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Vibrations

June 2017

► President's Message

Dear Members,

Another May is Speech and Hearing Month has flown by! Many thanks to all the volunteers who hosted library tables, highlighted the contributions of our professions in your workplaces, and participated in a multitude of social media conversations over the past weeks!

Did you know that all current and previous BCASLPA materials from May Month campaigns are available on the BCASLPA website? You can print them out, or if you have a special event and would like us to send you hard copies directly, get in touch with Janet Campbell, our amazing Operations Manager.

SAC has recently announced the results of their 2017 awards program, and BCASLPA is excited and proud to see no fewer than 4 winners from BC! Congratulations to Chelsey Michaud and Jessie Lee (Student Excellence Awards), Katharine Davies (Student Paper Award), and Kelsey Andison (Highest SAC exam score).

BCASLPA members and volunteers are active in a variety of member-driven policy, education, and advocacy initiatives. These initiatives focus on early intervention, SLP services in residential care, provincial funding for hearing aids, and others. If you have an initiative you are working on, or would like to find out if others are working on your concerns, please let us know! BCASLPA is excited to collaborate with members on issues that are important to them.

Planning for the 2017 BCASLPA Conference is in full swing, and we hope to see you there for this 60th anniversary celebration! It promises to be an outstanding conference with speakers in diverse areas.

Wishing everyone a happy (though late!) spring and a safe and adventurous summer.



► Federal Access Report: Canadians who have Speech, Language and Communication Disabilities



In 2016, Communication Disabilities Access Canada (CDAC) asked you to contribute and solicit input from people with communication disabilities on the emerging federal accessibility legislation and specifically about ways to make federal services accessible for people with speech, language and communication disabilities.

We were overwhelmed by your response.

More than 2,200 people from across Canada completed the survey and we received 4,000 comments and recommendations. Over half of the respondents were from people with communication disabilities and family members. Other contributors included clinicians, educators, social workers, personal support workers and students. You can see the breakdown in our full report.

We want to thank everyone who participated, especially those of you who supported people who have communication disabilities to provide their input. We have generated a loud voice from the communication disability community with very clear messages for accessibility policy makers and human rights legislators.

In March 2017, we compiled your responses and submitted a report to the Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Sport and Persons with Disabilities. We also met with her and other disability organizations to highlight the accessibility needs of people with communication disabilities. Minister Qualtrough is now reviewing our input along with contributions from her national engagement forums across Canada. She will release a summary report later in the Spring, 2017. CDAC will continue to work with her to reflect communication accessibility in the emerging legislation.

You can get our full report and a short two summary of the report at <http://www.cdacanada.com/projects/federal-accessibility-legislation-information>

You can get a copy of the report in French at <http://fr.cdacanada.com/federal-accessibility-legislation-information/>

Please share these documents with people that you know who contributed to the survey as well as provincial and local accessibility policy makers, legislators and accessibility committees.

Selected Highlights From Our Report

- Accessibility includes communication.
- People with speech, language and communication disabilities want to be seen as having unique communication accessibility needs that are different from the accessibility needs of people who have mobility, sensory, intellectual, learning or mental health disabilities.
- For people with speech, language and communication disabilities, communication is a two-way process that involves giving and getting information between two or more people.
- People with speech, language and communication disabilities can experience significant barriers when using federal service providers in face-to-face interactions, telephone services, public consultations, when accessing written or internet information and when completing and signing government forms.
- People with speech, language and communication disabilities believe that many of the barriers they experience can be addressed through meaningful policies, practices and education of service providers.
- For people with speech, language and communication disabilities, access to federal services means having service providers who know how to communicate with them, procedures to communicate over the telephone or alternatives to telephone services, producing communication friendly written and digital information, providing communication supports public forums, and making forms that are easy to navigate, complete and sign.
- People with speech, language and communication disabilities want services, where communication is critical, such as healthcare, justice, emergency and education, to have specific communication access policies and practices to ensure that they can effectively, accurately and authentically communicate within these contexts.
- People with speech, language and communication disabilities want the federal government to increase communication accessibility to all goods and services by working collaboratively with provincial governments to increase speech-language pathology, audiology, augmentative and alternative communication services and funding for communication devices.
- People with speech, language and communication disabilities want to be consulted, included on accessibility committees and involved in accessibility training for federal service providers.

Stay Updated

CDAC will share updates about the development of federal accessibility law with you on our Facebook page. You can get a link to our Facebook page by going to our website at www.cdacanada.com and linking on Facebook which is on the left side of the page.

If you don't use Facebook or if you want to be added to our email list, please contact us at admin@cdacanada.com and send us your email address.

Barbara Collier, Reg. CASLPO, F.ISAAC

► Credits

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Contributors: John Scott; Andrea Bull; Nomi Kaston; Julia Hodder; Charmaine Francis and Arlene Sturn; Vinni Panikkar, Jiji Hubert, and Allanah Turner.

Deadline for September Edition: August 10, 2017

► Book Review: The Autistic Author & Animator

“The Autistic Author and Animator” by Janet Walmsley, Influence Publishing, 2015, \$21.95, 200 pages, paperback.

I was set to go to a book signing for this book during March Break. Jenny Story, Janet’s daughter and subject of the book, broke her wrist, so the event was cancelled. Despite this, I feel like I know both of them after reading this biography set in Vernon and Vancouver.

Jenny, ‘a normal person with special needs’, lives with autism spectrum disorder. Janet describes how team effort, perseverance, and focus on talents took Jenny to – spoiler alert – Vancouver Film School’s Animation Program, and to writing, and illustrating a new book for Young Adults: *Dysnomia*.

Parts of her story will sound familiar to many of us; but not the whole story. Initially neurotypical, Jenny suddenly changes, and the original Jenny is ‘lost’. The fact that it happens after immunization is discussed in Appendix B on vaccines, without Janet being a rabid ‘anti-vaxxer’. What would you think if your bubbly child suddenly vanished? Fortunately, Janet is able to get a relatively early diagnosis in Vernon and Vancouver, and has already started collecting the pre-school ‘Dream Team’ that makes all the difference. Their much-loved SLP Lisa Coley-Donohue writes on the cover: “Janet’s love for Jenny always shone through no matter what challenging storm brewed; in her writing, you gain a sense of her optimism and humour. [This] is a parent’s story that gives us all the gift of hope and feeling of joy seeing our children pursue their life’s passions.”

The book details storms and solutions. Your reports do count; parents may quote them in books. Janet offers a guide to what her family with ASD needed, and mostly got, in BC. She thanks everyone who helped Jenny grow, learn, and succeed, but keeps Jenny front and centre. She is a hard-working, persistent girl who has to work three times as hard as anyone else to graduate from high school and VFS. Bullied some along the way, Jenny is also supported by key friends who see her as ‘uniquely human’ (see Barry Prizant’s 2015 book of the same name). This ‘shy girl’ faces the ‘usual suspects’ in ASD – sensory sensitivities, speech and language delays/disorders, anxiety disorder, motor and social communication needs. ASD girls are differently affected than boys. Ask one.

I appreciated ‘What others shared’. These are notes from Jenny’s professionals and friends at different ages. Janet adds their unique perspectives on the life of Jenny Story – which Vancouver Film School called a perfect author’s name.

Janet herself only ever misunderstood one term, pragmatics, as ‘being pragmatic about things’. Never assume! Otherwise, she covers assessments and reports in detail, which will help other parents. Today, I would give free ‘emergency cards’ from www.autismbc.ca that say Thank you for your concern and go on to explain this child has autism... is being helped appropriately, and interference by a stranger can create confusion and worsen the situation. This card is a lifesaver in the community. Every ASD home needs these.

Janet’s book offers ‘a rainbow of hope’ to parents of children with ASD. Jenny was first diagnosed as mentally handicapped—which was useful for funding, then. It shows what teamwork can achieve, and is a tribute to Vernon. We follow Jenny to prom and grad, a whole family move to Vancouver, Film School, and publication of her first young adult novel. There are more books to follow.

The only unnamed people in the biography are the first family doctor who dismissed Janet as an overly neurotic mother, and the pediatrician in Vancouver who endlessly listed all the things Jenny would

never be able to do.

Janet writes, “I would love to find this woman today and say, Hello, remember my daughter? Look at her now.”

Order *The Autistic Author and Animator* from Chapters. Jenny’s own young adult book, “Dysnomia”, can be ordered from her [gorgeous website](#). (John’s past reviews of recent books on ASD can be found in the Blogs section of the BCASLPA website under ‘summer reading’.)

Reviewed by John Scott, DSP, SLP-C, RSLP, Nanaimo

► BC Elks & Canadian Royal Purple Society: Bright Futures Walkathon 2017



BC Family Hearing Resource Society (BCFHRS) provides many educational programs and services for babies, toddlers and children with hearing loss, deafness and/or speech and language communication challenges. In the past 16 years, the Bright Futures Walkathon has successfully raised more than \$130,000 for our programs. **Our goal this year was to raise an additional \$20,000.**

On **Sunday, May 28, 2017** we came together at Campbell Valley Regional Park in Langley, for the 16th annual **Bright Futures Walkathon**, hosted by the Elks and Canadian Royal Purple Society. The event starts with a 1.5 or 3 km non-competitive walk/run along the designated trails, followed by a free barbecue, beverages and activities, provided by our sponsors.

The Elks and Canadian Royal Purple Society founded BCFHRS and continue to be major donors in all our programs and activities. Thank you for working together to ensure bright futures for children!

BC FAMILY HEARING
resource ★ society



PS: If you were unable to join us this year, please consider making a donation online by visiting www.bcfamilyhearing.com and clicking the **DONATE NOW** button.

▶ Early Intervention in Action



Michelle O'Connell shares her family's story from Liam's early diagnosis to a preschooler heading off to Kindergarten!

Dan and Michelle O'Connell welcomed their first child, in June 2012, after many years of infertility. They felt overjoyed with their new family of three; however, they had no idea what journey they were about to embark upon.

Michelle writes, "Liam failed the initial newborn hearing screening, but we were told it was likely the result of fluid in his ears and not to worry. So, we didn't. A few days later he was re-tested and again, he failed. This time we were given more false hope – told he was restless, and again, not to worry. Again, we didn't. Hearing loss was not something that even crossed our minds as a possibility. There was no history of hearing loss on either side of our families.

When we went to the public health unit a few weeks later, we were completely unprepared for what would be revealed. That day Liam was diagnosed with profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. We were in complete shock. I could hear what the audiologist was saying as she told us the diagnosis, but nothing felt real. I heard, I listened, but it wouldn't sink in. It felt like a joke, a bad dream, a mistake. I was numb and confused. The tears wouldn't come.

The next few weeks were a blur of denial, anger, blame, prayers, and tears. Many, many tears. Not just ours, but also our extended family and close friends who also grieved alongside us. Neither of us knew anything about hearing loss or knew anyone who had hearing loss. His future seemed so uncertain. All I wanted to do was hold my precious baby boy and make it all ok. We were heartbroken and terrified for his future and felt very, very alone."

When Liam was just a newborn, Michelle and Dan enrolled in services at the BC Family Hearing Resource Centre, a not-for-profit organization that provides early intervention services for families of deaf and hard of hearing children.

"We quickly connected with Liam's early interventionist as well as our sign language instructor, who made regular home visits to work with us and with Liam. They, and many other staff at BC Family Hearing were there to help us through the challenges as Liam got his hearing aids at 2 months and then shortly before his first birthday, bilateral cochlear implants (CIs). It was then that we saw remarkable progress in Liam's spoken language skills. Because we had been working with the staff at BC Family Hearing, since Day 1 of Liam's diagnosis, we were prepared to help Liam explore and learn in his new world of sound. And boy did he flourish!!



Today we are proud to say Liam's speech is excellent and age-appropriate. He hears things we don't! If you didn't see his CIs, you wouldn't even notice he has a hearing loss!"

In addition to individual early intervention sessions, the O'Connells took part in baby, toddler, and preschool groups at BC Family Hearing, as well as a Kindergarten transition program that prepares both parents and children for what to expect when they move on to the school system.

"I won't lie and say it has been an easy journey and it still continues to have its challenges, but since the day we connected with BC Family, we have never felt alone and have seen such remarkable progress in our happy, energetic son's language, confidence, and abilities. Instead of being heartbroken and terrified, we are now excited and optimistic for our beautiful Liam's future!"

A version of this piece originally appeared in BC Family Hearing's Newsletter – Reaching Out (Winter 2017 edition).

Revised by Charmaine Francis, SLP

▶ A Rare Opportunity in Transgender Voice Training

Get background and training in one conference, here in Vancouver!

- Learn how to facilitate transgender voice training from expert clinicians in an intensive practical course.
- Get up-to-date in transgender cultural awareness.
- Chat with professionals from other disciplines and people from the transgender community.

It's all at the CPATH (Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health) biannual conference in Vancouver, October 25 - 29, 2017. And this year there is a lot on offer for SLPs!

Preconference training:

The highlight is a full-day interactive workshop on the delivery of transgender voice and communication training. In the morning, three international experts will lay the groundwork and discuss current perspectives. In the afternoon, they will be joined by three skilled clinicians who work regularly with transgender clients. This unique workshop design gives participants plenty of opportunity to ask questions, practice techniques, and get one-to-one input. It is ideal for clinicians new to this area of practice and those looking to expand or refine their work.

A half-day workshop on cultural sensitivity and gender-affirming practice provides background and up-to-date perspectives necessary for working with people with diverse gender identities.

Conference presentation topics of special interest to SLPs:

- The relationship between self-perception and voice;
- Discussion on aligning communication with gender identity;
- Exploring the diversity of transmasculine gender identity and voice;
- Establishing a group voice feminization program.

For more information and to explore the preliminary program, visit <http://www.cpath.ca/conferences/cpath-2017/>.

PS: a secret bonus ... We, BC SLPs, are excited to welcome our colleagues and will be organizing an informal social event so we can all meet each other ... stay tuned.

► Presentation to the Legislature

In the age of proactive and preventative health initiatives, there is still little awareness of the detrimental impacts of hearing loss. There is also very limited funding for hearing aids, particularly among seniors in British Columbia. These are critical issues need to be addressed and hearing loss in adults and seniors needs to be given greater priority in health care.

BCASLPA's Director of Public Audiology, Andrea Bull, recently had the opportunity to present these issues to the BC Government caucus during the spring outreach sessions. Her presentation aimed to draw the provincial government's attention to the lack of hearing health awareness, lack of hearing aid funding support in our province, the detrimental impacts of un-treated hearing loss on overall quality of life and that it is in the best interests of our government to take a proactive and preventative approach to supporting individuals with hearing loss.



Lack of Public Information from Government Sources

The presentation highlighted the fact that there is a lack of information regarding hearing health on government websites and in guidelines for healthy aging and expressed that basic public education information of this nature on the Health Canada or Healthy BC websites would be a helpful first step in increasing hearing health awareness. It also recommended that they include a "hearing health checklist" to help alert individuals of the need for further investigation and that they promote and recommend routine hearing tests after the age of 60 so individuals become more aware of their hearing issues before major deterioration takes place.

Funding Assistance Required

The presentation also explained that hearing aids are the primary intervention and management tool for hearing loss but although incredibly effective, this intervention comes at a significant cost to the hearing-impaired individual and that this cost is prohibitively expensive for many and not seen as a necessary intervention due to the lack of education. It emphasized that ultimately, provincial funding assistance for hearing aids would be an ideal solution which would help ease the financial burden of proactively treating hearing loss, and in turn, also improves an individual's overall quality of life and helps mitigate the many other issues associated with hearing loss.

In concluding the presentation, we asked that our provincial government:

- Hearing loss in adults and seniors be given greater priority in BC provincial health care.
- Action be taken to increase hearing health awareness.
- Some degree of provincial funding be provided to the residents of BC to match the support received by those in other provinces.

This opportunity has opened the door for us to further engage with our provincial government to address these issues and advocate for better access to appropriate health services. Andrea and BCASLPA will continue to pursue these issues and work with our government to find proactive solutions.

► Public Education Update

Three informational graphics are displayed. The first is a pink graphic titled "What does a child's literacy development look like?" with a list of milestones from 1 to 5 years. The second is a green circular graphic titled "Did You Know?" with text about the interconnectedness of speaking, reading, and writing. The third is a purple graphic with a megaphone icon and the text "Everyone can be a storyteller." All graphics include the BCASLPA logo.

Thank you for everyone's involvement in May is Speech and Hearing Month. We had 19 volunteers at 14 locations across the province this month educating the public on all the wonderful work that our professions do.

Also in May, we launched our language and literacy campaign, Word Matter. Materials can still be found on our website under Speech and Hearing Month 2017 under the Resources tab. Keep an eye out over the next couple of months for our next campaign!

Lastly, we have had many passionate members working on several initiatives across the province. Communication Matters is working with a group of SLPs to prepare to present at a Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government community meetings in the Fall of 2017. There is a working group preparing a hearing aid funding model proposal. A number of passionate school SLPs are forming a working group to address concerns with representation in the school system.

If you'd like to be a part of the action, contact Becca Yu, Director of Public Education, at beccayu@gmail.com.

Speech & Hearing Month Celebrations

► Victoria Library Booth

Nomi Kaston, Speech Language Pathologist, sat at the May is Speech and Hearing Month table in the foyer of the Greater Victoria Public Library on Saturday, May 6.

People of all ages came to ask questions and to share their own experiences. Topics ranged from early language development to communication needs in older adults who have hearing loss to helping a newly immigrated grandmother feel at home.

Here is what Nomi shared about her experience: “I came away from my day at the Speech and Hearing table with the powerful feeling that people want to open up and talk with one another; that we want to break through the customs and norms that have us keep to ourselves. We want to talk to strangers. We want to connect. We are in a great field. Communication is a basic human need. We, in the Speech and Hearing professions, have a huge privilege, the ability to make communication happen.”



Speech & Hearing Month Celebrations Continued

► May Month in Williams Lake



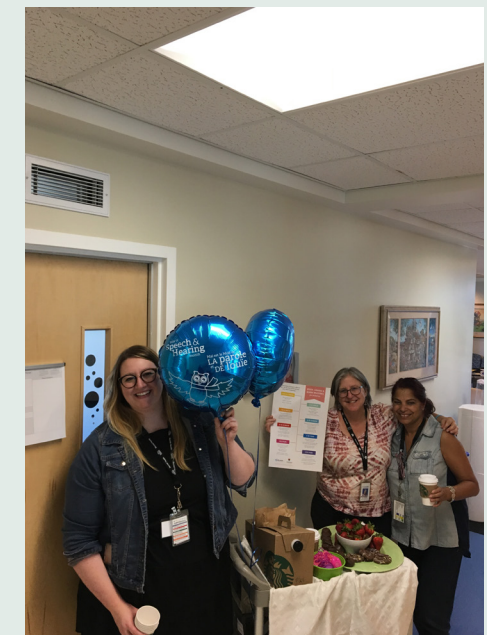
On May 6th, Julia Hodder, Speech-Language Pathologist, set up an information table at the Safeway store in Williams Lake. For two hours, she met with the public and handed out BCASLPA resources and information about the Pan Canadian Alliance #communicateawareness campaign. Members of the public were able to submit an entry for a free draw to win one of two May Month gift baskets. With the focus on Early Language and Literacy, the gift basket contained books (donated by Kit and Kaboodle), a magnetic alphabet board, chalk, pens, and toys to support communication for the whole family. Julia also spent two hours at an information table at the Williams Lake Branch of the Cariboo Regional District Library. The table remained there throughout the month of May. On May 28th, 2017, the information table was at the local Children’s Festival and the prize draw was made for the May Month gift baskets.

Speech-Language Pathologists in force at the Chilliwack Pro D day May 5, 2017. Sherri Zelazny presented on Voice Care for Teachers. Kudos to the Chilliwack SLP department for their presentation on Tier 2 recommendations.

From left to right:
 Chelsey Salli - SLP
 Nicola McCulloch - SLA
 Sherri Zelazny SLP
 Erica Tolman - SLP
 Emily Neufeld - SLP
 Melanie Paisley - SLA
 Jillian Gordon - SLP
 Darla Rintjema - SLA
 Jennifer Buckley - SLP
 Grietha Van Gameren - AAC Support Teacher

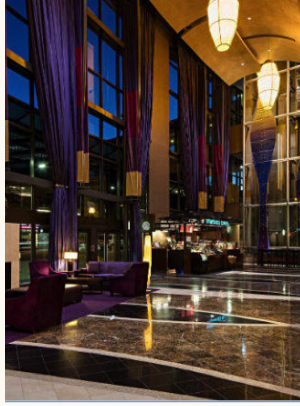


Charmaine Francis and Arlene Sturn at the Terry Fox Library in Port Coquitlam.



Alannah Turner, UBC SLP practicum student, Jiji Hubert, M.S., RSLP, and Vinni Panikkar, M.S., RSLP, serve coffee, food, and laughter at BC Children’s Hospital to promote Speech and Hearing Month.

▶ 2017 BCASLPA Conference: 60th Diamond Anniversary

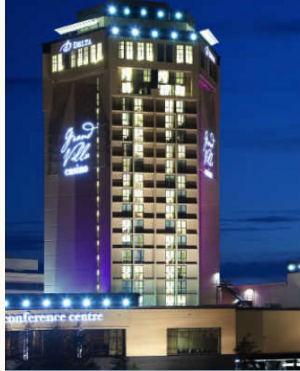


You are invited to BCASLPA's 60th annual conference on October 20 and 21 at the [Delta Burnaby Hotel!](#)

In honour of our 60th anniversary, BCASLPA has lowered the conference registration fee by \$60 for BCASLPA members.

You pay an early bird rate of only \$250 for a 2 day conference! Some of the special events planned include an awards reception, twitter contest with prizes, special guest performers, and more.

The early-bird fee deadline is September 15. The room rate is \$129 + tax per night. Book your hotel room online [here](#).



For the speaker line-up, and other conference information, visit [BCASLPA's Conference Website](#). Online registration will be available soon. Be sure to watch for emails from BCASLPA for more conference news.

Join us for this special, 60 Anniversary Conference celebration!

2017 BCASLPA Conference Planning Committee

▶ Autism in Real Life Study

Participants Needed!

We are seeking families to help us complete our dataset! This longitudinal study examines social communication, treatment experiences, and quality of life in preschoolers with ASD and their families. Families with children aged 2 years to 4 years and 11 months who have been diagnosed with ASD may be eligible to participate if they have not yet started or are within their first six months of intensive treatment.

Thanks to all the wonderful community SLPs who have been supporting this study! We are almost there!

If you know someone who is interested in participating or if you would like more information, please us at 604-822-0659 or clcl@audiospeech.ubc.ca.