

THE ISAAC COMMUNICATOR

December 2019

Message from the ISAAC President

Meredith Allan

In October I had knee surgery. I had a week in hospital and a week in rehabilitation. Members need not worry; the surgery was a success and by August I will be up dancing with the Mariachi bands in Cancún. The experience of being in hospital and rehab was a reminder once again that we have to be vigilant in asserting our rights. The doctor had written a charted medication for me, noting a sliding scale of 6-8 units. One nurse interpreted this as highest dosage of 14 units. I bluntly told her, "NO." There was an extreme lack of privacy as staff left doors open. One morning while I was dressing, a nurse was in the room, there was a knock at the door, the nurse said nothing and let the person walk straight in. I started screaming. Our vulnerability of living without a voice is always exposed! Another time, I was left in the shower, but the nurse had taken the towels out into my room, so when I had finished showering, I had to press the call button and wait for over five minutes for the nurse to come and give me the towel!!!

The speech pathologist at Rehabilitation came to assess me and I agreed to go on "Mince and Moist" diet, provided I could go off the modified diet if I requested it. It lasted one day. While the smoothies were great, the food was bland. I requested a sandwich, and I was refused. At supper I requested a biscuit, and I was refused again because of the "Mince and Moist" diet. Meanwhile I was still taking three huge tablets a day, which I found contradictory to the diet. I told the speech pathologist I missed chewing. I was told I could go off the "Mince and Moist"



Conference 2020 Registration is open!

[Register here](#)

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diet if I acknowledged my dysphagia and I was prepared to take the risk with a regular diet choice. I agreed to this. My choice of food recognizes my dysphagia. I remember at the Montreal ISAAC 2008 conference, John Rynn spoke about the incredible loss he felt about being put on a modified diet. When the time comes that I am forced onto a modified diet, I hope I will have more variety than what I was given in Rehabilitation, but I know the loss I will feel will be immense.

“ *Our battles are never ending, even if we are in places that are supposed to be caring for our needs*

On to a different matter now. Juan Bornman, President-Elect of ISAAC, recently attended the German AAC Conference in Leipzig. Her report follows.

AAC in Germany

Juan Bornman

The Gesellschaft für Unterstützte Kommunikation held their annual AAC conference in Leipzig, Germany, from November 14 – 16, 2019, with the theme “UK im Blick” (AAC In View). The conference organizers, Annekatrin Kelz, Michael Evers, and Marie Just put together a wonderful program for the approximately 1,400 delegates with 11 parallel sessions containing cutting-edge research, practical seminars that focused on therapeutic strategies, hands-on workshops, and the latest technology. The exhibition hall invited all to try recently launched AAC software, apps and devices, to browse through new books, discover interesting

Messages from ISAAC’s President and Executive Director are available in translation on our [website](#).

new low-tech AAC options and, last but not least, explore the irresistible toys on offer.

The coffee breaks – always with great German cookies! – and lunches afforded delegates with opportunities to network and share new ideas. I will bet that a host of new fruitful collaborations were born at this conference!



(From left) Robyn White, Prof. Juan Bornman, Prof. Ingeborg Thümmel, Maj-Britt Klein, Anne-Marie Brüggemann, Dr. Roberta Nicosia, Niklas Tibbe and Prof. Andrea Erdelyi.

The conference committee also graciously gave Juan Bornman the opportunity to present on the topic of ISAAC International and the Biennial conference in Cancún, Mexico at the gala evening. She spoke the power of communication and how it allows us to connect over continents, cultures, and languages. And about the fact that it helps us to understand each other and build common ground, and how it provides us with a way to share experiences, knowledge, and emotions. This conference provided all the delegates with the opportunity to build AAC (Unterstützte Kommunikation–UK) in Leipzig and hopefully this building and sharing can continue in Cancún.

From the Executive Director



Franklin Smith

Welcome to the December 2019 edition of *The ISAAC Communicator*. The ISAAC International Office continues its work on behalf of the membership around the world, and is pleased to advise on the following initiatives:

Conference 2020

Preparations for Conference 2020, to be held August 1st through August 6th, 2019, in Cancún, México's beautiful gateway to the Riviera Maya, are now well underway.

Conference registration is now open and live, and is available by clicking [here](#). We look forward to welcoming the world to Cancún, México in August 2020!

The [Conference 2020 Call for Papers](#) is now closed, and our tremendous group of ISAAC Conference 2020 reviewers are hard at work now evaluating all paper proposals. Applicants will be notified about the acceptance/rejection of their submissions by February 28, 2020.

Conference 2020 (main conference) is being held at the [Cancún International Convention Centre, or ICC](#). The decision to host Conference 2020 at the Cancún ICC was a collaborative one taken by the entire Conference 2020 Leadership Team, with full consideration for accessibility, ease of travel, hotel availability, and cost. The full press release on this announcement can be read on the [ISAAC website](#), or directly by [clicking here](#).

We are thrilled with the response received so far by our exhibitors and sponsors. Booth space sales for Conference 2020 is now over half sold, and the exhibit hall floor map is live on our [website](#). If you are a company considering exhibiting at Conference 2020, now is the time to make your decision, as booth spaces are selling out quickly.

Sponsorship efforts for Conference 2020 are moving along nicely, and we anticipate announcing more of our sponsors in the coming few weeks. Conference 2020 is shaping up to be one of the best-sponsored ISAAC conferences ever!

There are also a number of initiatives currently being planned to coincide with Conference 2020 aimed at supporting one of the overriding objectives for hosting Conference 2020 in México, namely the promotion of AAC within the Spanish-speaking world and the creation of the Spanish-language Chapter of ISAAC, ISAAC-Español. We look forward to releasing more information in the coming months.



Questions about
Conference 2020?
Check out the ISAAC
2020 [FAQ](#).

Membership 2020

Membership renewal notifications for ISAAC International, ISAAC-Australia, ISAAC-Canada, and ISAAC-US (USSAAC), were very recently sent out by email, during the final week of November and first week of December. If you were an active 2019 member of ISAAC through ISAAC International or one of these Chapters, you would have recently received a personalized email and attached pdf renewal package. We are pleased to once again offer all these members the opportunity of membership renewal

through our online ISAAC membership portal, available by clicking [here](#).



There is also an online resource available to our existing members, to assist in renewing memberships for 2020. This online resource can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

****NEW FOR 2020** ISAAC International is now pleased to offer membership sign-up and renewal for ISAAC International completely in Spanish!**

**** NUEVO PARA 2020 ** ¡ISAAC International ahora se complace en ofrecer la inscripción y renovación de membresía para ISAAC International completamente en español!**

We look forward to welcoming many new members to ISAAC whose first language is Spanish, to further enrich the quality of our support for the field of AAC around the world.

Webinars 2020

ISAAC International is pleased to continue its collaboration with our US Chapter, USSAAC, in promoting and providing interesting webinar content for our members. ISAAC maintains a full library of previous webinar recordings, that are freely available off the ISAAC website by clicking [here](#). We are in the process of following up with all of our stakeholders who expressed an interest in providing interesting webinar content during 2020, so make sure to visit our webinar webpage frequently for updated information.

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

Regards and thanks,
[Franklin Smith](#)



ISAAC 2020

A Message for Exhibitors and Sponsors

Hello/Hola!

ISAAC is excited to kick-start our Sponsorship and Exhibitor program in support of the 19th Biennial ISAAC Conference taking place from August 1st through August 6th, 2020 at the Cancún International Convention Center in beautiful Cancún, México. Sponsors and Exhibitors will be featured throughout the ISAAC Conference. The Exhibitor Hall is open from August 3rd to August 6th.

Due to the great success of the 2016 and 2018 conferences, the exhibitor response for ISAAC Conference 2020 has been very strong. [See Map](#)

Choose your booth number early and showcase your products and services to the world assistive community as an Exhibitor.

In addition to participating as an Exhibitor, there are many exciting sponsorship opportunities available through which you can promote your company's brand to an international audience. We will help create a sponsorship/exhibitor package that's right for you.

Judy Shapiro (ISAAC Sponsorship Specialist) and Tony Needer (ISAAC Exhibitor Sales Specialist) are committed to helping your company achieve a most rewarding Conference experience.

Contact us:

Judy Shapiro for [ISAAC 2020 Sponsorship info](#)

Tony Needer for [ISAAC 2020 Exhibitor info](#)

ISAAC 2020

Pre-Conference Workshops

Day One: August 1, 2020

Full Day Sessions (9:00AM - 4:00PM)

- *AAC: A Critical Component to Patient Care Throughout the Hospital*
John Costello, Rachel Santiago
- *Dare to Dream: Turning Your Dreams into Future Reality*
Diane Bryen, Jane Odom
- *Comprehensive Conventional Literacy Instruction in AAC*
Karen Erickson, Lori Geist
- *Identifying appropriate symbol communication(I-ASC): A Practical Workshop*
Janice Murray

Day Two: August 2, 2020

Full Day Sessions (9:00AM - 4:00PM)

- *Baby Steps: Fostering AAC and Language Development in Preschool Children*
Carole Zangari
- *CVI and AAC: Implications for Assessment, Intervention and Research*
Sarah Blackstone, Christine Roman-Lantzy
- *Apoyo al Desarrollo del Lenguaje Asistido por Sistemas Aumentativos de Comunicación*
Gloria Soto

For details, click [here](#). Register through the Conference 2020 online registration portal, [here](#).



Cancún Jungle Camp

We are preparing a warm welcome for participants of the ISAAC 2020 AAC Camp (August 1st and 2nd, 2020), an inclusive camping experience at Cancún Jungle Camp.



Campers who use AAC (ages 8 to 30), along with their siblings and friends, will have the opportunity to socialize while choosing from a variety of recreational activities.

For more information, please follow the links below:

- [ISAAC Conference 2020 AAC Camp \(Español\)](#)
- [ISAAC Conference 2020 AAC Camp \(English\)](#)

A video of the venue is available for viewing on the [Conference website](#).

Congratulations to **Michelle Therrien of Florida State University**, our Call for Papers draw prize winner, who receives a 50% registration discount for being one of the first 20 to submit a completed proposal. Her name was chosen in a random draw. Congratulations, Michelle!

ISAAC 2020



Awards & Scholarships

[Visit the ISAAC website](#) for details on how to apply for Travel Assistance Grants to attend ISAAC 2020 as well as ISAAC Awards. Applications for the following grants are due January 6th.

- ISAAC “More Impact Together” Travel Assistance Grant 2020 (New Professional) – Sponsored by AssistiveWare®
- ISAAC “More Impact Together” Travel Assistance Grant 2020 (PWU AAC) – Sponsored by AssistiveWare®
- ISAAC “More Impact Together” Travel Assistance Grant 2020 (Parent of a Child 18 years of age and under who uses AAC) - Sponsored by AssistiveWare®
- Travel Assistance to Attend ISAAC Conference: People who use AAC
- Travel Assistance for Emerging Country Members to attend ISAAC Conference 2020
- Travel Award for Emerging Researchers’ Attendance at the Biennial Conference of ISAAC

To apply, download a copy of the form-fillable PDF document from our website to your local computer before completing. This is required in order to ensure that your completed form saves properly. *Please note that funding through these programs is limited.*

ISAAC Outstanding Consumer Lecture Award

This award provides a platform for a person who uses AAC to present a topic in which they have special expertise at the ISAAC Biennial Conference. Application deadline: January 31, 2020.



ISAAC Fellowship Award

This award honours an ISAAC member who has earned distinction within the ISAAC community. The title Fellow of the International Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC) is given for the life of the recipient and may be abbreviated as F.ISAAC. Application guidelines can be found online. Application deadline: April 24, 2020

ISAAC Distinguished Service Award

The ISAAC Distinguished Service Award is presented to an ISAAC member or group to recognize an outstanding contribution to the field of AAC through clinical work, information/knowledge, distribution, and research. Application deadline: April 24, 2020

The Bridge School / ISAAC Teacher-in-Residence Award

[The Bridge School/ISAAC Teacher-In-Residence Award](#) enables an individual from a country with emerging technology to learn and teach AAC methods through an in-depth internship.

Inquiries should be sent to Vicki Casella, vcasella@bridgeschool.org.

ISAAC 2020 Short Film Festival

We invite you to enter the ISAAC 2020 Short Film Festival!

- *Theme: Communication Beyond Borders*
Details, guidelines, and submission form are available on the [ISAAC website](#).

Deadline for submissions: April 20, 2020.

Chapter News



ISAAC-Taiwan

“The 2nd East Asian Regional Conference on AAC: Uniting Local and International Perspectives” was held November 15–17, 2019, in Taipei, Taiwan. This conference was organized by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST); the Taiwan Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC-TAIWAN); Chung Shan Medical University; and Chang Gung Memorial Hospital, Linkou, and was co-organized by Taiwan Speech-Language-Hearing Association and Speech and Language Therapists Union, Taichung City, Taiwan. Professor Stephen von Tetzchner, Professor Meng-Ju Tsai, and President Mei-Hui Chen of ISAAC-Taiwan acted as Conference Chairpersons.

Five keynote speakers were invited, including Stephen von Tetzchner from Norway; Susan Balandin from Australia; Norimune Kawai from Japan; Judith D. Oxley from USA; and Hsiu-Ching Lee from Taiwan. In addition, three adults who use SGDs from Taiwan, Fu-Hua Chuang; Shu-Wei Guo; and Yu-Jin Yan, were invited to share their stories. Of the 126 attendees, 94 were from Taiwan and 32 were from China, USA, Australia, Poland, Norway, South Korea, Thailand, Sweden, and Philippines. There were 5 oral presentations and 13 poster presentations in total.



The 3rd East Asian Regional Conference on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) will be held in South Korea.



Submitted by Meng-Ju Tsai, ISAAC-Taiwan

ISAAC-Denmark

In October ISAAC Denmark chose to send out a poster showing the rights of Communication for AAC Users to all 98 local Councils of Disabilities in Denmark. Fortunately, this gave us positive response and requests to send more posters!



Awareness
Month
Activities



At the autumn assembly for AAC users in October, short videos were made to illustrate the need for better communicative access in the community for AAC users. The films will be distributed on social media, as they are short and very suitable for this purpose.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our 30-year anniversary event at the beginning of October, but we hope to see many participants at our conference in March. *Continued on page 6*

Activities on the Political Level In Denmark



After a general election in June we sent welcome letters to four new Ministers, whose areas are: Social affairs, Children, Schools, Education, and Health. The Minister of Social and Home affairs has responded on behalf of all four Ministers. We received a very positive response. She expressed her understanding of ISAAC's point that we need more focus on the AAC field, and she will pass on our recommendations to her ministry. Also, she wants to visit an institution to get more knowledge of AAC, a visit we are in the process of planning.

Currently we are having correspondence and dialogue with the Institute of Human Rights in Denmark in order to increase attention on communication and AAC.

Scandinavian Level

In October the Chairman of ISAAC DK, Birgitte Brandt, was invited to the annual meeting of the Nordic organizations of CP. The meeting took place in Stockholm. This year the theme was "Communication."

Birgitte made a presentation where she explained what is happening in the AAC field in Denmark, related to CP: "Communication – Rights, Knowledge, Practice, and Challenges." It was good to experience how we can inspire each other across countries and across disability associations. More disability organizations have put communication on their agenda, and we hope jointly to put more focus on the subject, using our different contacts to open up new doors.

[Full article with photographs here.](#)

Submitted by Margit Grønkjær & Birgitte Brandt, ISAAC-Denmark

ISAAC Francophone

ISAAC Francophone members hosted many events and activities during AAC Awareness Month 2019.

- Popular international "AAC posters" were translated into French. In total, eight posters have been designed.
- In Amiens, a city in the North of France, public libraries hosted 30 AAC events in 30 days, including storytelling in AAC with symbols and signs, games with AAC, a "One Hour Without Speaking" event using communication boards for libraries specially created by ISAAC Francophone. More than 1500 people attended the events: adults, families, schools, older persons, persons with disabilities.
- ISAAC Francophone, with another NGO, organized a full-day Conference, "AAC, a multimodal approach," with 270 attendees, with presentations by families, users and professionals
- Information sharing on social media, posting in a new Facebook group called [Octobre : mois de la Communication Alternative et Améliorée CAA](#). The group was created by ISAAC Francophone in October 2019, and now has 280 members.

Other groups relayed many more AAC activities.

Ready for October 2020!

[Full article with photographs here.](#)

Submitted by Isabelle Guillot, ISAAC Francophone

First AAC Awards in the UK



On October 11, 2019, Communication Matters ISAAC-UK and the conference organizing team from University of Leeds welcomed 140 people to Leeds for the inaugural AAC Awards Ceremony to help celebrate International AAC Awareness Month. The audience was made up of a myriad of people; many were involved in the AAC world but, most importantly, 28 AAC users were in attendance.

The lead up to the evening had been the influx of nominations, which we were delighted to receive from all over the UK, and also one from across the world! An experienced and diverse judging panel had been hard at work for several months short-listing the nominations based on a tight set of criteria. Just before our annual conference the panel met in a locked room to decide the winners.

The tone of the evening was set by Meredith Allan's welcome video, in which she enthused about the awards and spoke of the importance of raising awareness of AAC and celebrating all its successes.

Our host for the evening was comedian Alistair Barrie, who set the pace and tried to keep us all to time. Each award was presented by a distinguished guest who had a link with the award or the person that had won the category and the audience were informed by videos, photos and testimonials as we went along. [A program for the evening](#) was produced to act as a souvenir and help the audience navigate the proceedings.

We were lucky enough to have some prestigious guests in the audience. The Lord Mayor of Leeds, the Vice Lord – Lieutenant of West Yorkshire in full

ceremonial dress to represent the Queen and the Vice Chancellor of Leeds University as well as one of our patrons, Martin Pistorius, all of whom were also invited to present awards.



Britain's Got Talent winner Lee Ridley entertains the crowd.

A sumptuous three-course dinner was enjoyed with the second half of the awards following after. We were also treated to a hilarious comedy set from another of our patrons, Lost Voice Guy - 2018 Winner of Britain's Got Talent, Lee Ridley. We were entertained by some amazing signed song performances by Sign Out Loud, which everyone was encouraged to join in with.

The awards themselves covered a wide range of achievements including: Research, Community Inclusion, Rising Star, and Setting of the Year. No award ceremony would be complete without a Lifetime Achievement Award and this was no exception.

It really was a night to remember and planning has already begun for the next awards in 2021. We can't wait!

Submitted by Helen Whittle, Communication Matters

News +



From the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

The Secretariat of the United Nations has the honour to refer to General Assembly resolution 73/142 of 8 January 2019, entitled “Inclusive development for and with persons with disabilities,” in which the General Assembly requested the Secretary General to submit a report on the implementation of this resolution and of the outcome document of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the way forward, a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond, and to make appropriate recommendations to further strengthen implementation (A/RES/68/3).

In this connection, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) is requesting information from all stakeholders on progress made by your organization or community group towards meaningful and effective inclusion of persons with disabilities. This survey also requests information on lessons learned and recommendations on the way forward, which will be used for the above-mentioned report to the General Assembly and for sharing best practices online.

Please fill in the survey before **Friday 20 December 2019**, as follows:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/un_disability or https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/un_un_screenreader (screen reader option, which shows all questions at once on a page). Both survey formats can be filled using a keyboard only.

Awareness Month, October 2019: It's a Wrap!

The goal of International AAC Awareness Month is to raise awareness about AAC and the many different ways people are able to communicate using AAC. Thanks to all who submitted Awareness Month news and events for posting on the [ISAAC website](#). The efforts of Lateef McLeod, Chair of the ISAAC LEAD Committee, on behalf of ISAAC's Awareness Month initiatives are much appreciated!

People

Jeff Riley, former President of ISAAC International (2012 – 2015), will retire as Program Manager at CAYA BC as of January 2020. We are grateful for the countless hours he volunteered to ISAAC International and ISAAC Canada over the years. Happy retirement, Jeff!

The Centre for AAC in Pretoria, South Africa, is pleased to announce the appointment of **Professor Shakila Dada** as Director from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2023.

Barbara Collier, Executive Director of Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC), has been awarded the 2019 Honours of the Association from the Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (OSLA).



**Communication Support
World Network Newsletter**

The December issue is here! [Click here to view](#)

Chapters



ISAAC-Australia • www.isaacaustralia.com

ISAAC-Brazil • www.isaacbrasil.org.br

ISAAC-Canada • www.isaac-canada.org

ISAAC-Denmark • www.isaac.dk

ISAAC-Francophone • www.isaac-fr.org

ISAAC-India • www.isaac.org.in

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ISAAC-NF • www.isaac-nf.nl

ISAAC-Norway • www.isaac.no

ISAAC-Poland • [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/isaacpoland)

ISAAC-Sweden • www.isaac-sverige.se

ISAAC-Taiwan • <http://twisaac.blogspot.com>

ISAAC-UK • www.communicationmatters.org.uk

ISAAC-US • www.ussaac.org

Contact Us

Do you have a question or comment? Please feel free to send an email to feedback@isaac-online.org

Executive Board (EB) 2020-22 Nominations

The Nominations Committee is beginning their work in advance of the April 4th, 2020, deadline to receive Executive Board nominations from the Council. We encourage all current ISAAC members to be involved in this important governance activity of our organization.

Please feel free to get in touch directly with the ISAAC Council member that serves your country, region, or Chapter. A full listing of the ISAAC Council can be found on the ISAAC website by clicking [here](#).

If you live in a country / region not served by an ISAAC Council member, or if you have any questions about this process, please contact Nadia Browning, Chair of the ISAAC Council via email at nadiabrowning@gmail.com.

**Happy Holidays
& Best Wishes
for a
Wonderful New Year!
From all of us at ISAAC**

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](#).

**DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS
ABOUT RENEWING YOUR ISAAC
MEMBERSHIP FOR 2020?**

[Click here for details!](#)

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The ISAAC Communicator

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year. Comments welcome!

Please contact [Heather
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VP for BUILD, Scotland

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VP for LEAD, USA

Stay Social

Keep informed about ISAAC news &
stay in touch with the AAC community
on our social media!

