

Interface National Newsletter



**Centre for
Augmentative and
Alternative
Communication**

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www.up.ac.za/academic/caac

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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)**

Individual Highlights

Interface South Africa	Page 2
Regional News	Page 3-4
School News	Page 4-5
CAAC News	Page 6
For your diary	Page 6
General (CONFERENCE FEEDBACK!)	Page 7
Users' forum	Page 8
Aided Language Stimulation	Page 9
Technology Talk	Page 10

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Editorial A roaring success!

Firstly I feel I need to formally introduce myself, my name is Martin Pistorius and I am the new editor of the Interface newsletter. I'm sure many of the readers will know me from the awesome First Regional African AAC Conference and workshops held at the CAAC.

The First Regional African AAC Conference proved to be a roaring success! It was a marvellous experience for all who attended. Participants came from all over South Africa and the world e.g. India, England, USA, Canada, Cape Town, Durban, etc.

It was so great to witness countless AAC users, parents, teachers and

professionals all interacting and exchanging knowledge, experiences and ideas.

The African AAC Conference also provided the opportunity for all members of Interface to meet each other and chat amongst one another.

Interface held their AGM at the conference at which a new National Coordinate Committee was elected. All in all everybody left The First Regional African AAC Conference inspired, excited and enriched by their experience.

Martin Pistorius



I'm sure the knowledge gained, friendships and contacts made will be as the proverbial "pebble cast into the pond" causing continuous ripples to form a positive force for years to come.

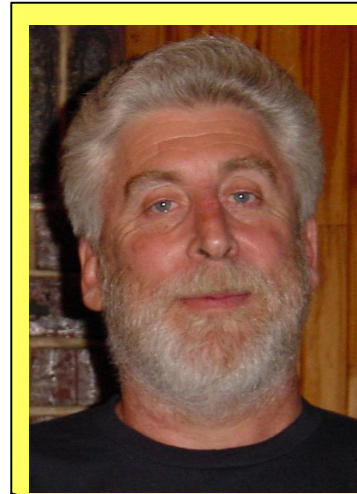


Interface South Africa has a new chairman!

It is hard to believe that it is already two months since our conference. I believe that the conference was a major achievement for South Africa and Africa and that it addressed very pertinent issues. It was great to meet some of the "legends" of Augmentative and Alternative Communication and to network with people from all over the world who share our interests and are making a difference for everyone with little or no functional speech.

The achievements by some of the delegates, I found to be amazing and very motivating. The advances being made with the adaptation of developing technology and teaching methods, to meet the diverse needs of the people and families who live with disabilities and limited or no functional speech, is astounding and very encouraging.

The conference has gone a long way toward creating awareness of the need for support of the needs of people with little or no functional speech, their families and caregivers, as well as the need to provide opportunities for the use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Promotion of awareness and the needs stated above is one of the



Mr. Rodney Pistorius, an Engineer by profession was elected as the new chairman of Interface South Africa's National Coordinate Committee (NCC) at the Interface AGM held on 25th of February.

Mr. Pistorius has over 30 years of management experience and has served on numerous committees. The wealth of knowledge & wisdom he brings to the NCC of Interface will surely be the catalyst in Interface South Africa growing from strength to strength.

primary objectives of Interface South Africa and hopefully we will be able to build on the foundation laid at the conference. Creation of awareness of the plight of all those individuals who are marginalized because of their disabilities and lack of support can be achieved by us all communicating what we know to the uninformed that we meet. This action will contribute to us achieving our objectives. Another means of assisting us to achieve our objectives would be for everyone to participate and support the activities of the Interface branch in your area.

As a final note I would like to thank all of you for contributing to the success of The First Regional African AAC Conference 2004,

whether it was assisting with the organisation, coordination, working at the conference, participating in the presentations, attending or just expressing your support. Thank you. I look forward to your continued support in the future.

Best wishes

Rodney Pistorius,
Chairman
National Coordinating
Committee
Interface South Africa

Interface
Join us today!

Interface as an organisation seeks to support and represent the needs of people with complex communication disorders, their families and caregivers. It consists of three branches (KZN, Cape Town and Pretoria) with a national coordinating committee advising and

overseeing the branches. If people with complex communication problems are close to your heart, it is very worthwhile to join this organisation! Benefits include:

- Reduced fees for workshops such as the AAC training workshop and advanced training workshop offered each year by the CAAC
- Being informed about events relating to people with complex communication needs, e.g. seminars, workshops
- Receipt of the Interface Newsletter three times yearly

Interface KZN:

On the 10th of March we held our AGM and the following persons were elected to the committee for the 2004/5 year: Elaine Byrne, Shelley Tooth, Felicity Jonck, Di Maitland, Suzanne van Zyl, Nishla Maharaj, Marsha Maehler, Julia Schouw, Sally Engels, Chris Engels, Margi Lilienfeld and Jackie McGreggor as fundraiser.

Our awareness evening was held on the 24th March at the Nedbank on Kingsmead Auditorium. Nedbank generously provided both the stunning venue and a finger supper for the hundred guests. Norma Beyl of Norma Beyl & Associates had been invited to speak on why she supports Interface-KZN. This was followed by a short address on Heather Rose and the issue of abuse of people with disabilities in South Africa. Chris Engles then recited the poem he has recently written and submitted for publication in the USA. The poem is titled "Let me be" Chris recited it using his Delta Talker.

The evening concluded with the screening of the movie "Dance me to my song".

Interface was also promoted during a two hour workshop on AAC at an O.T.A.S.A. seminar for over 40 Community Service Therapists on 26th March as well as during Saturday morning's workshop on AAC that was organized primarily for parents at Whizz Kidz Special Needs centre. Both these workshops resulted in tremendous interest in AAC and in joining Interface.

The Interface-KZN committee has decided on a new format for "committee meetings." All Interface-KZN members would be invited to attend meetings – the business of Interface KZN would be briefly discussed followed by a presentation on an AAC or related topic. It is hoped that this will result in members feeling more part of Interface with increased participation of all members.

Margi Lilienfeld

Interface Cape Town:

It was certainly a great honour to be part of the first regional AAC conference in Africa. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to those dedicated folk that put the whole conference together. It was a great success. I've only heard good things about the conference. I would also like to thank the Department of Health for their sponsorship. I trust that all those that were sponsored, will give much back to our country by helping all those that are unable to communicate.

I definitely learnt a lot and thoroughly enjoyed hearing other AAC users' stories and thoughts. I enjoyed being part of Daring to Dream and saw how much it meant to others that were present. Attending ACES and the computer emulation lectures were tremendously enlightening. I don't think there was a soul present that left these lectures feeling that they hadn't learnt anything.

It was so great that all of us that either belong to or are interested in Interface South Africa were able to meet and discuss things on two occasions. I felt that this was an important step forward in creating an effective organisation within South Africa and possibly further into Africa. I hope that we are able to get a strong regional and national organisation up and running so that we're able to pass on the message about Augmentative and Alternative Communication into those areas that have been previously disadvantaged.

Thanks for a great conference once again.

Graham Clarke

Check out more conference photos at

<http://www.up.ac.za/academic/caac/pages/photos.html>



The GREAT conference is over. Needless to say that it was an incredibly valuable experience for all those who attended. With the help of the Department of Health, some of our members were able to attend, and thoroughly enjoyed meeting up with other parents and people using AAC as well as the input from the various presenters. One of the Interface delegates who attended was Pearl Maziya, an 11 year old girl with Down syndrome.

Pearl has recently become the proud "owner" of an Alpha Talker® - with the generous help of PRC we have been able to organise a long term loan for Pearl. Pearl is very proud of her 'talking machine' and is keen on practicing to use it.

If you attended the conference, you might have seen Pearl on the dance floor during the cocktail party – she definitely stole the show!

The parent support group at Nuwe Wending



School has had their second meeting for the year, with many more parents attending. Our aim for the second and third terms of the year is to "have fun with AAC". We are intending to workshop together on making communication

books and training some gestures within the framework of fun activities.

As far as the organizational aspects of Interface Pretoria are concerned, there is definitely still space on our committee!

So, if promoting the cause of people with communication disabilities is an issue close to your heart, we would love you to get involved.

Please contact Martin Pistorius at martin.pistorius@up.ac.za or via fax (012 420 4389).

Kerstin Tönsing

School News

We at Pathways-Pretoria are blessed!



Our teachers enjoyed the AAC regional conference, and came back with new ideas.



They enjoyed talking with all the people from all over the world.

We recently had a wonderful golf day.



We had a picnic while our dads played golf.

We greeted the players with our



communication devices and handed out caps



News from Pathways-Pretoria

to them. We are going to buy therapy equipment

with the money raised.

We have also move to a new house. Our new

address is 466 Tennessee road, Garsfontein

Danita Nel

Devices South Africa



is proud to announce the visit from Mr Bruce Baker (Founder of the MINSPEAK Language System) during July 2004

If you would like to attend one of the conferences in your area or if you would like more information please contact us on - info@devices.co.za or (031) 7083237 between 08:30 am and 16:30 pm

**News from
Pathways-Polokwane**

Exciting times lie ahead for pathways-Polokwane! Our INCLUSION into a local mainstream school is becoming more of a reality with each passing day! So much to do, so much to plan but we have been very fortunate to be on the receiving end of invaluable support and advice from schools such as St Stithians in Johannesburg, Herzlia and Kenridge Primary in Cape Town and from the Inclusion Forum of the Western Cape! There is so much to learn and we are all very excited at the onset of this amazing journey.

We would like to take this opportunity to CONGRATULATE all the members of the CAAC on a Conference extremely well done! It meant a tremendous amount to us to share the experience with Gabby's caretaker, Lizzy and our Teacher Assistants, Elsie and Johannah whose poster presentation made us proud! Contacts were made and a lot of information, advice and support gained. The value of such a Conference is immeasurable. Thank you for making it possible for us all to attend.

*Sue and Ruth and all at
Pathways-Plokwane*

**News from
Pathways Roodepoort**

Pathways Roodepoort is in the process of being registered as a Non-Profit Organisation. Once that is complete, we will officially open our doors. We have however, decided to start with 4 kiddies being "baby sat" by our new principal Fay Hannah starting on 10th May 2004 at the Weltevreden Park Methodist Church.

Fay is the mother of a severely disabled little girl called Robyn and finishes her exams in studying the teaching of children with special needs at the end of April. She has kindly offered to get Pathways open and started despite us not having a bean in the bank and this at least will give us a starting point AT LAST. We formed an interim committee end of 2003 and have received the kind assistance of Gavin Reddell who volunteered to be our CA and who is doing all the leg work in getting us properly registered.

Our constitution is finalised and signed off and he is running the red tape gauntlet on our behalf for which we are so grateful. We are embarking on some big fundraisers. I've decided to climb Kilimanjaro to raise money for Pathways. We are busy with research and asking for assistance at present but

I plan to climb her towards the end of this year or beginning of next year and want to invite all the Pathways Centres to jump on the band wagon and try to raise money for themselves in their areas to take place but I'll keep you posted. Got a lot of interesting people trying to make this possible & I'm trying to get really fit.

Julie Botha

<p>WHIZZ KIDZ Kid set free by conference</p>

Our son, Darren is 14 years old and was born with cerebral palsy. He attends the Whizz Kidz Special Needs Centre in Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal. Darren has recently acquired a Vantage voice output device and is busy learning how to use it, with the help of Margi Lilienfeld. Shelley, Darren's teacher, has for some time now, stressed upon us the need for Darren to become more self-sufficient, and has introduced certain life skills tasks at school for Darren and his class mates to learn. As parents, it has been very difficult for us to consider that Darren may, with encouragement and teaching, become more independent.

We have always done everything for Darren and don't expect him to be able to do much for himself.

Then Shelley and Margi suggested that we attend the AAC Conference in Johannesburg in March this year, we were very eager to attend. Our expectations of the conference were that we would learn ways to help Darren with his communication skills and meet other parents, therapists and people with disabilities.

The three days of the conference far exceeded our expectations. It was so inspiring to see people with disabilities leading such full lives. We learnt so much over those three days, and I think the biggest thing we learnt was that by not letting Darren at least try and do or say things for himself, we are putting a roof on his abilities. Who knows how much he can do, or how far he will go, if we don't remove the barrier of our expectations of him, he will never gain any independence. The conference made a big impact on us as parents, and we are very grateful that we attended it. It has changed a lot of our way of thinking and we are definitely looking at a bigger picture.

John and Suzanne Van Zyl

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. If you would like to attend, please confirm with Liza (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 Mirinda (012 420 4728) or Liza (012 420 2001), Consultations cost R350.00 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.

Staff news

The CAAC has been through quite a few staff changes during the past six months. Our first goodbye was to Munyane Mophosho who decided that driving from Soweto to Pretoria on a daily basis is no longer an option. She has accepted a position at Wits Dept of Speech and Language Pathology, where she will do great things! Our second goodbye was to Maureen Casey who decided she preferred Table Mountain above the Magaliesberg.



Luckily for us, she is still very involved at the CAAC and has already visited us twice to do some tender training!! We want to thank all the above for their contributions in

helping to build the CAAC and AAC in this country and look forward to seeing the new ways in which they will support the work of INTERFACE and the CAAC.

Another brief goodbye goes to Shakila Dada, who will be exchanging the nice hot weather of Pretoria for the cold but beautiful Sweden. Fortunately, she is only visiting Sweden for a year and will return to South Africa in 2005.

We are pleased to welcome Mirinda van der Merwe on the team at the CAAC. She is a Special needs teacher and has local and international experience in working with children with special needs.

Tender Training

The CAAC had three tender trainings in the first quarter of the year. The one training session was held at the CAAC on the 12th of March

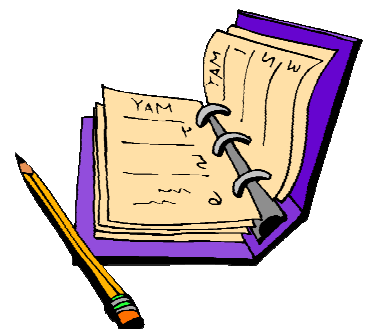
for educators from Krugersdorp, District 2. 25 Educators enjoyed the session about "Adaptation of OBE in the Special Needs School" and made great strides towards applying new ideas in their classrooms.

Both of the other training sessions (one in March and one in April) were held in Nelspruit. Nelspruit Districts Educators and Education Officials attended these training sessions. In total, 60 people attended each of these 2-day sessions on "White paper 6 and OBE". The richness of an OBE approach in accommodating diversity in the classroom continues to fascinate both CAAC staff and educators! We are looking forward to more tender training for the rest of the year. It is most rewarding to interact with these inspired teachers!

Mirinda van der Merwe

For your diary

- **AAC Training Workshop (offered by CAAC): 21 - 25 June 2004**
- **AAC Advanced Training Workshop (offered by CAAC): 28 June – 2 July 2004**
- **ISAAC 2004 (Natal, RN, Brazil): 4 – 12 October 2004**



Beyond all expectations!

This was our first visit to South Africa, and we had no idea what to expect. It was also our first visit to an AAC conference outside Europe and The States, so we were on a big learning curve from the outset.

Right from the start, we were overwhelmed by the warmth and friendliness of everyone we met, and the conference made a deeper impression on us than any we had attended hitherto. It is no secret that South Africa has not had a very good press in the West. For years it was apartheid, and then (after the euphoria of Mandela's release) worries about a falling economy, a rising crime rate and the epidemic of AIDS, so we did not arrive with entirely open minds.

Of course, the reality was so different - starting with the weather. So much for getting out of the UK in February to escape the rain! The conference surpassed all expectations. It was so well organised and the quality of the presentations was very high, with some well known AAC figures visiting. However, it was the deeply caring nature of the event that really impressed us.

Not only was the proportion of AAC users far higher than we are used to in European conferences, but we were pleased to see whole sections of the program made over to users with their input, comments and perspectives for the "professionals" to learn from. There was no tokenism here, but a genuine partnership between people with different interests in AAC.

The generally positive attitude was also a refreshing change for us. One family told us that they had paid R140, 000 for a communication aid. The following day, we learnt that the standard grant to build a township dwelling is R15, 000. People could be forgiven for giving up on AAC devices as an unaffordable luxury, but instead we heard only about plans to provide, to get the costs down and to find the money somehow.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the people who made our visit so worthwhile and enjoyable. It would be invidious to name them – but you know who you are! We also wish you well with the next conference. We will be there if we can.

*Paul and Alyson Hawes
Sensory Software
International Ltd*

Feedback from The First Regional African AAC Conference, an international perspective!

I DARE to dream!

Daring to Dream. In South Africa

Munyane Mophosho (Wits University), Graham Clarke (Interface, Cape Town), and I had a dream that we dared to dream. Together, across thousands of miles, we would jointly conduct a three-day workshop called "Daring to Dream" at the First Regional African Conference. The dream was bold, the planning was diligent and sometimes hard, and the results were fantastic. To an active audience of 60 persons - persons with disabilities, family members, and professionals, the dreamed-of workshop came true. The result was the development of bold dreams, carefully thought out action plans, and practical "first steps" for many participants with disabilities and their allies.



I can't think of a better place than South Africa to "dare to dream." As President Nelson Mandela has stated, "South Africa is Alive with Possibility" - alive with possibility for all South Africans including those with disabilities. Mr. Mandela's dream is bold and just. Now the hard work begins that of making the dream a reality. Thank you all for letting me share in your dreams.

With high hopes and expectations,

*Diane Nelson Bryen, Ph.D.
Professor and Executive
Director
Institute on Disabilities
Temple University
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,
USA*



Passive participant - not on your life!

This piece was originally composed and delivered by: Paul Marshall from Hamilton

Wentworth Communication Collective, Canada, Susan Thurston from Technology Access Clinic in Hamilton Health Sciences, Marnie Wilson from Hamilton

Wentworth Communication Collective, at the First African AAC Conference that was held in Johannesburg from 24 - 26 February 2004.

When a person acquires a disability during their life, they have 2 choices: either resign all hope of a productive future, or battle against it. However, simply deciding to follow the former option means that you'll remain right where you started from. As Nelson Mandela said: "Vision with action can change the world". Thereby implying that vision and only wishes will change nothing. What follows shows that an AAC-user doesn't have to become a passive observer in life Paul Marshall, the man in question, spent the early years of his life on a farm where he overcame many of his limitations due to him having a supportive

family, teacher and organizational support. This enabled him to develop a healthy self-esteem and a good sense of self-worth. He currently works for a community advocacy group (HWWC).

Other factors that he actively pursued:

- he never saw himself as a disabled person
- he had high expectations about his participation in society
- he learnt to do everything himself
- he set high standards for himself.

He was treated with dignity and was included in everything. He had the opportunities to reach independence. It's important for people using AAC-devices to become their own advocates.

"One who gains strength by overcoming obstacles possesses the only strength which can overcome adversity".

- Albert Schweitzer -

Derick Poremba-Brumer



Chris Engles a talented young poet from KZN seen here at The First Regional African AAC Conference has recently submitted his poem, "Let me be", for publication in the USA.

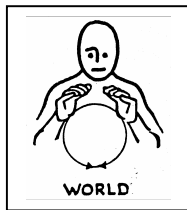
Let me Be

Let me be, let me be
A child who longs to be free Oh how
I dream of freedom in this great big
world .Let me live, let me love, Let me
never have enough of these things
called freedom and love

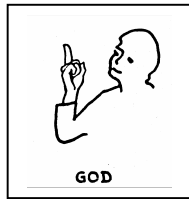
Come and walk with me
At the dawn of the day,
You will see I'm just like you in many
different ways with my hand in yours,
and yours in mine, we'll help each
other through you'll see I'm a person
too Please give me Dignity

Chris Engels

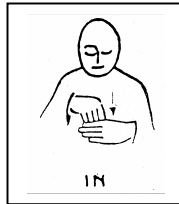
**HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS/
HY HOU DIE HELE WÊRELD IN SY HAND/
UNAKO KONKE OKUSEHLABENI EZANDLENI ZAKHE**



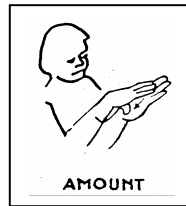
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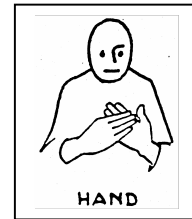
He's got the
Hy hou die
unako



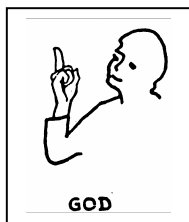
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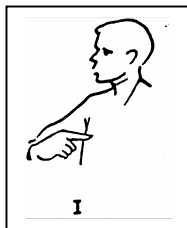
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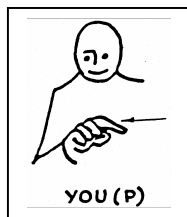
his hands
sy hand
zakhe **(x4)**



He's got me
Hy hou vir my
Unami



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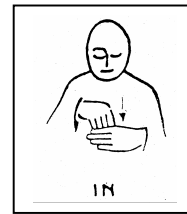


YOU (P)

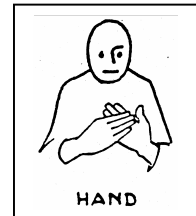


SISTER

and you, sister
en vir jou
no sisi wako



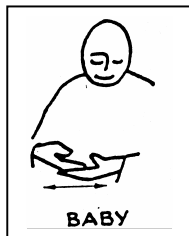
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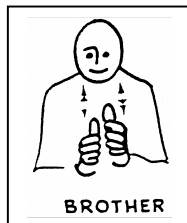
his hands
sy hand
ezandleni zakhe **(x3)**

He's got the whole world in his hands (repeat 1st line)
Hy hou die hele wêreld in sy hand (Herhal 1^{ste} lyn)
Unako konke okusehlabeni ezandleni zakhe (Phinda umugca wokucalal)

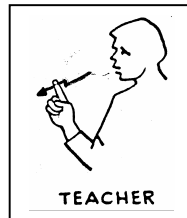
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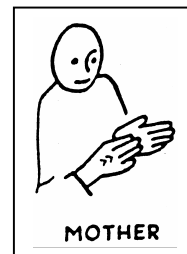
Tiny little baby
Kleinste fynste babatjie
Ingane encane



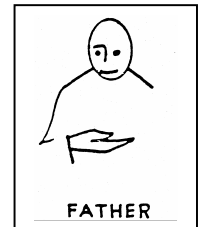
Brother
Boetie
Umfowethu



Teacher
Juffrou
Uthishele



Mommy
Mamma
Umama



Daddy
Pappa
Ubaba



Granny
Ouma
Ugogo

The CAAC and Interface received a wonderful donation from AbleNet. There was great excitement amongst all the CAAC staff upon returning to the CAAC after the conference. We all delighted in playing, with our new equipment. *Or should I say we conducted scientific research to obtain insight into the functioning of the new equipment!!* 😊

For more information on AbleNet's products please visit their website: <http://www.ablenetinc.com>

Some of the Products we received

Jelly bean Switch



i Talk2 communicator

- Records a single messages up to 8.5 seconds on each button
- Easy to program
- Excellent for teaching choice making

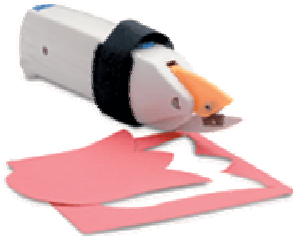


TalkTrac Plus with levels wearable communicator

- It has Two levels of messages, with four messages per level
- A Total recording time of 65 seconds
- Can be worn around wrist



Switch operated electric scissors



Fantastic Clip Fan

- A switch operated fan, great for Biofeedback especially with visually impaired children.
- Soft foam blades making it safe



AbleNet BookWorm

- This is a wonderful product fabulous for participation
- You can make almost any book into a "talking book." Simply by recording a book into the BookWorm
- The child would the merely need to press the keypad or an external switch, to be able to listen to the book.
- It has up to 8 minutes of recordable time



Single Switch Latch and Timer

- Ideal for toys and appliance you would like to stay on e.g. tape recorder.



Interface Membership

Yes, I would like to join Interface for the year 2004

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 2004

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: _____

TEL home: _____

Work: _____

Cell: _____

Cheques and postal orders to be made out to:

INTERFACE

PAYMENT DETAILS:

<i>KwaZulu-Natal</i>	<i>All other branches</i>
<u>Direct deposits:</u> Account name: Interface KZN Bank: Standard Bank Branch: Musgrave Branch Code: 042626 Account number: 051222930	<u>Direct deposits:</u> Account name: INTERFACE Bank: Standard Bank Branch: Hatfield Branch Code: 011545 Account no.: 011 966 408
<u>Cheques/deposit slips can be sent, together with this form, to</u> Interface KwaZulu-Natal P.O. Box 1995 Westville 3630	<u>Cheques/deposit slips can be sent, together with this form, to</u> INTERFACE: c/o Centre for AAC University of Pretoria Pretoria 0001

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 2004. I would specifically like to support:

Interface (Awareness raising and AAC devices)

Centre for AAC (Training in AAC)

For the following amount:

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