

Let's Talk

Interface

Interface-KZN supports and assists individuals who do not have functional speech due to disability or disease.

"... Not being able to speak does not mean that I have nothing to say ..."

Hulamin's Helping Hand

Hulamin very generously donated R6000 towards equipping the Resource Centre and amazingly, the funding was received a week prior to our first AAC Action Lab. The timing couldn't have been better!

Our Chairperson, Felicity Jonck, put a great deal of energy into purchasing what was needed. Thanks to this funding, the committee have been able to ensure that training room is well equipped and this in turn has meant that the Action Labs have run smoothly and effectively.

What a great start to this exciting chapter for Interface!

Thank you HULAMIN.



Participant showing the group her Action Board developed in the Action Lab.

AAC Action Labs update

The initial set of AAC Action Labs is designed to introduce the participants to the field of AAC. Additional Action Labs have also been planned to build more in-depth knowledge and will target topics such as Specialised AAC strategies for children with severe Autistic Spectrum Disorder, AAC with clients who are blind or visually impaired, language encoding strategies etc.

Our Action Labs are progressing well and drawing more and more support. On Friday the 16th May, Kirsty Nourse presented our lab on **Unaided AAC**. During this lab, facilitators and educators were introduced to the concept of communication strategies using our own bodies! Those present learnt about the differences between vocalizations, verbalizations, gestures, manual signs, eye blink, and facial expressions.

On Friday the 23rd May, Felicity Jonck presented our lab on **Positioning for Communication**.

On Friday 30th May, the concept of **Aided AAC** was presented by Dr Lilienfeld. She was assisted by Paul Burdett, who has been the vice-chairperson of Interface for 2 years has no functional speech but is a skilled communicator. He uses low tech (alphabet board) and high tech (Pathfinder – a dedicated speech device) methods to communicate.



Participants at the first Action Lab





SARAFINA MTSHALI SPEAKS ON AAC ACTION LAB

Sarafina Mtshali, a Group Tutor at Whizz Kidz Special Needs Centre says “ It has helped me a lot to better understand the children I am working with. I realise that I have underestimated them and did not realise how much they understand and can do. I have learnt that I have to include communication in everything I do with the children. I did not think one of the children I work with would understand the picture symbols but she will now bring me the toilet symbol when she needs the bathroom and this has improved her independence. The Action Labs are fun and we have enjoyed the opportunity to ask questions. Working in small groups was great and I would like to visit the other centres, like Pathways. I enjoyed the practical sessions like the “Talking mats”. **Please, WE NEED MORE WORKSHOPS – our children will benefit”.**

ACTION LABS IN JUNE

6 th June	Access methods and The Power of Communication: My Second Voice by Dan Ngcobo
13 th June	Beginning Strategies
20 th June	Early and Emergent Literacy
27 th June	Evaluating the child who uses AAC in the classroom

GOOD FRIENDS

When I told Kivashin Pillay and Darren van Zyl about the ISAAC Literacy MANY STORIES – ONE VOICE WRITING CONTEST they not only wanted to enter but immediately opted to write a joint story. “What will you call your story?” I asked and within seconds “Good Friends” was the loud and clear answer from Darren’s speech generating device, the Vantage. “I’m excited” Darren signed with his good hand as Kivashin insisted it included mention of his cat to which Darren replied “Ok and the Sharks” referring to his favourite rugby team. To tell you more would be to let the proverbial cat out of the bag so I will just say that the two settled down to the task with enthusiasm and in just over an hour had completed their story!

About the authors: Darren and Kivashin (Kivi to his friends) are indeed good friends. They both attend the Teen group at Whizz Kidz special needs centre. Darren has had his Vantage for a few years but Kivi only received his Vantage Plus on the 30th December last year on his 16th birthday. A read “gadget man” he has amazed his tutors and therapist with the way he has gained operational competence of the device and already knows where so much of the vocabulary is stored.

About the MANY STORIES – ONE VOICE writing contest.

This contest is part of the 2008 International AAC Awareness Month to be held in October. Anyone who uses AAC is invited to write a story, poem, or essay. The stories need to include AAC e.g. a character who uses AAC. The collection of stories will be placed on the Internet and in October any story or stories can be selected to be read in a library or suitable community venue as a way of raising awareness. A panel of judges will choose the best entries in different age groups and these will featured at the ISAAC Biennial Conference in Montreal in August. Stories have to be submitted online by the 13th June.

Margi Lilienfeld



Darren & Kivi in their classroom. Darren is dictating to Kivi who is typing on the computer



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