

MEDIA RELEASE

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CASLPA Champions Community Integration on International Day of Persons with Disabilities

December 3, 2010 (Ottawa) - Integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of life in their communities is critically important. Whether a child stutters, a teenager has difficulties reading, or a senior exhibits significant hearing loss, these and related communication limitations affect the social inclusiveness of people of all ages. Speech-language pathologists (S-LP) and audiologists, represented nationally by the Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA), are speech, language and hearing professionals who identify, assess and (re)habilitate communication limitations.

“Effective communication enables people to participate in the social, political, economic and cultural parts of their community,” says CASLPA President Gillian Barnes. “Communication is vital to community participation and inclusivity. Disabilities in communication can lead to social exclusion for a stuttering child, lower grades in high school for a teenager with reading difficulties and social isolation for people with untreated hearing loss.”

The World Health Organization defines disability as “an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which he or she lives.” People with speech, language and hearing disabilities in Canada are assessed by S-LPs and audiologists. These professionals, along with supportive personnel, work individually or collaboratively on interprofessional teams to maximize the speech and hearing potential of Canadians.

According to the *Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities* report published by the Government of Canada, more than 12 per cent of Canadians live with a disability. Hearing disabilities are the second most prevalent after mobility in Canada, with four per cent of Canadians reporting a hearing limitation. Speech disabilities and barriers are also experienced by many Canadians of all ages.

With more than 5,500 members, CASLPA is the only national body that supports and represents the professional needs of S-LPs, audiologists and supportive personnel. For more information about the role these professionals play in the treatment of communication disorders or to find a S-LP or audiologist in your area, visit CASLPA’s website at www.speechandhearing.ca.

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