

December 18, 2019

Dear USSAAC member:

Happy holidays from USSAAC's Board of Directors and volunteers!

We have had a great year of continued successes. The Education and Ethics committee continued to provide excellent webinars on a range of topics from speakers around the world. Members of the Disaster Relief Committee continued to support individuals and families who use AAC in areas hit by disasters and to provide presentations, locally, regionally, and nationally. Our editors for the SpeakUp! blog continued to post stories from individuals who use AAC and information from professionals who work in the field. Members of the Advocacy Committee continue to advocate for people who use AAC and their families and spearhead efforts to stop AAC certification. USSAAC's position on AAC certification can be found at

<https://www.stopaaccertification.org/stop-aac-specialty-certification/ussaac-opposition-statement/>. The Membership Committee worked hard to maintain and diversify our membership. Members of the AAC Awareness Committee organized a variety of events to promote AAC awareness month.

USSAAC thanks **Vicki Haddix**, Director, Public Information for her contributions to USSAAC's Board over the past several years. Vicki helped to overhaul USSAAC's website to make it accessible and user friendly. Thank you Vicki! We know we can count on your continued support!

We also want to welcome our new Board member, **Lois Jean Brady**, who will serve as the new Director, Public Information. Lois is CEO of iTherapy, LLC. She is a practicing Speech-Language Pathologist, Certified Autism Specialist (CAS) and Assistive Technology Specialist. She is a recipient of a National Science Foundation/Small Business Research and Innovation (NSF/SBIR) Grant, National Institutes of Health (NIH) and winner of three assistive technology Hack-a-thons, the Benjamin Franklin Award for Apps for Autism and an Ursula Award for Autism TodayTV. She also partnered with Microsoft to add features of artificial intelligence (AI) to the InnerVoice Communication App. Lois is currently a member of USSAAC's Disaster Relief Committee, the Board of Directors for the California Communications Access Foundation, and the Board of Advisors for the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards. Congratulations Lois!

Stephanie Meehan will continue her position as Director, Professional Affairs, and **Tracy Rackensberger** will continue her role as VP, People who

use AAC and their Families. Also elected were **Amy Goldman** as President-Elect and Sarah Blackstone as VP, Finance. **Yoo Sun Chung** will assume the role as President and I will take the position of Past President.

Mark your calendars! We have many exciting events happening in the new year, including the 2020 ISAAC Conference (August 3-6) in Cancun, Mexico.

Other important dates to remember are:

December 31: The deadline to renew your membership AND be included in a drawing for a free registration to ATIA 2021. Renew your membership here at <http://www.ussaac.org/membership>. ISAAC International will continue to manage USSAAC membership sign-up and renewal through ISAAC International's secure web membership system. As ISAAC International is based in Toronto, Canada, all payments will be processed in Canadian dollars.

January 1: The beginning of our new USSAAC "year".

January 30: Please join us for a membership "meet up" at ATIA led by Yoosun Chung, incoming USSAAC president, on Thursday, January 30, from 5:30 - 6:15 in Boca V. And remember, if you have not registered yet, ATIA is extending its discount for USSAAC members up until the conference begins.

As my term draws to a close, I feel indebted to members of the USSAAC Board who are so dedicated to advancing the needs and rights of individuals who use AAC. My heart is filled with gratitude, and I only wish I could thank everyone personally!

"To the dull mind, all nature is leaden. To the illumined mind, the whole world ... sparkles with light." ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

May this season sparkle with light for you and yours!

Sincerely,

Wendy Quach

President, USSAAC