REMEMBERING ANNE WARRICK
Anne Warrick... the name immediately conjures the image of a special persona, joie de vivre imbued with quiet dignity and gentle caring. During her visit to Kolkata and IICP in 1995, I was privileged to sketch her profile for *The Statesman*. Reading her reminiscences shared with me two decades ago made me rediscover how she chose her life’s mission.

Anne had been keen about a career on stage after finishing school. Speech therapy was a developing field in those days and her parents tactfully convinced their young daughter that teaching elocution and drama to those who had speech problems was an excellent alternative. Anne believed “it was the next best thing” to acting!

Developed by Charles Bliss during the period 1942-65, the Bliss symbol system was first introduced to children with cerebral palsy lacking functional speech at the Ontario Crippled Children’s Centre in Toronto in 1971. Completing her training there, Anne did pioneering work in the usage of Blissymbolics in Ottawa, Canada, where she worked at the Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy. By 1995, Bliss was being used in more than 30 countries as diverse as France, Iceland, Italy, Zimbabwe, Israel, Hungary, South Africa and India, and in 15 different languages!

Looking back, if Anne had followed her teenage dream and become an actor, the world may have gained another Audrey Hepburn or Bette Davis. But the world of those who have no speech would have been infinitely poorer. Anne Warrick gave the voiceless an invaluable gift – the language of alternative communication.

We bring for our readers, a special issue of *Deepshikha* as a tribute to Anne Warrick, a founder member of ISAAC International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, a ‘one-in-a-million’ speech and language pathologist from Canada and a true friend of IICP.

Anne passed away in November 2014, days before IICP’s 40th anniversary. We hope the tributes from friends and colleagues will bring you glimpses of Anne’s journey.

Reena Sen
This special issue of *Deepshikha* is dedicated to Anne Warrick, or Anne Didi as we all knew her. Anne was THE Pioneer who introduced Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) to India. Anne’s contribution to IICP went beyond her professional input. She nurtured and mentored many of us as co-professionals, parents and friends. She taught us to laugh at ourselves, enjoy our achievements and meet challenges with a smile. Because of her implicit faith and belief in us, she gave us the confidence to move forward and aim for the sky!

In 2002, Anne penned a delightful little book of wisdom called the *ABC OF COMMUNICATION* wherein she captured the essence of communication in the 26 letters of the English Alphabet.

I thought it would be more than appropriate to follow in the footsteps of my Guru and Mentor. I have attempted to capture the ‘essence’ of her personality, both personal and professional, by doing the same with the four letters of her name – ANNE.

**ANNE - OUR DIDI**

A = ATTRACTIVE, AFFABLE and AFFECTIONATE

N = NICE, NATURAL and NOTABLE

N = NEAT, NIFTY and NATTY

E = ELEGANT, with ELAN and ENCOURAGING
Anne truly captured the meaning of communication in the most simple yet meaningful manner. For her, communication cut across boundaries and languages; countries and cultures. She touched upon the true meaning of communication and AAC. Communication was person-centric and based on understanding, acknowledging and celebrating diversity.

With her professional mentoring and personal support over many decades, IICP can proudly claim to be the leading resource centre for AAC in India. ROSHNI, our ICT and AAC Centre is the hub of communication research and development. The team leaders in ROSHNI are people who use AAC, who have excelled in their field of work. And we are proud to acknowledge our Guru, Anne Warrick!

We celebrate her life today with joy and pride and consider ourselves really fortunate to have travelled many miles with her, through her journey.

What better than Rabindranath Tagore’s words to remember Anne… “Clouds come floating into my life, no longer to carry rain or usher storm, but to add colour to my sunset sky.”

_Sudha Kaul_

Hello Sudha,

First, many thanks to Mrs Uma Ahmed who started your Canadian Connection and all the wonderful years of learning and friendship we have enjoyed together. Your Canadian Connection began more than thirty years ago. Remember? You stood in a classroom in Ottawa alongside one of the very first speech output devices. It weighed as much as you, came up to your shoulder and had a small vocabulary of spoken words. In Toronto you found Blissymbols, (a communication system you thought useful for India) and the offices of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC). In Vancouver you attended your first ISAAC conference and finally, in Montreal, you renewed and charmed the AAC world as ISAAC’s President.

How did you accomplish so much? I believe this quotation has the answer.

“You did all these things and in doing so, provided education and dignity to people with disabilities in India and throughout the world.”

Dear dear Sudha. We wish you and Om many happy retirement years together.

_Anne and Ed Warrick_

_Toronto Canada_
This issue of *Deepshikha* – the first one for 2015 – is dedicated to Anne Warrick, friend, reputed speech and language pathologist from Canada, founding member of ISAAC International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, AAC guru. Also a woman of substance with a smile that made her eyes crinkle and her face light up. Apart from anything else, she proved that it is possible to do with one hand what one does with two!

At the 40th Founders Day commemorative programme during the traditional lighting of the lamp, the first wick was lit by Sudha for Anne. This was not in mourning but in celebration of her life and all Anne did for us including introducing us – and India – to AAC. Anne will remain with us – in the children’s laughter as they play in ‘Anne and Ed’s playground’, in our adults’ loving touch as they tend to the colourful blooms in our garden and in the music the children produce in the musical instruments we bought with her support.

*Reena Sen*
I remember Anne for her infectious laugh and for being cool under all sorts of circumstances.

One instance of this was when Sudha and I had gone to the ISAAC conference in Barcelona. The first thing we did when we got there was to contact Anne and meet up with her. We met in a roadside café where we started to catch up on all the news and gossip. We were so busy chatting that we did not notice the man at the next table move closer to our table and snatch Anne’s handbag which was by her feet. He was well away by the time we noticed Anne’s bag was gone. Sudha and I began to panic and quiz Anne as to what important items she had in her bag that needed to be reported to the authorities. Anne was very cool about it and told us not to worry that there was nothing important in the bag apart from her house keys and she would just tell her husband to get another set made. We could not believe this. Everyone keeps important things in their bag – was she really sure about this? Anne’s distinctive laugh rang out and she pointed to her blouse and told us everything of importance was safely nestled there!

We miss you Anne.

Tessa Hamblin
I find myself at a loss for words when I think of Anne aunty! I have always had a deep personal bonding with her, which I have cherished since I was young. Her contribution to introducing us to the world of AAC is unparallel. It is the very foundation on which we stand today. Through AAC, we have been able to express our thoughts, our dreams and our aspirations. That we can make others understand what we are saying and also convey that we understand what they are telling us has been possible only because of her! I remember so many little incidents fondly. I use to often slip off my chair and whenever Anne aunty happened to be around, she would quickly lift me up with just one hand and put me back on my chair! I know she loved not only me, but my mother too. Whenever she wrote to me, she would enquire about each and everyone.

How can I ever forget Anne aunty? More than anything and everything else, I love her! Anne aunty... I love you!

Putul Biswas

Бахут ачхи дхи. Мадхури ке гтар миен аайян. Майне Блис унсе сечха!

[She was very good. She came to Madhuri’s house. I learnt Bliss from her!]

Jhala didi

Jhala didi is Madhuri Kapur’s caregiver and a part of the family

I cannot forget Anne aunty. She taught me Bliss symbols! I told her that I can read, so why can’t I use a spelling board? She agreed and that is how I got my Alphabet Board!

Madhuri Kapur
In the Fall of 2012, a group of friends and colleagues came together to make a quilt for Anne Warrick. It was intended to keep her warm and cozy while she was having chemo treatment. It was also a testament of our friendship and support.

The theme of the quilt had to be related to Blissymbolics, as Anne was one of the international driving forces behind the use of Blissymbolics to facilitate authentic communication for nonverbal children. We chose symbols that represented Anne in every aspect of her life.

(Reproduced from the OCTC Handbook, with permission)

If Anne were writing this for one of our friends, it would be in verse. She was our Poet Laureate of all special events, birthdays and anniversaries. Combining a sense of humour with writing talents, she could be relied on to hit the nail on the head every time and entertain us. Anne was the friend who you always knew would be there for you when needed. Who can ask for more than that?

Jan Beaumont
Canada
When I was four, I started school. My school was at the Treatment Centre beside the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario.

I was lucky because I had a good therapist, her name was Anne Warrick. We tried a talking machine that was a circle with Bliss. We made my first Bliss board. I would use my thumb to point to words. Thanks to her I can communicate today.

When I was five, I had my first Bliss board. My speech therapist Anne made my first board. When I needed a new board I would help her. This is how we went about making a Bliss board. We needed to know all the words that I needed for my Bliss board. We had to put all the words and Bliss symbols in their places on the board. If I needed a word and there was no Bliss symbol for that word, we had to make it up. If the word was hamburger, we would put bread and meat as one Bliss symbol. We had fun with that.

After all the words were in their places, we coloured the Bliss board. Here are the colours: people were yellow, feelings were blue, questions and time words were white. There we had a Bliss board!

I did good work. I kept getting 80 or 90 in school. Just think how good I would be if I had a talking machine that worked, back then. I did not answer the teacher much because I was slow to answer. My teacher could not wait for my answer: most days I did not answer a question even if I knew the answer.
The lady with the wonderful smiling face, beautiful salt and pepper hair and the most charming behaviour – that’s how I remember my Anne aunty! She had a lot of patience. I remember how confused I used to get and not get things right, but Anne aunty always taught me again and again with the same smile!

Today, when I conduct training programmes, when I deliver lectures to university students, school students, teachers, families and many others, the person I thank most gratefully, is Anne aunty. It is Anne aunty and Sudha aunty who taught me how to talk to everybody using the alphabet board. It is because of Anne aunty that we learnt what AAC is and how to use it in picture boards, symbols and so many various other ways!

I have never met another amazing lady like Anne aunty ever in my life!

Shraddha Khator

Anne Warrick… The first time I heard her name, I was a little nervous about this expert coming all the way from Canada to teach us something I had never even heard about – Bliss! But my fears were unfounded. Anne turned out to be the gentlest of teachers I had yet to encounter. Soft spoken, patient – I am sure she needed it often while working with me – and a wonderful person, she was admired by everyone who came in contact with her. I believe that the skills I gained from her made me a teacher with better understanding of the children I worked with.

Over the years she made several visits to India and she became a friend of both me and my family. I so wish I could have met Anne once in the last few years…

Rest in peace my friend and mentor.

Ranu Banerjee

I met Anne many years ago when she came to Kolkata for the first time. She had a special quality and could reach out and touch people’s lives easily. She visited IICP many times and on a couple of occasions she stayed with me, giving me a chance to know her more closely.

Aware that I was very keen to do my PhD, Anne encouraged me to apply to the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). I was lucky to not only get admission but also receive part scholarships from British Council and MMU Social Work Dept with the help of IICP. Besides giving me support and encouragement to complete my MPhil programme, Anne also helped my research work with resource material from her centre. I met her husband Ed only once but felt I got to know her loving family through her. Anne was God’s gift to mankind and I consider myself fortunate to be one of her friends.

Sujata Parekh
It was many years ago. My student Shivjyoti and I were working in the school computer room. Dr Kaul walked in with a visitor and introduced me to her. That is how I first met Anne Warrick, one of the most eminent AAC experts. I thought she would leave after a few minutes but she pulled up a chair and sat beside me. With only a few months experience of work, I had little idea about assistive technology for AAC and was scared that she would find faults with my work. Shivjyoti had difficulties with access so we developed a rudimentary programme in Basic (Windows had not come to the Indian market at that time) where he could scan and select some words to write sentences. We had drilled the keyboard to get switches – made of wood and plastic boxes – attached to the space bar and the enter key to run the programme. That day the programme behaved rather erratically, hanging every five minutes to let me down! I kept glancing at Anne to see how cross she was, but was surprised to find her smiling and encouraging. She put me at ease, encouraged me to ask naïve questions which she answered patiently, spending nearly an hour with us.

She influenced my life as a teacher who showed how AAC can work wonders, and I consider her writings, especially the book *Their Manner of Speaking* (which she wrote jointly with Dr Kaul) to be my Bible. I was lucky to attend her workshops, and learn when she did assessments. In 2010, when I submitted my paper on using indigenous assistive technology for the Ablenet Remarkable Achievement Award in the 14th ISAAC Biennial International Conference, I sought her permission to be my referee. I will never forget the kind words of inspiration and appreciation she sent me. Those words have been the most important award of my life which I will cherish always. Anne received the ‘Lifetime Achievement’ award for her contribution to AAC in the same ISAAC conference in Barcelona. I cannot express the joy and pride I felt to be present during the presentation.

Anne is someone who will always be with me as a guide, whom I cannot ever lose.

*Swati Chakrabarty*
The few days in Poland together with Anne were very precious to me because I grew to know and appreciate her as a person quite apart from admiring immensely, of course, her work in AAC. Her calmness, strength and determination made working with her, and just being with her, so immeasurably rewarding. Anne gave me this recipe for shortbread when we were in Poland. I was very impressed by the fact that she made it every year at Christmas for all her family.

This is what she sent me:

**Shortbread:**
1 lb butter, ½ lb icing sugar, 4 oz cornflour, 1 ½ lb flour (plain). Cream the butter. Add sugar and cream some more. Roll the dough into small balls. Flatten with a fork and decorate as you wish. Bake at 325° for 25 mins.

I find they sometimes take longer so I keep watching for them to turn a bit brown after 20 mins or so. Good luck. Hope they turn out OK.” They did indeed turn out very well and I will be making them again this Christmas and will think of Anne.

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It was probably 1992 or 93 when I first met Anne. That was the time when I was gradually losing the functionality of my hands and fingers. During my one-hour class that morning, Dr Kaul had entered the that Anne was from Canada and had been coming to IICP for many years; Swati di was asked to tell her about more than one hour! After that, I would find the saintly lady beside me whenever she came to our organisation, which she once referred to as her ‘second home’ in front of me.

My most unforgettable memory of Anne is during my visit to Washington DC in 2000 to attend the ISAAC conference for the first time. Together with my father, I went around the AAC technology exhibition, where I was dazzled with the amazing number of technologies that could help me. Caroline Grey and Anne took me to several counters where they tried out AAC aids which would help augment my communication. What really and you want to use, sleep over it tonight. Tomorrow we will try it out once more, discuss it and if you give proper logic, I will talk to your father.” As promised, we discussed and got Ez Keys – the software that changed my life.

Anne Warrick is one of the persons who taught me the importance of AAC. But she is the one who gave my life a new dimension by which I learnt to self realise, correct and move ahead.

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Prue Fuller
UK

Sayom Deb Mukherjee
I was greatly saddened to hear of Anne Warrick’s death. To me she is one of the truly inspiring people that I met through ISAAC. Anne was a quiet and efficiently effective person. Anne worked closely with Sudha Kaul and I know that Anne loved her visits to Kolkata and similarly, I know the visits were equally appreciated by those working there and the children and young people themselves.

I have a copy of her book Communication without Speech – Augmentative and Alternative Communication around the world. It is clear and to the point and was one of the first books that ISAAC chose to translate into languages other than English.

One of my special memories of Anne was in Vancouver in 1996 at an ISAAC conference. Part of the external programme was a visit into the forests to see some of the totem poles made by the indigenous people of North America. Afterwards in the coach, I remember someone passing her camera over to Anne and saying “I never know how to change the films in these things, could you do it for me please?” This was in the pre digital camera days. Anne, with only one hand, managed the intricate job with no fuss!

Anne was one of the first people to develop an arm of ISAAC to support people who were working in countries where AAC was little known. I took on this committee further down the line and Anne was very supportive. She wisely helped me get things into perspective and see a way forward.

Anne’s legacy will live on for a number of generations, although she herself will not be here to see it all.

Caroline Grey
Oxfordshire, UK

I first met Anne at a ‘think tank’ about non-speech communication in the early ’80s. I knew nobody at the event and felt very intimidated. Anne took me under her wing and I stayed there for 30 years! At that first meeting, Anne told me about her work with Sudha and I was hooked. Two years later, Anne connected me with the Ghandy family in Jamshedpur and from there I met Sudha and her wonderful team who have been in my life ever since.

I remember the early days of AAC in Kolkata. Anne positioning a child to select pictures on a wheelchair tray; playing and pointing to Blissymbols on a board; laughing, smiling, encouraging and all the time teaching others to do as she did. I remember well the ISAAC Conference in Kolkata. Anne sat in the front row beaming with pride as IICP hosted AAC leaders from around the world at the first AAC conference in Asia. Years later, we delighted in seeing Kolkata’s AAC users, teachers and clinicians taking their rightful place alongside the international AAC leadership.

A few months before she passed away, Anne gave me a lovely statue of Krishna, which she had received from the children of IICP on her visit. I cherish it and keep it on my desk to remind me of Anne, India and what really matters in AAC.

Anne gave a voice to so many people. However she went far beyond that. Like a good relay runner, she masterly passed on her baton to the next person so that we can continue to do her work. I believe that is Anne’s legacy to all of us.

Barbara Collier
Canada
Anne Warwick will be remembered by all of us as a wonderful advocate for AAC and for her ongoing efforts to promote AAC around the world. I met her for the first time in India at IICP. My memory of her is of someone who was great fun to be with and who was generous in sharing her deep knowledge and passion for ensuring that AAC should be available for all those who need it. My students will remember the book *Communication without Speech: Augmentative and Alternative Communication around the world* which was such a valuable resource both for those new to or experienced in the field.

The field of AAC was richer for Anne’s participation and is now poorer for the loss. Anne will be much missed but her achievements will continue to enrich the lives of those who need AAC and those who help provide it.

I met Anne around the mid ’80s for the first time at Sudha Kaul’s home, to whom she was a friend, philosopher and guide. She became a friend for my family and me too. Thereafter, we met and interacted with Anne on her several visits to IICP and Kolkata. Her gentle, caring disposition was truly infectious and whenever she came to our home, she enjoyed the *addas* (chit chat) over Bengali food and interesting anecdotes. I shall cherish those get-togethers, including the little thoughtful gifts that she always carried all the way from Toronto for Shahana, Jayabrato and me. Anne had a wonderful sense of humour and was an adventurous person. I remember the time Jayabrato and I took her around to show some of the historical and interesting places in Kolkata and how she loved it because she saw our city not as a tourist but through the eyes of its inhabitants. Once we had taken Anne in the early morning to the Lake Rowing Club to shoot for a film we were making related to her work on Bliss Symbols. The natural scenic beauty of the lake surrounding the club enchanted her. This was followed by a typical Bengali breakfast of *luchi* and *aloor torkari* at home. She would remind me of that splendid morning every time we met. I missed meeting Anne in Toronto in 2008 when I went to attend my niece’s wedding as she was on a cruise in Egypt. From time to time Putul would entrust me to translate her letters to Anne written in Bengali.

So many beautiful memories keep flooding my thoughts and they will remain with me forever. We love you and miss you Anne. Bless us and RIP, dear friend!

*Subhra Chatterjee*
For Anne... the author of the ABC of Communication... partnership at its best!

A

a is for:

AAC
Attention
Acknowledgement
Access
Arranging the
environment

Adda

N

N

Namaskar

is for:

Nutty phrases
New ideas
Nonsense rhymes

E

is for:

high Expectations
involving Everyone

Enjoyable
Experiences
Thank you Anne for all you have done for IICP and for introducing us to the magic world of AAC.

Most of these picture symbols are from the Indian Picture Symbols for Communication (IPSC) software developed by IICP. This software also allows the user to import symbols from other sites.

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