

# THE ISAAC COMMUNICATOR

September 2021

## Message from the ISAAC President

**Juan Bornman**

Dear ISAAC-Family,

*"We had joy, we had fun, we had seasons in the sun..."*

Terry Jacks first sang these lyrics in 1974, followed by Westlife in 1999, Nirvana in 2004 and now in 2021 it is our turn!

September is the month when seasons change. Some of us are still embracing **Summer** as we feel energized and content to witness new life unfolding in the intense green of the leaves. Some of us are trying to spend the most amount of time outdoors to feel and to savour the warm sun on our shoulders.

Others of us are embracing **Autumn**, as the chillier days remind us that it is a season to prepare for the coming winter, to make the most of the last rays of sunlight and to watch in awe as the leaves turn to gold. Some of us will need to drop dead leaves – but some of us might sprig new branches.

No matter the season, this is the time to be aware of constant change and that just like the seasons, we are also

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**isaac**  
International Society for  
Augmentative and Alternative Communication

## Message from the ISAAC President ...continued

forever changing. It is the season to reflect. Reimagine. Reboot. Restore.

Therefore, it is no surprise that in ISAAC we also saw change with the inaugural ISAAC Connect event – and boy, did we have fun! It was truly a time for embracing and celebrating the new opportunities that the COVID-19 pandemic had brought to the table. We were able to connect in new ways and offer those not been able to attend a live ISAAC event in the past, a taste of why it is so special when the ISAAC family gets together!

September also leads us to October – and everyone know that that October is synonymous with **AAC Awareness month!** This is the most important month on our calendar as we aim to break stereotypes and overcome preconceptions regarding AAC. It is when we collectively aim to create a better understanding of what AAC is. It is not merely a strategy or a method or a system – **it is a voice.**

The Oxford English Dictionary describes “voice” as “*sound formed in larynx etc., and uttered by mouth.*” This definition is a perfect example of how inadequate dictionary definitions are! We all know that having a voice is much more than that! Voice gives power and agency when individuals realize that what they have to say has value. Voice

builds confidence – it is a way to express beliefs and to resolve conflict. It’s so much more than just expressing wants and needs!



In Africa, we have a saying that birds sing not because they have answers but because they have songs. Let that be true for every ISAAC member too. Let us all sing the song that fits our unique voice. I am looking forward to seeing how members from all over the world will interpret AAC Awareness Month and all the creative ideas that arise! Our October AAC Awareness campaigns also provide the perfect backdrop to the United Nation’s annual Disability Awareness Month in November with the fitting theme, *“Removing barriers to create an inclusive and accessible society for all.”*

Life is full of seasons. Nothing remains constant – in fact, it has often been said that the only constant thing in life is change. The fall of dry leaves act as a signal to the incoming green ones, so make every moment of your life count! Fight for the things that bring you joy! The sunset of every season brings the promise of a new dawn in the next season. Therefore, irrespective of what season you find yourself in, may you be able to reflect and exclaim with wonder: *“We had joy, we had fun , we had seasons in the sun...”*

*Juan*

[Juan Bornman](#)

ISAAC President 2020 -2022

# From the Executive Director

**Franklin Smith**

Welcome to the September 2021 edition of The ISAAC Communicator.

“The only constant in life is change.”

These oft quoted words are first attributed to Heraclitus, a pre-Socratic philosopher of ancient Greece who lived over 2,600 years ago.

These words have significant meaning to me today, given the very nature of the lives that we are all trying to lead, and the obstacles that each one of us face, whether they are personal, business, academic, or a combination of these and many others.

This is why it is critically important to celebrate every success and achievement, and I am pleased to advise that there is much for ISAAC to celebrate.

## **ISAAC Connect**

ISAAC Connect was a tremendous success!

With final registrations and attendance reaching over 500, ISAAC Connect was able to reach all continents around the world (except Antarctica),

including the following



countries/territories: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea (Republic Of), Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and the United States. 32 in total, quite an achievement!



We also thank the many attendees who completed our post-session and post-event feedback surveys. The vast majority of all feedback was very positive, with over 75% of respondents indicating that they would both attend another future ISAAC virtual event as well as our planned in-person conference next year, Conference Cancún!

The entire ISAAC Connect leadership team wants to thank all of those who worked so hard to ensure a very successful event, namely our many volunteers, exhibitors, sponsors, and attendees! Congratulations everyone!

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## From the Executive Director ...continued



### ISAAC 2021 Membership

Membership in ISAAC (Chapters plus non-Chapter members) for 2021 has now exceeded 1,800 globally, the first time this level has been achieved in many years. This, at a time when significant global challenges has meant a postponement of our Conference Cancún to 2022, and has created additional personal and professional challenges for many of our members and Chapters. The reasons for this very positive growth in membership are likely many and varied, but there are a few common themes that we are aware of, namely:

1. Communication and connectivity — many of us have been forced into numerous lockdown cycles, but the desire to stay in touch with friends, family, and professional associates remained.
2. Using technology to maintain relevance — it has been difficult enough in many countries for profit-oriented businesses to maintain relevancy when people can no longer “drop in” in person. This

*Messages from ISAAC's President and Executive Director are available in French, Italian, and Portuguese translation on our [website](#).*

2. difficulty is all the more pronounced for a non-profit and volunteer driven organization like ISAAC. The ability to maintain organizational relevance during a global pandemic, by employing technology to provide many and varied opportunities for our stakeholders to communicate and stay connected has been tremendously successful.
3. Organizational relevance drives growth — organizations that can continue to show relevance to their stakeholders, even during the most trying of times, stand the best chance of translating that relevance into growth. This could be one reason why ISAAC membership during 2021 reached 44 countries around the world!

### October is AAC Awareness Month

Thanks to all of our LEAD Committee members, chaired and led by EB member Kevin Williams (USA) for developing the theme for the October 2021 AAC Awareness Month. You can find out more details by visiting our [ISAAC AAC Awareness 2021 webpage](#).

The current pandemic fueled by COVID-19 has created a greater reliance on technology for everyone, and it brought on new ways to work. Communicating with

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## From the Executive Director ...continued

the assistance of technology for many social interactions has changed the way people value alternative forms of communication. Using a combination of video, text chat, and audio voice calls simultaneously in one conversation has become commonplace in today's society. Quickly making accommodations for people's available mode of communication often occurs without much interruption of the conversation. Many people now use apps and non-spontaneous communication to interact with businesses for basic daily tasks such as ordering food and shopping for goods.

And this is precisely what AAC Awareness Month 2021 focuses on!

ISAAC International will be holding a number of webinars to support AAC Awareness Month 2021, and these are posted on the [ISAAC website](#).

We look forward to hearing from our Chapters and other stakeholders from around the world, to share their own AAC Awareness Month activities. Please make sure to send photos, videos, stories, and any other related materials to ISAAC's Manager of Communications, [Heather Stonehouse](#).

## Special Meeting of the ISAAC Council



ISAAC's President, Juan Bornman, and Chair of the ISAAC Council, Nadia Browning, have called a "Special Meeting of the ISAAC Council" for Thursday October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 at 3 pm (15:00h), Toronto time. Invitations to register and proxy forms have already been sent to individual Council members to attend.

We encourage all Council members to attend this important governance meeting of ISAAC. If any Council member cannot attend, then please do take the time to nominate another individual member by making use of the provided proxy.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and feedback. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly, at [franklin@isaac-online.org](mailto:franklin@isaac-online.org), should you require any further information or assistance.

Regards and thanks,

[Franklin Smith](#)

ISAAC Executive Director

## News

### USSAAC

# USSAAC

THE VOICE OF AAC

USSAAC is excited to announce the launch of our **AAC Speaker Connection** on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The AAC Speaker Connection is part of *USSAAC Amplifying AAC Voices Campaign*.

People who use AAC deserve to have their voices heard and to be reimbursed for their unique contributions. USSAAC's AAC Speaker Connection is here to connect people who use AAC of all ages in universities and schools, conference organizers, media outlets, families, industry and advocates across the United States. People who use AAC can now more easily share their remarkable stories, skills, knowledge and insights. USSAAC's AAC Speaker Connection makes it easier to amplify the voices of AAC.

The AAC Speaker Connection is a web-based portal that enables individuals, institutions, corporations, media, and others to find and engage individuals who use AAC as invited speakers for their classroom, organization, clinic, workshop, conference, or other event. If you are someone who uses AAC or know



someone who might be interested in being or finding a speaker, go to <https://speaker.ussaac.org/>.

To see more information, please watch the [AAC Speaker Connection Launch](#) video.

### ISAAC Denmark



Due to COVID-19, ISAAC Denmark's 2020 yearly conference was transformed into a row of online webinars taking place this year. The first webinar, giving the cancelled 2020 conference, took place in March 2021, when the next yearly conference was meant to, and our last presentation is scheduled for December 2021. Up until now, we have had a presentation once a month with several participants.

We have reached more participants than usual at our successful yearly conference! We have seen participants from Asian countries and our Nordic neighbors, as well as people who have previously not been in touch with ISAAC. Hopefully this will lead to an increased number of memberships, but for now we are happy with the increased attention on our Facebook profile!

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## News

### ... continued



The webinar style has made it possible for us to keep our original planned program for the 2020 conference. Rose Ann Sevcik and MaryAnn Ronski from Georgia were able to attend (though it was a little late for their time zone!), and presenters from Sweden and UK have also been on the program. Together with our Danish presenters, the program has shown a variety of perspectives in high quality!

The subjects of the online conference have been: CVI and communication, challenging behavior, talking Mats theories, parental coaching, identity, focus on rights to communicate.

The webinars have been short, maximum 2 hours, and offered a possibility to join “coffee rooms” aka breakout rooms in Zoom, where the participants and the presenter could meet after the webinar and discuss, exchange experiences, and connect. This form has been well accepted by our participants.

This positive experience makes it possible to invite more presenters from abroad in the future, and gives great opportunities to share knowledge across the world!

In **October**, we are also looking forward to

the **next regional meeting**. The first regional meeting was in June with participation from Norway, Poland, Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark. We only missed Russia, we hope to see them next time.

## ISAAC-Singapore



Welcome ISAAC-Singapore – the newest ISAAC Chapter!

ISAAC-Singapore is a newly formed national organization established to promote augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) in Singapore. Their goal is to advance the field of AAC within the country on behalf of all stakeholders: people who use AAC (PWU AAC), their families, professionals, researchers, clinicians, and companies. Their vision is for people who use AAC to connect and build an AAC community.

To contact ISAAC-Singapore directly, please send an email to Sarah

Yong, [isaacsgchapter@gmail.com](mailto:isaacsgchapter@gmail.com).

You can also follow them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Isaacsingaporechapter>.

## ISAAC Connect

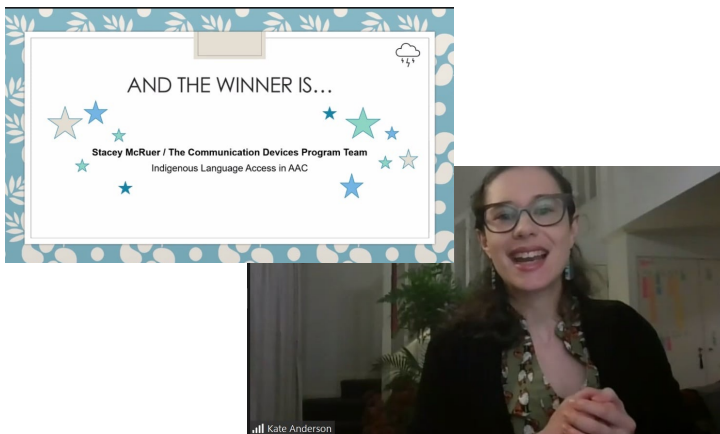


**ISAAC Connect**, ISAAC's first-ever virtual event, which took place from August 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, was a huge success!

Let's take a look back at some of the highlights of the event:

### Lightning Pitch

The winner of the ISAAC Connect Lightning Pitch was Stacey McRuer of Canada, whose pitch, "Indigenous Language Access in AAC" came out on top. Thanks again to Kate Anderson for organizing this special event.



### Prelude to ISAAC Film Premiere

The *Prelude to ISAAC* film showed the history of ISAAC as told by those who were there, with musical accompaniment by Bliss iBand.



Congratulations on the great job done by the production team - Judy Wine, Lynette Norris & Penny Parnes - and project coordinator, Shirley McNaughton.

You can watch the film here: <https://isaac-online.org/english/isaac-connect/prelude-to-isaac-film-premiere/>.

### Cooking with our Leaders

Cooking with our Leaders was one of the most enjoyable events of the conference! We got to see many interesting cake variations of ISAAC the Moose!



... ISAAC Connect continues on page 9

## ISAAC Connect ... continued



### Cooking with our Leaders cont.



*Joni Nygard and Daniela*



*Sarah and Harvey*

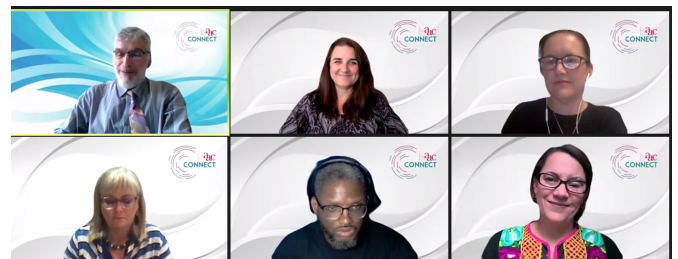


*Stephen von Tetzchner*

Congratulations to the winner, Alina Smyczek and all contestants for participating in this fun competition! Thanks once again to Gabriela Berlanga & Karen Erickson for co-hosting.

## Closing Ceremony

All good things must come to an end after all! The ISAAC Connect Closing Ceremony was bittersweet, but it was great to see all the people that helped make this fantastic event happen!



Thanks once again to all the amazing participants, exhibitors, sponsors and all those who organized ISAAC Connect!



We hope to see you in Cancun in 2022!



... ISAAC Connect continues on page 10

## ISAAC Connect ... continued



*Dear ISAAC office team and  
ISAAC Connect leadership  
team,*

*Thank you very much for organizing that  
great ISAAC connect online event! It was  
really impressing to meet so many people  
from all over the world and I enjoyed the  
happy atmosphere. Thank you for your  
help and patience in all of the technical  
and organisational issues!*

*Hoping to meet you next year in Mexico"*

**– Imke Niediek (Germany)**



*"I have just completed 30  
hours of ISAAC 2021  
recorded sessions- they were  
outstanding!"*

**– Gladys Siegel (US)**



*"Thank you ISAAC  
International, Tracy  
Shepherd , Sally Clendon,  
Juan Bornman, Franklin Smith and  
everyone who made #ISAACconnect  
such a success. It was an incredible 4  
days of information and interaction,  
wonderful to know all the content is  
still available to the end of August!"*

**– Facebook post by RERC on  
Augmentative and Alternative  
Communication (US)**



*"When we envisaged  
#ISAACconnect only  
a few months ago I  
could never have imagined it could  
lead to the feeling of true connection  
we feel at a typical ISAAC conference.  
So impressed by the international  
AAC community and proud to be a  
part."*

**– Tracy Shepherd, ISAAC President-  
Elect (Canada)**

## AAC Awareness Month



International AAC Awareness Month is celebrated around the world each October.

The goal is to raise awareness of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and to inform the public about the many different ways people communicate using communication devices.

International AAC Awareness Month was established by ISAAC's LEAD Project Committee in October 2007. Thirteen countries participated in the first Awareness Month, and events have been increasing in number and scope ever since. Don't miss out on the exciting upcoming events!

*Use #AACaware21 on Twitter and Facebook!*

### Getting Families On Board via Tele-AAC with Avaz

This special webinar will be taking place on **October 4 from 8:30-9:30 ET.**

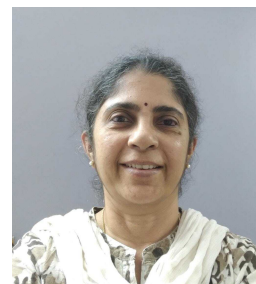
In this presentation, Speech Language Pathologists, Niveditha Rayali and Naynatara Nambiar, talk about effective teletherapy strategies that helped create more family

buy-in and engagement. They share a few tested practices and activity ideas that help in generating more parental involvement.



*Niveditha Rayali and Naynatara Nambiar*

The webinar also includes, Lalitha Nagarajan of Avaz Inc explaining user-friendly features of Avaz AAC app that have helped families implement AAC at home.



*Lalitha Nagarajan*

Participants will learn about teletherapy strategies, customizing features of Avaz AAC app, and fun activity ideas to include family members in the AAC user's communication journey.

**Register here:**

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_EuWdxXdTQ\\_SwSpDYpAawsPg](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EuWdxXdTQ_SwSpDYpAawsPg).

... AAC Awareness Month continues on page 12

## AAC Awareness Month ... continued

### USAAC Virtual Auction



As apart of AAC Awareness Month, USSAAC is holding a virtual auction to fund our AAC Speaker Connection – an online directory of AAC users to match them with faculty, schools, self-advocacy and parent groups, community organizations, and others who are interested in hearing the authentic voices of people who use AAC.



*Are you an artist, writer, musician, author, knitter, crafter?* Please consider donating to USSAAC's virtual auction! **Bidding starts October 1 and runs through October 15** as part of our AAC Awareness Month celebration.

Contact [virtualauction@ussaac.org](mailto:virtualauction@ussaac.org) if you have a product or service willing to donate or for questions or information about your donation. (Note: Donors are asked to handle the shipping to the winning bidder; reimbursement for postage costs is available for people with disabilities as needed).

## ISAAC Denmark

On **October 25**, ISAAC in collaboration with the National Association for Autism invites you to a one-day seminar!

In Denmark, having no COVID-19 restrictions, this will be an in-person meeting on the subject of AAC and autism.

Listen to presentations from Simon Felskov, (member of the main board of the National Association Autism) and Marianne Rosenkvist (sociologist with professional experience in evaluating social efforts).

Joanne Cafiero will also be with us virtually, but the rest of the presentations will be taking place in real-life.

Register here: <http://www.isaac.dk/>



Best regards,

Ida Mundt and  
Margit Grønkjær



... AAC Awareness Month continues on page 13

## AAC Awareness Month ... continued



### Meet Me Where I Am: Ramps to Cognitive & Physical Access of High Tech AAC Following Acquired Brain Injury



Another exciting webinar will be taking place on **October 13, 2021 from 7:00 – 8:00 PM ET** and is being hosted by Jill Adlin. Jill Adlin is a licensed Speech Language Pathologist who has served in a variety of settings including home health, schools, nursing homes and private clinics.

In this webinar, we will discuss current advancements and best practices for the provision of AAC services to adolescents and adults with acquired brain injury. We will address common cognitive and physical access limitations in acquired brain injury populations and options for overcoming these challenges to promote effective high-tech AAC use. Information and strategies may also

apply to individuals with developmental causes of brain injury as well.

#### *Webinar Objectives:*

1. 3 innovative strategies for improving motivation for social AAC use in acquired brain injury.
2. 3 innovative physical access options for individuals with acquired brain injury.
3. Considerations for AAC language display design specific to the acquired brain injury population.

#### **Register here:**

[https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_mOrPFdpRoykK695T-Qm1g](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mOrPFdpRoykK695T-Qm1g)

### Call for Submissions!

The theme for this AAC Awareness Month is:  
***Get Out, Speak Up and Break through the Screen in a Recovering World.***

It's time to start planning activities, resources, and events in celebration of International AAC Awareness Month in October 2021!

Send us your news and we'll start posting your submissions. Contact us by email at [feedback@isaac-online.org](mailto:feedback@isaac-online.org)

## Chapters



ISAAC-Australia • [www.isaacaustralia.com](http://www.isaacaustralia.com)

ISAAC-Brazil • [www.isaacbrasil.org.br](http://www.isaacbrasil.org.br)

ISAAC-Canada • [www.isaac-canada.org](http://www.isaac-canada.org)

ISAAC-Denmark • [www.isaac.dk](http://www.isaac.dk)

ISAAC-Francophone • [www.isaac-fr.org](http://www.isaac-fr.org)

ISAAC-India • [www.isaac.org.in](http://www.isaac.org.in)

ISAAC-Israel • [www.isaac.org.il](http://www.isaac.org.il)

ISAAC-Italy • [www.isaacitaly.it](http://www.isaacitaly.it)

ISAAC-NF • [www.isaac-nf.nl](http://www.isaac-nf.nl)

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ISAAC-Poland • [aac.org.pl](http://aac.org.pl)

ISAAC-Singapore • [www.isaac-online.org/isaac-singapore](http://www.isaac-online.org/isaac-singapore)

ISAAC-Sweden • [www.isaac-sverige.se](http://www.isaac-sverige.se)

ISAAC-Taiwan • [twsaac.blogspot.com](http://twsaac.blogspot.com)

ISAAC-UK • [www.communicationmatters.org.uk](http://www.communicationmatters.org.uk)

ISAAC-US • [www.ussaac.org](http://www.ussaac.org)

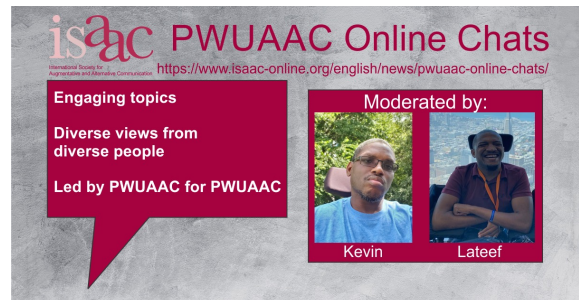
## **Contact Us**

Do you have a question or comment?

Please feel free to send an email to

[feedback@isaac-online.org](mailto:feedback@isaac-online.org)

## PWUAAC Online Chats



Visit [PWUAAC Online Chats](https://www.isaac-online.org/english/news/pwuaac-online-chats/) on the ISAAC website for information about the next scheduled chat.

## ISAAC Webinars

As of January 2021, most ISAAC webinars and archived recordings are available as a benefit of membership, and accessed through the Members' Only portal. A limited number of [webinar recordings](#) will remain open to the public. Find out how to become an ISAAC member [here](#).



## Our Vision & Mission



*ISAAC's Vision is that AAC will be recognized, valued and used throughout the world.*

*ISAAC's Mission is to promote the best possible communication for people with complex communication needs.*

*ISAAC is a Non-Governmental Organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic & Social Council.*

## Stay Connected

ISAAC Chapters and members worldwide are invited to submit items of interest from your country or region. News, AAC practice tips, research, personal essays, in article format or as a link to online articles or resources, will be reviewed and made available on the ISAAC website as appropriate. Please send articles and photos to [Nola Millin](#).

## Stay Social

Stay in the loop! Follow ISAAC news & views in the AAC community on our social media!



## Staff

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## The ISAAC Communicator

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Please contact [Chloe Leon](#).

