There are moments when even our best communicators can't find the right words to express the emotions that they feel pooling within them. It is a moment that they often relate to being beyond words - beyond even the simplest of expressions.

But what if everyday you had thousands upon thousands of thoughts careening about your mind and they were trapped there seemingly forever?

What if you were destined to be one of the greatest physicists of the modern era and you were struck by the debilitating effects of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis? Would you still have the passion to uncover the secrets of the Universe? Would you still become Stephen Hawking?

For many people that we work with as Speech Language Pathologists, their reality is the abyss of silence.

With this issue of the Wayne State Communicator, we announce the 1st Annual State Your Peace Fundraiser. Its purpose is simple: to provide a voice to the voiceless by means of an Alternative and Augmentive Communication device.

Our hope is that we'll benefit the life of someone in need. And maybe, just maybe, we'll find that next someone who just might change our view of the world.

- Tom Southern
Imagine for a moment that you cannot write or speak. You raise your hand to write a message only to find that your movements are so beyond your control that it is impossible to put pen to paper. Imagine that when you attempt to speak, the sounds that come out are totally foreign to you or worse yet, not sound at all but silence. What would it feel like to be completely unable to make your intentions known; to ask for a glass of water or tell someone that you love them?
or many individuals this is a reality. As students in the field of speech, language and hearing sciences, we are keenly aware of the impact verbal communication has on our lives. Many people around the world suffer from debilitating disorders, syndromes and diseases that severely restrict their ability to communicate.

Fortunately, there is technology that can give these people a voice. Augmentative, Alternative Communication (AAC) is a system of aided communication that uses words, pictures, charts and computers to allow others to hear the thoughts and feelings of those who are non-verbal. Not only does AAC allow for realistic voice output, but it can also compensate for many of the limitations that accompany mental and physical impairments such as Cerebral Palsy, Traumatic Brain Injury and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). One notable user of AAC systems is the famous physicist Steven Hawking. Hawking has lived with ALS since his early 20s and has used AAC devices mounted to his wheelchair to give lectures, write scientific papers and even author a book. AAC gives individuals with communicative impairments a chance to live and work independently, a gift that many of us take for granted. Like communicative disorders themselves, the need for AAC technology knows no racial, economic or social boundaries. People of all races, backgrounds and genders require the use of AAC devices which can allow them to live active and productive lives.

AAC has the potential to change the life of any person who is communicatively challenged. It is with that intention in mind that WSSHLA is organizing an annual fund to raise money for an individual who may not be able to afford one of these essential devices. Typically, an AAC device would be funded by the state. However, in Michigan, Medicaid denials are at an all-time high posing a funding crisis for individuals who are in desperate need. The average cost of an AAC device ranges anywhere from $2,000 - $10,000. That is why we need support in raising funds for someone who through the denial of Medicaid may not be able to receive this necessary device. Our goal is to raise a minimum of $2,000 through various WSSHLA initiatives such as Spare Change for Speech, benefit dinners, and the WSSHLA cookbook. With the help of other NSSHLA groups within the state of Michigan we wish to open the candidacy for the fund to people across the state and select one or more individuals from a wide range of applicants.

It is our hope that in providing one individual with an AAC device we can make a change in their life for the better. A chance to make jokes with friends, create and develop personal relationships, have successful and meaningful careers. Please join us in our efforts to provide a voice for someone who has been silenced. Everyone deserves a chance to be heard. Together we can make that happen, one person at a time.

By: Katie Piescic
Faculty Spotlight: Mrs. Karen O’Leary

Karen O’Leary, M.A., CCC-SLP is a Clinical Instructor, Undergraduate Advisor, and Head Start Clinic Supervisor for the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Wayne State University. In this interview, Mrs. O’Leary shares how she became interested in Speech Language Pathology, her current research project, and what she enjoys in addition to being an instructor at Wayne State University.

Where did you attend college?
Undergraduate: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Bachelor of Arts Degree, Speech Language Pathology
Graduate: Wayne State University, Detroit. Masters Degree, Speech Language Pathology

What drew you to the Speech Language Pathology profession?
Both a desire to help others and personal experiences influenced my career choice. My mother was hearing impaired and my grandfather developed aphasia after experiencing a stroke.

Who is your role model?
My father was an exceptional person and my role model. He was strong willed but always supportive towards others. My father unselfishly gave me opportunities in life that he did not have himself. For example, he valued education and wanted me to have access to learning and higher education. I attribute much of my success to him. He was a special person.

Please tell us some of the things in which you are currently involved regarding SLP
I teach courses for undergraduate and post bachelor students, I am an advisor for undergraduate students, I supervise graduate students at Head Start Centers, and right now I’m involved in an exciting clinical research project. Dr. Balog and I are exploring the impact of shared book reading in relation to the development of comprehension and inferential language skills. This research is an extension of a master’s thesis completed by a current second year graduate student, Rachel Razgunas.

You’ve been involved in many different aspects of the SLP profession.
Would you share some of your experiences with us?
I was a SLP in the health care profession for 10 years. I ran a satellite Speech Language Pathology outpatient clinic for Sinai Hospital, which is now part of the Detroit Medical Center. I transitioned from healthcare to education and have been with WSU for 18 years. I’ve enjoyed working directly with patients and assisting students in their clinical learning. I think the variety of opportunities in speech language pathology is a benefit of the profession. Another reason I like my current position is that I am able to work with students from the introductory courses through their graduate programs and see their development from several perspectives. It is gratifying to see the intellectual, clinical and personal development of students over the course of their degree programs. Being an SLP has brought me a great deal of enjoyment and has been very rewarding.

What is your favorite book?
My favorite book is Life Lessons by Elizabeth Kubler Ross. It is a valuable book with important advice on how to live your life.

What is your favorite activity outside of WSU?
I enjoy gardening as a hobby and I value spending time with family and friends. My husband and I also enjoy traveling, particularly to the Northeastern coast of the United States and to Ireland.

Where are you from originally? Are you single or married and do you have children?
I am a native Detroiter.

Continued on Page 8

“O’Leary”
Name, age, hometown. My name is Kelly Elizabeth Wright and I am 24 years old. I currently live in Windsor, Ontario but was raised in LaSalle, a smaller town bordering Windsor.

Are you married? Kids? I am not married and I do not have any children.

Undergrad? Post-bach? Was your undergraduate major? Where and when did you graduate? I am a post-bachelor student. I received my undergraduate degree in Language and Logic and Psychology in June 2006 from the University of Windsor.

When did you first hear about Audiology and Speech Language Pathology? I first heard about Audiology during the fall semester. Since I didn’t know too much about it I contacted an audiologist and asked her some questions about her career and tried to learn more about the profession. I first learned about Speech Language Pathology during my undergraduate degree. I began volunteering with different speech pathologists in a variety of settings. I was able to work with both adults and children and I found there are many facets to this job that interest me.

What movie or book character do you best identify with and why? I really can’t think of a character in a movie or book that I fully identify with. I’m pretty shy when I first meet people but it doesn’t take me long to open up and have a good time. I like spontaneity but I also tend to think about the consequences of my actions. If you can think of a character that sounds similar let me know! I guess I’m a pretty level-headed person and many movies and books tend to look at the more extreme aspects of a character.

What do you do to "getaway" from the world? One of my favorite things to do when I want to really get away from it all is travel. I have been hit by the travel bug! I find it interesting to see new places and learn about new cultures. If time or money does not permit me to travel I’m content to curl up with a good book or go down by the river for a walk or bike ride.

Favorite all-time professor or teacher? Why? I’ve had many wonderful teachers over the years and it’s hard to pick a favorite. I love teachers that are really passionate about their field. It makes me so much more interested in the material. Also a teacher that shares their own experiences with their students helps to bring the subject alive and make it more exciting.

Most irrational fear? Although it seems silly I have an irrational fear that while I’m crossing the bridge it will collapse and I’ll fall into the water. Being a Canadian student this poses a problem since I must get to school each day. So people often ask me, “Why do you take the bridge?” Well I have an irrational fear that the tunnel will spring a leak when I’m driving through. As you can see I’ve overcome this fear because I show up for class everyday.

If you could swap lives with anyone, who would that be with? Why? If I could change places with someone I would like to be Diane Sawyer of “Good Morning America.” Her job allows her to interview so many different people – actors, authors, sports figures, world leaders and everyone in between. There are many questions I would like to ask these people and the job seems fascinating. She is also able to travel all over the world and I really enjoy traveling whenever possible. I think her job has the right combination of glamour and journalism that makes it very interesting and constantly changing.

Kelly Wright is truly the definition of a Wayne State Warrior. She’s a friendly gal who’s very helpful to her peers. She’s entertaining, and always provides a laugh or a smile. A hard worker and very dependable. Her admirable personality can’t be compared which is why she’s a great part of our CSD Program...

"Peer Spotlight: Kelly Wright" Interview by Katie Miller
Fundraising

Spare Change for Speech: On February 12, WSSLHA members gathered together in the basement of Rackham to make paper mache pigs to collect spare change for the AAC project. The pigs will be toted to all undergraduate and graduate classrooms over the next few months. One of the two will always be in Dr. Daniels office where everyone is encouraged to drop off whatever spare change that they can. The pigs, lovingly named Bumpy Bob and Smooth Sam, will make an appearance at the MSHA conference.

Art in Nature Fundraiser: Kickoff was on February 20 and we are selling through March 19. Checks can be made out to WSSLHA. Delivery will be on April 2 in the basement of Rackham. If you just want to participate in the fundraiser by purchasing items, please contact Katie Miller. ax3115@wayne.edu.

Spaghetti dinner anyone? Bring your passports, we’re taking a field trip to Windsor!

Announcements

2008 Minority Student Leadership Program Call for Applications. The Minority Student Leadership Program is open to students who wish to enhance their leadership skills, interact with leaders in their professions and learn about how their association works. Now in its 10th year, this program has given over 275 students from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds insight into their leadership abilities, a better understanding of how leaders affect change within ASHA, and has empowered these students to take risks and meet their own challenges. All students are eligible to apply; however, preference will be given to students from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds that have historically been under-represented in the Association. Visit MSLP FAQ’s for more information and to download an application packet.

Register for Spring / Summer Classes. If you haven’t done so already, go to the WSU Pipeline and register for classes.

Brown Bag Lecture Series: Dr. Daniels will give a lecture about the impact of stuttering on school performance on Thursday March 6 at 12:30pm in 2339 FAB inside the Humanities Center. The talk is sponsored by the Working Group on Science and Society.
Walk For Warmth Success At Southland Mall

Social

Redwings Social:
On Sunday March 30, we will be cheering on the Wings as they take on the Nashville Predators at the Joe. All tickets to WSSLHA have been allocated, but there is still time to contact the box office and get tickets near the group if you are interested.

Community Service

1st Year Graduate Students Alexis Mimikos, Andrea Krause, Carrie Hodrosky, Emily Paul, Jaime Jaffee, Yolanda Williams, Dr. Balog and her beautiful baby Sydney participated in Wayne-Metro’s Walk for Warmth. Bill Spencer from Channel 7 News led the way through Southland Mall in Taylor the morning of March 1st. The preliminary online donations reached a staggering $1,990.00. Out of all the participants, our own Carrie Hodrosky placed third in online donations. We were all very excited to be a part of the event and wanted to thank everyone for their support. You can still donate online to help those living in Wayne County who need assistance in emergency utility relief at www.firstgiving.com/waynemetro.

The PB/UG’s have also scheduled April 11 to volunteer for the Capuchin organization. We will be volunteering our time in a separate facility than the kitchen itself; a program that will have us packaging food baskets, separating clothes and assisting families who come in. They can accommodate up to 20 volunteers for that time slot so we can take first come, first serve. We need a final head count one week before our date, so we need to know by April 4th.

Interested individuals can contact Jennifer Coates directly at jennjenn5646@yahoo.com.

Andrea Krause, Carrie Hodrosky, Emily Paul, and Alexis Mimikos
More Fundraising

Send in your recipes!!! We are putting together a cookbook with all types of recipes as a fundraiser for WSSLHA. E-mail your favorite appetizers, salads, main courses, and desserts to Katie Miller-ax3115@wayne.edu. Please include an original recipe with title of the dish, your name, ingredients, and directions. The cost of the cookbooks will be announced once we have all of the recipes.

We are looking to get at least 100, so please e-mail them as soon as possible. Deadline for recipes is Tuesday, March 18th.

“O’Leary” Continued

My husband John and I have been married for 23 years. We have a wonderful son named Brendan who is a freshman at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania.

If you could choose another profession other than Speech Language Pathology, what would it be? I would be a preschool or Kindergarten teacher. I enjoy working with this age group and I have a professional interest in pre-literate development in children.

Finally, do you have any advice to students? It is important to keep a balanced perspective in school and life. I know that students are focused on grades, and while grades are very important, people need to remember that attitudes matter also. An individual’s attitude, character, and tolerance help achieve a balanced perspective which is necessary for effective learning. This is particularly important because as SLPs our focus is on human services and helping others. We need to be able to accept and learn from our own errors before we can help others who struggle with their communication.