

LOUD 'N CLEAR

The Newsletter of Speaking Differently

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COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY IN LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARIES



By Tracy Shepherd and Stacy McDougall

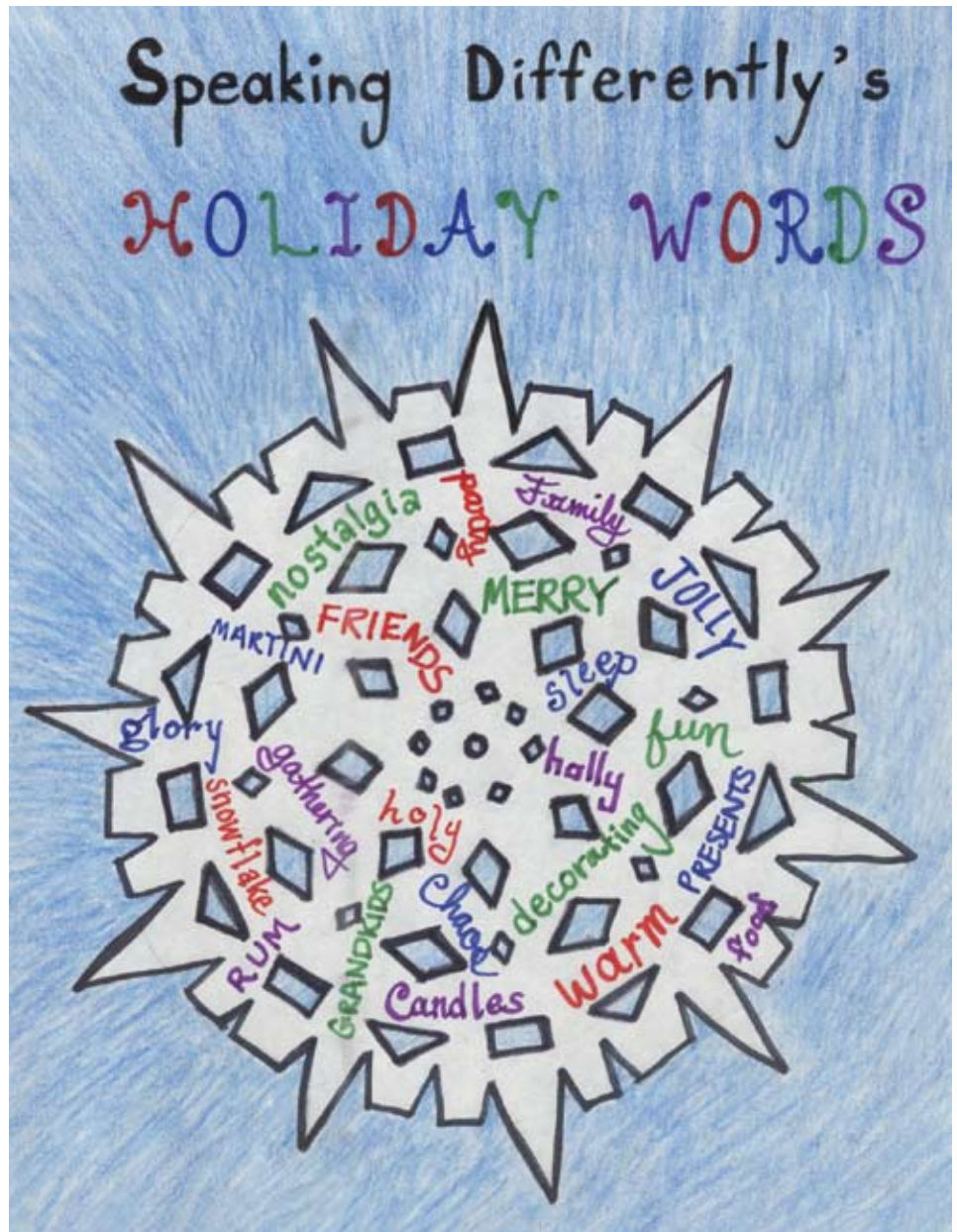
Libraries for All is an exciting new joint project in London, Ontario, between the London Public Library (LPL) and the Thames Valley Children's Centre (TVCC). Clinicians from the Augmentative Communication Service at TVCC have joined forces with staff from the LPL to implement this project. It consists of two main components: communication displays available in each London library location, as well as training for every library staff member on how to use communication displays. *Libraries for All* was adapted from a project out of the Communication Resource Centre (Scope) in Australia (www.scopevic.org.au), which was originally presented in Brazil at the ISAAC conference.

TVCC provides rehabilitation services for children, youth, young adults, and their families, and supports these individuals' participation in all areas of life. The TVCC vision is "Our clients at their best". Similarly, the LPL mission is to provide equitable access for all to the world of information and creative expression. The partnership between these agencies is thus successful, because their participation and accessibility philosophies are aligned.

A *Libraries for All* Task Force was established, and it included members of the library team, AAC clinicians from TVCC, and an individual who utilizes Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Adapted communication displays and marketing materials were also developed. The materials included a letter of introduction, the *Libraries for All* logo (seen above), posters, letterhead, and a bookmark. Both the letters of introduction and the bookmarks were mailed to two hundred past and present TVCC clients who use AAC. Community agencies were also targeted, in order to inform them of the project and its start date. The project launched in October of 2005. (*continued on page 2*)

Holiday Issue!

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STUTTERING: TIPS AND ADVICE

What should you do when speaking with someone who stutters?

First of all, it's important to realize that children are usually unaware of their stuttering, and young kids who stutter will often stop stuttering once they reach a higher level of self-awareness and a lower level of excitability.

Adults, on the other hand, are extremely aware of their stuttering, and will do their best to hide it.

There are three general rules to following when speaking with someone who stutters:

- 1) Provide an unhurried speaking and listening environment. Giving the impression that you are in a rush will not put your communication partner at ease.
- 2) Maintain eye contact slightly more than you would when conversing with someone who does not stutter.
- 3) Listen to what the person is saying rather than focusing on how he or she is saying it.

THE WET SANTA



The Christmas holidays were just about to start. On the last day before school closed, there was the annual Christmas party, with a stage show in the school's auditorium. They had dancers, plays, clown acts, and a few celebrities. There were also these professional wrestlers that entertained the kids with their feats of strength. The master of ceremonies himself was a professional wrestler - "Lord Athol Latin" was his name. Why they had these wrestlers at the school's annual Christmas party still remains a mystery to me. I guess it was a charity thing for those guys. To me, they looked like human monsters with their big muscles, and God, were they ugly.



I did recognize a few of the wrestlers from watching wrestling with my dad on Saturday afternoons. One wrestler I knew was "Dick the Bulldog Brower". Mrs. Gray asked me if I wanted to meet him up close. I nodded my head yes as if to say, "Yeah, why not." Mrs. Gray pushed me up to him and introduced me: "Mr. Bulldog, this is Tony, one of my students."

I was a bit taken aback by his large physical stature. With a deep baritone voice he said, "Hello there young fella. Are you a wrestling fan?" I felt like if I didn't say yes to this big ugly monster in front of me, he'd eat me up or somethin'.

"Let's see how heavy you are in that wheelchair," he said.

He then grabbed my chair by the cross bars under the seat, and lifted me up in the air with one arm. Then he carried me across the classroom as if I was a king and he was my slave, like in one of those old Egyptian movies.

At first, I was a bit scared of being dropped on my head by that big ape of a man, but I got a big thrill from it soon after. I was completely amazed at his strength. He finally lowered me slowly back down to the floor, but then that poor sap had to lift about forty other kids in wheelchairs. That poor Dick.

Then came the highlight of the party...

Yes, it was time for that fat guy in the red suit to make his

appearance. We all gathered into the school's auditorium. The principal announced his arrival: "Attention boys and girls! I've just been informed that Santa Claus will be here at any moment now, and... Oh! Do I hear jingle bells?"

Into the auditorium he came, jingling his bells and ho, ho, hoing.

"Merry Christmas, boys and girls! Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas!!" He was a scarier sight than Dick the Bulldog Brower.

Being six at the time, I did believe there was a Santa Claus, yet there was something distinctly familiar about this particular Santa. His red suit looked tarnished and kind of old. His white beard was straggly and knotted. Actually, he looked a lot like some drunken homeless guy who could have wandered in off the street.

He sat himself down in the middle of the auditorium, and invited each kid to sit on his lap, and disclose what he or she would like for Christmas. My best friend Harvey excluded himself, partly because of his Jewish background, but mainly because he knew that this guy wasn't Santa Claus.

"Be careful he doesn't eat you up, Tony," he cautioned.

Harvey's comment made me even more nervous than I already was, and it was getting closer and closer to being my turn to sit on Santa's lap. Now, my nervousness often caused two things to happen with my body: first, I'd have more muscle spasms and involuntary arm movements, plus my right hand would grab on to things that were close to me; second, I'd piss myself.

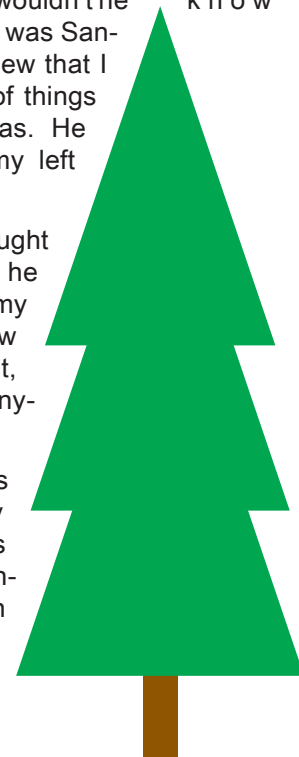
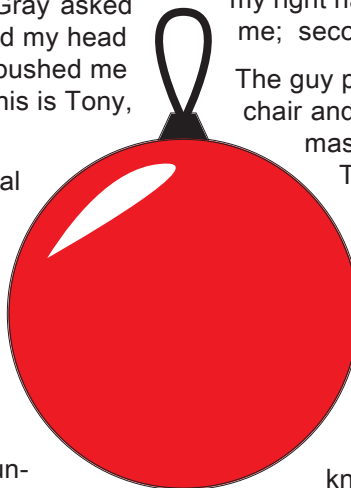
The guy playing Santa Claus lifted me out of my wheelchair and onto his lap. "What would you like for Christmas, Tony?" I wondered how he knew my name.

Then I just figured - why wouldn't he know my name? After all, he was Santa Claus. He even knew that I had typed up a list of things I wanted for Christmas. He took the list from my left hip pocket.

"He's amazing!" I thought to myself, "How did he know I had a paper in my pocket? No one else knew I had it there, except my attendant, Andy, who put it there, and he isn't anywhere around here."

At this moment, my right hand was slowly beginning to open up, and my fingers were wrapping around his hanging whiskers. He was totally unaware of what was bound to happen at any moment, and began reading my list.

It read:



Dear Santa,

If it's not too much trouble, I would like you to get me the following:

A dump truck, a super ball, a hockey puck, a hockey stick, a hockey net, a Montreal Canadiens hockey sweater (but please don't make the mistake of getting me a Toronto Maple Leafs sweater like my mom did last Christmas, because I hate the leaves. A Canadiens sweater is red, with the letter 'C' in the middle). I would also like a football helmet (any team helmet is OK), a football, a soccer ball, (but not a baseball, 'cause I hate baseball), a table hockey game, a record player, a transistor radio, a wristwatch, and an electric race car set.

But not all of these things are for me - the dump truck is for my little brother, because I know it's not right to be selfish or greedy. And my older sister gets nothing, because she says you're a fake.

Thank you Santa.

*Your friend,
Tony*

As he was reading this letter, my right hand got a firm grasp of his hanging beard. I tried to let go, but my hand wouldn't listen to what my brain was telling it to do. When he finished reading the letter, he said, "Ho, ho, ho! You don't ask for much, do you?" He then noticed that I'd gotten a firm hold on his beard.

"Hey kid, let go of the beard will ya?" he snapped, and his voice suddenly took on a different tone. It sounded a lot like Andy the attendant. I then noticed that his right eye never

blinked, just like Andy's. Well, at that moment I knew the guy was, in fact, Andy the attendant, not Santa Claus. I felt a bit of anger and disappointment. How DARE he impersonate Santa Claus?! That was like impersonating God.

"OK," I thought, as my mischievous side took over, "Why not yank off his beard? Plus at the same time, why not pee on his lap since I have to go really badly?"

First, I let my bladder go. Then my spasms took over, and I just YANKED!

"Yeaoooooow!!! Tony! You're tearing my face off!!" Andy screamed.

He then carried me out of the auditorium, and into an empty classroom across the hall, not wanting to expose his real identity to the other kids. Then he noticed a large wet stain on both his legs and crotch area.

"You even pissed on me!!"

Andy didn't know what to do next. His beard was half off his face, and his pants were all wet from me peeing on him. The poor guy looked like a pathetic, incontinent Santa Claus.

Miss Hunting, one of the school's physiotherapists who helped students with muscle and coordination exercises, pushed me down to the nurses' station to get me changed. The last I saw of Andy, he was sitting in that empty classroom still wearing that pissed-on Santa suit, shaking his head at me as if to say, "Why me? Why always me??" (I had pissed on him a few times before in the washroom).

Christmas day came, and my wish list did get a reply from Santa. It read:

Dear Tony,

Ho, ho, ho! Here are most of the presents you asked for in your letter. Next year, please don't wet on Santa.

Merry Christmas...you little ...BRAT!

By Tony Diamanti

CHOCOLATE COOKIES

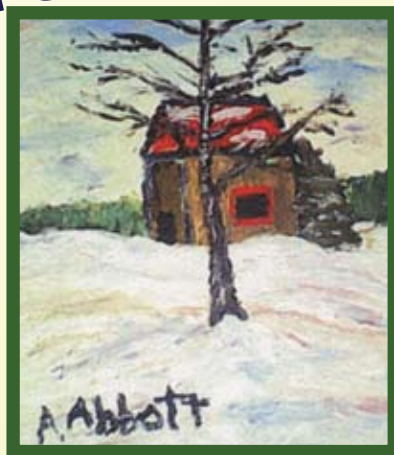


2 cups flour
 ¾ cup cocoa
 ½ tsp. salt
 1 tsp. baking soda

1 cup butter
 2 cups + 2 tsp. sugar
 2 eggs
 2 tsp. vanilla

Sift the flour, cocoa, salt, and baking soda together. Cream the butter with 2 cups of the sugar. Add the eggs and vanilla to this mixture. Slowly add the sifted ingredients to the butter mixture. Once combined, wrap the dough and refrigerate it for ½ an hour. After it has chilled, form the dough into little balls. Roll each little ball in the extra 2 tsp. of sugar, and place them (sugar side up) on a cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 8 minutes.

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THE LITTLE BOX

By Anne Abbott

They make me live in this little box.
Try as I may to turn the key, it never unlocks.
Inside it's cramped and dark with no room to grow,
But within my heart hope flickers, and brightly does it glow.

I yearn to spread my wings, and, like a bird, soar!
But first I must find a way to open this caged door.
Through the bars I can see the lucky ones outside –
Upon their sleeves they wear their Rights and Freedoms with
such casualness
That it kills me inside!

They make me live in this little box.
Try as I may to twist the key, it never unlocks.
Each day the box seems to get smaller.
Hope still burns deep within me, but now I have to fight the
urge to scream and holler.

Those lucky ones from outside
Look at me and think I should be satisfied.
I have shelter, they say

And enough to live upon each day.
They don't understand I want more from life.
They don't understand my existence is full of strife.
I have so little choice,
And no one seem to listen to my voice.

They make me live in this little box.
Try as I may to rattle the key, it never unlocks.
Sometimes they open the door a crack,
But it always slams back.
Within those few seconds I can see what I need –
I see what I lack.

Disappointment, like a gloomy rain,
Happens to me over and over again.
And sometimes I wonder how much longer I can remain sane.
Still, I must keep my hopes and dreams alive.
It is the only way to survive!

They make me live in this little box.
Try as I may to force the key, it never unlocks.
One day I know the door will swing open and I shall be free.
And then, those lucky ones from the outside will see
That someone like me deserves some dignity.

WEBSITES

www.cca.org.au
<http://aac.unl.edu>
www.isaac-online.org
www.asha.org
[http://wata.org/resource/
communication](http://wata.org/resource/communication)
www.aacintervention.com

LISTSERVS

- 1) Email Majordomo@asel.udel.edu
→ Leave the subject area blank
→ Type "subscribe AAC" in the
body of the email
- 2) Email listserv@vm.temple.edu
→ Leave the subject area blank
→ Type "subscribe *your first name*
your last name" in the body of the
email. Eg: "subscribe John Major"
- 3) Others available from
<http://aac.unl.edu:16080/yaack/65.html>



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Send us your work!

As always, Loud 'n Clear is seeking out contributors who are willing to voluntarily submit work.

For those of you who are already fashioned artists and writers, we would love to include your work in an issue of Loud 'n Clear. Email us at speakingdifferently@gmail.com or send us a letter at the address listed above.

For those of you who have yet to discover your artistic talents, we urge you to explore whatever creative outlet fascinates you, be it poetry, script-writing, painting, or photography. Send your finished work to speakingdifferently@gmail.com, and enjoy seeing your name in print!

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