

## DIRECTORS, 2023

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February 2023

Dear Friends:

Let me start this letter with the sad news of the passing on February 2, 2023 of another giant in our field, David Yoder. His daughter Lisa wrote on Facebook, *"It is with a heavy heart that I share that news that my Dad, David E. Yoder, passed away yesterday morning at the age of 90. He passed away quickly and peacefully with my Mom holding his hand. He was a wonderful husband of 68 years, a loving father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. To say that he was a giant in the field of Communication Disorders is not an exaggeration, and I once heard him referred to as "The Godfather of AAC." We are grateful our SpeakUp! Editor Deirdre Gavin-McLaughlin had the opportunity to interview him for the November blog in our series of AAC leaders and legends, available at [USSAAC Leaders & Legends: David Yoder - USSAAC](#)*

More information is available in David's obituary at <https://www.med.unc.edu/healthsciences/2023/02/remembering-the-life-of-david-e-yoder-chair-emeritus-of-the-department-of-health-sciences/>

You may wish to pay tribute by donating in his memory to the **McLean Yoder Schiefelbusch Fund (MYS Fund)**. The National Joint Committee for the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities (NJC) – of which David was a founder - plans to endow this ASHFoundation fund so that student scholars can receive support for research on the communication needs of people with severe disabilities. Find out more and how to donate at [The McLean Yoder Schiefelbusch Fund \(MYS Fund\) \(asha.org\)](#)

## Report from ATIA!

Congratulations to the many USSAAC members who presented at ATIA!

*Tidbit FYI:* Did you know that you can get a reduced Amazon Prime subscription if you receive government benefits such as SSI, SSDI, and Medicaid? I learned about this discount at ATIA, which may be helpful in acquiring useful products, including "smart speaker" technology. While we are sad to see Amazon discontinuing "Smile" (which has provided USSAAC with hundreds of dollars thanks to those of you who shopped via Amazon Smile), this may be helpful to people with disabilities. Go to [www.amazon.com/qualify](http://www.amazon.com/qualify) for details.

*Prentke Lecture:* You can watch the recording of the 2023 AAC Distinguished Lecture recipient, Ashley Mohesky, at [2023 Prentke AAC Distinguished Lecture: Ashley Mohesky - YouTube](#) The call for 2024 nominations is expected late summer – think about nominating yourself or someone you know who uses AAC!

*USSAAC Meet-up:* We had great attendance at our ATIA meet-up, including ISAAC President Tracy Shepherd, ISAAC-Canada President Kathy Look Howery, and ISAAC Executive Director Franklin Smith! (Photos available on our USSAAC Facebook page!). We had a 50-50 drawing to benefit the USSAAC general fund; our winner, Tina Moreno, graciously donated her share of the “pot” back to USSAAC!

*Status of AB-AAC:* One of the sessions I attended was an update on the “American Board of AAC”. As you may recall, USSAAC was one of the organizations that expressed concerns to ASHA about this initiative which, nonetheless, is well underway. Handouts are available at [https://www.aacspecialist.org/files/ugd/58875a\\_c0a96b178dcc4ca49e857ec0b15db901.pdf](https://www.aacspecialist.org/files/ugd/58875a_c0a96b178dcc4ca49e857ec0b15db901.pdf) Of particular note (slide 19) is the timeline for initial applications – May/June 2023. The first cohort will be accepted based on portfolio review only while subsequent applicants will also need to pass an examination (which is still in development). Questions regarding initial application and renewal costs could not be answered at this time but reportedly will be similar to those required by other ASHA-related specialties. Members of the AB-AAC encouraged interested parties to keep up-to-date via their website, <https://aacspecialist.org>

### **Upcoming Webinars**

The second in our 2023 webinar series, “Using PowerPoint to Simulate a Speech Generating Device”, will be held February 22, 2023 at 7:00 -8:00 PM eastern, in which Dr. Richard Hurtig will discuss PowerPoint as a tool for clinical training and evaluation. PARTICIPANTS WILL BE ABLE TO:

- 1) Demonstrate how the functionality of PowerPoint can be used to simulate SGD functions.
- 2) Demonstrate how the SGD simulation can be used in AAC clinical education program.
- 3) Discuss how the SGD simulation can be used in AAC evaluations and clinical trials.
- 4) Use PowerPoint to create an SGD simulation.
- 5) Demonstrate a multi-page communication tool.
- 6) Demonstrate a multi-page medical decision-making tool.
- 7) Demonstrate a bilingual multi-page communication tool.

Register at [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_wXwIGwJSSX2FFTBGgpsZMw](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wXwIGwJSSX2FFTBGgpsZMw)

### **ISAAC Conference Cancún**

We are excited to invite you to attend the *ISAAC Cancun Information Gathering* to answer all your questions! We will be covering a range of topics including what to expect while attending the conference (workshops, sessions, film festival, exhibitions, lightning pitch, etc.), travel and hotel accommodations, fun things to do while in Cancun, how to register (step-by-step), and so much more! Please join us virtually on **February 20<sup>th</sup> at 8 pm** (Eastern time; 5 pm Pacific time). No registration is needed, just click the link!

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83945774638?pwd=S2t1QzNyK2xVVENvWjR4bmJ1bHQxZz09>

And in case you were wondering...paper acceptances will be announced soon!

### **Committee News:**

All USSAAC members are invited to join a committee (or two)! Contact [info@ussaac.org](mailto:info@ussaac.org) to get in touch with committee chairs and learn more.

*People who use AAC and their families:* Watch Patrick Regan's video about the proposed Communications and Video Technology Accessibility Act (CVTA) at [https://youtu.be/klqnyK\\_IP0Y](https://youtu.be/klqnyK_IP0Y)

*Development Committee:* Amplifying AAC Voices Mini-Grants (up to \$1000) are available now! People who use AAC have lots to say and contribute, but too often the avenues through which their voices can be heard remain limited. USSAAC's Amplifying AAC Voices mini-grants are designed to broaden those opportunities. Grants may address issues at a local, state, regional, or national level. Applicant must be a USSAAC member and include an AAC user in developing the application. Contact [president@ussaac.org](mailto:president@ussaac.org) for more information.

*Disaster Relief Committee:* Nine (9!) presentations were conducted or sponsored by the Disaster Relief Committee in 2022, including at ISAAC's Show Your Voices, Closing the Gap, the IN First Responders Conference, and a USSAAC webinar (archived at <https://isaac-online.org/english/members-only/>). USSAAC purchased "open access" so everyone can read the Perspectives article, [https://pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/2022\\_PERSP-21-00274](https://pubs.asha.org/doi/10.1044/2022_PERSP-21-00274)

*Research Committee (NEW!):* Did you know USSAAC is involved in three research activities including one on the efficacy of the disaster "toolkit", one on assessment practices in schools, and one on people from Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color ("BIPOC") who use AAC? Thank you to Wendy Quach who will chair this ad hoc committee, making sure people who use AAC are involved in the committee's work.

### **Member Finder is Live!**

Member Finder (<https://finder.ussaac.org>) is a way for people to access a service provider (from among *any* of the disciplines represented in USSAAC!), find a person who uses AAC who can mentor them or their family, and locate others in the AAC community. In private practice? List your services through Member Finder! Only USSAAC members are listed in the directory, which can be searched by anyone (note: you can limit your contact information if you wish)! One of the cool features is when you start your profile you can find out whether your membership is paid for 2023 *and* your ISAAC member number! Please complete your profile TODAY so we have a robust directory for the public.

### **Speaker Connection Continues to Grow!**

Have you visited USSAAC's Speaker Connection recently (<https://speaker.ussaac.org>) There were 27 speakers hired through the Speaker Connection in 2022, and there are 9 connections already in process for 2023! Thanks to our Amplifying AAC Voices sponsors Smartbox; the Bridge School, tobiidynavox, PRC-Salttillo and Attainment for the funds that supported the development of this project.

Have a great month!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy S. Goldman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "G" at the end.

Amy S. Goldman, President

Calendar Re-Cap

February 20, 2023, 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM Eastern: ISAAC Cancun Information Session

February 22, 2023, 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM Eastern: USSAAC Webinar, "Using PowerPoint to Simulate SGDs"

March 17, 2023 – Early Bird registration for ISAAC Cancun ENDS

July 24-27, 2023: ISAAC Cancun

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<https://www.facebook.com/ussaac1>

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