

DIRECTORS 2021

Lewis Golinker
Lois Jean Brady
Elizabeth Christensen
Stephanie Meehan
Tami Altschuler



OFFICERS 2021

Yoosun Chung, President
Amy Goldman, President-Elect
Wendy Quach, Past President
Sarah Blackstone, VP Finance
Tracy Rackensberger, VP People
who use AAC and their families
Alison Pentland, Secretary

Dear USSAAC members,

Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a relaxing and safe holiday break and has started a great new year, 2021.

I know 2020 was one of the most challenging years to almost everyone due to the pandemic, and these challenges have continued in 2021. However, in spite of the unusual challenges, USSAAC had a productive year in 2020 and I hope that we will continue our successes in 2021.

I had announced various accomplishments that USSAAC has done in the President Letters all throughout last year, but I would like to highlight something new in the beginning of this year. USSAAC's Disaster Relief Committee has developed a free toolkit to increase the emergency preparedness for people who use AAC and their families. Entitled: *Disaster Preparedness for People Who Use AAC*, the content is delivered via text to your mobile device, once a day for seven days. You can learn more about this toolkit at <https://ussaac.org/readiness/>.

In addition, I would like to commend USSAAC members who use AAC who are in the leadership position nationally and internationally. For example, **Kevin Williams**, the current Chief of Technology Officer at USSAAC, has been elected as VP for LEAD project at International Society for AAC (ISAAC, <https://isaac-online.org/english/home/>) after **Lateef McLeod**, the former President of USSAAC, ended his term. Kevin and Lateef are now leading Online Chats for people who use AAC to meet online a regular basis for informal chats, that is hosted by ISAAC. **Mike Hipple**, the outgoing Director of Membership for USSAAC, is the founder of the Wisconsin AAC Network and has taken an active role in the Leadership Committee.

USSAAC started a new year on January 1st. Hopefully you have already renewed your membership for 2021! USSAAC thanks **Mike Hipple** for his contributions to USSAAC's board over the past several years. We want to welcome our new board member, **Elizabeth (Beth) Christensen**, who will serve as Director, Membership. Beth is currently a member of USSAAC's AAC Awareness Committee. In addition, USSAAC greatly appreciates **Jill Senner**'s time and effort as the SpeakUp Editor for the past several years. Jill brought SpeakUp interesting topics on a regular basis. Thank you, Jill. We also want to welcome **BoYoung Christina Byun** again, as the new SpeakUp Editor. Congratulations Beth and BoYoung! We

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welcome you and look forward to working with you. The existing board members will continue their terms in the following positions: **Yoosun Chung** as President, **Amy Goldman** as President Elect, **Wendy Quach** as Past President, **Sarah Blackstone** as VP, Financial Affairs, **Tracy Rackensberger** as VP, People who Use AAC and their Families, **Stephanie Meehan** as Director, Professional Affairs, and **Lois Jean Brady** as Director, Public Information. Congratulations to returning Board members elected to a new term, **Lew Golinker** as Director of Advocacy, **Tami Altschuler** as ISAAC Liaison, and **Alison Pentland**, Secretary.

The Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) annual conference is being held virtually this year due to the pandemic, so the USSAAC meet up at ATIA is not happening this year. The pandemic has changed almost everything we have been doing so far! However, if you have registered for ATIA, please join USSAAC and the ATIA strand advisors at the AAC social hour on Monday, January 25, from 5:00-6:00 pm eastern. USSAAC is pleased to co-sponsor this event and offer great prizes! Also, **Kevin Williams** is the 2021 recipient of the Prentke AAC Distinguished Lecture! This lecture is FREE and will take place February 4 at 5 - 6pm EST. Visit the ATIA website to meet Kevin, learn about his lecture and register to attend! [#ATIA2021 http://ow.ly/Ylfw50D6qA4](https://ow.ly/Ylfw50D6qA4)

Despite all our current challenges, I hope that every USSAAC member will keep our passion and energy high to advocate the rights of people who use AAC and their families. If you have not renewed your membership yet, please renew at <https://ussaac.org/membership/>.

Thank you thank you thank you. I only wish I could thank everyone personally!

Please be safe and cheerful!

Yoosun Chung, President

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