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Happy Holidays and Happy New Year ISAAC Canada members!



As we have come to the end of 2023, we are also reaching the end of the four-year term of both the ISAAC Canada Executive and the ISAAC Canada National Council. I would like to take this opportunity to update you on your new Executive members, the new and not so new committees that have been established and to say a huge thank-you to those who have been involved over the past four years!



BUT FIRST! I would like to share some wonderful news!

That is that our very own **Glenda Watson Hyatt** whose ground-breaking work has earned her the **Mitacs Award for Outstanding Innovation**—Master's for her first-of-its-kind study of employment barriers for those living with speech disabilities. The award was presented at a ceremony at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa on November 22, 2023. Please refer to the ISAAC International website to read more about Glenda's work and to see an photo of Glenda and the other recipients of this prestigious award

<https://isaac-online.org/english/news/>



We are very pleased to announce the renewed partnership between **ISAAC Canada and the Breaking the ICE conference.**

BTI hosts events for people who use **Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC)**. **ICE stands for Independence, Community and Empowerment.** The goal is to provide individuals who use AAC opportunities to come together and learn from each other, create meaningful relationships in the community, and have a platform to share ideas and feelings. See <https://isaac-canada.org/ice-conferences/> for details!

Stay Tuned!

The second bit of news is more like a “stay tuned”. We will be seeking entries for an **AAC Authored Poetry Book**. The intent is to once again have ISAAC publish a book of writings by people who use AAC and I would like to start the submissions with Canadian authors! It has been several years since ISAAC has published these types of books and in discussions with other ISAAC Canada Chapters I have decided to spearhead the initiative to publish a new book of poetry, hopefully in 2024. To see similar such books that have been published in the past please refer to the ISAAC International webpage <https://isaac-online.org/english/publications/>. You will be hearing more about this opportunity in the next few months.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

This isn't so much news as a reminder that it is once again time to renew your membership. Here is the link to do so in case it has slipped off your “to do” list <https://isaac-online.org/english/about-isaac/members/membership/>

This year there are a couple of extra perks:

ISAAC International and its partner ATAAC are offering **free attendance to the online 2024 ATAAC conference** to ISAAC members who refer a new member. I always find it so interesting, and inspiring to attend AAC conferences from other parts of the world. I recently attended and presented at the 5th International Conference on Augmentative and Alternative Communication from Bulgaria. It was amazing to hear all the work countries in Europe are doing to promote understanding of AAC. I must admit to being humbled as well as challenged to have a similar conference across Canada – more to come on this front too!

Also, **ISAAC Canada is offering Adult AAC users their first year of ISAAC Canada membership free** and in subsequent years they pay the AAC member fees as outlined by ISAAC Canada.



ISAAC Canada Executive 2024- 2027

Now I would like to take the opportunity to introduce your (mostly new) Executive and National Council Members for the 2024-2027 term.

President – Kathy Look Howery

I will be staying on at least for the first two years to support the transition to working under the new Terms of Reference.

President Elect - Glenda Watson Hyatt

Glenda will be working with me to ensure a smooth transition. And now that we no longer will be having a Past President position it will be great to work together with Glenda as she takes on the Presidency in 2028, if not sooner!

Vice President Who Uses AAC – Joanne Picard

Joanne is new to the ISAAC Canada Executive but not new to ISAAC. She is from Alberta, and is passionate about politics and social justice. She is currently taking her Political Science Degree at the University of Alberta. We know she will bring a strong voice to the Executive

Vice President Without Portfolio – Darla Burrows

Darla is also new to the Executive and like Joanne is an AAC User. Darla is currently living in Ontario, although she spent some time in Alberta as well! She has a passion for gaming, and presented on it at ISAAC Cancun this past summer!

Secretary – Elizabeth (Liz) Baird

Liz is an ISAAC member also from Ontario. Liz has served for the past four years as the Ontario representative to the National Council. She works at the Holland Bloorview Centre in Toronto and brings a wealth of AAC knowledge to our Executive. We are very pleased she is taking on this important role!

Treasurer - VACANT

We are in need of a Treasurer. Although this may seem a daunting role, Shaun, our past Treasurer assures me it is not! There is plenty of support from ISAAC International with keeping the books and keeping track our of financial situation. We do, however, need a treasurer so if you or someone you know is interested please contact me at kateconsulting@icloud.com or email admin@isaac-canada.org. Looking forward to onboarding a new Treasurer.

ISAAC Canada National Council Members

The National Council acts as an oversight body, I suppose kind of like our Canadian Senate. They meet twice a year to learn what the Executive has been up to, and also are charged with providing updates from activities in their Zone for the Newsletter, Website and Facebook. The Members for 2024-2027 are:

Zone 1 BC/Yukon	Jacob Rowe (BC) Jacob is staying on for a second term and we are so grateful that he is!
Zone 2 Alta/Sask/NWT/ MB	Toby Scott (Alberta) Jennifer Bacon (Sask) Aynsley Allen (Manitoba) Chelsea Hagen (Alberta) Toby and Jennifer are new to the National Council and we welcome them with open arms! Aynsley returns for her second term and we are thrilled!
Zone 3 Ontario/Nunavut	Seeking Members! Currently we have no members from Ontario or Nunavut but hope to remedy that situation soon! If you are interested, please contact me!
Zone 4 Quebec/Nfld/Labrador	Maha Abdelhak (Quebec) Stefano Rezzonico (Quebec) Mariska Burger (Quebec) We are beyond thrilled to have 3 members from Quebec this term. Maha returning, and Stefano and Mariska joining!
Zone 5 New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI	Emily Goulet (NS) Emily will be staying with us for a second term. We are so pleased!

Make a Difference...

Join a Committee!



Our Committee Work – PLEASE JOIN US!

As presented at the General Meeting in July (from the ISAAC Conference in Cancun) we have struck committees to assist us in achieving **our 5 major purposes**. These purposes are as follows:

1. to educate and provide information to local, provincial, and federal governments within Canada to ensure equitable funding is sufficient and available for people who have complex communication needs.
2. to work toward reducing barriers and increasing opportunities for people who have complex communication needs
3. to work toward ensuring stakeholders have access to education and learning opportunities regarding the current state of AAC.
4. to maintain ongoing communication with members, and
5. to work with its membership and AAC related non-profit organizations to advance its objectives.

The aligned committees with current membership are:

Political Advocacy <i>In addition to general advocacy related to AAC, this committee will collaborate with the work of Communication Disabilities Access Canada https://www.cdacanada.com/ and the Canadian Communication Access Alliance</i> Purposes #1 and #2	Stefano Rezzonico Darla Burrows Maha Abdelhak Stacey McRuer Kathy Look Howery
Communications <i>The work of this committee will involve communicating with membership and the public about AAC and ISAAC Canada. It will involve working on the Newsletter and engaging in Social Media such as our Face Book page</i> https://www.facebook.com/ISAAC.Canadianchapter Purposes #1 and #4	Glenda Watson Hyatt Stacey McRuer
AAC Connections <i>This committee includes the renewed partnership with Breaking the ICE (see below for more information) and working on AAC Awareness, most particularly focused on activities during AAC Awareness Month in October.</i> Purposes #1, #2, and #5	Erica McCloskey Chelsea Hagen
Professional Learning <i>This committee will focus on the ISAAC Canada Webinars, where Canadians involved in AAC as users, families, or practitioners will share information. This committee will also explore the feasibility of Canadian AAC Conferences in the years where there is not an ISAAC International Conference.</i> Purposes #3 and #4	Kathy Look Howery Mariska Burger
Membership <i>This newly established committee will seek to engage with membership and in particular explore opportunities to expand membership across Canada and across the various stakeholder (AAC users, family members, professionals)</i> Purposes #4 and #5	VACANT

As you can see, we are short of person power on a few fronts in particular people who are interested in supporting and expanding our membership.

ISAAC Canada relies on volunteers! Please reach out if you are interested in any of these committees. You need not take on a chairperson role but we will need committee members so the committees can function. If we do not have people on the committees, then the committee will go into hiatus until we have people to support the work. I am hoping to hear from many of you who are interested!

Thank you



Finally, would like to give a great big thank you to the people who have contributed to both the Executive and the National Council from 2020 to 2023.



Lee Miller from Saskatchewan who has been Secretary where she kept minutes for both the Executive and National Council meetings – a not insignificant task which she has done beautifully. Lee has also contributed greatly to the work that this Executive has taken on particularly with her contribution to the Think Tank we held in March 2023 and her thoughtful contribution to changes that this Executive has undertaken. Lee also was the Saskatchewan rep to the National Council from 2016-2020. Thank you for all your contributions Lee!



Next is **Shaun Pearson** from Alberta. Shaun was *a bit* coerced by myself to undertake the position of Treasurer. And while there is indeed support from ISAAC International on this front Shaun has lent a steady and thoughtful hand to our financial matters providing rational thoughts and approaches to any money related matters that have come out way. While he is leaving the Executive for now, it is my hope (and belief) that he will continue to be a contributor including inspiring us all to look to gaming as an approach to engage all of us in fun communicative activities whether you use AAC or not. Shaun you may yet make a gamer out of me! Thank you!



A great big shout out to **Stacey McRuer** from Manitoba who has taken on a number of roles and duties during her time on the Executive and prior to that as the Manitoba rep to the National Council. Stacey stepped up and edited our Newsletter and in doing so put a great new “face” to *Figuratively Speaking* and worked hard to gather information to keep us all up to date on AAC goings on across Canada. Stacy has also chaired the important Canadian Communication Access Alliance meetings to which ISAAC Canada is a member. The work of this group is to push for the regulations in bringing the Accessible Canada Act to life. This work continues thanks in large part to Stacey’s dedication to this important issue. Thank you Stacey!



The next person to thank is **Jocelyn Roberts** also from Alberta. Jocelyn stepped up when asked to organize the ISAAC Canada Webinars that have happened during this term, and we have had some great ones. Being new to ISAAC Canada Jocelyn had a bit steeper learning curve than some but she has been an integral and important member of the Executive not only through her work securing webinars, but also as a dedicated and effective participant in the work of the Executive over the past four years. Jocelyn will be stepping back to focus on her work and most importantly her family, but like Shaun I hope and believe will continue to support ISAAC Canada in ways beyond that of a specified position. Thank you Jocelyn, it has been wonderful working with you!



Finally, a huge thank you to our “Defender” **Chelsea Hagen**, who is an AAC user from Alberta. Chelsea has engaged in numerous activities beyond her role on the Executive. She is a active contributor the ISAAC LEAD committee and participates in the monthly PWUAAC Online Chats (<https://isaac-online.org/english/news/pwuaac-online-chats/>). Chelsea has been an active voice in AAC Awareness both during the actual AAC Awareness Month campaigns and through her creations that celebrate the use of AAC. On her own and with the help of her Sexy Robot Voice Army, Chelsea has created several short videos and stories that are both informative and engaging! These include: It’s not me it’s my device that’s haunted (see ISAAC Canada Facebook page), Debunking the Myths of AAC for AAC Awareness 2023 (<https://isaac-online.org/english/aac-awareness/>), and a poem about her voice. Chelsea will be staying on the National Council for 2024-2027. She will also be partnering with Erica McCloskey to lead the *AAC Connections- Breaking the ICE – AAC Awareness Committee*. We thank Chelsea and look forward her ongoing contributions to both ISAAC Canada and ISAAC International!

Final Thoughts...

ISAAC Canada exists to bring together people who use AAC across Canada and their family, friends, and supporting professionals. We are so glad to have you all a part of ISAAC Canada to bring to life its mission of promoting the best possible communication for people who require and use Augmentative and Alternative Communication in their daily lives

Please reach out to me at kateconsulting@icloud.com or to admin@isaac-canada.org, and we will make sure to get back to you with more information on any of the things I have shared and particularly if you are interested in volunteering for committee work 😊

Kathy Look Howery, PhD
President
ISAAC Canada



International Society for
Augmentative and Alternative Communication
Canada
Société internationale de suppléance à la communication