



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **CASLPA Supports International ACC Awareness Month October 2009: *Many Methods, One Goal—To Communicate***

***“Communication is not a luxury: it is a necessity. Speech is not a privilege: it is an inalienable right.”  
Rick Creech, AAC user, 1984.***

The Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA) recognizes the importance of International Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) Awareness Month, being celebrated this October. Speech-language pathologists (S-LPs) have a valuable role to play in evaluating and teaching communication skills to people who have no or limited speech abilities.

AAC gives people who live with severe communication difficulties the tools they need to express themselves. AAC users include people with congenital conditions such as cerebral palsy, autism and Down Syndrome, as well as those with acquired communication challenges, for example the result of a stroke, laryngectomy or brain injury. In some cases, technologies, or aided systems, such as picture charts or specialized computers, become an everyday communication tool. Unaided systems, including sign language, are also used when appropriate.

“The AAC device opens doors, travels distances, knocks down barricades, accompanies and listens,” wrote Elsie Hudak in her essay *The Voice*, which she wrote on her AAC device.

S-LPs hold the important role of communication specialist and work with clients and a team of professionals to develop the best form of communication for each client, including how to use their tool in their environment.

“The need to communicate is central to us all. Today’s technology and augmentative communication strategies provide the means to communicate for those who are not able to use speech,” says Shelley Deegan, Hamilton, Ontario, speech-language pathologist and CASLPA member. “It takes a team to implement augmentative and alternative communication, and speech-language pathologists are the cornerstone of these teams around the world.”

This October events are being held across Canada and throughout the world through chapters of the International Society of Augmentative and Alternative Communication. For more information, check out the website at: [www.isaac-online.org](http://www.isaac-online.org). To read stories written by people who use AAC, go to [www.aacawareness.org/2009stories.htm](http://www.aacawareness.org/2009stories.htm).

More than 5,400 speech-language pathologists, audiologists and supportive personnel are represented by the national professional association the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA). For more information about the role speech-language pathologists, audiologists and supportive personnel play in the treatment of communication disorders or to find a speech-language pathologist or audiologist in your area, visit CASLPA’s website at [www.speechandhearing.ca](http://www.speechandhearing.ca).

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