

# THE ISAAC COMMUNICATOR

September 2022

## Message from the ISAAC President

Juan Bornman

Dear ISAAC Family,

I cannot believe that this is really my last message as the 2020-2022 ISAAC President. During the past four years, first as President-Elect and then as President, I have learned so much about ISAAC and all our wonderful members from across the world. I want to say thank you to each one of you with whom I was able to meet and engage with in every way. Your support for ISAAC and all our initiatives, despite the turbulent and disruptive global events during this time, has given me, and I dare say all our members, courage. It has been heart-warming to see how this time has been an incubator for creativity and new initiatives. It has been a springboard for fearlessness and bold change. It has cultivated endurance and introduced us to a new generation of heroes.

How I wish that I could have had a cup of coffee (or tea) with you. I definitely would have had coffee... because a bad day with coffee is arguably better than a good day without

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International Society for  
Augmentative and Alternative Communication

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it! This is where my mind was wandering to when I read the story of a wise elder who encountered a young professor who never seemed to tire of his own voice and his own opinions...

In the story, the elder did his best to be patient and listen attentively, but soon realised that the professor had no real interest in communicating with him as the professor was only interested in himself. He was only concerned with speaking and had no interest or understanding that communication is supposed to be a two-way street that involves both parties sharing information, but also receiving information. So, the elder suggested that perhaps they should have a cup of tea (or coffee... you decide!).

The elder poured his visitor's cup full and then kept on pouring as the professor's eyes widened. When the professor finally couldn't restrain himself any longer he burst out: *"The cup is already full. In fact, it is overfull. Can't you see that no more tea will go in?"*

The elder stopped pouring the tea and calmly started explaining: *"Like this cup, you are filled*

*with your own opinions and ideas. These ideas are formed by your upbringing. Your culture. Your background. Your religion. Your education. Many different things that work in tandem to make you, you. How can you be open to learn anything more, unless you first empty your cup?"*

As my mind continued to think about teacups and coffee mugs and their role in my life, I couldn't help but think about knowledge, learning and wisdom. Three constructs that on the surface might look the same, but in fact are so different. I started realising that it is so easy to be caught up in our own opinions and "truths" that we are closed off to different ways of seeing and understanding. We are sometimes so quick to judge others that we look at their cups, perceive it to be empty and then dutifully proceed to fill their cups without them asking us to do so. We do this without realising that the cups of others already contain a rich history of traditions, values and norms...

We all have a cup, and whatever is inside our cup, is what will pour over or spill out. On a literal level, if there is tea in your cup – you

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## Message from the ISAAC President ...continued

will spill tea. If there is coffee in your cup – you will spill coffee. Metaphorically, this challenges each one of us to ask ourselves: “*What is in my cup?*”. When life happens and we are shaken, the contents will spill out. Truth, gratitude, forgiveness, joy, words of affirmation for ourselves; and kindness, gentleness and love for others? Or anger, bitterness, grief, desperation, resentment, fear, harsh words and reactions? We get to choose.

Tomorrow, when you have your first early morning cup, contemplate what is inside. My wish for you is that your cup will overflow with bravery, courage and strength. I wish that you will feel inspired to live life to the fullest and that you will do what you need to do from your soul. I wish that you might walk lightly in the world and that your cup will bring you joy,

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



not the fleeting superficial emotion of happiness, but a deep inner feeling of contentment.

As the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu said “*Joy subsumes happiness. Joy is the far greater thing*”.

*Juan*

[Juan Bornman](#)

ISAAC President 2020 -2022

# From the Executive Director

Franklin Smith

Welcome to the September 2022 edition of The ISAAC Communicator.

This time of year is always a special one here at ISAAC.

One of the reasons for this is that October is International AAC Awareness Month. We are actively working towards being able to present to the world some engaging and informative online panel discussions. More about this can be found in this issue of The ISAAC Communicator.

September is also an important month, because every other even numbered year, we say goodbye to one or more members of the ISAAC Executive Board, thanking them for their tremendous service on behalf of our organization.

This month, we bid a fond “adieu” to Juan Bornman, who has served in the capacity as President-Elect during the 2018-20 period, and

then as President these past two years, from late in 2020 to 2022.



Needless to say, the global COVID pandemic has created significant challenges for everyone around the world these past two years (plus!). During this very challenging period, when ISAAC was forced to make conference related decisions that it otherwise would never have had to, Juan’s style of leadership exemplified the characteristics that all ISAAC Presidents with whom I have been privileged to work with all share in common: honour, respect, grace under pressure, and a great sense of humour!

On behalf of myself, as well as our ISAAC members and ISAAC staff team, we thank you Juan for your tremendous service to ISAAC, and wish you and your family good health and much success!

## **ISAAC Membership 2023**

The month of October is always a busy one here at the ISAAC office, as we embark on getting ready for a new membership cycle, beginning in January.

The ISAAC membership year runs from January through December, and memberships taken

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## From the Executive Director ...continued



out or renewed beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> each year are automatically assigned to the next calendar year.

As in previous years, international members, as well as members of ISAAC-Australia, ISAAC-Canada, ISAAC-Singapore, and USSAAC (ISAAC-US), can make use of our [online membership portal](#) to renew an existing membership, or take out a new membership. The ISAAC office will be sending out electronic membership renewal communication to all these current members during November, so please watch your email.

Individuals who live in a country served by any other ISAAC Chapter, will need to take out a new membership or renew an existing membership with their Chapter directly. Your Chapter will be communicating with you directly.

### Conference Cancún

The Conference Cancun leadership team continues its work towards presenting our much anticipated in-person conference next year, July 24-27, 2023 (main conference), in beautiful and sunny Cancún, México.

For everyone who originally submitted an accepted proposal back in 2019, and would still like to present it in 2023, you will need to re-submit. Our [FAQ on this subject](#) explains how to do this.

In order to submit a proposal for Conference Cancun (either a brand new one or re-submitted from 2019), you will need to access our [Call for Papers portal from the ISAAC website](#).

We are also now heavily engaged with all of our local service providers, including the conference centre, hotels, and others, in order to make next year's conference a fun, safe, and enjoyable experience.

The **Conference Cancún online registration system is [open and available](#)** for registrations, and we look forward to finally welcoming the world to the 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of ISAAC next year in beautiful (and sunny) Cancún, México!

### 2022 ISAAC Council Meeting

On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, ISAAC International President Juan Bornman and ISAAC Council Chair Signhild Skogdal officially released notification that a Special Meeting of the ISAAC Council was called for 2022. The meeting was

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## From the Executive Director ...continued



held virtually on Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022. The official announcement for this meeting can be found on the [ISAAC website](#).

### **ISAAC International Website Redevelopment**

As announced in the March 2022 issue of The Communicator, ISAAC International has embarked on a website redevelopment project.

We have now engaged with a service provider, and are beginning the process of conducting the formal project kick-off and discovery sessions.

We will keep the ISAAC community apprised as we proceed through this process.

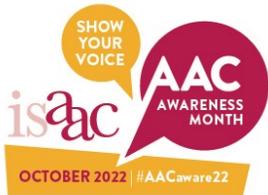
As always, I welcome your thoughts and feedback. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly, at [franklin@isaac-online.org](mailto:franklin@isaac-online.org), should you require any further information or assistance.

Regards and thanks,

[Franklin Smith](#)

ISAAC Executive Director

## AAC Awareness Month



ISAAC celebrates International AAC Awareness Month each year in 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 AAC devices.

Thirteen countries participated in the first Awareness Month in October 2007, and events have been increasing in number and scope ever since. Don't miss out on the exciting upcoming events!

This year, the theme for October is **“Show Your Voice.”** Whether it be showing how you communicate or how you advocate for communication access, we encourage you to show your voice this October!

*Use #AACaware22 on Twitter and Facebook!*

## Show Your Voice Discussion Series



Save the date! It's time to Show Your Voice!

Join ISAAC International on October 26, 2022 for our Show Your Voice Discussion Series.

We'll be hosting a day of lively and engaging panel discussions about AAC, led by community experts in a relaxed environment. These will be on topics important to AAC communities around the world. They'll be held in key global time zones, they'll be free, and they'll take place on Zoom.

Watch the ISAAC website for more information over the coming weeks - <https://isaac-online.org/english/aac-awareness/aac-awareness-month-2022/> and check out ISAAC's social media channels. We're on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

## News



### USSAAC

## USSAAC THE VOICE OF AAC

Members of USSAAC's Disaster Relief Committee - Miriam Boesch, Elizabeth Begley, Sarah Blackstone, and Tina Caswell published an article in *Perspectives*, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) peer-reviewed journal of the Special Interest Group for AAC. This is an open access article which is available here: [USSAAC's Disaster Relief Committee Publication](#).

### Abstract

**Purpose:** People who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) face unique challenges during natural and man-made disasters. When Hurricanes Harvey, Maria, and Irma struck in 2017, the need to address the immediate and longer term needs of this group during all stages of the disaster became apparent. The purposes of this clinical focus article are to discuss the *United States Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Disaster*

*Relief Committee* initiatives; obtain the perspectives of families on disaster preparedness before, during, and after the disaster; and provide recommendations for speech-language pathologists and other professionals to increase disaster preparedness for people who use AAC.

**Method:** A survey was disseminated via e-mail to 20 people who requested AAC assistance during Hurricane Harvey. A total of 13 people completed the 10-question survey for a response rate of 65%.

**Results:** The most salient findings indicated that people who use AAC and their families were unprepared prior to the disaster and did not have the necessary resources during and after the disaster. The Disaster Relief Committee used these findings to create disaster preparedness initiatives.

**Conclusion:** This article discusses a text-based toolkit developed to increase disaster preparedness and provides recommendations for speech-language pathologists and other professionals on how to help clients who use AAC prepare for disasters and have the necessary vocabulary to communicate effectively during disaster situations.

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## News

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For more information and resources for emergency preparedness for individuals who use AAC, please visit the USSAAC website:

[USSAAC Disaster Relief Committee](#)

## The Bridge School



**AAC-CVI**  
project

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are announcing the availability at no cost of The Bridge School's University Module, *Introducing Children with Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI): An Interprofessional Education Module for Preservice and Inservice Educators*. This Module is funded in part by Ability Central Philanthropy. It is designed to increase awareness of the unmet needs of children with cortical visual impairment or CVI, the most common cause of visual impairment in western nations today, highlighting the potential impacts of CVI on children with complex needs.

The primary purposes of the module are to:

- (a) support instructors from multiple disciplines to provide information to their students about CVI,
- (b) help advocate for interprofessional educational content in coursework at a preservice and in-service level and
- (c) enable instructors to embed information about CVI into their coursework and trainings.

Instructors can access the module through The Bridge School website

<https://cvi.bridgeschool.org/university-module/>

Please feel free to forward this invitation to your colleagues and contact us if you have questions at [questions@bridgeschool.org](mailto:questions@bridgeschool.org)

The module includes:

- ◆ Instructor's Manual. The manual suggests specific learning objectives, discussion questions, ideas for engaging students, ways to use the stories, and additional resources and references. However, the module is designed so that instructors can easily select and embed information in ways that work for them.

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## News

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- ◆ Introductory video: A one-minute orientation to the module's content for students.
- ◆ Basic information about vision and CVI. The slide deck provides instructors with multiple options so they can decide how to present content most relevant to the students and content of their course(s).

The following content is provided:

- A PowerPoint slide deck. Instructors can add to or personalize the content to fit the needs of their students/course.
- A video of the slide deck, narrated by Dr. Christine Roman Lantzy, for those who might prefer to have an expert in CVI present the content.
- ◆ Three videos. Each short (5-6 minute) video tells a story of one child with CVI and complex needs. Each is told from a unique perspective: by an educator, a speech-language pathologist, and a parent. Stories are meant to engage students and help promote targeted discussions.



We are asking you to review the module and present it to your students. If you do, we ask you and your students to provide us with constructive feedback so we can improve the module.

Thank you for your consideration.

We sincerely hope you will participate.

Sarah W. Blackstone, Ph.D., Principal Investigator, CVI/AAC Project

Vicki Casella, Ph.D., Executive Director, The Bridge School

## ATAAC Conference



**News about the 5th International Assistive Technology and AAC conference.**

**ATAAC Conference will be hosted in Zagreb, Croatia from September 29-30, 2022.**

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## News

### ... continued



The conference can be attended in person or watched online at [www.ataac.eu](http://www.ataac.eu).

Leading AT and AAC experts and manufacturers will be presenting information, research and products, sharing experiences and valuable advice on working with children and persons with communication support needs .

Online access to watch the recording lasts for 2 weeks from the first day of the conference, ensuring you have enough time to focus on each and every lecture.



All lectures in other languages will be simultaneously translated into English.

More information can be found on the [ATAAC 2022](http://ATAAC2022) website.

ISAAC is a partner of ATAAC and supports the growth of AAC community in Southern and Eastern Europe.

ATAAC Zagreb is organised by by E-Glas, Faculty of Engineering, University of Rijeka and Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation, University of Zagreb.

## PRC-Salttilo



### **The 26th Annual Edwin and Esther Prentke AAC Distinguished Lecture Call for Nominations is now Open!**

Nominations for The 2023 Prentke AAC Distinguished Lecture are now open and will close on October 15, 2022!

The lecture will be held at the ATIA 2023 Conference in Orlando on Friday, February 2, 2023, from 11:30 am – 12:30 pm EST.

The winner of this award will receive a \$2,000 honorarium and up to an additional \$3,000 to cover travel expenses for the recipient to present in person at the conference in Orlando, provided by PRC-Salttilo.

More information about eligibility requirements and how to submit your nomination can be found on [this page of the ATIA website](#).

## Chapters

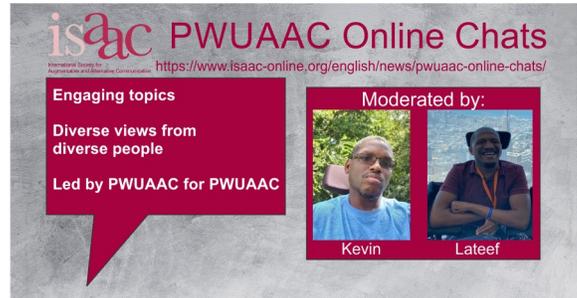


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## Contact Us

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!



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## The ISAAC Communicator

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