FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**AAC Core Boards installed in Northville District Library for accessible communication options**

Northville, MI: Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) includes all of the ways someone can communicate beyond talking. Performed daily by everyone, albeit unconsciously or unintentionally and without assistive technology, it is also used within the nonverbal community when children and adults with severe speech or language impairments are not able to talk. The many forms of AAC include: gesturing, facial expressions, writing, drawing, or spelling words by pointing to letters; using an app or software on a tablet, phone or computer; utilizing software to speak electronically; and pointing to printed pictures or written words.

Research conducted by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association has determined that AAC benefits people of all ages, and can be used early in life as there are “no thinking skills, test scores, or other milestones that you need to reach before AAC can help.” One AAC format that will be installed in the Northville District Library (NDL) in January 2022 is the Core Vocabulary Board, also referred to as a Core Board. Considered low-tech AAC, Core Boards present specific core vocabulary for a given activity, depending on the location, situation and outcomes intended. This means they feature a small collection of words that make up the majority of what is communicated daily in that particular setting.

NDL has been committed to creating a more inclusive environment. We have a history of offering a range of formats and resources, which include large print books, a magnifying machine located on the lower level of the library, audiobooks, ESL and Language Learning materials, Graphic Novels, Read-Alongs and Easy Readers. NDL also offers downloadable eBook services, Libby by Overdrive and Hoopla Digital, with the option to use Open Dyslexic font while reading. Lastly, a book collection for readers with dyslexia is currently in the works. The addition of the Core Board is meant to provide a voice for anyone to use. Handheld core boards will be available at all public service desks with a larger core board installed near the main stairwell.

This project was prompted by Cathrine Trautman, one of NDL’s Youth Services Librarians, who has a personal motivation; her niece is nonverbal. This inspired Cathrine to collaborate with two local speech pathologists, Susan Oleson and Lia Gargaro. NDL wants anyone in the community that is neurodivergent and/or non-verbal to feel worthy and included. “This is a way to take part in normalizing different modes of communication while being a proactive and positive influence; we hope that the Core Boards inspire curiosity and conversation for teachable moments, in addition to being a helpful tool,” Cathrine stated.

The library wishes to thank the Friends of the Northville District Library and Community Financial Credit Union for their generous contributions. NDL is also grateful to Susan Oleson and Lia Gargaro, Wayne RESA for the Core Board standards, and the Wayne County Speech and Language Association.

For more information, visit Northville District Library on Facebook here: facebook.com/northvillelibrary, visit our website at: [northvillelibrary.org,](https://northvillelibrary.org/?page_id=22254) or telephone the library at 248-349-3020. For questions regarding the development of the Core Vocabulary Boards for NDL, Cathrine Trautman can be reached directly by email at: ctrautman@northvillelibrary.org.

**Local Community Resources**

* Blossom Children’s Center, Novi: https://blossomchildrenscenter.com/
* Braille and Talking Book Library at the Library of Michigan, Lansing: <https://www.michigan.gov/leo/0,5863,7-336-94422_28313_54234---,00.html>
* Communication is Key, Plymouth: https://www.communicationiskey.org/
* Cooke School, Northville: https://cooke.northvilleschools.org/
* Living and Learning Enrichment Center, Northville: <https://www.livingandlearningcenter.org/>
* Northville Schools’ Specials Services Department, Northville: https://www.northvilleschools.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\_ID=350722&type=d&pREC\_ID=760793v
* Oakland County Children’s Village, Pontiac: https://www.oakgov.com/village/Pages/default.aspx
* Oakland County Talking Books, Rochester hills: http://otbs.rhpl.org/
* Oakland Literacy Council, Bloomfield Township: https://www.oaklandliteracy.com/
* The Reading Clinic at Oakland University, Auburn Hills: <https://oakland.edu/rla/programs-for-children/reading-clinics/>
* St. Joseph Mercy Ann Arbor Hospital, Ypsilanti: https://www.stjoeshealth.org/location/st-joseph-mercy-ann-arbor-hospital
* St. Mary Mercy Livonia Hospital, Livonia: <https://www.stjoeshealth.org/location/st-mary-mercy-livonia-hospital>
* UM Northville Health Center, Northville: https://www.uofmhealth.org/our-locations/northville/pediatric-speech-therapy
* Wayne County Speech and Language Association, Livonia: https://www.wcsla.com/
* Wayne RESA, Wayne: <https://www.resa.net/>