

Interface National Newsletter



**Centre for
Augmentative and
Alternative
Communication**

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**Interface promotes
communication for
people with complex
communication needs
by supplementing
existing communication
with gestures,
communication boards
and assistive
technology (thus,
augmentative &
alternative
communication)**

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Editorial

It's been quite a year!

It's been quite a hectic year for me personally and I know for many of you too.

It's been a year in which I've had the privilege to travel across our beautiful country meeting and speaking to countless wonderful people from all walks of life about AAC and the power of communication.

It's a year in which I witnessed inclusion in action and have seen the fruits of many many dedicated individuals' hard work over the years starting to pay off.

It's been a year in which for the first time ever, I've heard the previously seemingly invisible speech disability and AAC being specifically mentioned at conferences alongside other disabilities.

It's been a year in which I've been privileged to have been part of the ground breaking youth empowerment, Fofa Project. A project I'm sure we're going to see and hear a lot of great things about in the years to come.

But it's also been a year in

which it's become abundantly clear to me that there's still a lot of work to be done. There are so many people with little or no functional speech, and many other people who know someone with a speech disability, who don't even know AAC exists! There are so many educators struggling in the dark to implement White Paper Six on inclusion.

As this year slowly winds down and we take time to reflect on the past year and rest, relax and enjoy the company of family and friends, I would like to firstly say a special thank you to everybody who has contributed to making this newsletter what it is. It's a true pleasure for me to receive such wonderful contributions.

Secondly I would like to wish everybody a joyful, peaceful festive season and everything of the best for the New Year.

Martin Pistorius
Editor

**Send comments &
contributions to**
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Chairman's report

Once again, as the end of the year draws closer, it is time to provide some feedback to members regarding activities of Interface South Africa.

Thanks to all the votes that were submitted on the Shuttleworth Foundation website requesting that Interface SA, together with the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, be included in the Giving Exchange Innovation Bazaar - we were invited to exhibit. The event took place at Nelson Mandela Square in Santon. It was hosted by the Shuttleworth Foundation and The Greater Good South Africa and consisted of approximately 70 non-profit organisations, each with a small stand, housed in a large marquee in which they were able to exhibit their activities and involvement in the community.



Thanks to Alecia Samuels, who did most of the work and coordination, as well as manning of the stand, we had an interesting and attractive stand. The awareness of the general public regarding people with little or no functional speech was increased and a lot of networking with the other exhibitors took place. Alecia, ably assisted by most of the CAAC staff and some Interface members at various stages during the exhibition, ensured that the three days were worthwhile.

Margi Lilienfeld from Interface-KZN has offered to

assist us by compiling the required financial statements for Interface South Africa. The relevant documentation is being faxed to her to enable her to carry out this task.

It has eventually been established that our application that was submitted to the National Lottery for funding in 2004, was unsuccessful. We did not submit an application for 2005. Our strategy for applications to be submitted to the National Lottery Fund in the future, will have to be reconsidered.

Our website has been updated recently and now has relevant contact information and links to recent Interface newsletters. Our thanks go to Martin for his assistance with this.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the readers of our newsletter, a joyous, peaceful and blessed festive season and everything you may wish for in 2006.

Rodney Pistorius,
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Regional News

Interface Gauteng:

Nuwe Wending News!

We have made exciting progress regarding the verbal expressive mode used in conjunction with PCS symbols by one of our learners. Cornél who has little functional speech, recently astounded his teacher by talking too much! As I was passing by the classroom, she stopped me and mentioned that: "Now that he has started to talk, I can't

seem to stop him." I thought what a tremendous improvement!!! AAC is the way to go!

Heidi Mapisa
(Speech therapist, Nuwe Wending School)

Interface Western Cape:

The wind is blowing and the sun is shining, so summer must be here! Only a few weeks left before the trek of Gautengers to the Mother City. We have had a busy few months with a visit from Barry Romich, Casual Day and planning our end-of-year function. Barry Romich of the Prentke-Romich Company visited Cape Town during August and gave two talks – "Language Representation Methods" and "Evidence-Based Practice in AAC". The talks were informative and thought-provoking. I think the CAAC students from Cape Town especially appreciated all the theoretical knowledge he shared.

As a fundraising initiative, we took part in "Casual Day" for the first time this year. Thanks to the cooperation of Redham and Bergvliet High Schools, Vista Nova School and the committee members, we were able to raise over R4000 for Interface and approximately R7000 for the Casual Day. All our tickets were sold out and we will definitely participate again next year, hoping to raise even more money! The money will be used to purchase a printer and laminator to produce communication boards for children with complex communication needs who attend a parent support group at Red Cross Children's hospital.

We will be again be having a High Tea Fundraiser at the end of the year. On Saturday

3 December we will be celebrating the International Day of the Disabled at Vista Nova School. Martin Pistorius - AAC user, disability activist, staff member (and student) at the CAAC, will be our guest speaker. Please contact Jenny Tully (tel. 021-7120461) for more information.

On a personal note, one of our committee members and AAC users, Luvuyo Tyulu, turned 21 at the end of October. Congratulations Luvuyo! Nicky Eyre, our treasurer, was married on 20 August to Peter Smit, we wish them well for their future.

We would like to grow our membership and support base, so any new members are very welcome to make contact. For Interface to be effective, we need as many soldiers as possible to fight for the cause. So come and be part of making a difference in the lives of people with complex communication needs, giving them a voice to speak out.

Nicky Smit
Western Cape Committee

Interface KZN:

Barry Romich's Visit

The visit from Barry Romich was most informative and it was wonderful to meet the chief guru of PRC. There was incredibly positive feedback, from those who attended the evening meeting at Edgewood. In asking Barry to present on some of the employment options enjoyed by adults who use AAC in the USA, Interface KZN had hoped to raise the expectations of providers, parents and individuals who use AAC in KZN. It appears that this goal was achieved as voiced by a parent ... "tonight has opened my eyes.....and this process has to start with us, the parents.

We have to raise our expectations that our children can be employed and we have to start now while they are young to prepare them for employment.” Barry’s presentation on the AAC Institute that evening was also most interesting and very well received.

The suggestion of Paul Burdett for individuals using AAC to meet informally with Barry was most successful. Four youngsters who use PRC devices and Paul met with Barry for a relaxed afternoon of getting to know one another and of learning more about the capabilities of their devices. Barry also ended up doing quite a bit of technical “trouble shooting” particularly in relation to computer emulation.

Fofa Project

“Spread your Wings”

What an amazing week this turned out to be for France Mgenge and Daniel Ngcobo who were participants from KZN as well as for myself. France, and his brother, Michael, who acted as his personal assistant (PA), as well as Daniel and Phyllis, his mom and PA, flew up from Durban to attend this week of intensive communication and employment empowerment. The highlights of the week were numerous and the team at the CAAC are to be congratulated on achieving the listed outcomes of the proposed goals of the programme some of which are mentioned below:

- *To provide participants with an appropriate PC based communication system to enable them to communicate* - The 2005 participants received on long term loan fantastic laptop computers pre-loaded with specific AAC software, “The Grid”.
- *To train participants to use the communication device effectively* - The participants got a good start on mastering The Grid through training by

Celeste Mukheibir and the incredible input of Martin Pistorius, undoubtedly the most experienced and competent “The Grid fundi” in South Africa. Clearly, however, this will be an ongoing process.

- *To expose participants to options for employment and independent living* – This was addressed in several different ways including presentations on issues related to personal assistants, how to make oneself more employable and the tools to transition from school to work and planning for future employment. The presentations were exceptional, in that although based on sound theory, they demonstrated practical applications and provided a wealth of sound realistic ideas, examples and meaningful contacts with relation to SETA’s, job coaches, development of work skills etc. Presenters included Kitty Uys, Sharon Rufus of EmployAbility and Leonora Nel, O.T. at the Pretoria School.

- *To facilitate the development of advocacy skills, empowering the participants to impact on community awareness of disability* - A measure of the empowerment that took place during the week was clearly evident in the final presentations of the participants on the last day of the week – without exception upbeat, positive and very moving.

There was so much more, the camaraderie that developed, the sharing during lunches, the excitement of watching individuals grow in confidence. Not to omit the Daring to Dream process that was facilitated by JéAnette Loots and Kitty, the presentation by Adv. Mandy Janse van Rensburg on the rights of persons with disabilities, Skakila Dada’s

pertinent presentations on issues of communication and vocabulary selection and the informal entertaining address by Dr Jonathan Jansen. To Prof. Alant, Dr. Kitty Uys, JéAnette Loots and all the other members of the CAAC team for whom nothing was ever impossible or too much effort thanks for allowing me to be part of a great team and for the wonderful opportunity of sharing in this powerful yet challenging project. I am sure the future will reveal that great things grew from the initial Fofa project and the participants truly did start to learn to spread their wings. How high they fly will be largely up to Daniel, France, Legogang and Martin but will also depend on those that support and assist them to reach their dreams.

New Vice-Chairperson

Paul Burdett was unanimously elected vice-chairperson of Interface KZN at the September meeting of Interface KZN. Paul is determined that Interface KZN must raise awareness of the needs of people with disabilities, particularly those who require AAC. He has lots of ideas for Interface KZN to implement and wants to play an active role in this process. Paul is currently using the association’s loan Pathfinder that was donated by the Victor Daitz Foundation. He has chosen to use the word and letter based software AQLS on the Pathfinder.

New unit for young learners with autism

Di and Allan, who have along association with Interface KZN are parents of Nicholas, a 6 year old boy with autism. Di, who currently serves on the Interface KZN committee writes “Currently Nicholas is at a mainstream school, with a full-time facilitator. We have decided,

however, that his education would be better served if he were to be schooled in a classroom where the teaching approach is specifically geared for autistic learners.

Resources in KZN are, as you know, very limited. We are therefore starting a small teaching unit in January 2006 for young children between the ages of 3 and 7. The new unit, Kids First, will be a not-for-profit organization (Section 21 company), and will be based in Durban North. It will initially be small, comprising 6 children to 1 teacher and teacher aide.

The unit will incorporate principles of Applied Behavior Analysis, TEAACH and Picture Exchange Communication – the emphasis being on communication, social interaction, the development of imagination and play as well as the improvement of language, motor and daily living skills. Literacy, numeracy, general knowledge and arts and crafts will be taught in both individual and group lessons. Drama, music and playtime will be group activities; the child’s external therapy programs will be followed through at school to assist with the generalisation of skills and it is intended that individual programs will be set up for each child, based on the specific needs and professional advice pertaining to that child.

It is our intention to provide the children with a structured learning program within a stimulating, safe and caring environment. As they grow older and/or as the children’s needs change, the program will be adapted accordingly”.

Interface KZN wishes Kids First every success and we offer our support to Di and Allan on this wonderful initiative.

Au revoir Shelley

The founder and principal of Whizz Kidz Special needs Unit, Shelley Tooth, is going to the U.K. on a two year sabbatical. Shelley has been actively involved in Interface KZN virtually since its inception. She has played a particularly significant role in the organisation and presenting of seminars and workshops. Her enthusiasm, dedication and cheerful contributions will be sorely missed at Interface KZN committee meetings. We wish Shelley everything of the best during her stint in the U.K.

Margi Lilienfeld

School News**News from Pathways-Polokwane**

WOW! How this year has flown....so much has taken place that we can barely keep track!

What an adventurous year it has been. We have learnt so much from the three Inclusion Conferences we have attended and can in all honesty say that the two local conferences were inspirational!! We have learnt a tremendous amount this year but realize that our greatest learning will occur when we are living our Inclusion dream. Our plans are still on track though a little delayed due to the ever present "financial reality check"!

At present our building date is set for January 2006 and our occupational date is set for July 2006.

One of our pupils Lesedi Makgato is already being included into a weekly Grade 3 maths lesson in the most understated, natural way.....friends have been made and bonds formed and Lesedi has taken a shine to his new teacher!!!! All the

other children....from both schools.... are quite envious and can't wait to be included in our New Year plans.

We have been extremely fortunate and extremely grateful to be the beneficiaries of donations from D.G Murray Trust, Meropa Casino, Die Vryburgers, KFC and AFROX with which we will purchase equipment for our new school. Paging through equipment catalogues takes on a whole new meaning!!!!

Gary Player has very kindly agreed to host a Golf Day for us! The golfers in Polokwane are beside themselves in anticipation of playing golf with a South African golfing legend. After a day of golf a benefit dinner in aid of Pathways will be held with Gary Player as the guest speaker.

Various memorabilia from Tiger Woods, Retief Goosen, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player will be auctioned on the evening too.

Congratulations to Pathways-Kloof on their 10th Anniversary....may you continue with the tremendous work you are doing and may you go from strength to strength.

Congratulations to Pathways-Roodepoort on their successful climb up Kilimanjaro.....well done!!! We are so proud of your outstanding achievement! You are an inspiration to us all!

Congratulations to Juan and her family on the birth of their son. We know he will add even more laughter and joy into your loving family.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Martin Pistorious for all the hard work and effort he puts into gathering all the articles for the newsletter and for giving us all plenty of notice to

submit our news...thanks Martin!

We wish you all a blessed Christmas and every best wish for the New Year!

Sue and Ruth and all at Pathways-Polokwane

News from Pathways-Roodepoort

The 9th September saw Team Pathways lying on the floor at International Departures due to an 8 hour delay in our flight to Tanzania! A year and a half of preparation; training, buying equipment, researching Kilimanjaro, visualisation, feelings of dread, excitement in anticipation and the day had finally arrived. At last our flight took off into the South African night sky and our adventure began.

A quick stop off in Dar es Salam to change planes and we made a quick hop to Kilimanjaro International Airport. Dawn broke as our weary team arrived at The Keys Hotel while Kilimanjaro herself remained hidden from our curious eyes. For the moment she remained a figment of our wild and apprehensive imaginations as we prepared ourselves for the next day when we would set foot upon this ancient and awe-inspiring volcano.

Excitement mounted the next morning as our Landrovers bumped along the potholed roads towards the Machame Gate where we signed in. Our first steps along the path were up hill through the magical Rain Forest. Thando and I resigned ourselves to this fact early on and bent our heads down leaning on our trekking poles for consolation. The vines and tall trees, strange and wondrous plants and rocks conjure images in your minds of a combination of fairies and magic tales as well as an expectation of

seeing Tarzan swinging by in the wild forest.

All through our climb we experienced the changes of Kilimanjaro's moods and yet seldom caught a glimpse of her towering crown of ice. She remained shrouded in cloud most of the way but gave us brief and spectacular photo opportunities when we least expected it. We climbed from her foothills where I realized that Kilimanjaro has mighty large feet, into her very heart where her gorges and valleys surpassed our wildest imaginations in sheer size. We slept in the arms of Kilimanjaro upon the slopes where little mountain streams trickle by at an energetic pace and then we climbed upon her shoulders, up the Barranco Wall, along lofty ridges to reach the Barafu (Ice) camp long after the sun had dipped behind the jagged horizon.

We breathed the air above the clouds and felt the weariness in our limbs due to the lack of oxygen. Our final effort for the summit started at midnight with the moon climbing into the star spangled sky. Giant glaciers of ice which gleamed silver in the moonlight beckoned us onward and upward. A ribbon of lights preceded us where climbers were making their way into the night and up towards Kilimanjaro's Stella Point. Thando and I followed both secretly wondering if we had enough physical and mental strength to make this last and desperate climb for Uhuru Peak.

At 4900 metres high Jack Frost stood unmoving between Thando and Stella Point. He sank his relentless icy fingers into her feet and hands and she was fast becoming hypothermic. Thando and I had an emotional parting as she

made the wise and responsible decision not to challenge the mountain any further and to rather try to summit again some other day. Frostbite had set into her fingers and toes and it would be more than 2 weeks before she would fully regain the feeling in them again.

My own remaining strength seemed to leave with my young and brave companion as I watched her turn back with our Head Guide, Julius, towards the Barafu camp. I was alone with George (my guide) and set about following his lead, pole pole (slowly, slowly in Swahili) and making progress at a snail's pace. By this time the rest of the team was far ahead of me and I would never catch up. More than anything, I wanted to sleep and found myself dosing off into a fog of consciousness and muddled dreams as I walked. The fluid that had settled on my lungs was becoming a real drain on the last ounces of energy as the coughing became worse as I ascended. As the dawn broke behind me I begged George to let me sleep and as my head hit the gravel I fell into a very deep sleep. An hour later George woke me and we plodded on. At 11h30 I stood below Stella Point which was only 100m above me when we spotted three of my friends descending Stella Point. Surprised to see me still on the mountain they came over to me insisting that I descend with them. My resolve to continue hung by a thread and I was torn between the loneliness of going on alone or the camaraderie of descending with familiar faces. A moment later a giant cloud rolled over the edge of Stella Point and in a second the rim disappeared before our eyes. Jeff the Chef - the guide looking after my friends - cast a weary eye at the fast

moving cloud and said "No ! You see this cloud? It bring rain, bring snow, we don't know. It is too dangerous to climb now. We must go down."

Upon the oversized pumice stone I sat, head in hands and cried. I felt I'd let Fay and the children down and knew that I would have to come back to finish what I started. My friends did all they could to console me by pulling the Pathways Roodepoort banner from my back pack and photographing it and our Pilgrim Bear at Gilman's Point (5685m) but I was still devastated that I did not reach Uhuru.

10 out of 14 of our team members summited so the trip was a resounding success. We received a heroes welcome at Jhb International Airport when we got home and it was a very emotional reception. There were so many reasons why we wanted to do this before we left but so many more reasons why we had done it by the time we got back. There are even more reasons now to do it again! One grows spiritually, mentally and emotionally when embarking on a pilgrimage along the many routes of Kilimanjaro and our advice to anyone who has flirted with the idea of climbing is to "DO IT!"

August 2006 will see Team Pathways Roodepoort, Fay (our principal), Thando and myself reach the summit with the Pathways banner. We know well what we are in for and can ensure that we prepare differently to secure our success. There is nothing easy about climbing Kilimanjaro but once again we will face her with respect and prepare as best we can and hope that conditions and our health remain excellent

and that this time the whole team will reach Uhuru Peak at 5895m.



Well done to the members of our team who made it this time - it was one of the most difficult things any of us have ever had to do in our lives. To all the sponsors who helped us with this expedition, a sincere "Thank You!" to Andy Scott of Mandeville who sponsored Thando's airfare & climbing fee (R10 000), to Garreth and Wesley Botha who donated Thando her kit, to Waltons Stationery, Pancake King, KPMG, Africa Blue, Caterpillar, Aesthetic Design, ABSA, 121.com, friends of Pathways and family who donated money to Pathways. A huge thanks to FoneWorx who have given Pathways Roodepoort an SMS line which donates R5 to the school if you SMS "Pathways" to 36720.

I do not have the complete list of sponsors yet but would like to thank everyone involved for making this a huge fund raising success for our Stimulation Centre for children with severe mental and physical impairments. May the 2006 be even more successful in helping us sustain our little school.

Julie Botha

News from Pathways-Pretoria

We at Pathways-Pretoria look back on a challenging and exciting year. We have moved to our beautiful plot on Lynnwood road, Plot 1, Shere, Dudley Ave. We trust the Lord to provide for us, to buy the plot before the school closes, so keep praying with

us. We had a special Pathways – fun day. Bubbles the clown and "Willie en die Wenspan" entertained us. We also invited all our young Grannies and Grandpa's for a sing along music therapy morning that blessed us all.

In planning is our carols by candlelight and picnic. We are inviting all to join us on the 13th November at 5:30. Our other BIG event is our concert on Saturday the 10th November at 10:00. Our theme is "Counties of the World" and we will all rap and tap! We will have our first Christmas outreach this year and invited 60 children from Soshanguve for a special Christmas day. We will entertain them with our concert and they will answer with all the songs they have learned.

Exciting news is our new life skills and employment training programme; 15 Young adults can enrol for training in life skills, work preparation and job sampling. We hope that they will be placed, within a year or two, in the open labour market. So keep your eyes peeled!

We want to wish all a blessed Christmas and a special time as family together.

Danita Nel & the Pathways Team

News from Whizz Kidz

Well, there is never a dull moment here at Whizz Kidz! So much has happened in the last few months. Pravina Coombs (Chairperson) and Kim Morgan (Vice Chairperson) have repeatedly demonstrated their strength of character and reaffirmed our belief that they are women of action! We are very grateful to them both for their commitment towards the staff, parents and children of Whizz Kidz.

Our two Outreach Projects, Teen-Wize and KZN Kids Care, continue to provide an invaluable service to the Whizz Kidz families. Teen-Wize is a unit accommodating our teens (13-18 years) and KZN Kids Care offers respite and residential care. Sharon and Paola are quite simply remarkable ladies whose dedication towards our children and their families is truly commendable!

The Teens organized a garage sale as part of their life skills programme to raise funds for their unit as well as a family who were victims of the Tsunami. It was felt that an important lesson for the Teens to learn is that all members of the community should make an effort to "give back" to those in need. Great fun was had by all and everyone that attended reported a successful event. The Teens were also given the opportunity to demonstrate their musical talents to the delight of friends, family and neighbours. A total of R180 was raised for Teen-Wize and R1 200 for the family.

In September, Whizz Kidz held a Pub Quiz at the Westville Catholic Church and managed to raise R2 777. Melanie Haynes (one of our teachers) did a fabulous job of organizing the event!

Our Annual Golf Day was another HUGE success! In total, R40 000 was raised for Whizz Kidz. Lesley Fraser of GUD Filters surprised us with a donation of R7 500 which was handed over at the prize giving. A fantastic surprise! Damon Beard and Roland Styles were our M.C's for the prize giving and both did an awesome job and we're very grateful for your contributions. Whizz Kidz was honoured to have you share the occasion with us.

Damon Beard from East Coast radio came to visit the school some time ago and demonstrated a genuine interest in each and every child he met. Our Teens joined us for the day and showed off some of their reading and communication skills. They were totally in awe of Damon and absolutely delighted when he gave them a special message on air that afternoon. Since then, Damon has come up with a few fabulous fundraising ideas and I am very grateful to have his support. You're a real gem Damon! Roland Styles has recently committed himself to being a spokesperson for Whizz Kidz. He has made it clear to us, from the beginning that Whizz Kidz holds a special place in his heart. He is always willing to assist at events/socials arranged by the school and has truly become a "friend of Whizz Kidz". We're so proud to have him on board and it can only mean great things for the future. Roland, we luv ya!

Whizz Kidz has experienced some serious financial strain recently but with the help of members of our Board, local service clubs and businesses, and our loyal community, we seem to be back on track! The amazing support we've received from our donors and sponsors has been invaluable! To all our donors and sponsors - Well done and thank you all so much! Hopefully we can go Bigger and Better in 2006!

Now, a special word of thanks to the parents and staff of Whizz Kidz and Teen-Wize who have put in a tremendous amount of effort to assist with recent fundraising initiatives. You know who you are.....but I just wanted you to know that I am grateful for any assistance you offer.

Finally, I am sure that most of

you are already aware of the fact that I will be winging my way to the U.K. on a two year sabbatical. This has been strictly a personal decision and rest assured that I am not resigning as Principal of Whizz Kidz. I intend to keep in constant contact and am busy setting up various opportunities to source international donors/sponsors for Whizz Kidz. I intend to remain as involved as I possibly can. In my absence our Acting Principal will be Kim Morgan. She is a truly amazing lady who I am confident will be an asset to the school.

As you can see, it's been a very busy and very exciting few months! We have formed new and long lasting partnerships with various organizations and my only hope is that you all continue to offer your support and in so doing assist us in reaching our goals.

Shelley Tooth

Aided Language Stimulation Corner

Story Time: How to include children with little or no functional speech in to story time activities?

(This article is based on AAC Make It/Take It Presented by Lori Tufte/Julie Maro March, 1999. Visit <http://aacintervention.com/litboards.htm> for the original paper)

1. Select a story book.

A. Utilize Repetitive Phrase story books.

Using repetitive phrase stories during reading time is a quick and efficient way to engage students with limited verbal skills into story time. To do this, you will need to:

- pull the repetitive phrase

and/or phrases from the story

- find symbol representations for these phrases using BoardMaker or some other picture library system. Line drawings could work as well.
- place the picture symbols for the repetitive phrases on a simple communication device or communication board
- record the message into the communication device
- model the use of the communication device during initial story readings
- cue students to activate the communication device when reading the story. This can be done using a visual cue such as highlight tape on the repetitive line of the book and on the communication device.

Examples of repetitive phrase story books: "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle, "Mrs. Wishy Washy" by Joy Cowley

B. Choose from other recommended children's literature. Look at the curriculum or for age appropriate books.

2. Provide Access to Main Theme Vocabulary

Create a "generic" communication story board which can be used with a number of story books. For example, many books feature colours and numbers within the plot. Creating a communication overlay that can be used whenever you have a story dealing with numbers, colours or another theme will give you easy access to vocabulary pertaining to more than one book.

To do this you will need to:

- Identify the main theme vocabulary from the story
- Find symbol representations for this vocabulary using BoardMaker or some other picture library system
- Create an overlay using the main theme vocabulary for

your communication device/system

- Record the vocabulary into your communication system if using voice output
- Model use of the system for the students
- Cue students to use the theme vocabulary when reading the story

Examples of Main Theme Overlay Topics: Colour Overlay, Number Overlay, Interaction Overlay (e.g. Turn the page!, What's that?, Read that again!)

3. Use Aided Language Stimulation Boards for Story Reading

Goossens', Crain and Elder have developed aided language stimulation overlays that can be used to promote expressive communication during story time. You may use their overlays or create your own.

To do this you will need to:

- Buy or loan the appropriate aided language stimulation overlay book(s). (See <http://aacintervention.com/links.html>)

- Create a custom overlay based on the boards designed by Goossens', Crain and Elder or design your own from scratch

- Find symbol representations for this vocabulary using BoardMaker or some other picture library system

- Print the overlay and use separately or record the messages into the augmentative communication system

- Model use of the system for the students

- Cue students to use the vocabulary during story reading activities

4. Novel Stories Based on Favourite Literature or Songs

Retelling favourite stories or songs in a new way provides an opportunity to promote

communication. Taking a story or song such as Goodnight Moon, Brown Bear, Brown Bear or Mary Wore a Red Dress and revamping the vocabulary to make a novel story/song allows you to tailor the new vocabulary to the season, the classroom theme or curricular unit. For example in the winter, Brown Bear, Brown Bear can be changed to "Snowman, Snowman" or "Black cat, Black cat"

To do this you will need to:

- Identify the story to be redone

- Identify the new vocabulary

- Find symbol representations for this vocabulary using BoardMaker or some other picture library system

- Create a story overlay using the new vocabulary

- Print the overlay and use separately or record the messages into the augmentative communication system

- Model use of the system for the students

- Cue students to use the vocabulary during story reading activities

Examples of Novel Stories/Songs based on Favourite Literature: Rainbow, rainbow what do you see?

Shakila Dada

CAAC News

HOT!!! That's what it's been like around the Centre for the past couple of months. With afternoon temperatures in our offices reaching the 35°C plus mark, staff have had to find some innovative methods to keep cool. Not finding any relief, Kitty Uys has decided enough is enough and is temporarily exchanging the Highveld for a cooler winter in Sweden. Seriously though, Kitty will be visiting the CHILd institute at Malardalen University from the middle of November 2005 until January

2006 where she will be giving a series of lectures to their Early Intervention masters students as well as working with, amongst others, Prof Mats Grandlund. We look forward to welcoming her back at the Centre in the New Year.

Sadly we are having to say goodbye to 2 other staff members. Machunene Lekalakala, our physio will be leaving at the end of this year to concentrate on her PhD studies and JéAnette Loots who has been filling in for Juan Bornman will be leaving at the end of November as Juan returns in January. We wish both these members all the best in their future endeavours.

Since the last newsletter staff have been involved in a number of trainings, exhibitions, and presentations. One of the big highlights of the year was the FOFA project, the first one of its kind in South Africa (*more about that elsewhere in this issue*). Thanks also to everyone who voted for the CAAC and Interface to be part of the first ever Giving Exchange. This event was hosted by the Shuttleworth foundation in September at the Nelson Mandela Square Sandton. This was a great opportunity to spread the message of AAC and also to build up some useful contacts with other NGO's. It was interesting to see the diverse and valuable amount of work which many organisations are doing out there but also that we have more in common than we think. Opportunities for partnerships therefore exist and should be explored further.

Kitty Uys and Juan Bornman presented two interesting lectures at the International Toy Library Congress held at the CSIR and you can view and download these from our website.

CAAC Open Days and consultations

Do you want to find out more about AAC? About devices? About resources for the classroom or for home? Why not come round to an open day at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (CAAC), at the University of Pretoria (Lynnwood Road entrance).

Parents, AAC users, educators or therapists can attend a free presentation by the CAAC on services, resources and activities. A demonstration can be given on high and low tech communication aids. Programs are tailored to your special area of interest. Open days take place on a monthly basis, usually on the last Friday of the month, from 9h00 -11h00. If you would like to attend, please confirm with Liza (012 420 2001) in order for us to individualise your program.

Apart from open days to give a basic overview of AAC and the Centre's services, the CAAC also offers consultations to persons with complex communication needs.

In order to schedule a consultation, please contact Alecia Samuels (012 420 4727) or Liza (012 420 2001), Consultations cost R500.00 to be paid on the day of the consultation. We operate on an in-contracted fee, so claims can be made from the medical aid.

The website is currently undergoing a revamp and these downloads form part of our new and improved service to the AAC community. We are always open to new suggestions and ideas and I know that Martin welcomes all your inputs. So please keep the feedback coming in.

We have also been actively involved in spreading the message of AAC to the Speech language therapy community. Shakila Dada recently presented a lecture on Aided Language Stimulation at the annual SASLHA conference in Bloemfontein and we have just completed a successful workshop with Speech pathologists in the Gauteng Department of Health. Unfortunately many myths regarding AAC still exist amongst our colleagues and these were therefore great opportunities to dispel some of these.

As we approach December and the end of an academic year, it is always a good time to reflect on the past months. For us here at the Centre it has once again been a busy but fulfilling year but we are all looking forward to a well deserved break. For myself I'm heading home for a bit of a jol in the Mother City!! (*Ek mis nogal die berg!!*). The last thing that remains however is for all of us at the CAAC to wish you all a Blessed and Peaceful Christmas with loved ones and family. Buckle up and drive safely and check you all in the New Year.

Alecia Samuels (A.K.A the Cape Crusader)

Neville Cohen 1933 - 2005



We are very sad to have heard of the passing of Neville Cohen. He was one of the Founder members of the CAAC and made a major

contribution to disability issues in this country. May he rest in peace ...we will all miss him very much

Erna Alant

Interesting AAC Research

Three communication pathology students did their final year research on AAC topics, under the supervision of Dr Juan Bornman. Some interesting discoveries were made.

Anna Kolatsis investigated the associations that English-speaking adolescents make with Minspeak™ icons. She had 53 participants who completed a questionnaire containing 20 possible associations for each of the icons. Participants were then asked to rank the associations from the most appropriate to the least appropriate. Results indicated that for most icons the South African adolescents were more likely to make associations with the USA-based Unity 128 Software Package than with the list compiled by South African University students.

Loami Wepener looked at the effect of self-generation on the acquisition and retention of Blissymbols. 10 Blissymbols were selected, ranging from easy iconic symbols to complex compound ones. 23 10-yers old were divided in a control group and experimental group. Training for the control group entailed visual access and naming of the symbols, whilst the experimental group had, in addition to these 2 strategies an opportunity to generate the symbols themselves. The process consisted of a pre-test, post-test and withdrawal. Results indicated that self-generalization has a positive effect on the retention of complex symbols.

Lindi le Roux was interested in finding out if typically developing Afrikaans-speaking Grade 1 learners from a low socio-economic background regard Picture Communication Symbols (PCS) as iconic or not. She selected 16 symbols that were all related to an activity, namely making the bed. Learners were divided into a control group and an experimental group (who received training). Learners in both groups were asked to pair a phrase with a symbol. Results showed that both groups only perceived 3 of the 16 symbols as highly iconic after the pre-test. The experimental group showed a marked improvement during the post-test, identifying 13 symbols as highly iconic, which is indicative of the learnability of PCS symbols.

Results from all three these research projects highlight the role of experience, culture and language when choosing symbols sets or systems – which is certainly crucial in the multilingual and multicultural South African contexts.

Juan Bornman

Disability and Development

The Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (CAAC), the Department of Sociology and the South African Netherlands Program on Alternative in Development (SANPAD) have embarked on a project that will focus on including disability within the context of development. The overall aim of the proposed project is to assess the extent to which disability has been included within the current development policies, strategies and programmes of major development agencies in South Africa and to explore the opportunities, constraints and potential strategies for the

incorporation of disability as an issue, and people with disabilities as participants, within development policies, programmes and projects. A preliminary meeting and planning workshop was held on the 31 August and 1 September 2005 at the CAAC to commence with the planning of the project.

The importance of a project of this nature is highlighted as international research has shown strong linkages between poverty and disability. A broad range of development and donor agencies have committed themselves to addressing disability within the context of their development programmes for example the United Nations, World Bank, USAID and European Commission amongst others. While some advances have been made in the implementation of more inclusive policies, progress has generally been slow and limited. Although some international evaluations of progress towards including disability within development policies and programmes have been undertaken the available information tends to be limited and very general in nature. As yet no comprehensive assessment of the inclusion of disability in development has been undertaken in South Africa.

It is envisaged that this project is particularly relevant to the South African context as, with its history of colonial subjugation and racial oppression, racial inequalities, poverty and disability are intertwined in complex configurations. Within the context of changing policies and attempts to redress the injustices of the past, understanding the complex relationships between disability, poverty, gender and race are therefore vital for advancing the cause of disability and

addressing poverty. This project will actively engage both disability and development stakeholders, helping to raise the awareness of both sectors and encouraging the two sectors to engage with one another through workshops.

Shakila Dada

Fofa Project "Spread your wings"

It began one Sunday afternoon at the beginning of September, four young guys and their personal assistants arrived at the University of Pretoria's Die Werf. The air was thick with excitement and nervous anticipation of what lay ahead!

That evening the CAAC staff and their families joined us for supper and I think everybody sensed this was the start of something special, something extremely significant, not just for each of the Fofa participants, but also for the CAAC and the country! After a short welcome by Prof Alant we enjoyed our food between much laughter and excited chatter as we got to know each other better. Then it was off to bed.



We awoke to a beautiful fresh spring morning, and walked to the CAAC. The four of us moving through campus in our wheelchairs, created quite the stir! Perhaps they too could sense that this group of young individuals were part of something historic!

After a welcome from

Professor Alant we got stuck into the purpose of the week - to equip, enable and empower us to reach our full potential! Dr. Kitty Uys then spoke to us about the challenges we face in our lives and I learnt that I don't need to apologise for, or try and hide my disability, and that even though I don't always feel that I am of value, and important. JéAnette Loots introduced us to "Daring to Dream" a very exciting, yet challenging concept that the CAAC borrowed from Dr. Diane Bryen from Temple University, USA. We worked on putting our dreams on paper throughout the week. By the end of the first day we were all a little tired yet inspired and excited about the rest of the week. After buying supper we headed back to Die Werf, to do our home work and rest.

The next day Margi Lilienfeld taught us about the importance of Small Talk and made suggestions about phrases that we need to save on our devices for quick access. Kitty taught us how to become an employer for our personal assistants by developing individualised contracts. We had lunch with the Dean of Faculty of Education, Prof J.D. Jansen. It was a very fulfilling experience for all.

On Wednesday France, Lebogang and Daniel the participants received a laptop with voice output communication software, The Grid. Celeste Mukheibir came all the way from Johannesburg to teach us how to use The Grid and in the afternoon I had the pleasure of being able to help my fellow Fofa participants to become familiar with using The Grid. Thursday, Leonora Nel taught us about planning for

our future, specifically how to plan for the transition between the school and the labour market. Sharon Rufus from the company EmployAbility, gave us a lot of information on job coaches, SETAs' and learnerships, we all went for lunch feeling informed, empowered and excited! In the afternoon Mandy Janse van Rensburg, from the Department of Justice, taught us about our legal rights.

Friday seemed to come so quickly and we began the final preparations for our speeches. Before we knew it the honoured guests and people from the media arrived. Kitty gave a great presentation about the week and each of us, France (A.K.A. DJ Fire), Lebogang, Daniel and myself told our stories about where we are from and where we are planning to go - to realise our dreams. Finally Professor Alant said a few closing words, and handed us our certificates.

Everybody left, informed, inspired and empowered and the four of us became good friends. After exchanging phone numbers and the goodbye's were said, we went our separate ways.

I would like to thank everybody at the CAAC and especially Kitty and JéAnette for everything! I left the week a different person; it was an honour to be part of the Fofa week.

Martin Pistorius

I believe I can fly

Hi. My name is Daniel and I stay in KZN. About a month ago I was invited to go to attend the Fofa Project in Pretoria. Oh if you don't know, Fofa means spread your wings. Do you remember the song from R

Kelly, I believe I can fly? Yeah well if he can fly, so can we.

The Fofa Project is a project to learn different ways of communicating and how to empower yourself. Like getting a job, do you know that there are people that help disable people to get a job? Hey! I didn't know that and I bet you also didn't. So if you need a job, try to get hold of them. You are not the only one, I also need a job. I wonder if they can help me to find a nice Beautiful girl too?

Let me tell you more about the Fofa Project, it was attended by four cool, good looking guys France, Lebogang, Martin and yours truly, Daniel. *(If you are a beautiful girl and you want to know more about these four cool guys then don't stop reading!)*

France and I flew up to Johannesburg on Sunday morning with his brother Bekhi and my mom Phyllis, our assistants. When we arrived in Johannesburg we were driven to Pretoria. When we got to Pretoria two ladies were waiting for me okay, okay maybe they were not just waiting for me. They were waiting for all of us but hey! A guy can dream, can't he? Kitty and JéAnette welcomed us then we got settled in and we had a dinner party.

Monday morning came. We had to walk about thirty minutes to get to the CAAC. On the way we saw cars, houses, people and mmm yeah some girls. Okay a lot of girls but I didn't take any notice of them.

Professor Erna Alant came to speak to us. We all introduced ourselves to each other. Then Dr. Kitty spoke about why we were there, I thought we were there to

party, (just joking). I knew we were there to work but WOW! I didn't know we were going to do that much work! Dr. Kitty also talked about what are our biggest obstacles. She also talked about, the different ways we communicate. JéAnette came to speak about, Daring to Dream, I learnt so much. She asked us "are we allowed to dream big?" Of course we are! I have, no actually, we all have very big dreams.

On Tuesday we had a pretty full day, first of all Dr. Shakila talked about, developing communication boards and files. One of my friends Dr. Margi was also there, she talked about AAC users and small talk. Well I have no problem with small talk, especially if she's good looking. While we were busy with small talk Macheuene took our personal assistants for PA's: Transfer training. Then we had lunch with the big boss Faculty of Education Professor J. D. Jansen but before we had lunch with him, he had a chance to chat to us. WOW! He's pretty cool for a big boss, he's funny and wise. People let me tell you, we had really long days but it was worth it. JéAnette came back to carry on with Daring to Dream and reflecting on our life story and how to set our goals. The day was finally over and we were so tired but we still had Wednesday, Thursday and Friday to get through.

On Wednesday we were told the big news, we could take the laptops home! Now I think you could guess how we were feeling after hearing that. The first guest for Wednesday arrived, Celeste Mukheibir, she taught us The Grid. She showed us quite a lot about The Grid, like how to edit communication grids and we had a practical session personalizing our Grids.

Dr. Kitty then came back again to talk about relationships between employers and employees. Well I found out a lot from that topic and I used it when I came back. You see I was too friendly with the person that helps me at home, so I stop being too friendly and guess what? She left, Good! Kitty and JéAnette actually talked a lot, but you know what, they were not boring so it was cool.

We were given money everyday for lunch and dinner. We could go to the shops and get anything that we liked.

Thursday came and our first guest arrived Leonora Nel, she talked about planning for our bright and lovely future. Now my future is like this, I'm going to be rich with ten cars, ten houses and ten everything. I'm just pulling your leg that is not me, I'll tell you more about me and my dreams later. Anyway our second guest came, Sharon Rufus, to speak about EmployAbility. She was the one that told us about those people that work in helping the disabled to get a job. It was the first time I heard that, I mean I do have friends that are helping me to look for a job. But to learn that there are people who do this as a job, was great to find that out. After lunch we had to prepare our formal presentations for Friday because the press was coming on Friday. Our final guest came, Mandy Janse van Rensburg, to talk about our legal rights and she gave us bags.

The big day came Friday, the press was coming. We were going to be in newspapers, on TV, Magazines, our picture on the back of buses. Okay maybe I'm going over board but we had press from the

newspaper and I think from Radio. But before they came, we had a chance to solve any problems with the Grid and setup our presentations. We had tea before our presentations and the press had a chance to meet us. How do you like that?

Now if you think we were nervous, you better think again. Kitty and Professor Erna Alant said some few words about the Project. Then we gave our speeches and I must say we were really good. Professor Alant gave us and our assistants certificates. We had lunch with our guests and off they went. After they were gone it was time for us to go too, we said our goodbyes and off we went.

This Project was a success thanks to these ladies, Professor Erna Alant, Kitty, JéAnette, Shakila, Macheuene, Gloria, Lee, Michal and Margi. I know that there are many more people that had a hand in the Project so thanks to them.

Now I did promise to tell you more about these four cool guys, so here we go. (*Ladies read slowly and carefully.*)

France, he is from Durban just like me. Actually France and I were in Brown School together he's a really cool guy. Trust me ladies, I use to hang out with him after school and we would talk about guy stuff. You know soccer, cars and yeah girls, you know. I mean if two guys don't talk about girls, you must be worried. Anyway France's biggest dream is to be a DJ. Yes people in future you will hear about DJ Fire, that will be France and remember you heard it first from me!

Lebogang, it was my first time meeting him but he's a pretty nice guy. One of his biggest dreams is to open his own restaurant. Lebogang came with his friend Patrick.

But do you want to know something about Lebogang? He left in the middle of his exam to come to the Project. What do you think about that?

Then there's Martin, I think a lot of you will know all about him. Martin came with his assistant Rooi. Martin and I share similar dreams, just like owning his own house, car and to have someone special in his life. Oh yeah and those dreams are also some of my dreams. Martin is pretty lucky because he has two jobs and he goes out a lot to talk about disability. So you can say he's a pretty busy guy, so ladies that is Martin, but that is not all about him.

Daniel, that's me. I'm just a guy with a lot of dreams. I believe in God and I look at my disability as a Blessing. I've been to places that I would have never been if I wasn't disabled. I also have many friends that I wouldn't have if I wasn't disabled and it's brought me closer to God. My dreams are to own a car, my own house, my own business and to have someone special in my life. The one thing that I hoped for and that I came back with, is new friends.

Daniel Mgcobo

User Forum

Never Give Up On Your Child

Hi, I am Elrene Dreyer. Today I want to tell you about Dehan, our only child. He was born on the 25th of April 2002 with an emergency Caesar in the Medi Clinic, Vereening. I had a healthy normal pregnancy up until that point but all of a sudden everything went wrong, my due date was only on the 2nd June that year.

Dehan was immediately intubated, the doctors were not optimistic. They told us our baby's condition was critical and to take it from hour to hour.

When he was eight days old, it was suspected that his heart was misformed so he was transferred to Morningside Clinic to see the cardiologist. They transferred him by road ambulance. We were so sad and worried because he was so tiny. Miraculously when the sonar was done, there was nothing wrong.

When Dehan was a month old, he was transferred to Clinton Hospital where he spent the following ten months of his life. During that time we experienced a lot of "highs and lows". A tracheostomy and gastrostomy was done. I was very much against the tracheostomy but as Dehan needed to be resuscitated on one occasion because he got too tired to breathe on his own, I soon realised it was best. Many diagnoses were made from Prader-Willi Syndrome to Cystic fibrosis; however none of them proved to be accurate.

At the end of 2002 Dehan came home for five days. It was truly a wish come true, made possible by Highveld Stereo's Christmas wish list.

Dehan went back to hospital but the arrangements to send him home permanently had started. On the 9th of March 2003 Dehan came home! It was wonderful, but very difficult coping with Dehan's medical condition, it's a big responsibility.

Dehan was home for a little more than a month when Sandra Moolman joined the nursing team. Under a watchful eye, Dehan developed into a curious happy child. She gave him a reason to live and showed

him that there is more to life than a bedroom and a ventilator.

In general Dehan is a "healthy" child. In May 2004, Dehan's gastrostomy was removed because he did not need it anymore. In the beginning we were told that he will never learn to swallow but thanks to Sandra and Adri (who joined us in the meantime) there just wasn't such a thing as he "can't" or "never".

It was a difficult road to travel because if you tried to put a bottle in Dehan's mouth, he gagged. It could easily take half an hour to get 2 spoons full of food down his throat. However with perseverance and a lot of patience we won the battle. His diet now consists of purée foods but at least he swallows.

In November last year a biopsy was done and the diagnosis of mitochondrial myopathy was made. There is unfortunately very little known about this condition.

Although he has poor neck control, it's not preventing him from walking. Every morning after breakfast he takes a walk around the house accompanied by his nurse on duty.

Dehan loves people and is not shy at all!

At first glance Dehan's situation can seem to be scary and overwhelming to people but as soon as they start noticing the human being and not the ventilator, they just can't help falling in love with him.

We are teaching Dehan Sign Language because we don't want him to get frustrated because he can't communicate. However the wonderful news is he is now starting to talk. He can say "mamma" and "ouma".

We are very lucky to have

such devoted staff. There are literally not enough words to express the gratitude we feel for all their hard work over the years.

From a child that was only supposed to live for a few hours, who would never be able to walk and talk Dehan's courageous spirit has proved everybody wrong!. Unfortunately Sandra passed away recently after a long illness. However she will continue living on in Dehan.

My last thought I want to leave you with is, **never give up on your child**. Follow your heart and stay on your knees because our special children are there for a reason. I am proud that I was chosen to take care of one of these angels.

Elrene Dreyer.

Tel (W): 011 907 8517/8

Tel (H): 011 902 5641

Cell: 083 943 5266

Technology Talk

"Lazydaze" is a company manufacturing beanbag lap-trays. These ingenious trays have a bag on the base which is partially filled with polystyrene beans which mould to the shape of the user providing a completely level and stable surface from which to eat or drink. Think of it as a T.V. tray - its uses are endless, writing cards, to beadwork, laptop computers, manicures, bed tray, etc.

The tray can be customised with your own logo or any picture you want. An innovative idea is instead of having a picture, have an alphabet, symbol or word board in this way, the person will have a nice stable surface to not only work on but also to communicate with.

The trays are lightweight & very comfortable to use with a completely "wipe-clean"

and heat resistant surface. Plus, they fit easily into a standard carrier which can then be slung over a handle at the back of the wheelchair for transportation.

At the present moment, we are supplying the likes of Pick'n'Pay who incidentally, are not only placing the trays in all their cafes/restaurants & pharmaceuticals but, are also sponsoring trays for use in hospitals, schools for disabled & children's homes. Other companies are also very interested in not only "sponsoring" the trays but providing help to those desperately in need of it.

Should anyone know of companies or persons interested in "Sponsorship" or who are interested in these trays, please contact Anna or Gray Atherton e-mail:

ganda@myconnection.co.za
Cel. 0827000850

Anna Atherton

New Database

Lee Hommes, a research assistant at the CAAC has over the last few months been creating a Microsoft Access Database of all the Interface members. Some of you may recall receiving a form with the last newsletter, requesting you to complete it and return it with you current details.

Hopefully within the next few weeks the database will be finished thereby enabling us to streamline our services and reduce costs by eliminating people getting multiple copies or having the newsletters sent to the incorrect address.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you to renew your Interface membership and send us your current contact details. We rely on your support to produce this newsletter.

Martin Pistorius

Your contribution will assist Interface and the CAAC in helping parents, children and other AAC users to face the great many challenges encountered on a daily basis

Let's work together to make a difference.

YES! Count me in as a support of Interface / CAAC in 2006. I would specifically like to support:

Interface (Awareness raising and AAC devices)

Centre for AAC (Training in AAC)

For the following amount:

Sponsor – a gift of R100

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University of Pretoria: Interface

Cheques can be sent, together with this form to:

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University of Pretoria
Pretoria
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