

Interface South Africa
 Room 13 (Ground Floor)
 The Memorial Institute Building, c/o
 Joubert Street ext and Empire Road,
 Braamfontein
 2001
 Postnet Suite 27, Private Bag XI,
 Glenvista, 2058
 Tel: 082 822 5193
 Fax: 086 529 2255
 E-mail: desirae@interface-sa.org.za

Interface Western Cape
 Private Bag X18 #39 Rondebosch
 7701
 Tel: (021) 854 7758

Interface Kwa Zulu Natal
 291 Underwood Rd, Sarnia, Pinetown
 P.O. Box 1995, Westville, 3630
 Tel/fax: 031 708 4237
 Cell: 076 819 6750
 E-mail: lfackzn@saol.com

Interface Johannesburg
 Tel: 082 822 3694 (Michelle Aranson)
 Email: maranson@myconnection.co.za



*Centre for Augmentative and
 Alternative Communication
 University of Pretoria*

Tel: (012) 420 2001
 Fax: (012) 420 4389
www.up.ac.za

SSN 1018-2071

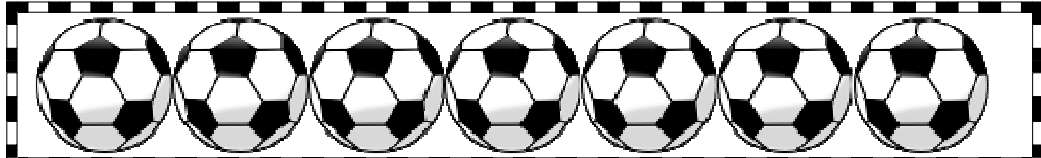
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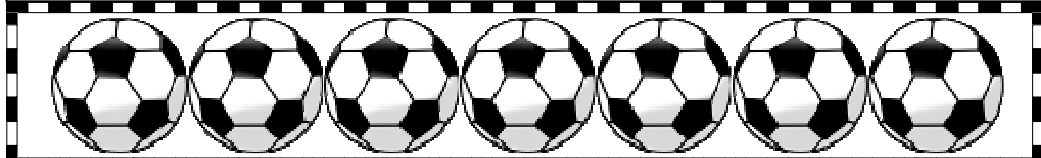
Interface

&
 Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication
CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Interface National Newsletter



Viva AAC!



Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter for 2010! The year is well on its way, and promises to be a memorable one for a number of reasons. While the whole country is eagerly awaiting the kick-off of the soccer world cup, the AAC community already ‘made history’ with a number of exciting projects this year. So we want to dedicate this issue to all those hard-working individuals who are making a difference in the lives of individuals who have little or no speech – thank you for making a positive impact in our country!

We recently had the privilege of having Dr Vicki Casella present a memorial lecture here at the Centre for AAC, in memory of

Neville Cohen, who was a passionate disability activist. Dr Casella spoke about the road travelled by those involved in AAC in the States over the past 30 years, and it was encouraging to hear how many of the challenges we face in SA (lack of funding, lack of advocacy and support) have been facing people elsewhere in the world – and how change has come about one step at a time through the tenacity and perseverance of individuals who refused to give up. So keep up the good work! Just like the soccer world cup should put South Africa on the map, let us continue to put AAC on the map – one step at a time.

*Kerstin Tönsing
 Editor*

Interface promotes communication for people with little or no functional speech by supplementing existing communication with gestures, communication boards and assistive technology (thus, augmentative & alternative communication)

Interface Branch News

News from KZN

We ended 2009 with really fantastic news, in that we received confirmation from Anglo American and The DG Murray Trust that they would be providing us with funding for the Interface KZN and Khulani Special School Project. During 2009, the Khulani School had grown from a group of 13 learners to some 30 children with special needs. This meant that December, January and February were really very busy months, spent preparing for our trip.

I would just like to express our gratitude to Margi Lilienfeld for her dedication and expertise and for all the long hours she has spent coordinating and preparing for the Khulani School project. This included liaising with Sunette Wessels, Occupational Therapist at Mseleni Hospital; Jocelyn Mngomezulu, Occupational Therapist at Fort Napier Hospital whom Margi recruited to join us and to assist with translating. Materials such as isiZulu children's books, AAC resources and training materials needed to be sourced, translated and produced. We are also so grateful that we have someone as capable and dedicated as Linda Wiles at our centre, as she spent the past few months doing a great many tasks but most importantly

printing and laminating all manner of communication boards; song boards; communication fans; board overlays; and individual PCS which were designed by Margi. We spent the week of the 22nd to 26th February at the school and were just amazed at the dedication, commitment and abundant love shown by this "community" of learners, volunteer caregivers and teachers, and family members to each other. *Please read the article that Margi has submitted for an account this project and our experiences during the time we were there.*

Freddie Batten is volunteering as our Events Coordinator and it has been just wonderful to have someone with Freddie's enthusiasm and dedication assisting us. Coordinating events really does take creativity, patience, perseverance and *TIME!* Many of our recent events have been aimed at contributing funds towards helping to send Dan Ngcobo and Paul Burdett to the ISAAC conference in Barcelona this year. To this end we are currently running a raffle with lovely prizes, including an electronic golf caddy and a weekend at the Elangeni Hotel! Prizes will be drawn at our first fundraiser of the year: Buddy and Friends at the Heritage Thea-

tre in Hillcrest on Tuesday the 9th March.



As our last event of 2009, we showed the 58 minute documentary "Including Sam" on Friday 4th December. This was really enjoyed by all those who watched it, and the candid interviews with adults living with severe disabilities were especially relevant for our young adults who attended. We now have this resource in our library and I would really strongly recommend it to parents, educators, therapists, caregivers and teenagers and adults with disabilities. We also recently purchased a number of Enabling Devices products to add to our library. One of the really exciting plans we have for this year is too make as our newly translated isiZulu communication boards, song boards and so forth available on our web site. The idea is that anyone looking for translated boards will be able to access our website and hopefully find a host of down loadable resources.

Our AAC Action labs for 2010 will commence during the second term of school, and we sent notices about our first series of topics to our branch members in March. Some of the initial workshops will probably include Boardmaker, PODD, and Minspeak. **WATCH THIS SPACE!**

Felicity Jonck
Interface KZN



Khulani nani Khulani!

I could scarcely believe it but on Sunday 21st February 2010 we were eventually on our way to the Umkhanyakude district of KZN and the Khulani School. I say “eventually” because it was two long years since we first heard of Crizentia Ngobese and wrote our first funding request to provide training, AAC resources and materials to Khulani School. In 1998 Crizentia, whose son, Muziwamandla, had been born with severe cognitive impairments 14 years previously, had started a playgroup for children with severe disabilities with the help of the therapists from Mseleni hospital. Ten years later the playgroup had developed into a small special school with 13 children between the ages of 6-12 years attending on a regular basis, without any formal support from the Department Education or Social Development.

At the end of October 2009 Interface KZN decided to step out in faith and committed to visit the school in the first term of 2010, although we had not received any positive response to our fundraising efforts for Khulani School. At that point the school had since grown to over 30 children, of whom 21 had no functional speech. The bold step was rewarded – both the D.G Murray Trust as well as the Chairman’s Fund of Anglo American indicated their financial support shortly after – enabling us to even purchase voice output devices. During November and December 2009 and January 2010, Interface KZN dramatically intensified the development of AAC resources in isiZulu. Communication boards, conversation books, visual schedules and symbol stories were translated. Song and rhyme boards for traditional Zulu songs were developed and symbols were printed for Zulu stories and books that we had managed to purchase. The training manual was written and translated. Pre-screening information was obtained for specific children to prepare more specific resources. The training and intervention team would include myself; Felicity Jonck, (Occupational Therapist and the mother of a child with special needs who uses AAC); Dan Ngcobo, an effective augmented communicator; and Phyllis Ngcobo, Dan’s mom. In the

meantime, the Department of Education had eventually ‘come on-board’ in the beginning of 2010 and seconded a



School building and kitchen store room

qualified educator, Mrs Thokozile Nxumalo, to fill the position of Acting-Principal of Khulani School.

As I write this one week later, Sunday 28th February, the images of the children and Khulani School are vivid! The overriding impression is of the most valid example of “ubuntu” that I have ever encountered. Ubuntu as evidenced by Crizentia and the other eight volunteer teachers, none of whom are qualified educators, but who all arrive every single day (come rain or shine) to enthusiastically teach the children in small groups in the patches of shade under the trees on the property that constitute “classrooms”. “Ubuntu” was also evident in the number of caregivers, family members, who quietly and seemingly without direct instruction cleaned, fed and toileted the children, cooked their meals and washed huge mounds of clothing and bedding each day. When you consider that Khulani School has no electricity and that wood had to be collected daily and carried in to cook the midday meal, and that there is no bathroom or laundry facility, the enormity of this contribution can be considered! Under “ubuntu” children are never orphans since the roles of mother and father are by definition not vested in a single individual with respect to a single child and the man or woman who lives the philosophy of “ubuntu” would never allow any child around him or her to be an orphan and this reality we witnessed in practice!



A mother cooking the midday meal for the children

Despite the heat, the crowing cockerels, the hens creating dust clouds as they sand bathed caregivers and

volunteers listened attentively during our training sessions from 2- 4 every afternoon, learning and teaching each other manual signs, practising AiLS, helping to design communication boards, each taking turns to record appropriate messages and to learn how to operate the recorded voice devices. Not only did they practise these and other skills such as using eye-gaze frames correctly but they THEN implemented what they had learnt the



very next morning!

But most vivid are the images of the children Nqaba, only 4 years old and reaching with his toe to point

Using a communication fan to the symbols on the Gaya amabele songboard, to the symbols on the stories, to depress the switch on the toy mixer to make his own milkshake. Noxolo, diminutive at 15 years of age who despite only attending 3 weeks of school during the past two years readily picking out her printed name, common words and spelling out her name with minimal assistance! Njabulo expertly balancing his glass of juice on his heel. Sphelele, smiling and pointing at absolutely everything on the page as he assumed he was meant to do!

We had carefully planned our intervention to follow what I believe to be the optimum model for training the implementation of AAC within the South African context. This model included elements such as the inclusion of an effective augmented or alternative communicator, in-context training and modelling of strategies combined with theory and hands-on skills training sessions, follow-up support etc. But what ultimately determines the success of implementation is the attitude of the participants in the training and these could not be faulted at Khulani School.



Nxolo making her milkshake

The contri-

bution of our incredibly skilled translator, Jocelyn cannot be overestimated.

The Khulani School could not function without the volunteers, or the commitment of the primary caregivers of the children who contribute

funds from disability and child care grants, the support of Sunette and Sarah, Physiotherapist from Mseleni Hospital. These therapists visit the school weekly to provide gross and fine motor therapy, sports for the disabled and assistive devices to the learners. In addition, the therapists continue to empower the volunteer teachers with skills, ideas and materials to educate these learners.



Interactive story reading

Now that the school is registered by the Department of Education the building of an adequate facility cannot be delayed. At present the buildings consist of two tiny rooms and a Gemini hut. A site has been identified and Phinda Game Reserve has secured promises of funding so the process needs to start NOW. The children and all the volunteers deserve to see Crisentia's dream, of a special needs school come true! Interface KZN is honoured to be part of the Khulani School initiative.

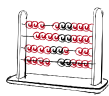
*Dr Margi Lilienfeld
Interface KZN*



Shulile communicating using the eye gaze frame



Learning and teaching manual signs



SCHOOL NEWS.....



KEY SCHOOL

What does the Key School and a Sowetan jeweller have in common?

You may well ask! Well The Key School is the premier school for children with autism in Parktown, Johannesburg. Nqobile Nkosi on the other hand, is a manufacturer of jewellery with his own retail store in a Sowetan shopping mall. He funded the store himself from the savings he accrued from baking and selling cakes. From the savings he also bought a polishing motor for polishing jewellery and he started designing jewellery and selling it at exhibitions. Nqobile's biggest financial boost came when he won the Vuka Uzenzele award for creating employment and motivating the community in Soweto at the Jet

Community Awards 2009.

So what does he have in common with The Key School for children with autism? Well he was 'discovered' by van der Bank Jewellers, in particular by Marius van der Bank, who adopted him and mentored him in jewellery-making skills. Marius, at the time, was making and selling silver puzzle pieces as pendants to create awareness around autism.

The puzzle piece as you may know is the international symbol for autism, and since Marius's long-time girlfriend is a teacher at The Key School, he thought he could not only create awareness around autism with his puzzle pieces, but that he could create a source of income for the school which operates as a non-profit organisation. Nqobile quickly learnt the art of manufacturing the puzzle pieces from Marius who has now handed over the entire project to Nqobile. Nqobile now sells his puzzle pieces as pendants, bracelets, money clips,

cufflinks, key rings and even belly rings!

The Key School is excited by the relationship that it now has with Nqobile who is an unassuming young man despite the various awards he has won and the funding he receives from overseas for his little business. Not only does he 'win' by creating awareness around autism, the school 'wins' by receiving a portion of his profits. To support this venture please visit our website at www.thekeyschool.co.za or phone 0117262445 or email key-school@iafrica.com

*Dr Jenny Gouws
Principal: The Key School*



Nqobile Nkosi with Sasha and Talia at The Key School

Pathways Roodepoort

We have had a good start to our year with a few additions to our staff compliment. Each person working with our special needs children is hand-picked not only for qualifications but for having a HEART for our children. Not everybody has a personality conducive to working with our little people who often bite, pinch, scream, slap and kick. At Pathways Roodepoort we have these wonderful individuals who understand that our children are sometimes extremely frus-

trated and lash out in any way they can to express themselves. They do not mean to hurt us or themselves but often there is no other way for them to get rid of pent up frustration. We also received the balance of the money promised to us in 2007 by Lotto so have some money for running expenses now which should see us through most of this year. Thank you LOTTO.

Our Support Group is hosting excellent talks this year by experts like Financial Advisors on Estate Planning bearing in mind the unique circumstances of special needs children who are forever dependent on family; Dr Aduc who will be discussing Puberty in disabled children; Dr

Bosch, a dentist who is particularly good at contending with dental care in children with severe mental disabilities and the list goes on. Anyone wanting to attend is welcome – see our website for details:

www.pathwaysroodepoort.org.za.

We are already gearing up for Casual Day and appeal to corporates and individuals to support all NGO's affiliated to this fantastic initiative. Book your Casual Day stickers NOW with the organisations who are beneficiaries of Casual Day. Show your support. It is a lot of fun and helps our organisations like us thrive and not merely just survive.

*Julie Botha
Founder – Pathways Roodepoort*

Abuse: People with disability should be seen and heard

South Africa is one of the countries with the highest incidence of sexual abuse and rape. People with disabilities (especially developmental disabilities) are four to ten times more likely to become victims of crime, abuse and neglect. Moreover, they are often repeat victims and the crimes against them are less likely to be reported or prosecuted.

Within the disability cadre, individuals with little or no functional speech are particularly vulnerable. There are many reasons for this increased vulnerability. First, they are often seen as vulnerable and unable to fight back. Because of their communication disability, they are incorrectly seen as undeveloped, lacking in understanding of what happened, unable to make choices rendering them unable to tell about their victimization. Furthermore, when they do tell they are less likely to be believed because they may not be understood due to their communication disability. This makes them become voiceless and invisible in society. Finally, there is the perception that they are unable to testify in court on the own behalf due to competency issues and other criminal codes about hearsay, confronta-

tion, and leading the witness. This may be due to the fact that the vocabulary and symbols needed to report their victimization and to testify in court may not be available to them either on communication boards or stored in programmable speech generating devices.

If we as a country are serious about ending the silence of crimes against people with disabilities, several strategies are required. Firstly, these individuals should be seen and heard, by providing them with communication strategies (e.g. sign language, communication boards or communication devices) if they cannot speak. Hence the Centre for AAC set out on a joint project with Dr Diane Bryen (Temple University, Philadelphia, USA) to develop communication boards in four languages (Afrikaans, English, Sepedi and isiZulu) so that both children and adults with little or no functional speech can tell someone (e.g., parent, friend, teacher, therapist, and first responder) if they have been victims of crime, abuse, or neglect. The boards were developed after various focus groups with a variety of role players were held. At present the vocabulary on the boards is being socially validated by people

with little or no functional speech.

They should soon be available. *If you are interested in obtaining some of these boards, please contact us!*

Secondly, people with disability should engage in appropriate education about sexuality, similar to that of their peers without disability and learn about protective behaviours.

The Western Cape Forum for Intellectual Disability has produced a great resource manual to help with this : *All About Me: A lifeskills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education programme for learners with intellectual disability*, written by Rebecca Johns.

Thirdly, these individuals should be taught what to do if they have been a victim, and their families should be supported to address their fears when reporting a crime. Partnerships between different people involved in the justice system should be fostered and all involved should work systematically to support investigation and eventually prosecution. Only then will South Africa stand a chance to lose its alarming status as world leader when it comes to child abuse and rape.

*Prof Juan Bornman
Centre for AAC*

CAAC NEWS

My experience of a Poverty Simulation Initiative

During my recent trip to Bloomington, Indiana, USA, I was able to attend a poverty simulation programme hosted by Circles, an Initiative that aims to provide a bridge out of poverty for families all over the States. The evening activity gave participants a glimpse of what it must feel like to live in poverty condition- where your stressors far out weigh your resources, where Lady Luck appears invisible and Mr Murphy ever present!

The simulation activity took place over the period of 1 hour and each 15 minute period represented 1 week in the life of a family. The participants were divided into “families” and provided with an information pack which outlined the material possessions each family had at their disposal, the weekly expenses they had to meet, their income and the community resources they could approach for assistance. [At the beginning of week 1 our family had \$10, an absentee father, an unemployed mother (me!), one teenage son (fresh out of rehabilitation) and 1 school-aged daughter (who was arrested during the week 2 for carrying a firearm to school)]. As the weeks progressed it became increasingly evident that other families in our community were becoming as desperate as we were as assistance from government departments etc was woefully insufficient to make a dent in the rising pile of grocery and utility bills, rent, transportation costs, and any other unexpected calamities (like, in our case, the geyser bursting courtesy of Mr Murphy!).

Although it is very easy to say that poverty statistics between South Africa and America differ vastly in

terms of the level of poverty and number of people living in poverty, the common stressors of accessing services, never being able to claw your way out of the current situation, and the total despondency with which any additional stress is perceived is, in my opinion, a common thread which is felt by all families who find themselves in this condition. Role-playing the situation was a surprisingly real way to feel and experience some of the emotional and psychological aspects related to living in poverty.

The families who were most successful at changing their circumstances after the “month” were those who had some element of stability. This mirrors an important aspect of the Circles Initiative in real-life, namely the presence of stable allies. The Circles Initiative pairs each family with 2-4 community allies who meet on a weekly basis to help families plan to transition out of poverty. They provide informational support to families such as, basic financial literacy, problem solving skills, mobilizing community resources, as well as emotional support to help families to retain their motivation to change their circumstances. Monthly meetings also allow families in a specific community to plan together to address issues within their community that they identify as perpetuating poverty conditions

This wonderful initiative really embraces the systems approach to communities and intervention in the sense that members from all levels of the community are encouraged to get involved and actions are focused at the level of family as well at the community level. The evening forced me, in many respects, to reconsider the links between lack of material support and resources, the perception of stress, and resilience factors such as the presence of allies who are able to work with families to change not only themselves but the communities in which they live.

*Dr Michal Harty
Centre for AAC*

“HALALA ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROJECT HALALA”

The Gauteng Department of Education is taking definite steps to address communication barriers in non speaking learners at their schools.

The CAAC team is currently engaged in the third project on assistive technology provision – this time to provide 15 non-speaking learners with communication devices in the Gauteng Province. This project was again mandated by the Gauteng

Department of Education to assist learners who can not speak with AAC devices. The special schools that participate in this project are: Reinotswe which is in Tshwane West, Thabo-Vuyo in Sedibeng West and Zodwa which is in Tshwane district.

The project is divided into six stages and it will be finished by the of May 2010. It is evident that the using of AAC in the province is regarded as one of

the priorities as part of Inclusive education practice. That is the reason we all say “*HALALA assistive technology halala*”

*Gloria Ledwaba
Centre for AAC*



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY TRAINING IN THE NORTHERN CAPE

Inclusive Solutions, a company specialising in the provision of assistive communication and access technology, has been involved in a tender for the Education Department (Directorate Inclusion) over the past year. This tender is aimed at providing inclusive and special schools with assistive communication technology, and providing training to staff on the use and application of this technology in the classroom.

Various persons and organisations have partnered with Inclusive Solutions to provide this training in different parts of the country. This is how I found myself flying into Kimberly one Sunday afternoon, surveying the streets-turned-rivers from the plane and being thankful for having missed the thunderstorm that poured down 100mm of rain within 1 hour a short while before we landed. Despite the GPS having to 'recalculate' our route a few times due to blocked streets, Ivor Moolman from Inclusive Solutions and myself found our way to Jannie Brink School the next morning, where we were welcomed by eager staff from three special schools catering mostly for learners with intellectual impairment. Various district officials also dropped in and out during the course of our training. The purpose of the two-day training was to familiarise teachers with some of the technology in their 'goodie pack' which the department had provide the schools with, and focussed mainly on Boardmaker Plus as well as some digital communication devices, alternative computer access devices (roller ball, roller joystick and switches) and The Grid 2 Keys (providing a person with physical limitations access to various computer programmes without having to use a physical keyboard).

On the afternoon after the second day of training, Ivor and myself hit the road to Kuruman, from where we drove to Learamela special school in Mothibistad the next morning, to start another 2-day training. Once again we were welcomed with Northern Cape hospitality, which one appreciates all the more where schools are situated in poorer communities with a lack of infrastructure.



Learning the inn and outs of Boardmaker

In both settings, teachers seemed to benefit from the training, and found especially the Boardmaker Plus programme very appropriate and useful for making classroom resources. Staff who did not have much prior exposure to the computer enjoyed picking up some skills in that regard on the side-line. A challenge with any centrally mandated tender is to get input from people at implementation level as to their specific needs regarding technology – educators indicated that not all technology provided to their schools would necessarily be used by learners in their specific schools. However, special schools are also envisaged to act as resource centres to other schools in the future. Infrastructure for the use and upkeep of technology (e.g. working computers and printers) also needs to be in place in the schools, and should be factored into such tenders.

*Kerstin Tönsing
Centre for AAC*

Adieu, so long, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye. . .

It was a sad moment for all here at the Centre for AAC when Liza Rossetti-Siefe told us that she is emigrating to New Zealand with her husband. Liza has been our much-more-than-a-secretary here at the Centre for AAC for the past 6 years. Liza was truly the heart of the Centre. The brain too, mind you—how she knew all of those cost codes off by heart is still a mystery to me! However, I think Liza will first and fore-

for her friendliness, her warm smile, and her willingness to help everyone. Not only did she support us as staff, but she mothered students, clients and visitors alike. Her good interpersonal skills could calm the waves instantly, and she handled many tricky situations with great flair and finesse.

In true Italian style, she was a Master Chef and wonderful hostess, which benefitted staff and guests alike!



Liza, we will miss you dearly (especially when the printer jams or the coffee is up!) We wish you and your husband success and happiness in New Zealand and do hope you will come by for a visit some time!

*Kerstin Tönsing
Centre for AAC*



USER FORUM

Personal Assistants: Employment Contracts



The Neville Cohen Memorial lecture was awarded to Dr Vicky Casella from the Bridge School, USA, for her outstanding contribution to the field of AAC.



Dr Michal Harty (right) received the Semantic Compaction Systems Award for the best research thesis in AAC/ severe disabilities.



Ms Ina Krige (left) received the Mayer Johnson Company Award for the best Hounours student in AAC.

In our previous newsletter, Simon Sikhosana reported on the role of a personal assistant. In this article, Simon explains the importance of an official employment contract for a personal assistant.

A personal assistant should be treated like any other employee and must have a contract of employment. The following should appear on the contract:

1. Working hours

A personal assistant should work normal hours, excluding overtime, which is eight hours a day, which in turn makes 40 hours per week. Personal assistant may not work more than 12 hours on any day, including overtime.

Overtime may only be worked as agreed upon from time to time and may not exceed 15 hours per week. Overtime must be paid at 1.5 times the employee's normal wage, but where an employee agree to receive paid time off that must also be in writing.

Night work, which is after 18:00 and before 06:00 can only be worked if agreed to in writing and if the employee resides at the workplace or transport is available and must be compensated by an allowance.

2. Meal intervals

A personal assistant is entitled to a one-hour break for a meal after not more than five hours work. Such interval may be reduced to 30 minutes, by agreement in writing between the two parties. When a second meal interval is required because of overtime work, it may be reduced to not less than 15 minutes. If required or permitted to work during this period, remuneration must be paid.

3. Saturday, Sunday and Public holidays work

If a personal assistant is required to

work even on Saturdays, that should be clearly stated on the contract.

Work on Sundays and/or public holidays is voluntary and a personal assistant can therefore not be forced to work on a Sunday and/or public holiday. If the employee works on Sunday and/or a public holiday, he/she needs to be paid double the daily wage. Paid time-off in return for working on a Sunday and/or public holiday may be agreed upon in writing.

4. Procedure for the termination of employment

Whilst the contract of employment makes provision for termination of employment, it must be understood that the services of an employee may not be terminated unless a valid and fair reason exists and fair procedure is followed. If an employee is dismissed without a valid reason or without a fair procedure, the employee may approach the CCMA for assistance.

Simon Sikhosana
Centre for AAC

AAC Consultations

The Centre for AAC offers **consultations** to persons with little or no functional speech and their intervention teams (family and service providers).

In order to schedule a consultation, please contact Priscilla Kershaw (012 420 2035) or phone our office at (012 420 2001).

Solofelang Project



Lebogang Sehako, one of the Fofa participants, is giving back to the community – he has been involved with the Solofelang project initiated by a team at Gelukspan hospital. Herewith his report:

This week I'm at Gelukspan hospital in the Reakgona Centre. They have started a new project, named **SOLOFELANG PROJECT**. It's all about empowering the disabled youth. It's not only the people who

use AAC devices who participate. There are participants with different kinds of disabilities. For example, there are Deaf people and those who are blind.

I'm acting as an assistant facilitator in this project. I teach them that even if we have disabilities, we can dream and we can make our dreams come true. Some of them use AAC devices. I teach them how to use it. I use the methods that I have learnt and gained at FOFA. This means I'm giving back, remember last year during the week of FOFA I learn about giving back to the community.

This week I'm so happy and proud of myself. That's because I made a difference in someone else's life. If you remember back to FOFA 2008, you will remember my message. I said I am like a tree that produces fruits.

*Lebo Sehako
AAC user and Fofa participant*



A new national information service for disabled people was launched in November 2009. Callers can find out the contact details for their nearest NGO or government service provider by sending an SMS to 072-172 2623, with their name, town and the service required.

The relevant service provider is also notified of the enquiry by email and asked to contact the caller and provide support. The system includes a database called The.Sponge which has nearly 3000 contacts in NGOs, government departments and other service providers. There are no charges for this service and we have already been able to assist callers from all over South Africa.

Most of the calls confirm our assumption that disabled people and their families are quite ignorant of the rehabilitation services that are freely available to them. We invite you to assist us to make the service known by distributing the following sample notice to your own network of contacts, and by displaying copies in any place where it may be seen by the communities in your area. You are welcome to edit the format and add a translation into any of your local languages.

Further information about The.Sponge Project is available from tony.webb@telkomsa.net

Sample Notice
SMS INFORMATION SERVICE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Do you need rehabilitation or other disability services? To find out what is available in your area, send an SMS with your name, town and the service you need to 072-172 2623. (You can use your free SMS's).

The silence that surrounds us
An evening with a difference!

Have you ever wondered what speechlessness is really like? From the inside?

Join us over cheese and wine on a multifaceted journey of discovery exploring this theme from a somewhat different angle.

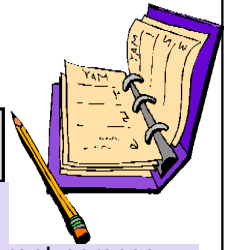
The evening will include a first time production by the UP Drama students, in collaboration with people who have little or no functional speech.

The short movie "Memories" will also be screened for the first time, documenting the personal journeys of some persons with little or no functional speech who are part of the FOFA project.

The evening is hosted by the Centre for AAC, UP.

Date: 2nd week in May 2010 (date to be confirmed)
Time: 18h30 for 19h00
Venue: Die Masker, University of Pretoria
Cost: Free (all donations in aid of the Fofa project)
RSVP/More information: Tel 012 420 2001

FOR YOUR DIARY....



Prader-Willi syndrome Workshops: August 2010

“Understanding the person – understanding the syndrome”

The PWSA (SA) warmly invites you to attend a workshop on the Prader-Willi syndrome from a parent perspective - presented by **Linda Thornton**. The workshops will cover three main areas: an overview of the syndrome, from the genetics through childhood, teenage and adulthood; management of the difficult food-related behaviour and the dietary and health needs of a person with PWS.

Who is Linda Thornton?

Linda Thornton is the national director of the Prader-Willi Syndrome Association in New Zealand and also the vice-president and secretary of the International Prader-Willi Syndrome Organisation (IPWSO). She has three daughters of which the youngest one has Prader-Willi syndrome.

Please diarise the dates where applicable:

13 – 14 August 2010: Cape Town

18 August 2010: Bloemfontein

20-21 August 2010: Durban

27 – 28 August 2010: Pretoria

For more information on the syndrome and the workshops please contact:

Chairperson: chairperson@praderwilli.org.za
www.praderwilli.org.za

Secretary: secretary@praderwilli.org.za
 Tel: 012 344 0241

SKILLSHOPS

The CAAC is presenting a number of skillshops during the year. These skillshops are aimed at providing teachers and therapists with practical information on relevant topics, and consist of a 2 hour CPD accredited afternoon session.

The first skillshop, was held on Thursday, 25 February and it focused on the screening and assessment of potential AAC users. It was attended by a group of 20 individuals, ranging from teachers, to speech and occupational therapists. We even had someone attending from as far as Vryheid! The session was well received by most of the attendees and two of the teachers decided there and then to enrol for the Postgraduate course in AAC! The second skillshop focussed on feature matching of devices. Participants were shown how a thorough assessment (dealt with in the first skillshop) forms the basis of selecting a device that appropriately matches a client’s skills and communication needs.

We are looking forward to seeing you all at our third skillshop on 21 April. Please note that we have had to move the May workshop 1 week earlier! The new date is the 19th May.

*Enid Moolman
 Centre for AAC*

SKILLSHOP DATES



21 April: How to do an activity analysis and develop a corresponding communication board

19 May: How to select core vocabulary and develop a corresponding communication board

22 September: How to make a battery interrupter to use with battery operated toys

20 October: How to make a simple pressure switch to be used with the battery interrupter

Challenging Behaviour Workshop

The Centre for AAC is planning to present a one-day workshop on challenging behaviour at the CAAC premises on 11 September 2010. This workshop comes in response to many requests from parents and teachers who have to deal with children with disabilities who display challenging behaviour. More details will be included in the August Newsletter edition.

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2058

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I would like to give a donation for:

- Interface (Awareness raising and AAC devices)
- Centre for AAC (Training in AAC)

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 1962

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KwaZulu-Natal	Cheques/deposit slips can be sent, together with this form, to:
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Interface Western Cape	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.