

## **Jeff's Speech - October 4, 2007**

Thank-you Ashleigh. And thank-you to Minister Richmond, Minister Taylor, Simon Cox, and Melinda Rundle.

In conclusion, I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to the many people in this room that helped make Communication Assistance for Young Adults a reality. In the beginning many of us in this room gathered to see what we could do to address the needs of young adults with severe communication disabilities; young adults we had come to know through their childhood years in the educational and health systems; young adults we knew could communicate and lead productive lives, if only they had the all important tool of communication.

I recall meetings with my colleagues at ISAAC-Canada, at SET- BC, at Technology for Independent Living, at GF Strong Rehab Centre, at Sunny Hill Health Centre, at the offices our local device vendors, and many others in the education and health community. We spent many hours planning how to address this challenge faced by these young adults. We then presented our thoughts and ideas to the government of BC, and as my ISAAC colleague Melinda Rundle stated – you listened!

In 2005 we began CAYA and began delivering devices and services to enable young adults across BC to continue communicating, enabling them to organize and plan their new lives as adults, to participate in their homes, and communities. Freedom of speech and the freedom to speak are highly prized rights in our democratic society. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the government of BC for recognizing the importance of communication in our lives. With the funding provided today, CAYA along with our clients and our community partners, will work to ensure that British Columbians keep talking and communicating, no matter what their disability.

Thank-you.