A VOICE** to create awareness of Augmentative and Alternative Communication!

When: 21 October 2011

Time: 10h00 – 12h00

Starting point: Centre for AAC, University of Pretoria

The walk will be a 2.2km wheel-chair friendly route on Campus.

Refreshments will be provided.

RSVP: 14 October 2011

saak@up.ac.za

Tel: 012 420 2001

Inspired by the 2nd Regional African AAC Conference?

Then save this date:

ISAAC 2012 July 24 - August 4, 2012

Would you like to get acquainted with the international AAC community? Catch up on the latest in AAC practice and research from around the world? Share your own practice experience or research in the field of AAC? Then the 15th Biennial Conference of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) is for you. This event will take place in Pittsburgh, PA, US July 24 - August 4, 2012.

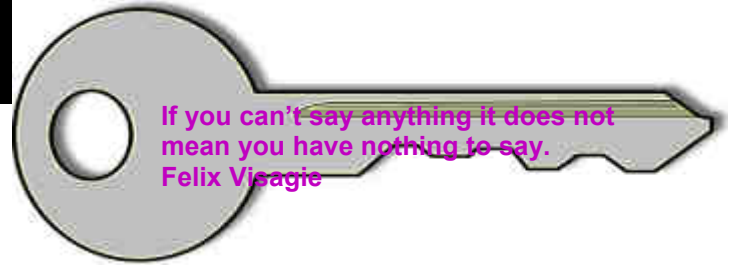
ISAAC's mission is that people anywhere in the world who communicate with little or no speech deserve to achieve the most effective communication possible in order to achieve their maximum potential. Join the thousands of members in 60 countries from the 15 ISAAC Chapters who are working together to accomplish our mission.

Registration opens 4 October 2011. **Early Bird registration** at a reduced fee closes on 31 January 2012. Note that ISAAC members register at a reduced fee – so consider joining ISAAC! For information on how to join, go to http://www.isaac-online.org/en/about/how_to.php.

The submission deadline for the **call for papers** is 1 November 2011.

More info at <http://www.isaac2012.org/>

To get updates, Like this Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Isaac-2012-Pittsburgh/143324919049372>



APPLICATIONS FOR POST GRADUATE DEGREE STUDIES

Should you be interested in studying for the BA Hons (AAC), MA (AAC) or M(ECI) 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.