

## 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

**Alive with possibilities!**  
excited people get about AAC.

2005 is well on its way and alive with possibilities!

The exciting strides being made towards inclusive education continue, as AAC grows and develops in the country. However, there is still much work to be done and many challenges to overcome. This became very apparent to me in January, when I was the guest speaker for the Casual Day thank you functions held in Bloemfontein, P.E., Durban, Stellenbosch and Joburg respectively.

Although doing this was hard work, much harder than I anticipated, it provided me with the wonderful opportunity to fly for the first time, a thrilling and thoroughly enjoyable experience! But far more significantly, it gave me the opportunity to meet many people and spread the word about AAC. Three things became very apparent to me; firstly, how few people actually know of AAC; secondly what an enormous need there is for AAC and thirdly how

On another note I would like to thank all the people who contribute to this newsletter.

If we are going to make the impact we need to make, it will require that we become more effective in including new people into the AAC circle – and encourage them to provide their ideas and opinions in the newsletter. Please continue to encourage those you meet, (old and newcomers to AAC) to contribute to the newsletter. We would very much like to hear about the good and the not so good. Thereby ensuring that this newsletter continues to be a vibrant, relevant one and grows to reach more people in need.

I look forward with great enthusiasm to being the editor for another year!

**Martin Pistorius**  
Editor

Send comments & contributions to  
[martin.pistorius@up.ac.za](mailto:martin.pistorius@up.ac.za)

## New Books!

### Beyond Poverty: Augmentative and Alternative Communication and Severe Disabilities

This book Edited by Erna Alant PhD & Lyle L. Lloyd PhD, aims to present a different perspective on AAC intervention by focusing on the application of various AAC related issues within a poverty context. It is intended for advanced students and professionals across disciplines who are interested in extending their knowledge and critical thinking to advance issues surrounding AAC intervention within a poverty context.  
Contact : Liza Human (012) 420 2001  
E-mail: [liza.human@up.ac.za](mailto:liza.human@up.ac.za)

### Just the same on the Inside:

*Understanding diversity and supporting inclusion in circle time.*

A book with 10 stories about children who have various types of disabilities. These short stories are used as a vehicle for explaining to children between 6 and 11 years what these disabilities mean, with activities to help them to understand and appreciate peers or siblings who are in some way different from themselves. Teachers and other adults, who work with children in primary school, as well as parents, will find this a useful book, and more importantly, the children find it fascinating and full of fun!

Contact: Juan Bommman 082 555 7476

## Chairman's report

A year has flown by since the First Regional African AAC Conference where our last Annual General Meeting was held. It is hard to believe it, but we will be required to hold another AGM in the near future.

We still need to appoint a treasurer. I again appeal to any Interface member (preferably from the Gauteng area) who has a flair for financial matters and is willing to assist us with this aspect of our organisation, to please contact us. I believe that we could co-opt such a person onto our committee or the person could be elected to the committee during our AGM.

There has been limited activity during the past four months although Margi Lilienfeld and Maureen Casey did a very good job evaluating our current constitution with a view to assess whether there was a need to make changes to it and if so, recommend the required changes. The committee has still to discuss the proposed changes before presenting anything to the members, who would then be required to vote on whether the proposals are acceptable or not. We plan to hold a telephone conference soon, to discuss the impending AGM among other things.

The funds that were available for distribution to the branches as described in the last newsletter have only been partially distributed. To date only Interface-KZN have received their allocation. The experience of having cheques rejected by the Bank in KZN prompted me to investigate more expedient ways of distributing funds to branches. The ideal solution appeared to be Internet Banking. The required application forms were duly completed and the process

of getting Internet Banking "up and running" was started. What a mission! It has taken nearly three months to get to the position where I will, in future be able to electronically transfer money. Firstly, I had to prove that it was acceptable for me to have an electronic transfer capability. Then I had to fetch an electronic card from the branch where our account was held. I was issued with an electronic card for small and medium enterprises. The branch was unable to issue a PIN because their system wasn't working. I then had to go to another branch to have a PIN issued. From that point, what should have been a simple matter of activating the facility on the internet started a chain of events that seemed to be never ending. Having done all the required input on the internet, it was necessary to phone their hotline to confirm the activation of the account. It was then found that because Interface S.A. is a registered NPO there was no enterprise ID number. I then had to return to the bank and request that they enter my personal ID number onto the account profile. This took some time. The branch personnel assured me that the information would be entered and the internet banking could then be activated. It took numerous weeks of persistent following up with the branch, and checking with the telephone activating service, that provides the service of activating internet banking, before the information was considered to be acceptable. The internet banking facility was ready to be activated. It should have been a simple process from this point on. But this was not to be!



I managed to log on to the account but no information was visible. A few phone calls later I found out that the "case status" of the account had to be changed for internet banking. So I had to go back to the branch again. It took a while for the required alteration to be made. Hoping that everything was now correct I tried to log on to the system only to find that the system rejected either the password or PIN. After numerous phone calls I was advised that the only way to rectify the situation was to have the card reset. This could only be done at the branch. Another trip to the branch was made and the card was reset. I am now able to log on to the system and our banking information is visible. The next step is to try transferring the funds to Interface Western Province. Hopefully the transaction will succeed! I will give feedback in the next newsletter regarding what happens. We have not been able to establish what the status is regarding the funding that was applied for from the Lotto. After numerous enquiries we were told that the financial statements that had been submitted with our application were not acceptable and that comment from an independent auditor was required. The required information and letters were obtained and submitted to the Lotto and we hope to get an indication of whether we have been allocated any funds.

I trust that 2005 will be a productive year for us all.

**Rodney Pistorius,**  
**Chairman**  
**National Coordinating**  
**Committee**  
**Interface South Africa**  
**Cel: 082 8505638 (A/H)**  
**E-mail:**  
**rodneyp@yebo.co.za**

## Regional News

### Interface KZN:

As we move forward into 2005 it has been great to welcome Mpume Pretty Hlabe onto the Interface-KZN team. Mpume started with Interface-KZN last year while doing the practical element of her project-manager's learnership with the Services Seta. She not only showed great initiative but was also so willing and capable in manning the office and resource centre that these duties are now part of her position at Interface-KZN. If you wish to contact Interface-KZN phone Mpume on 031-7011444 or email her at ifacekzn@saol.com

The Interface-KZN AGM took place on Tuesday evening, 15th March 2005 at the Edgewood Campus of UKZN in Pinetown. The evening started with refreshments and a mini-expo of communication devices and resources. This allowed for some "hands-on" experimentation of various low and high technology devices.

Elaine Byrne then gave an excellent and inspiring account of how it has been possible for her son, Samuel, to be included in a mainstream school. Samuel has severe disabilities and requires AAC for both writing and speech and Elaine illustrated her presentation of photos of Samuel interacting in class as well as examples of his Clicker 4 grids, his AlphaTalker overlays and Sam's actual work completed in class.

The business part of the meeting followed with chairman's and treasurer's reports and the confirmation of the auditor. Thandi Sibaya, Marilyn Clark & Tracey-Jane Corfe were unanimously voted onto the committee.

Daniel Ngcobo, who was unable to be present, has also been co-opted onto the committee. The above mentioned are warmly welcomed onto the Interface-KZN committee. The evening ended with a presentation by Margi Lilienfeld on Adult Quick Learning Systems™ (AQLS). This letter and word based software was designed for use on the Pathfinder Plus and is also available for the DeltaTalker and Liberator devices of PRC. The strategies used in AQLS to provide rate enhancement were demonstrated and the many advantages of AQLS were highlighted. The limitations in that individuals who could use AQLS need to be literate and have intact language were discussed. Some other letter and word based AAC software programmes for other devices and PC's were identified and the talk ended with a short question and answer session.

Our first workshop of the year co-hosted by Comm-Links was held on Saturday 5th March 2005. Maureen Casey gave an excellent presentation on the multi-level language rich literacy programme that has been designed so that ALL Learners will be able to access the world of literacy. This includes learners who require augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), those who have sensory impairments (Deaf and visual impairment) those who have cognitive or specific disabilities as well as typically developing learners. The programme is intended to be taught together with any existing literacy instruction and can also serve as an excellent foundation for the successful acquisition of literacy. Maureen presented some of the theoretical background to the

programme as well as information of how to implement the programme. Using some well known folk tales Maureen modelled the use of the programme and related her current experiences in presenting the programme at the Brown's school. Every participant at the workshop also received a copy of the teacher's instructional board, the "Bridging the Gap Tool". It consists of 167 high frequency words used in both the spoken and written language of Grade 1 children. This board utilizes both graphic icons to represent words as well as the printed words as well as add-on-tiles that have been colour coded according to the Fitzgerald key with picture symbols on one side and the printed words on the reverse are included.

Interface-KZN could not accommodate everyone wishing to attend the workshop and a repeat is scheduled for the **7th May 2005**.

*Margi Lilienfeld*

### ***Reflecting on the 2004***

This past year has been eventful and started off with an awareness evening on the 24th March 2004, at the Nedbank on Kingsmead Auditorium. The evening was very well attended and Nedbank generously provided the venue and a finger supper for 100 guests. Norma Beyl of Norma Beyl Associates spoke on why she supports Interface. Margi Lilienfeld gave a short address on Heather Rose and the issue of abuse of people with disabilities in South Africa. Chris Engels recited his poem "Let me be", using his Delta Talker. The highlight of the evening was the screening of the movie "Dance me to my song", with Heather Rose in the main role.

A Ladies Tea and Fashion Show was held on the 11th December 2004, at the St Johns Baptist Church hall in Pinetown. This event was superbly organized by Suzanne van Zyl who co-ordinated donations and sponsors alike. The afternoon was well attended and almost all the 100 tickets were sold. This event was organized as a fundraiser as well as to raise awareness of Interface KZN.

In December 2004, Interface KZN committee members and friends manned a gift wrapping table over 5 days at the Fields Hill Shopping Centre in Kloof. Shoppers donated generously and over R600 was received. Much interest was shown towards the Interface posters and brochures.

The committee is also looking into starting up a "Friends of Interface" group, which would promote and raise awareness of Interface KZN, and would offer a lower membership subscription than Interface.

On the 26th March 2004, a two hour workshop on AAC was presented at the OTASA seminar for community therapists in KZN, by Dr. Margi Lilienfeld.

On the 23rd May 2004, Dr Margi Lilienfeld presented a workshop on AAC titled "When Children with Severe Disabilities can't speak: Simple Techniques – Functional Outcomes", at the OTASA conference in Cape Town. A poster presentation on the introduction of AAC in Community Based Rehabilitation was also presented.

On the 8th, 9th and 10th of July 2004, a beginning workshop on AAC was presented in conjunction with Comm-Links. The workshop was very popular and presenters included Margi Lilienfeld, Shelley Tooth,

Elaine Byrne and Chris Engels. Participants in the workshop included educators, parents, therapists, and facilitators from all over KZN.

On the 19th and 20th July 2004, Bruce Baker of Semantic Compaction in the USA presented two fascinating study days focusing on vocabulary issues and language encoding in AAC.

On the 18th September 2004, a workshop was co-hosted by Interface KZN and Comm-Links, and presented by Margi Lilienfeld and Shelley Tooth. This workshop focused on software, namely mastering Boardmaker, Speaking Dynamically Pro and Writing with Symbols. Participants in the workshop included educators, parents, therapists, and facilitators from KZN.

In addition to the above, Interface KZN was also promoted at various training seminars and workshops which were presented in KZN by Comm-Links.

This year a number of resources have been added to our resource library. Items include: a Springboard; a Go Talk 4; Pathfinder and Lightwriter devices; a Talking Photo frame; the AAC Newsletter; subscriptions to USA based magazines; and several resource books including two written by augmented communicators.

Interface KZN would like to express our heartfelt and sincere thanks to Mr PA Douglas of Visionary Financial Management, in Westville, who has agreed to do Interface's audits free of charge.

This year, Interface KZN has received numerous donations. Community Care (Jump Start) approved funding for the purchase of



premises to be used as a Resource Centre. The Victor Daitz foundation donated software for devices and a Pathfinder. Hirsch donated funds, which have been put towards the purchase of equipment to be used in the resource centre. Wesbank donated 11 computers, which will be allocated to individuals with special needs. Shell Chemicals donated funds for devices. Additional donations were received from Mooney Ford and Partners; Alliance Property Group; Brackenham; McDonalds Pinetown; Montwood Veterinary Clinic; Nedbank; Gail Tatenhove; and Pick 'n Pay.

I would like to extend sincere thanks to the entire Interface KZN Committee for all their hard work and commitment this past year. The committee members were: Elaine Byrne (Vice Chair); Elaine Byrne & Di Maitland (Fundraising); Chris Engel (Website); Elaine Byrne (Resources); Felicity Jonck (Secretary / Minutes); Margi Lilienfeld & Shelley Tooth (Newsletters & Liaison); Marsha Maehler (Treasurer); Nishla Maharaj, Shelley Tooth, Julia Schouw & Suzanne van Zyl (Catering / Workshops); & Di Maitland (Membership).

In addition, I would like to offer thanks and appreciation to Pretty Hlaba for all her hard work this past year. Pretty was selected from the Project Manager Learnership to work on awareness and other projects for Interface KZN and Whizzkids, and has fulfilled this role since July 2004. She has been an asset to the Interface office.

**Ben Jonck**  
*Chairperson*

**Interface Gauteng:**

The parents of the support group at Nuwe Wending School are looking forward to

exciting gatherings and some are eager to meet again. This year a lot of planning has to be done in terms of the aims regarding the support-group. Some of this is to learn more about AAC and the resources that are available, to create more public awareness about their child and AAC. A small kick off about this started last year when an open day was held at Nuwe Wending School. The outcome was amazing and much more are anticipated for this year.

The parents already started to empower themselves with the development of individual communication boards for their children. They seem to overcome the colouring barrier and are enjoying it a lot more!

It is also with great regret that we have to say goodbye to Ms Kerstin Tönsing, who played an important role in the support group, on behalf of Interface. The support-group and the learners of Nuwe Wending School will miss her a lot and wish her all the best for the future.

**Heidi Mapisa**  
*(Speech therapist, Nuwe Wending School)*

**Interface Western Cape:**

“Hello”, “Hoesit”, “Molo” from a hot and windy Cape Town. The exciting news from the Western Cape is that two AAC users, Xola Ntlahla and Alana Vlotman, have received AAC systems to enable them to write and speak effectively. Through the combined fundraising efforts of INTERFACE and the Chaeli Campaign, Xola, a learner with cerebral palsy at Agapé School, has received a motorised wheelchair and a laptop with AAC software. This has given her independence in mobility, speech and writing. We are

looking forward to following her progress in school and beyond. Rabie Property Developers sponsored the laptop and software for Alana Vlotman, who stays at LifeCare in Pinelands. A big thank you to Ronelle Liebetau, a Speech Therapy student at UCT, who did the fundraising. Alana’s system is being set up and all involved are excited about how this will empower her to “speak out!”.



*Xola Ntlahla from Agapé who has recently received a laptop and motorised wheelchair. You go girl!*

One of the aims for this year is training and workshops on AAC and related topics. On 1 March 2005, Nafisa Baboo and Nicky Eyre presented a workshop on AAC, focusing on PECS and manual signing, for the Western Cape Forum on Intellectual Disability. We hope to collaborate more with other organisations and tertiary institutions in future training. Upcoming events include a workshop on Literacy – “Bridging the Gap” presented by Maureen Casey and Nafisa Baboo, to be held on Saturday 23 April 2005. Please contact Nafisa (021-6896075) for more information. Sensory Software and Inclusive Computer Solutions will be coming to Cape Town

in April/May to present their software. Details will be posted on the AAC listserve.

We held our Annual General Meeting on Friday 22 April. For more information: interface.wc@intekom.co.za I also encourage anybody interested to join us, new members are very welcome and we hope that INTERFACE Western Cape will continue to grow from strength to strength.

**Nicky Eyre**  
*Western Cape Committee*

**School News**

**News from Pathways Pathways-Kloof**

We have started the new year with a new look to our building and our staff and structure. Work was finally completed on our new classrooms and on our access driveways by the end of last year. Now that we could open the school to more pupils, we set a limit of 30 pupils with a total of 15 per group. We employed 4 new staff members and promoted others: thus our Group Leaders are Jenny Head and Alison Hardwich, our Teachers are Ntombi Khumalo and Tracy-Jane Corfe and our teacher - aides are Veronica Bauti, Candice Hogan, Hlengiwe Ncgobo, and Phindle Ngciva. We have already seen the benefit on the children of having two groups, and the system is working really well, under our excellent staff. We also added a new look to our children - a simple uniform of a navy blue T-shirt printed with our logo, and navy shorts was introduced, and our children look very smart and are very proud of their uniforms.

With Shaelene leaving for colder lands, we will be welcoming a new Principal from 14 March 2005. Her name is Lilian Khanyile, and with her Special Education training and 20 years experience with children with severe disabilities, we feel she will make a significant contribution to Pathways and the community.

We would like to congratulate Pathways Roodepoort on their official opening - we wish you all the best!

*Shelley Tooth*

**PATHWAYS  
- LEADING THE WAY TO A  
BETTER FUTURE-**

**News from  
Pathways Pathways-  
Polokwane**

We would like to start by wishing everyone much joy, happiness and success for this New Year!

All in Polokwane is going well and we have a very exciting and adventurous year planned!!

Our INCLUSION programme is going exceptionally well and with a bit more funding we will start building our unit at Mitchell House Preparatory School very soon.

We received a very generous donation from the D.G. Murray Trust which will be used for purchasing new equipment and for training and workshops throughout this year.


Our children have recently been to their new school to join their Mitchell House friends for break time as well as formal lessons. The laughter that resounded across the school was music to our ears. Kgaugelo was immediately made a member of the school choir and Naldo charmed his computer teacher with his heartfelt, "Juffrou Jansen jy leer my so mooi op hierdie rekenaar." Visits such as these will continue on a regular basis throughout this year ensuring

that all the children and staff, from both schools, are secure and confident in our merger next year.

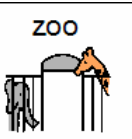
This year we will be attending the Inclusion Conference in Johannesburg and will be hosting the same international speakers at our Inclusion Conference in Polokwane. We will also be attending the Inclusion Conference in Glasgow in August this year as well as visiting schools in London under the guidance of the very kind and knowledgeable Katie Price. So you can see our year is dedicated to gaining as much insight, guidance and advice with regard to Inclusion as we can so that our dream for our children to belong to a local mainstream school, learning, exploring, discovering and playing alongside their friends can finally become a reality.

*Sue and Ruth  
Pathways-Plokwane*


**News from  
Pathways - Pretoria**

We greet the  whole world

and  Pretoria

We at Pathways were  zoo blessed by a

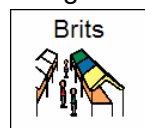
outing. The ladies from Asterhof ladies hostel at the University accompanied us to the Zoo and made our day special. We got a free ride on the train as well as the cable cars and saw all but the lazy lions!

We also have a  golf day on the 14th April 2005 that we look forward to as all

adults will play golf and the children will have a nice picnic on the lawns at the club.

We are also planning with

people in Brits



to start a small Pathways there. We already have 4 Pathways friends who would like to have the opportunity of being included in a school. If you know any friends out in that area who would like to join us, you can contact, Drieka Kruger: 082-356-4370.

On our prayer list is still our dream to move to a farm like environment and we are waiting in expectancy to move. We will keep you informed so that all our friends can come and join us for tea.

We have recently started with using brand names as part of our "functional literacy training", and we would like to give you some fun ideas to do at your school:

Take a big shopping bag and fill it with 2 containers which are familiar to the child at home, such as Omo, Ricofee, Lux, Colgate, etc.

- Let the child look for and match the containers while you are making tea with him.

- You can also use the containers as building blocks with little ones and ask them to pass you the Kellogs Corn flakes or the Omo and familiarize them from a young age to the different brand names.

- You can also collect all the Brand names that start with your child's name and match it to his name. "Look, Clifton, Ceres, and Cal-C-Vita also start with a "C" it is the same as your name."

*Danita Nel*

**News from The Key  
School**

On the 10 February one of our children from The Key School went to the CAAC for an AAC assessment. Ten year old Skye was to be assessed for a communication system as she has no functional speech and both the school and her parents wanted input from the experts. The staff that accompanied Skye were the speech therapist, her teacher, her class assistant and the principal. The OT was unfortunately absent and so could not be there. Both mom and dad were also present.

We were warmly welcomed by the ever-friendly staff at the CAAC and shown through to the assessment room where Skye's parents and the staff of the school were interviewed by Juan, and where Skye was asked to complete activities that were age appropriate by Kerstin. Juan and Kerstin gathered much information about Skye who is a young girl full of energy and who loves communicating with those around her using many expressive (and loud) vocalisations.

After the comprehensive fact-gathering session it was felt that the best system for Skye would be sign language as it is a mobile system and it would best suit her needs. The session in the end was enlightening and a most enjoyable experience. We now await the reports.....

In the meantime both Skye's parents are delighted with the assessment experience with dad saying that it was "FANTASTIC!" They feel that they now have direction and both of them, along with granny, are off to do a sign language course. The Key School has also approached

St. Vincent School for the Deaf to ask them to extend our knowledge as well. Dad also told me that in less than a week they have taught Skye two or three new signs including a socially appropriate sign for "toilet". Mom described the assessment experience as an "eye opener" as she has learnt how to help Skye communicate more than in the past.

We can all highly recommend the assessments that CAAC do. Well done to the staff – may you continue to find new ways for providing communication systems for those who would otherwise would be locked away in silence.

**Jenni Gous**  
Principal Key School  
Tel. 011 726 2445

*Contribution by Masters in AAC student Ensa Johnson in celebration of Youth Day on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June*

**ACTIVITY**

We can use the cube below to discuss different emotions.

1. Use the pattern provided below to make your own cube. Cut it out and make the cube.
2. Paste any of the 6 emotions on your cube.
3. Talk with your friend/ teacher / mom about why you selected these pictures.

Without speaking a word

I can say a lot without speaking a word, just with the look on my face  
I smile, I frown, I grin, I scowl,  
I can say a lot with my face.

I can say a lot without speaking a word, just with my body and hands  
I wave, I slap, I point, I clap,  
I can say a lot with my hands.

(Author unknown)

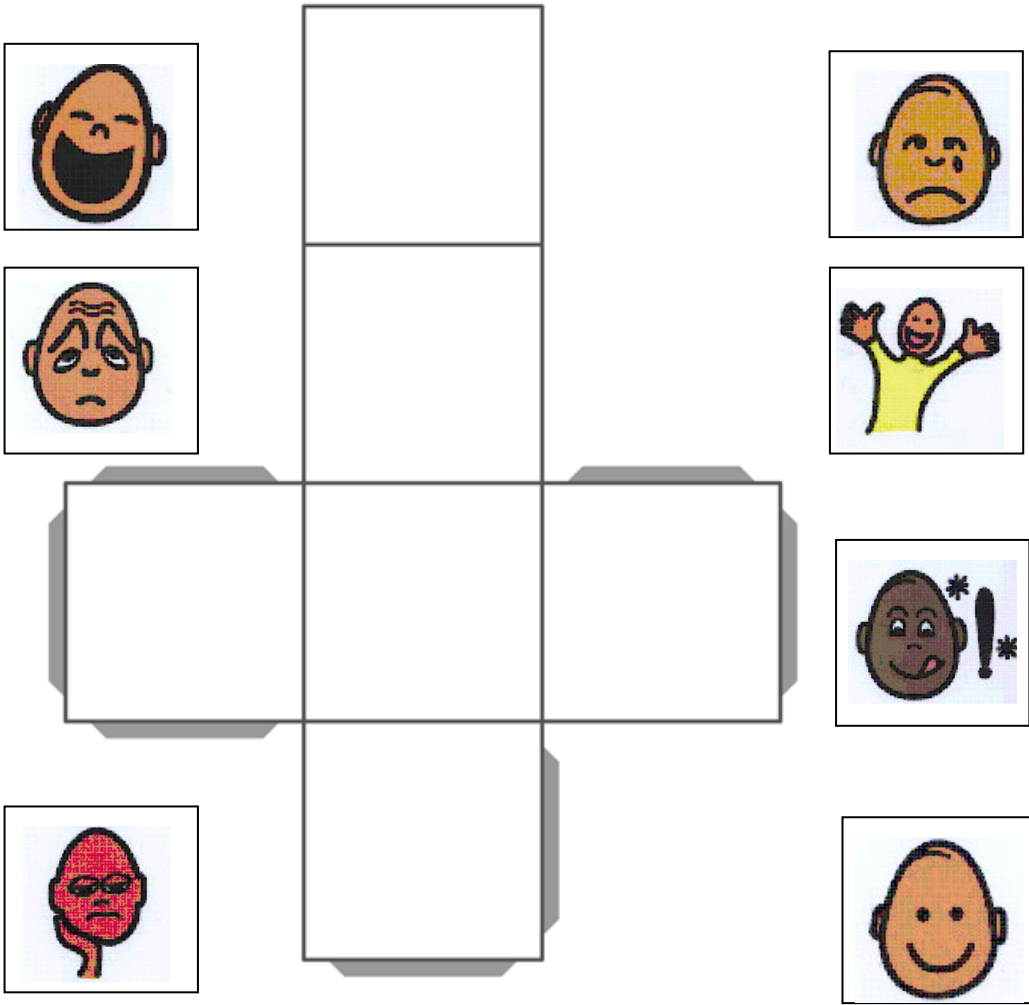
*For your diary* 

**Interface KZN:**  
*"Bridging the Gap"* workshop  
7th May 2005 (Repeat)  
Time: 09h00 – 15h00  
Venue: Department of Occupational Therapy, Health Sciences Faculty, University of KZN at the Durban Westville Campus  
Cost: R350.00 – incl. a light lunch & the tool kit  
R300.00 for Interface-KZN members  
Presenter: Maureen Casey  
Contact: Freddie Batten on 031-7011490 (o/h).  
**Limited to 20 participants.**

**Interface KZN "Awareness evening"** *Journeying out of Silence*  
7th June 2005  
Guest speaker: Martin Pistorius.

**Discovering AAC**  
7th 8th and 9th July  
3 day interactive workshop - Building skills and knowledge in implementing AAC for children with limited or no functional speech.  
Presenters: Dr Margi Lilienfeld & Mrs S. Tooth

**Barry Romich Visits Interface-KZN**  
23rd 24th August 2005  
Details pending.





**CAAC:**

**Talking Mats Course**

(Presented for the **first time** in South Africa by Joan Murphy)

19 May 2005 - Talking Mats for Children 08:30 - 16:00

20 May 2005 - Talking Mats for Adults 08:30 - 16:00

Cost: R230.00 per person per day (which includes your own Mat)

Venue:

Centre for Augmentative and Alternative, Communication, Lecture Hall, Room 2-44, Communication Pathology Building, University of Pretoria

**AAC Basic Workshop**

27 June to 1 July

**AAC Advanced workshop**

4 July to 8 July

**(No participant will be considered for the Advanced AAC training workshop prior to completing the basic AAC training workshop.)**

R 200, 00 per person per day includes tea, but excludes lunches. Lunch facilities are available on the University Campus.

R 900, 00 per person if you register for the whole week

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**There is Limited space available for the above mentioned, no person will be allowed entrance without a prior booking and payment.**

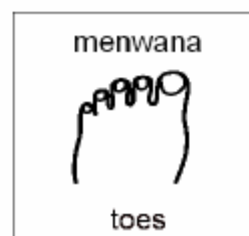
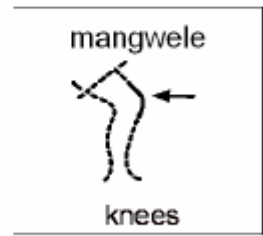
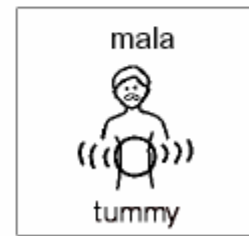
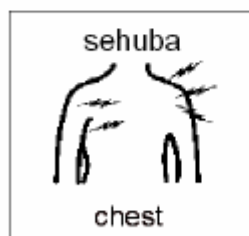
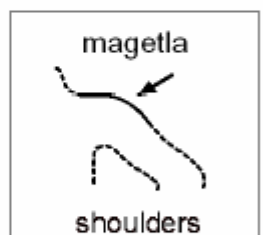
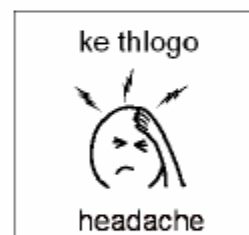
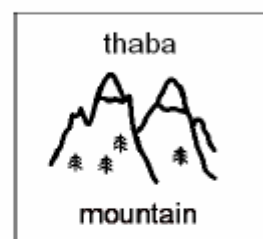
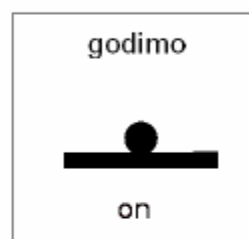
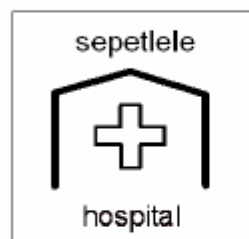
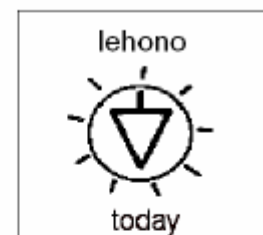
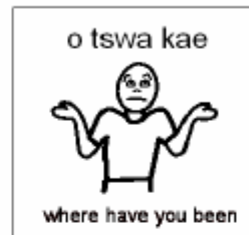
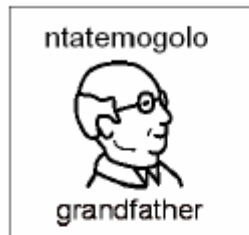
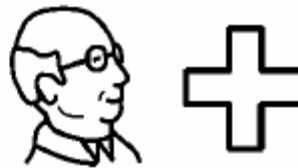
Contact: Liza Human  
 Fax: (012) – 420 4389  
 Tel: (012) 420 – 2001  
 E-mail: liza.human@up.ac.za to make a booking.

For more information visit [www.caac.up.ac.za](http://www.caac.up.ac.za)

**Positive Functioning – Intervention Conference at the University of Pretoria**  
 27 - 29 September 2006

**Aided Language Stimulation Corner**

**Let's Sing the Ntatemogolo Song!! 😊**



Kitty Uys

Hi Everyone,

This is Michal Harty from the Centre for AAC – we have the privilege of having 3 new people join the CAAC team here in Pretoria. They are: Gloria Madiba (who is a teacher), Alecia Samuels (a speech therapist) and Machuene Lekalakala (a physiotherapist).

Unfortunately, we have also had to say goodbye to Mirinda van der Merwe (many of you will remember her as she was responsible for organizing our consultations) and Corneli Strydom. Mirinda and her husband are currently in the UK. She is teaching in a school for children with special needs and Corneli is returning to University of Stellenbosch (department of speech therapy) after spending 9 months with us.

We are very pleased to announce that, another one of our colleagues, Kerstin Tönsing, has begun her own private practice, in addition to her work at the Baby Therapy Centre in Pretoria. She is, however, still involved in our weekly consultations and her input and support is greatly appreciated!

It is always exciting to have new people on board and we hope that they will enjoy working with the CAAC and INTERFACE to promote disability issues.

*Michal Harty*

## Dumelang!

*(Hello everyone)*

Being the newest staff-member at the Centre for Augmentative Alternative Communication (CAAC), it is a privilege to write this article. I would like to express my gratitude to St. Mary's Home of Sizanani, for children with profound disabilities.

I worked there last year (2004), as a senior Physiotherapist and Therapy manager. The experience of working with profoundly disabled children there has helped to shape me into my present and future endeavours. It's from my stay there that I realized the importance of communicating and being understood.

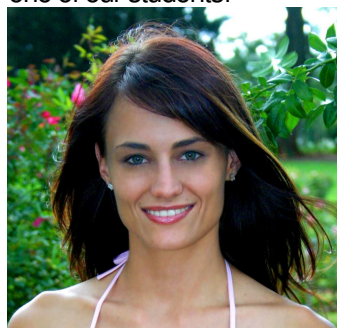
There were a number of children who communicated with facial expressions and gestures but whom I feel, could benefit from Assistive technology. This would enable them to communicate more effectively and eliminate the chances of being misunderstood as that caused them a lot of frustration. Working on what they already have and strengthening that can increase their scope of communication abilities and impact on their self-esteem.

My hope is that by working at the CAAC will enable me to 'plough back' the knowledge and experience into the community as well as providing the children at Sizanani with better communication strategies to empower them to become effective and proficient communicators.

*Machuene Lekalakala*

## CAAC the place for beauty & brains!

On the 5th of February the Tuks Coca-Cola Soviet Rag Queen for 2005 was crowned and it was none other than **Fiona Smit** (photo below) one of our students!



Fiona comes from Brakpan on the East Rand. She matriculated at Hoërskool Stoffberg in Brakpan in 1998. She completed her degree in education in 2002 (with distinction). In 2003 she completed her Honours degree in educational Psychology, which she also passed with distinction. She is currently busy with her Masters Degree in early childhood intervention at the CAAC.

To be crowned as Rag Queen you have to go through three elimination rounds where you are required to do charity work and raise funds. In the six months Fiona raised in excess of R55 000, and did a lot of charity and community service work. All the money that she raised will be donated towards various charity projects.

In the year to come Fiona will not only be an ambassador of Rag and the University of Pretoria, but also use her title to continue the hands-on charity work that she has been involved in for the last year. Her Long Term Charity projects include a glamorous Rag Queen Ball. She aims to raise in excess of R100 000 with this ball. This money will be used to open a trust fund for disadvantaged students who can't pay their registration fees at University. A project that is very close to her heart because she started off as a disadvantaged student who battled to pay her registration fees.

Fiona has a real passion for children and loves working with people. With her extreme dedication and enormous heart Fiona is sure to have an impact on various people whose lives she will touch during her reign.

*Neil van der Linde & Martin Pistorius*

## 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, starting at 9h00 -11h00. If you would like to attend, please confirm with Liza Human (012 420 2001) in order for us to tailor 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 human (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.

## Swedes visit the CAAC!

Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) NRF sponsored a joint research grant between the CAAC (University of Pretoria) and the CHILD program in the Department of



Social Sciences (University of Mälardalen) for a 3-year period. This project is aimed at exploring issues surrounding support for parents who have children with disabilities. Last year a group of 10 CAAC staff members and PhD students from the CAAC visited the University of Mälardalen, and Juan Bornman and Shakila Dada spent extended periods there. (Everybody at the CAAC is looking forward to Shakila's return, which should be soon!).



This year we were fortunate to have 10 staff and PHD students from Sweden visiting the CAAC. They participated in the 2-day Research Seminar, and all participants felt that it was a very industrious and stimulating time. Lots of exciting new ideas were placed on the table, and new methodologies brainstormed. The rest of the week was spent discussing joint research ideas – which should eventually all turn into research papers!

School visits were also undertaken (thanks to Pathways Pretoria, Zodwa and Pop-Up). But all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy – and we couldn't take the risk of this happening, so we also took some time to show the Swedes the Big Five (and the difference between a wildebeest, kudu and a buffalo), teach them to play the African drums (boem-paka-paka-boem), see the Southern Cross, visit Soweto and taste melktert and koeksisters.

We are looking forward to the beautiful sweet fruits that this tree of collaboration will carry!

**Juan Bornman**

## User forum

### A new and improved voice!

Hi, to you all reading this article. You will probably ask who I am?

Well maybe I should refresh your memory, with a few pointers. I am Zach Joubert, the young man, who joined Interface SA in the mid-nineties. I was fortunate to represent SA during the 10th Biennial conference of ISAAC as an AAC user, using a DeltaTalker. It is a synthesized speech output device from Prentke Romich Company. I had thought highly of the device that is until I come across the successor to the DeltaTalker namely the Pathfinder. It is also a product of Prentke Romich Company, which has all the features the DeltaTalker had plus a few extras. Let me name two of them: (A) *touch screen dictionary* and (B) *memory capacity*. These 2 extras have made my communication much easier and faster than with the DeltaTalker. With the touch screen dictionary you only have to spell the first two or three letters of the word. It will then generate a list of words, which begins with those spelled letters. You can then choose your word by touching the word. You can also update the list of words being displayed.

The Pathfinder has a built in memory saver, unlike the DeltaTalker, which you have to keep on the whole time otherwise the sentence which you have composed, will be lost when power-saving automatic switch-off is triggered. With the Pathfinder the sentence you have composed, will only be erased if you push the 'Clear Display' button. There are many other features of the Pathfinder, but that have to wait till the next newsletter.

I want to express my gratitude toward the Rotary organization, for their willingness to help me with the funds and above all for Erna Alant and the CAAC personal of the University of Pretoria for showing their trust in me. I am sure that with their ongoing support for the disabled, they will break down the barriers faced by the disabled, especially the speech disabled.

Till we meet again in a future newsletter.

**Zach Joubert**

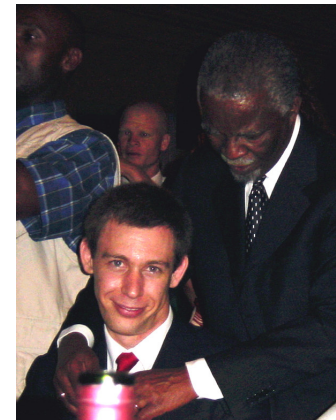
### AAC user meets the president.

On the 11th of December 2004 I was invited to attend a gala dinner in honour of the South African Olympic and Para-Olympic teams. The black-tie affair was held in a Marquee on the lawn at the president's official state residence in Pretoria.

It was very exciting to see all the athletes and dignitaries. The evening began with a lot of speeches and a few awards were presented to some athletes. Then dinner was served needless to say the food was divine!!!

After the three course meal things really got exciting as first Ryk Neethling came to chat to me, really nice guy! I teased him about his accent and said that we both have an American accent. A few minutes later I was informed that the president would like to meet me and that he would come to speak to me before he left. Approximately 15 minutes later, accompanied by a hoard of body guards and press he came over to my table. We chatted for about ten minutes. We talked a little bit about the CSIR's National Accessibility Portal (NAP) but mostly he wanted to know about how PowerBox worked and about AAC. Thabo Mbeki

seems like a really nice person and was genuinely interested in what I had to say, meeting him was an honour.



I also met Deputy President Jacob Zuma and a few other ministers. The evening concluded with dancing, it's a night I will remember for forever.

**Martin Pistorius**

## Technology Talk

Check The Map, [www.checkthemap.org](http://www.checkthemap.org)

Check The Map is an innovative website which meets the W3C and WAI-AA standards for web-accessibility, what is most appealing is its simple, clear and easy to use lay out.

Check The Map is the brain child of Imogen Wedgewood who has worked with children and adults with a range of Severe Learning Disabilities for many years, in the UK and overseas.

Check The Map was created for parents, teachers and anyone working in Special Needs to make it easy for everyone to find out what services there are for people with Learning Disabilities in their local area; unfortunately for us, it currently only caters to the UK. However the "LD resources" has lots of nice and useful information and resources - Be sure to look at the "Downloads, Software and Hardware sites" link which has a links to other websites and some free software available for download.

**Martin Pistorius**



Yes, I would like to join Interface for the year 2005

Annual membership:  
R 65.00 per person or family  
R 100.00 per school or centre

- Hereby I include my INTERFACE membership fee or proof of deposit of \_\_\_\_\_ (please indicate amount) for the year 2005
- I would like to be placed on the AACSA list serve.

NAME (of individual or organisation): \_\_\_\_\_

AFFILIATION (e.g. parent, therapist): \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

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Cheques and postal orders to be made out to:  
INTERFACE

**PAYMENT DETAILS:**

<b><i>Interface South Africa/ Gauteng</i></b>	Cheques/deposit slips can be sent, together with this form, to:
<u>Direct deposits:</u> Account name: INTERFACE Bank: Standard Bank Branch: Hatfield Branch Code: 011545 Account no.: 011 966 408	INTERFACE: c/o Centre for AAC University of Pretoria Pretoria 0001
<b><i>KwaZulu-Natal</i></b>	Cheques/deposit slips can be sent, together with this form, to
Account name: Interface KZN Bank: Standard Bank Branch: Musgrave Branch Code: 042626 Account number: 051222930	Interface KwaZulu-Natal P.O. Box 1995 Westville 3630
<b><i>Interface Western Cape</i></b>	Cheques/deposit slips can be sent, together with this form, to
Account Name: Interface Total Communication Bank: Standard Bank, Rondebosch Branch Code: 02-05-09-11 Account No: 071439269	Private Bag X18/ #39 Rondebosch 7701 Or fax deposit slip to: 021-8550582

*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 2005. 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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