

AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS CANADA

Lieutenant Governor of Ontario meets with ACCPC



Hazel Self, Lieutenant Governor Onley, Barbara Collier and Colin Phillips

Lieutenant Governor Onley met with ACCPC in September 2009. His Honor has chosen accessibility as the overarching theme of his mandate. He defines accessibility as that which enables all people to achieve their full potential and play meaningful roles in life.

ACCPC presented an overview of the communication accessibility issues experienced by people who have communication disabilities.

His Honor assured us that he will include communication accessibility within his presentations to organizations across Ontario.

Ways to Contribute to ACCPC

ACCPC has no operational funding beyond the projects that it undertakes. We rely on volunteers to represent issues relating to people who use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) at government levels, to write and submit project proposals and to make our resources available to you on line.

We have now grown to the point where we need funds to pay for staff and resources in order to keep doing these activities.

ACCPC is now a registered charity.

If you value our work, please make a donation by logging onto CanadaHelps at www.canadahelps.org and selecting ACCPC.

This website provides you with a secure and easy way to make a donation to us. You will be issued a charitable tax receipt.

Thank you for your support.

Communication Access

In 2009, ACCPC continued to represent the accessibility needs of people with communication disabilities on the Information and Communication Committee meetings with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario. There are now five accessibility standards in various stages of development and implementation.

These include customer service, employment, transportation, information and communication and built environment. For information please go to: <http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario>

Guidelines on Communicating Access

With funding from The Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, ACCPC wrote a booklet for businesses and organizations about providing accessible goods and services to people who have communication disabilities.

The booklet covers a number of topics:

- The Right to communicate
- Communication disabilities
- Communicating in different ways
- Communication barriers
- General tips on providing communication access
- Communicating with people who use different communication methods
- Communicating on the telephone
- Written communication access
- Alternate formats
- Decision-making and consent
- Privacy

Using the Guide

You can get a free online copy of Communication Access in French or English at www.mcsc.gov.on.ca or a printed booklet from Service Ontario

There is no government plan to disseminate these booklets, so we encourage you to distribute them to businesses and organizations in your community. You might want to give them to people at your local hospital, bank, doctor's office, dentist, restaurant, coffee shop, stores, library. By distributing these booklets you are helping to increase people's awareness of their responsibilities to provide equal access and opportunity to people who use AAC.



Connecting to Communities



Tien Hoang requests assistance from a bank teller to access his bank machine

We are busy working on a new DVD and book about ways that people who use augmentative communication can connect and communicate with people in their communities. The resource will be available in the summer of 2010 and will be in English and French. It is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Connecting to Communities is based on the experiences and recommendations of seven people who use different AAC systems - Paul Marshall, Trenea Guy, Tien Hoang, Jorge Almeida, Dave Dawson, Collin Phillips and Jessie Weber. They tell us how they start up conversations with people, how they stay in touch and how they communicate in groups and at meetings. They tell us about their communication rights and about their responsibilities to educate and inform businesses and services about their communication accommodations.

The resources will be a compilation of strategies that people who use AAC may find useful in their communities. We will be launching connecting to communities in June 2010 in Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa. At that time we will also post information on our website about how you can order your copy.

Access to Justice



*Aaron Shelbourne and his communication assistant,
Lamia Gibson*

Many of you already know about our online resource to support the justice sector in making their services accessible for people who use augmentative communication. These resources are available at <http://www.accpc.ca/ej-resources.htm> and are being used extensively by the legal community across Canada as part of their trainings on accessibility.

With funding from Justice Canada, we are now expanding the resources to include information on how courts can ensure that people who use AAC are provided with equitable access to their services. Like everyone else, people who use AAC have a right to:

- communicate their situation, information and legal needs effectively and accurately
- receive legal information in ways that they can use
- maintain and demonstrate authorship of their communication
- Access spoken and print information

The legal community has an obligation to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that this happens, because without adequate processes and supports, people who use AAC do not have access to justice.

The resource will contain guidelines for the justice sector on who should provide communication assistance in court situations, communication techniques that assistants might use and recommendations for recording communications from a person using AAC.

We are also pleased to announce a roster of AAC professionals who have agreed to act as resources for legal professionals in their province / territory. The new resources will be available on our website in March 2010.

We will also be hosting a number of webinars to introduce people who work in the justice sector to the resources on our site. It should be useful for legal professionals, police, judges, legal aid clinics, jury members, legal education networks, victim witness services, counselors, shelter workers and disability advocate.

The new resources will be available on our website in March 2010.

Update on Communication Assistants

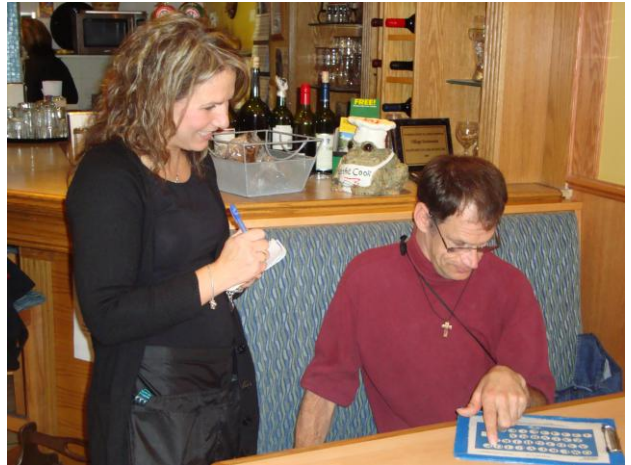
Throughout 2009, ACCPC made a number of presentations to the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services about the need to train and provide communication assistance services for people who use AAC.

We hope that MCSS will move forward on these recommendations in the near future.

New Project: Resources for Canadian Businesses and Services

We are pleased to announce that we will be starting up a new project in 2010.

The project is funded by the Federal Government's Office for Disability Issues. We will be conducting a national survey about the communication accessibility needs of people who have communication disabilities and developing an online resource to support businesses and services to provide communication accessibility when providing goods and services to people who use AAC. Please check our website for details or email us if you would like to participate in the national survey.



Paul Marshall places his order at his local restaurant

Creating Cultures of Communication



Pat deGraaf has a chat with Cathy McDonald at WDDS.

In 2009, ACCPC worked with two organizations to develop cultures of communication for the people they serve. London Participation House Support Services and Woodstock and District Developmental Services have established communication support teams that participated in a year-long training with ACCPC.

The communication support teams have learned about various communication tools and strategies that they can use with people who have communication disabilities. In Sept. 2009, over 130 staff at Participation House attended a series of communication workshops.

"ACCPC has laid the foundation to pathways of communication for the people we support here." Carmel Tait, Director of Services, PHSS, London.



Barbara Collier
Executive Director
ACCPC
131 Barber Greene Rd. Toronto ON M3C 3Y5

www.accpc.ca
accpc@sympatico.ca

ACCPC Board of Directors:

Hazel Self, Chairperson
Elise Nakelsky, Secretary
Marcia McNabb, Treasurer
Sue Lantz
Melinda Rundle
Al Cook
Janice Light