

# FYI Newsletter March 30, 2009

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**MOSAIC DIVERSITY FILM FESTIVAL:** The City of Bloomington Community and Family Resources Department invites the public to attend the 2009 MOSAIC Diversity Film Festival. This year's festival will take place on two Saturdays, April 4 and April 11. The film festival helps Diversity Theatre celebrate its 25th anniversary.

MOSAIC consists of various short films for adults and children addressing the issues of disability, aging, race, and ethnicity. Films will be shown continuously starting at 10:00 a.m. through 2:00 p.m. inside City Hall, 401 North Morton Street. The April 4 and April 11 events at City Hall are free and open to the public. For a complete list of films with descriptions and times, visit <http://www.bloomington.in.gov/cfrd>.

Also on April 4 at 8:00 p.m., there will be a special showing of the feature film *The Cats of Mirikitani* at the Cinemat. There is a \$3.00 admission charge at this venue only. Diversity Theatre exists to increase awareness of discrimination and inequity in race, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, aging, and homelessness. The company dispels myths about members of minority groups, promotes full participation in society, and serves as a catalyst for change. Diversity Theatre was founded in 1984 by several individuals with disabilities who wanted to use the medium of theatre to educate about disability issues. Funds are generated by the company through grants, donations, and performance fees.

Sponsors of MOSAIC include the City of Bloomington, Asian Culture Center, Latino Cultural Center, the Indiana University Office of Multicultural Initiatives, Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center Library, Commission on Multicultural Understanding, Black Film Center/Archive, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Janice Wiggins, GLBT Services, Ross Jennings, Gerald and Audrey Marker, Bloomington Muslims for Peace and Justice, and the Indiana Office of Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs. For more information about Diversity Theatre and MOSAIC, contact Artistic Director Audrey Heller at (812) 336-3198 or City of Bloomington Special Projects Coordinator Craig Brenner at (812) 349-3471.

**CHAMPION YOUR FUTURE CONFERENCE:** The Arc of Indiana and Families United for Support and Encouragement (FUSE) will host a one-day conference, on Saturday, April 25, 2009 at Stonybrook Middle School, Indianapolis, designed for middle and high school students with disabilities and their families focusing on life planning after school.

There will be workshops designed just for parents and workshops with a student focus. Exhibitors will provide information and resources for students and families as well. Nationally known Gold Medalist and Author Mike Schlappi will be the featured speaker. Schlappi dreamed of a career in sports. A gunshot wound to the chest challenged his dreams. He would never walk again. After months of physical therapy, he began playing basketball from his wheelchair and went on to become a standout athlete. Mike Schlappi's thought-provoking presentation challenges people of all ages to realize that despite difficult circumstances, you can take responsibility and be empowered.

Registration fee is \$15.00 per person, but no more than \$60.00 per family and includes a box lunch. Please pre-register before April 17, 2009. For more information, contact the Arc of Indiana at (317) 977-2375 or 1-800-382-9100 or FUSE at (317) 462-9064 or visit <http://www.arcind.org> or <http://www.fuse.org>. This conference is sponsored by the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, the Indiana Institute, IN\*SOURCE, and R.A.I.S.E.

**NEW HOPE IN INDIANA FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES AND LITTLE OR NO SPEECH:** Research and training in the fields of severe disabilities and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) were recently strengthened by the appointment of Erna Alant to the Otting Endowed Chair in Special Education at Indiana University. Dr. Alant, who is currently President-Elect of the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC), took up her position within IU's School of Education in January 2009. She is due to take over the reins of ISAAC in 2011-2012.

From the outset Erna Alant has expressed a strong interest in collaborating closely with disability stakeholders, in particular those people who have little or no speech and their families, special educators, therapists, and academic colleagues, to strengthen research and training in AAC and severe disabilities. Her commitment to augmentative and alternative communication, which aims to provide those who have little or no speech with supplemental ways of communicating and expressing themselves, goes back more than 20 years during which time she has worked collaboratively to ensure that communication for all becomes a reality.

Dr. Alant, who received her Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. in the field of Speech-Language Pathology from the University of Pretoria in South Africa, joined the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg in 1978 from where she moved to Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal, to work in the school context. In 1984 she was appointed to the University of Pretoria as a Clinical Tutor and Lecturer and later as a Professor in Communication Pathology.

In 1990, she founded the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (CAAC), which even today remains as the only graduate training and research facility in its field on the African continent. In 1995, the CAAC received the Education Africa Presidential Award from Nelson Mandela for its work in special education. Three years later, Dr. Alant received the Rolex Award for Enterprise for the CAAC project, Communication for Life.

Since then, the CAAC has received numerous other national and international awards in recognition of its impact within the African continent and beyond. In 2008, Dr. Alant also received an award from the American Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in recognition of her international contribution to the field.

Over the past 18 years, Erna Alant's research endeavors have focused largely on the development of appropriate communication systems for people who have no or little speech who are living within poverty contexts. One of the outcomes of this research was a book co-edited with Dr. Lyle Lloyd of Purdue University, *AAC and Severe Disability: Beyond Poverty*, published by Whurr Publishers in 2005. This was the first book internationally to focus on poverty and AAC intervention. In coming to Indiana University, Alant's dream is to work with others to ensure that Indiana becomes one of the front-runner states in AAC intervention and research in the U.S. The Indiana Institute extends a warm welcome to Dr. Alant. She may be reached via e-mail at [éalant@indiana.edu](mailto:éalant@indiana.edu).

**INDIANA INSTITUTE'S GILBRIDE FEATURED IN ARCLIGHT MAGAZINE:** The Indiana Institute's Margaret Gilbride, Research Associate for the Center on Community Living and Careers, coauthored an article entitled *Giving Grief Its Due: When People with Intellectual Disabilities Mourn* in *ARCLIGHT Magazine*, published by the Arc of Rockland, located in Congers, New York.

Gilbride's contribution focuses on the need for professionals and families to understand the unique needs of people with disabilities in processing their experiences of loss and grief. Coauthors include Mark Markell, Professor in the Department of Special Education, St. Cloud University in Minnesota and Bill Gaventa, Director of Community and

Congregational Supports, Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities in New Jersey.

Visit <http://www.rocklandarc.org/index.php> for more information on the Arc of Rockland and ARCLIGHT Magazine.

LIBRARY CORNER: The following new materials may be borrowed by Indiana residents from the Center for Disability Information and Referral at the Institute. To check out materials, contact the library at 1-800-437-7924, send e-mail to [cedir@indiana.edu](mailto:cedir@indiana.edu), or visit us at 2853 East Tenth Street in Bloomington.

Cohen, M. (2009). A guide to special education advocacy: What parents, clinicians and advocates need to know. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Morgan, P. L. (2009). Parenting an adult with disabilities or special needs: Everything you need to know to plan for and protect your child's future. New York: AMACOM.

Radin, L. & Radin, G. (2008). What if it' not Alzheimer's?: A caregiver's guide to dementia. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

- See more at: <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pagelD=40&newsId=146&newsType=2#sthash.z8WIs7ZJ.dpuf>