

## DIRECTORS, 2022

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March 2022

Dear Friends:

It's Spring! Can summer be far behind? If you are a USSAAC member and staff a summer program for children or adults who use AAC, please let me know. We have a dedicated page on our website where we will list your program!

USSAAC has many active committees doing wonderful things to support people who use AAC, their families, and of course, our members. Learn more about our committees at [Committees - USSAAC](#) and join one (or more) today!

Committee highlight: Disaster Relief Committee (DRC): USSAAC's committee addressing emergency preparedness and disaster relief for people who use AAC is led by Liz Begley and Sarah Blackstone and includes USSAAC members Andrea Barton-Hulsey, Miriam Boesch, Lois Jean Brady, Amy Goldman, Mara Hernandez, Sharon Mankey, Wendy Quach, Mariesa Rang, Amy Sonntag and Carole Zangari » [Emergencies and Disasters \(ussaac.org\)](#). Although the DRC's mission is to help people with their AAC needs after federally declared disasters, exceptions can be made in certain circumstances. The DRC received a recent request for to replace an SGD for an eight-year-old boy in New Jersey, after his was destroyed in a family fire. We successfully worked with the family, a local SLP and an impressive AAC manufacturer's representative to find a long-term loaner device until a replacement could be secured through insurance. When the school was reluctant to send the device home, despite a two-week period of remote learning, we communicated with the school administration and the Accent 800 with an Xtreme™ case was given the green light to go home. It was a great reminder of how committed professionals and families working together can make good things happen, and the need for USSAAC and our DRC.

I am pleased to introduce you to USSAAC's new "editor-in-chief" for our SpeakUp! blog, Deirdre Galvin-McLaughlin ([speakup@ussaac.org](mailto:speakup@ussaac.org)). Deirdre is a clinical instructor and speech-language pathologist at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, Oregon. She has expertise in AAC with clinical interests in supporting people who experience motor or sensory access challenges to traditional forms of technology. She works clinically with children with developmental disabilities and neurodegenerative conditions and adults with developmental

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disabilities who have complex access challenges. She also works as a research associate in the REKNEW lab under the direction of Melanie Fried-Oken to develop a brain computer interface for AAC, serves on the Go Baby Go Oregon committee, and is a member of the board of directors for the Communication Matrix Foundation. She has already welcomed several editors to her “staff”, and a new blog is currently under review. Are you interested in writing a blog for USSAAC? Details for prospective authors can be found at [» Guest Author Guidelines \(ussaac.org\)](https://www.ussaac.org/guest-author-guidelines)

Coming soon! The USSAAC Development Committee is getting ready to launch a video contest to support our Amplifying AAC Voices campaign. USSAAC is seeking creative individuals or teams to create a short video (under 2 minutes) to promote USSAAC’s Speaker Connection (<https://speaker.ussaac.org>). The Speaker Connection is an important way for people to find and hire AAC users – but more people need to learn about and USE it! All submissions will be posted on USSAAC’s YouTube channel and judged on the number of “likes” from viewers and how the video responds to one or more of the following questions:

- Who needs to learn from someone who uses AAC?
- What can you learn from someone who uses AAC?
- Why is it important to learn from someone who uses AAC?
- What are the best ways to learn from people who use AAC?
- Why is USSAAC’s Speaker Connection important?

The contest will run this summer; the winning individual/team will receive \$500! Stay tuned for more details.

Registration is open NOW for our next webinar, April 27, 2022 at 7 pm eastern, “Exploring AAC Access to Swearing, Expletives, and Slang”. Members get early access to registration (and ASHA CEUs are included at no cost) but seats are limited, so sign up today at [https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_Uaf5nfj\\_TfiNhXFVhGLiJw](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Uaf5nfj_TfiNhXFVhGLiJw)

Do you have ideas for topics or presenters (including yourself?) – let us know! Email Betsy at [education@ussaac.org](mailto:education@ussaac.org).

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We are gratified that we have already exceeded the number of members we had last year at this time! If you have not already renewed, please do so today at [Membership - USSAAC](#).

Stay up-to-date on USSAAC activities and follow us on Facebook!  
<https://www.facebook.com/ussaac1>

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Amy S. Goldman'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy S. Goldman, President