



In Memory of Anne Warrick,  
Speech Language Pathologist,  
In Recognition of her Dedication to  
Communicating with the  
Children of OCTC



***A Blissful Quilt for Annie***

**Created for Helen Anne Warrick – 1933-2014**

By

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## Blissymbolics on Annie's Quilt



In the Fall of 2012 a group of friends and colleagues came together to make a quilt for Anne Warrick. It was intended to keep her warm and cosy while she was having chemo treatment and as a testament of our friendship and support.

The theme of the quilt had to be related to Blissymbolics, as Anne was one of the international driving forces behind the use of Blissymbolics to facilitate authentic communication for non-verbal children. We chose symbols that represented Anne in every aspect of her life.

Our special thanks to Blanche Dunn from Victoria's Quilts, who searched the piles of materials in her basement and donated the ones you see in Annie's Quilt, and to OCTC for accepting the quilt in recognition of Anne's dedication to the children of the OCTC.

## Therapist - Jorge Almeida's Story

# The Treatment Centre

When I was 4, I started school. My school was at the Treatment Centre beside the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

I was lucky because I had a good therapist. Her name was Ann Warrick. We tried a talking machine that was a circle with bliss. We made my first bliss board. I would use my thumb to point to words. Thanks to her I can communicate today.

I had two friends and their names were Liz and Chantal. We had lots of fun together. I still keep in contact with Liz today but sadly, Chantal has left this earth.

Our class went on two trips: one was to Disney World for a week and the other was to Toronto for four days. On the first trip, we flew to Disney World and we met with many teenagers in wheelchairs in a park and we ate and played games with them.

On the second trip, our class went by bus to Toronto and we went to the zoo where we saw many animals.

## Talking

I do not speak so I need a talking machine or a word board to talk.

When I was five I had my first Bliss board. My speech therapist Ann made my first board. I liked the board that she made for me. Later on, when I needed a new board I would help her.

This is how we went about making a Bliss board: We needed to know all the words that I needed for my Bliss board. We had to put all the words and Bliss symbols in their places on the board. If I needed a word and there was no Bliss symbol for that word, we had to make it up. If the word was hamburger we would put bread and meat as one Bliss symbol. We had fun with that. After all the words were in their places, we colored the Bliss board. Here are the colors: people were yellow, feelings were blue, questions and time words were white. There we had a Bliss board!

I did good work. I kept getting 80 or 90 in school. Just think how good I would be if I had had a talking machine that worked back then. I did not answer the teacher much because I was slow to answer. My teacher could not wait for my answer; most days I did not answer a question even if I knew the answer.

# Teacher

When I joined the speech therapy department at OCTC in 1981, I had much to learn about Blissymbolics and augmentative communication. There were books and seminars and I did learn many interesting and helpful things.

What Anne had to teach me was not available in books or seminars.

Anne exemplified what it means to be a therapist, both in her professional skills and her connection to her students. She left no stone unturned in her dedication to exploring all possibilities, from prototype eye-brow switches, eye-gaze frames, custom switches for toys, blissymbols and other systems - any and all means to enable the kids to express themselves.

I once saw one of the older students arrive at Anne's office, terribly upset about something that had happened at home. Anne took charge, with a smile and a "Come in, we'll sort it out." It took quite a while for the distraught girl to tell the complicated story by pointing to the blissymbols on her board. Anne waited until the story was told and then offered sympathy and sensible advice. It was inspiring to see how this child trusted and knew that Anne would be a patient and respectful sounding board.

Anne was a wonderful teacher for me, and an extraordinary therapist for her kids.

*Cynthia Field-Rose*



# Leader

It started like so many other great ideas, as a seed, a sort of project that goes beyond what you might have imagined when you first began. Anne worked in a practical, creative and down to earth manner; she was a problem solver who was extremely dedicated to using Blissymbolics to facilitate authentic communication for non-verbal children. So when Anne planned therapy sessions for a small group of Blissymbolics users they were always fun and lent themselves to unique communication opportunities. The children were always coming back to class with riddles and jokes.

It was no surprise when Anne and the children began to prepare for a mock trip to Disney World. Anne's work with this group of children and the rest of the team was so successful that each child had developed their own characteristic style of combining basic Blissymbols into more complex and abstract ideas. Since the children were becoming quite adept at using their Blissymbols to communicate their thoughts in this unique way of combining basic symbols into complex and novel thoughts, the sky was the limit for communication. They could say almost anything to anyone who would take the time to "listen".

So one day when Anne Warrick came into Joan MacGillis' classroom to report on what the kids were up to, one of them said, "why don't we do it for real" and the other one, without pausing a second said "why not", the mock planning became the real deal. That was so Anne-- no problem was ever insurmountable. There was always a way. In a matter of days the whole therapy and education team at OCTC where on board and together with their families' blessings it was full steam ahead. The children now had a full year of authentic communication opportunities before them as they planned their trip to Disney World. There were letters to write, research to do, fundraising to plan, transportation challenges to overcome and problems to solve but with the whole team on board, that group of six

students and seven staff members did in fact climb onto an airplane and go to Disney World, Florida for a week. The trip was just like Anne, the real deal.

*Lisa Donaldson and Barb Kates*

Everyone who knew Anne recognized how generous she was. My example is one of many.

In the early '80s, I was asked to see a youngster who had lost his voice. The psychologist knew that the boy was depressed and wondered if there was an augmentative communication system that could be of use. Some of you may recognize the client I'm talking about because the story was published in the Ottawa Citizen.

Not only had this boy lost his voice but he had very limited movement. In fact, resting his forearm on a surface he could only move his right index finger inchworm-like very slowly and only for short distances.

At that time, voice output technology was just getting started. A representative from Phonic Ear came to OCTC to show us the newest products. Anne and I were very excited about the new technology.

I told the rep that our client would be a perfect fit for one of the devices. He was willing to let the client use it for a three-month trial period. The Assistive Devices Program (ADP) was being developed but had not yet been launched. When the trial period ended, the rep agreed to another 3 months as our client was actually discovering glitches in the system, which allowed Phonic Ear to improve its performance.

As the 6 month trial period was ending, I hoped that the Assistive Devices Program would give us the go ahead to lease the device. ADP said that the program would purchase the device when they opened but could not lease it. Phonic Ear said the client could

have it for \$500 until ADP came online. In those days, \$500 was way out of my reach. But guess who gave me a \$500 check to make sure that that young man didn't lose his voice again – Anne. I will always miss her.

*Nan Dauphine, Asheville, NC*

I first met Anne at a "think tank" about non-speech communication in the early 80s. I knew nobody at the event and felt very intimidated. Anne took me under her wing and I stayed there for 30 years! At that first meeting Anne told me about her work with Sudha and I was hooked. Two years later, Anne connected me with the Ghandi family in Jamshedpur and from there I met Sudha and her wonderful team who have been in my life ever since.

I remember the early days of AAC in Kolkata. Anne positioning a child to select pictures on a wheelchair tray; playing and pointing to Blissymbols on a board; laughing, smiling, encouraging and all the time teaching others to do as she did. I remember well the ISAAC Conference in Kolkata. Anne sat in the front row beaming with pride as Indian Institute for Cerebral Palsy (IICP) hosted AAC leaders from around the world at the first AAC conference in Asia. Years later, we delighted in seeing Kolkata's AAC users, teachers and clinicians taking their rightful place alongside the international AAC leadership.

A few months before she passed, Anne gave me a lovely statue of Krishna, which she received from the children of IICP on her visit. I cherish it and keep it on my desk to remind me of Anne, India and what really matters in AAC.

Anne gave a voice to so many people. However she went far beyond that. Like a good relay runner, she masterly passed on her baton to the next person so that we can continue to do her work. I believe that is Anne's legacy to all of us.

*Barbara Collier, Toronto*



# Strong

Anne was my colleague and friend almost from the first day we met in 1967. It was over lunch in the hospital cafeteria and she was so welcoming and interested in my new job. It was only later that I learned she had recently lost her arm and was there that day to look at a prosthesis. My thought even then was that this was a very strong woman.

She was physically strong. She wanted to see if she could still play tennis with her single arm, and she asked me to take her to a tennis court early in the day when there would not be spectators. We did, and it soon became apparent that Anne, with one arm, could beat me over and over again, once she'd figured out a way to serve. On a similar note, just weeks before she died, she wanted to try out a new form of tennis and badminton. So we put up the net in a school yard and we played. Again Anne could outplay me with her drop shots!

Anne was strong in her beliefs. She was passionate in believing that OCTC children should be given as many opportunities as other children, beginning with their right to communicate. This belief extended to other centres around the world. She would set out road maps for administrations to consider and follow for the benefit of OCTC children. She was way ahead of all of us in her thinking and her vision.

Anne was also strong in her ability to love. She loved and was so proud of her family and had such a special place for her grandchildren. The children at OCTC were really an extended family to her and she loved them and each of their successes.

She was committed to all her friends and would take their concerns to heart. Throughout her battle with cancer, she always wanted to know updates about each of us. It was sometimes difficult to get to ask about her health. She would much rather focus on you. At one point I was having an issue with a member

of my family. Anne took the time to email me a list of suggestions – all very pragmatic and caring, as you would expect from Anne.

Her determination, courage and strength brought hope to all who knew her. She is missed.

*Sally Lees*

## **Friend**

If Anne were writing this for one of her friends, it would be in verse. She was our poet laureate of all special events, birthdays and anniversaries. Combining a sense of humour with writing talent she could be relied on to hit the nail on the head every time and entertain us.

Between squash games and long walks we had years of friendship, adventures and fun.

Anne was the friend who you always knew would be there for you when needed and who can ask for more than that?

*Jane Beaumont*

I'd known Anne for over 40 years as a fellow 'rugby-wife' as our husbands played for the same team, but it was 11 years ago that we became close friends on a shared trip to Iqaluit. Her awareness of a young child in the room and her ability to engage that child completely was remarkable - it was as though her antennae went up - 'shall we see what I have in my bag?'. Her energy, openness to other people's situations, sense of humour and overall interest in life around her made her a friend to be treasured.

*Alison Ivey*

I first saw Anne the weekend that we had come up to Ottawa to find a house and look at Squash Clubs. My husband had been offered a job here.

We were driving down Donald Street to the Rideau Squash Club and saw a woman walking towards the club house carrying a racquet bag with her one arm. We were amazed and wondered how she would be able to play. I was soon to find out.

I started to work as a Physiotherapist at the Treatment Centre and was introduced to Anne the Speech Therapist. She had seen my name on the ladder at the Rideau and asked me would I like to play a game with her. I agreed but it was with a little trepidation that I went to the club as to how we would play.

No problems - Anne showed me exactly what she wanted me to do without saying a word. She threw the ball up in the air and hit it back to me and when it fell on the ground, she put out her racquet and I placed the ball on it. We had a very good match and I thoroughly enjoyed our game. We went up to the bar and each had a beer and then decided to share another one! We played every Tuesday after that and our husbands joined us. We continued to have our bottle and a half of beers after every game.

Anne was amazing what she could do with just one hand. She always put people at their ease by holding out her left hand when meeting people as she expected them to shake her hand. She joked about her coat being the only one in the closet with a pinned up right sleeve.

After she moved to Toronto with her husband we spent many weekends with them in Toronto and they often came up to our cottage in the Gatineau in the summer. Anne introduced us to cruising when we went over to Barcelona on a repositioning cruise. She was a wonderful friend and is missed.

*Jill Nowell*

***Inspired by Victoria's Quilts***

*"Be strong and of good courage,*

*Do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord is with you,  
Wherever you go."*

**Joshua 1:9**

**Who is Victoria?**

**Victoria Ann Morrison was a wife, mother, grandmother, and the best friend of Deborah Rogers, the founder of Victoria's Quilts in the United States. She was also a cancer patient. One of the comments she made about her chemotherapy was that she got cold while she was laying in the treatment facility waiting for the day's infusion to be over.**

Deborah remembered Victoria's comment about being cold and wanted to do something. Since Victoria made so many quilts in her life time, Deb thought that this would be a good place to start. Victoria took the fear out of quilting. She said, "People aren't perfect – why do quilts have to be?" Out of this grew Victoria's Quilts.

**Victoria's Quilts Canada's mission is to provide handmade quilts to people with cancer in Canada.**

By providing these quilts, we hope to bring physical comfort to those dealing with cancer as well as a spiritual comfort in knowing that they are not alone in their struggle.

<http://www.victoriasquiltsCanada.com/>