



# THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION

A Nonprofit Organization

FALL 2019

Since 1947... Helping Those Who Stutter

VIRTUAL LEARNING

# GOES GLOBAL








VIRTUAL LEARNING

# GOES GLOBAL

"Without leaving the house, I am able to have access to updated knowledge and experiences of experts with different professional backgrounds. **It is a great benefit for people like me**, who over the years were struggling to reach the latest research findings and ideas about currently used therapy approaches."

- Kasia Węsierska, Poland





The all-new Virtual Learning by Stuttering Foundation program rolled out this year with great success! This online series of interactive workshops provides a variety of free monthly offerings for speech-language pathologists, parents, and individuals who stutter.

The series ranges from clinical training opportunities, to parent education, to a platform for people who stutter of all ages to share their stories. Each session is moderated by many of the world's leading clinicians, researchers, and self-help advocates — bringing learning and collaboration to learners across the globe.

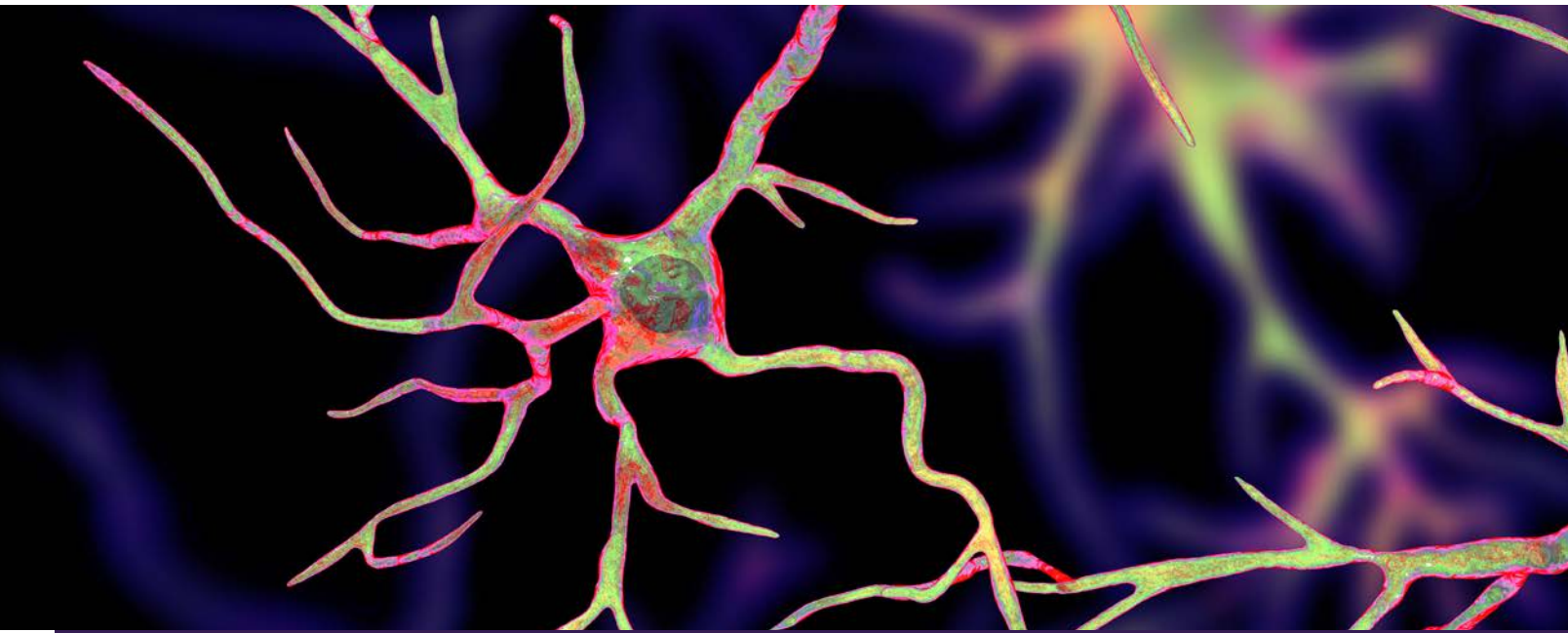
Since starting the program, attendance has streamed in from nearly 30 different countries. "I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the Stuttering Foundation Virtual Learning events," remarked Voon Pang of New Zealand. "The presentations by highly esteemed speakers have allowed me to stay up-to-date with current ways of working and supporting people who stutter. The mix of topics targeted at different audience members is unique in that it reminds me that as an SLP there is always more to what we do than just focusing on 'speech' or 'fluency.'"

Moderators are excited about this unique opportunity and what it means for the stuttering community. "Thanks to the Stuttering Foundation's Virtual Learning series, parents of students who stutter had the opportunity to educate other parents, speech-language pathologists, and one another about how best to support their children as they engage the world and become their own advocates and experts about communication and stuttering," said Ellen M. Kelly, PhD, CCC-SLP, BCS-F. "The platform provides an interactive forum for discussion of direct application of research findings, clinical methods, and consumers' experiences (e.g., parents) to improved understanding of stuttering and practical help for those who stutter."

The Stuttering Foundation team is thrilled to continue expanding and improving this innovative platform. With Virtual Learning, key information on the complexities of stuttering is easily accessible for those who need it most. Stay tuned for what's coming next!

## **VL LEARNERS: 29 COUNTRIES**

Chile  
US  
Brazil  
Canada  
Pakistan  
India  
Peru  
Singapore  
Puerto Rico  
Sri Lanka  
Mexico  
Australia  
Argentina  
New Zealand  
Thailand  
Lithuania  
Romania  
Italy  
Greece  
Australia  
Jordan  
Poland  
Israel  
Netherlands  
Belgium  
Portugal  
Lebanon  
Suriname  
Turkey  
Croatia



## ASTROCYTES: NEW TARGETS FOR STUTTERING THERAPIES?

### NIH Study In Mice Identifies Type Of Brain Cell Involved In Stuttering

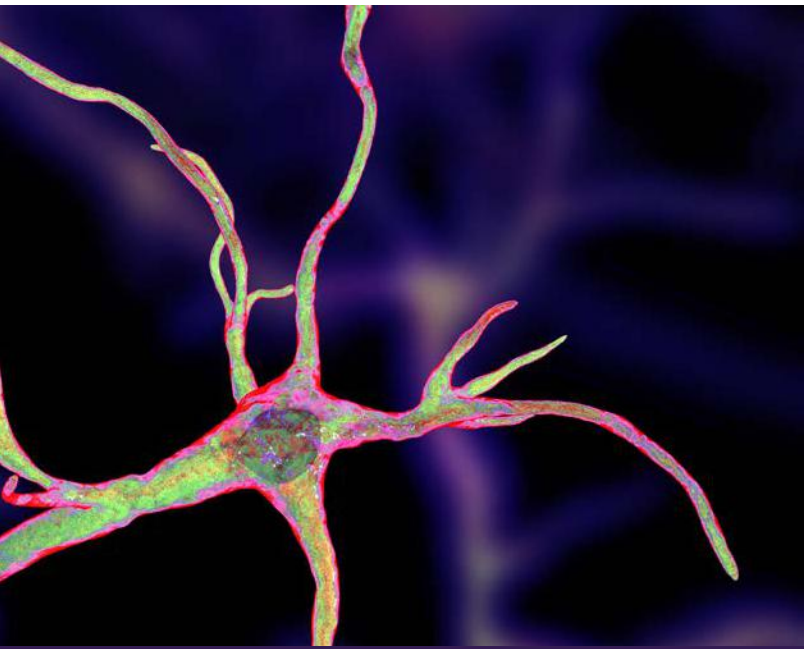
Researchers believe that stuttering – a potentially lifelong and debilitating speech disorder – stems from problems with the circuits in the brain that control speech, but precisely how and where these problems occur is unknown. Now, using a mouse model of stuttering, scientists report that a loss of cells in the brain called astrocytes are associated with stuttering. The mice had been engineered with a human gene mutation previously linked to stuttering. The new study, which appeared online on August 12, 2019 in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, offers insights into the neurological deficits associated with stuttering.

In the mouse study, the loss of astrocytes, a supporting cell in the brain, was most prominent in the corpus callosum, a part of the brain that bridges the two hemispheres. Some previous imaging studies of people with persistent developmental stuttering have revealed structural and functional problems in the same brain region. The study was led by Dennis Drayna, Ph.D., of the Section on Genetics of Communication Disorders,

at the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Researchers at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis and from NIH's National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering, and National Institute of Mental Health collaborated on the research.

Stuttering is characterized by pauses and repeated or prolonged sounds, syllables or words, which disrupt the normal flow of speech. People who stutter know what they want to say, but they have trouble saying it. The condition is most commonly seen in young children, who typically outgrow the problem. However, for one in four such children, the condition persists as a lifelong communication problem. It has been estimated that as many as 1 percent of adults in the United States are affected by the disorder.





**"THERE HAVE BEEN DOZENS OF BRAIN  
IMAGING STUDIES INVOLVING PEOPLE WHO  
STUTTER, BUT THOSE RESULTS CAN ONLY TAKE  
US SO FAR..." - DR. DENNIS DRAYNA**

"Identifying the genetic and cellular changes that underlie stuttering has helped researchers and others realize that persistent stuttering is a brain disorder," said Andrew Griffith, M.D., Ph.D., NIDCD scientific director. "Perhaps even more importantly, understanding the cells that are involved opens opportunities for novel interventions for stuttering – and possibly other speech disorders."

Earlier research by Drayna and colleagues to identify genes associated with stuttering laid the foundation for the new findings. By studying families from around the world in which stuttering affects several members, Drayna's research team identified the first of several genes linked to the condition in 2010.

"There have been dozens of brain imaging studies involving people who stutter, but those results can only take us so far," said Drayna. "By taking a genetic approach, we have been able to begin to decipher the neuropathology of stuttering, first at the molecular level by identifying genetic mutations, and now at the cellular level." All of the stuttering genes Drayna's team has

identified over the past decade are involved in intracellular trafficking, the process that cells use to move proteins and other components to their correct locations within the cell. Defects in cellular trafficking have been linked to other neurological disorders, such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), Parkinson's disease, and Alzheimer's disease, suggesting that certain nerve cell pathways are particularly sensitive to impairment of this process. The research does not indicate, however, that persistent stuttering is an early indicator of these other disorders.

In the current study, Drayna and his team set out to identify changes in the brain brought on by the mutations in one of the genes previously linked to stuttering. The scientists created a mouse model of stuttering by engineering a human stuttering mutation in a gene called GNPTAB into mice. The mice had long pauses in their stream of vocalizations, similar to those found in people with the same GNPTAB mutation. Like people who stutter, the mice were normal in all other ways, reinforcing earlier research that suggests that the mice can serve as a valid animal model for important features of this disorder.

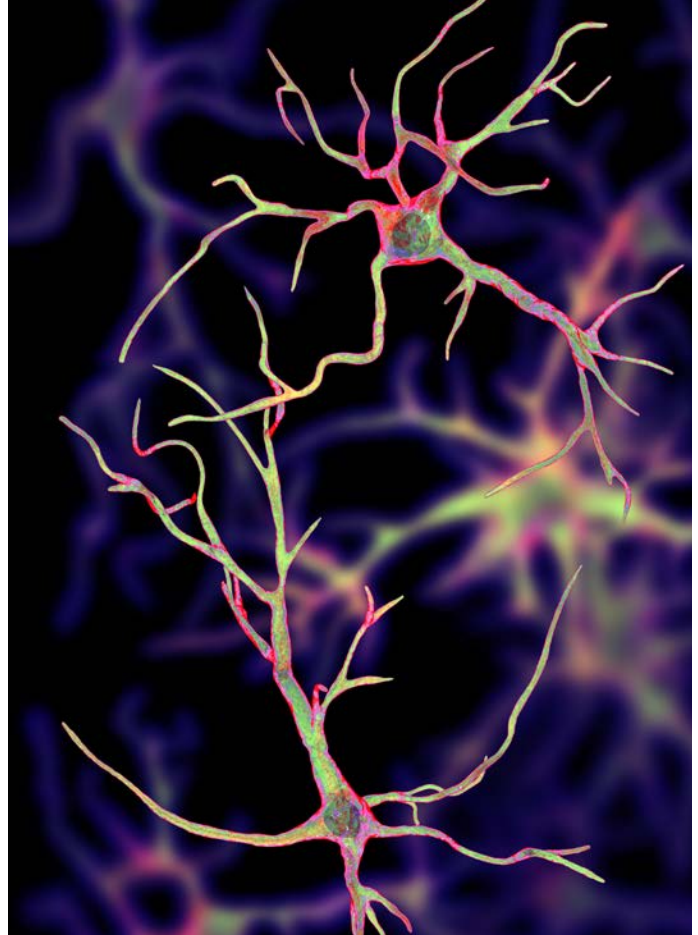
The investigators next examined brain tissue from the mice and found a decrease in astrocytes, but not other cell types, in the mice with the genetic mutation compared to mice without the mutation. Astrocytes play a critical role in supporting nerve cells by carrying out a wide range of functions, such as supplying them with oxygen and nutrients and providing structural support. The loss of astrocytes was more pronounced in the corpus callosum of the mutant mice. In addition, using advanced magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) methods, the researchers detected reduced local volume of the corpus callosum in the mutant mice despite normal diffusion tensor MRI values, providing further support for a defect in this brain region.

Containing as many as 200 million nerve fibers, the corpus callosum enables communication between the brain's left and right hemispheres, helping to integrate signals for processes that involve both hemispheres, such as physical coordination and use of language.

Follow-up experiments in which the GNPTAB human stuttering mutation was introduced into individual brain cell types—rather than the entire mouse—confirmed that the vocalization defect is specific to astrocytes. The mice did not have the stuttering-like vocalizations when the mutation was engineered into other types of brain cells.

If future research confirms that stuttering in people with GNPTAB mutations derives from a loss of astrocytes in the brain, these findings could open the door to new therapeutic strategies for some people with persistent developmental stuttering by targeting associated molecular pathways and cells.

This press release describes a basic research finding. Basic research increases our understanding of human behavior and biology, which is foundational to advancing new and better ways to prevent, diagnose, and treat disease. Science is an unpredictable and incremental process — each research advance builds on past discoveries, often in unexpected ways. Most clinical advances would not be possible without the knowledge of fundamental basic research.



This research was supported by the Intramural Research Program at the National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (Z1A-000046-18). The NIH's National Institute of Mental Health and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute also contributed support.

About the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD): The NIDCD supports and conducts research and research training on the normal and disordered processes of hearing, balance, taste, smell, voice, speech, and language and provides health information, based upon scientific discovery, to the public.

About the National Institutes of Health (NIH): NIH, the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov).

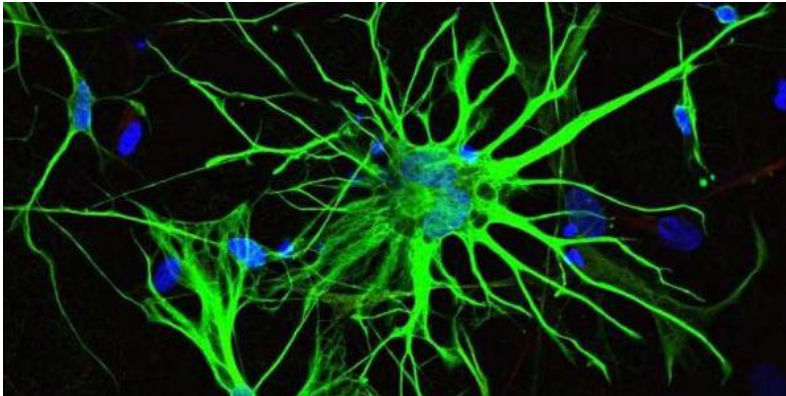


Here's what some of our more than **269,000 friends** are talking about in our Facebook community

Stuttering Foundation @stutteringhelp



Stuttering Foundation



**NIH study in mice identifies type of brain cell involved in stuttering** A fantastic discovery in a recent National Institutes of Health (NIH) study has identified the type of brain cell involved in #stuttering. Led by Dennis Drayna, Ph.D., of the Section on Genetics of Communication Disorders, at the NIDCD, this discovery may lead to better treatments and new therapies.



**Tesfa:** If i am alone i can speak well!!! So, how it can be related to brain cells? I'm confused.



**Stuttering Foundation:** It's a question of how fast the connection is between the 2 sides of the brain. The same would be true for walking the tightrope in the air. When under stress, the brain doesn't always work as efficiently yet circus performers can do it. TV announcers are more fluent than those of us who sometimes stutter. Speaking is the most complex thing we do!



**Tanya:** Of mice and men, noted, so what is the treatment?



**Stuttering Foundation:** Once genes have been identified it is easier for pharmaceutical companies to identify what drugs might affect them.



**Rosemary:** I appreciate the comparison with other neurological disorders like Parkinsons, ALS, Alzheimers, and please include autism. Interesting that the area linking the two halves of the brain, the corpus callosum seems to be involved. This is a well written article that does not send us on a wild goose chase. The relief of knowing these are not behavioral disorders is a great relief. This parallels the 2013 work of Temple Grandin and Richard Panek, "The Autistic Brain" . We criticize persons for behavior over which they have no control. When the general public is 'cured' of that bullying, great progress will have been made, and the bullies can go back under their rocks.



**Stuttering Foundation:** Thank you for your thoughtful comments!



Stuttering Foundation



**Suffering from a stutter? Local kid raises awareness about communication disorder** 8-year-old Jack Cummings of San Antonio is making a BIG difference for kids who #stutter. He and his dad formed a group to spread awareness and help families in their community.t



**Monica:** Way to go Jack!!! As an SLP who works with children and adults who stutter, I love seeing kids advocate for themselves!!!



Stuttering Foundation



**Remembering Alan Rabinowitz** One year after his passing, we remember Alan Rabinowitz for his conservation work with Panthera and as a true inspiration to the stuttering community.



**Governors:** I saw a video of him talking about how pumas and jaguars did not scare him, but his stuttering did as a young boy. Alan had such a powerful message!

*\*some comments have been edited for content, length, and/or grammar; profile photos have been changed.*



# 2019 GALA

MAY 16, 2019 . THE LOTOS CLUB, NEW YORK CITY







To mark Stuttering Awareness Week (May 13-19), the Stuttering Foundation held its annual gala at the Lotos Club in New York City featuring guest speaker Dr. Dennis Drayna, Chief, Laboratory of Communication Disorders and Chief, Section on Genetics of Communication Disorders of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Drayna updated attendees from the stuttering community about recent research in the fields of genetics and neuroscience of Stuttering.

“Basic biomedical research can be painstaking and unpredictable,” said Dr. Drayna. “Understanding the basic biological mechanisms that underlie a disorder not only tells us about that disorder, but it allows us to potentially use developments that come from studies of other disorders that arise due to similar mechanisms. This can produce important, unexpected synergies with research on other disorders – A rising tide floats all boats!”

During his keynote address, Dr. Drayna gave an overview of his stuttering genetics research, including the genes they had found, the discovery of what the products of those genes do, and how this information has led to an understanding of underlying defects in stuttering. In addition, he discussed research published by other scientists showing how pharmacological approaches to this new type of neurological disease mechanism can lead to small molecule agents that reverse such defects in other neurologic disorders.

He also discussed creation of a “mouse model” of stuttering and how it has allowed researchers to integrate molecular findings with systems neuroscience approaches to understand stuttering at a cellular and brain connectivity scale.

Dr. Drayna concluded that research is starting to reveal the deficits present in stuttering at the molecular level, stating this knowledge is a prerequisite for, and can now allow for, development of potential new therapeutics for stuttering that, for the first time, would be based on a known cause of stuttering.

“Dr. Drayna, who as a private citizen, serves on the Stuttering Foundation’s Board in addition to his work at NIH, reminds us all that there is ongoing, strident research into the causes and treatment of stuttering,” said Stuttering Foundation president Jane Fraser.

# ANOTHER YEAR OF GOLFING AND GENEROSITY FROM OUR FRIENDS AT SHELBY RAILROAD



Kirk and John Tarver and their Memphis-based Shelby Railroad Services Inc., raised more than \$10,000 for the Memphis-based Stuttering Foundation. Shelby Railroad held their annual fund-raising golf outing and dinner on Sept. 18 at Wedgewood Golf Club, in Olive Branch, Mississippi.

"The Tarver Family and Shelby Railroad Services have demonstrated an unbelievable commitment to helping others and giving back to their community," said Donna White of the nonprofit Stuttering Foundation.

Jane Fraser, president of the Stuttering Foundation, added, "Year after year, we are extremely grateful to Shelby Railroad and the Tarver Family for their ongoing kindness to the Stuttering Foundation. Their incredible gift of \$10,400 along with additional gifts of \$400 from participating attendees will help us to serve the stuttering community locally and worldwide."

The annual golf outing honors Ruth McGuinness Tarver – the late mother of company president and founder John Tarver. Ruth stuttered from the time she was a young child.

"She was a wonderful lady," Shelby Railroad Vice President Kirk Tarver said of his grandmother. "Her stuttering never mattered much to us, but for her it was a source of great embarrassment. She felt shame, humiliation and defeat her whole life. Eighty years ago, there wasn't any real help for people with speech issues."

The Stuttering Foundation closed its office early and the staff joined in the celebration.





# DEAR SFA:

KIDS' LETTERS TO THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION



## SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A ROBOT

My name is Isaac and I am seven years old. So far, I've struggled with stuttering. I mostly stutter more when I mess around, don't do that. What we need to do is keep practicing on letting go of stuttering. **If you don't practice, it won't work.** You need to know when you stutter so that you know how to fix it. And remember, always keep talking!

Isaac, 7, St. Paul, MN

We LOVE to read your stories, advice, and strategies!

Please mail letters, *original\* color artwork* and/or photos to:

**The Stuttering Foundation**  
P.O. Box 11749,  
Memphis, TN  
38111-0749

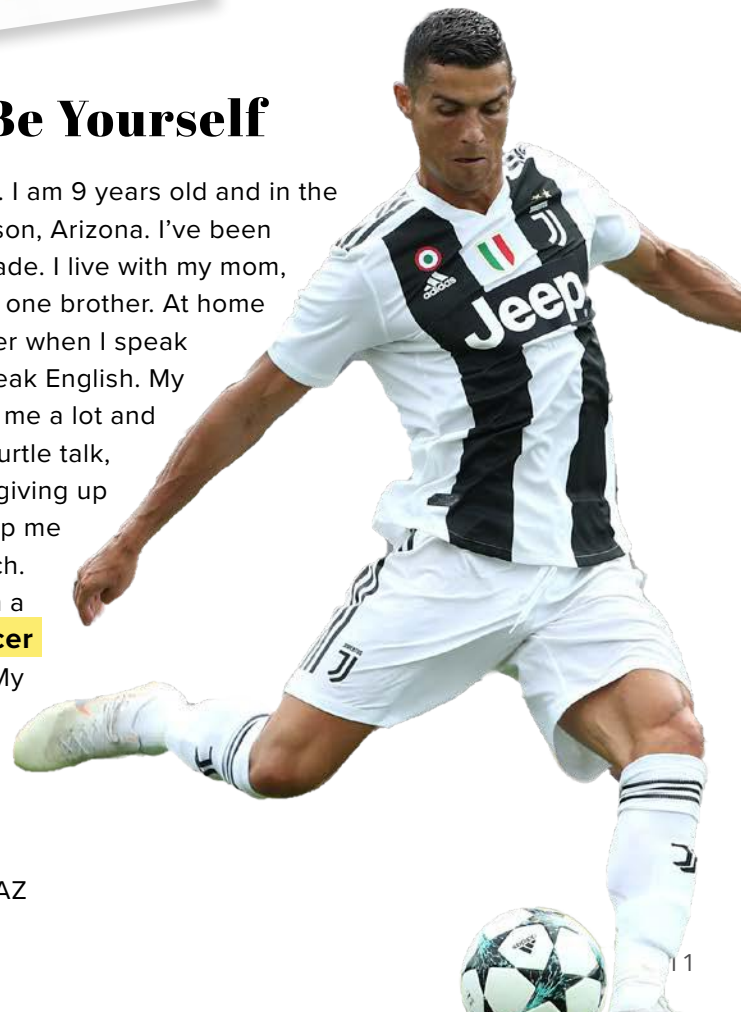
Letters and high resolution photo files can be emailed to [info@stutteringhelp.org](mailto:info@stutteringhelp.org)

*We attempt to respond to each child personally; please be sure to include adult SLP or parent contact information. \*Please mail all original artwork submissions. Photocopies, scans and faxes of artwork cannot be accepted. Photos can be mailed, digital photos can be sent via email.*

## Just Be Yourself

My Name is Abdullahi. I am 9 years old and in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I live in Tucson, Arizona. I've been stuttering since 1st grade. I live with my mom, dad, three sisters and one brother. At home I speak Somali. I stutter when I speak Somali and when I speak English. My speech teachers help me a lot and they are nice to me. Turtle talk, breathing, and never giving up are strategies that help me to have smooth speech. I play soccer and I run a lot. **My favorite soccer player is Ronaldo.** My advice to you is to be yourself and never worry about people that make fun of you.

Abdullahi, 9, Tucson, AZ



## The Funny Guy That Uses His Strategies

My name is Jaden. I am 9 years old. I am in the 3rd grade. I like watching YouTube. My birthday is November 16.

What helped me with my stuttering, is saying it in my head. My favorite strategy is pausing. The reason I like pausing is because I stop on a word and then say it fluently.

Jaden, 9  
Milwaukee, WI

Hello, my name is Annabel, I am 8 years old. I go to Summit Street School when I start I feel like I can't stop stuttering. I use two strategies like I start over My sentences and I breathe and believe that I can stop stuttering.

Annabel, 8  
Essex Junction, VT



**HI, MY NAME IS JOHNNY.** My favorite sport is baseball. My favorite baseball team are the Yankees. My speech therapist is nice. She taught me how to breathe in and out and we do meditation too! I like using pull outs sometimes.

Johnny, 7, Spring Valley, NY

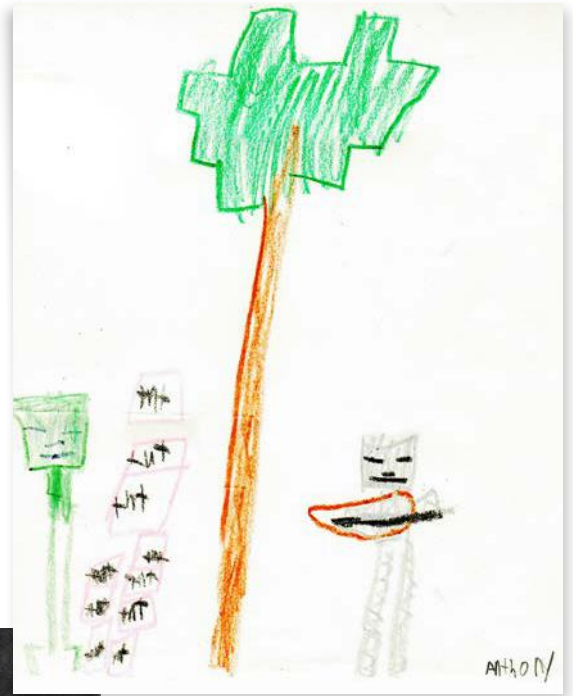
My name is Isabella. I am 9 and I am going into 5th grade. **When I stutter I feel like a bird that tried to fly but can't.** But I try it again and when I do it smooth the next time I feel like I learned how to fly. So even if I stutter, I never give up.

Isabella, 9, Greenfield, WI

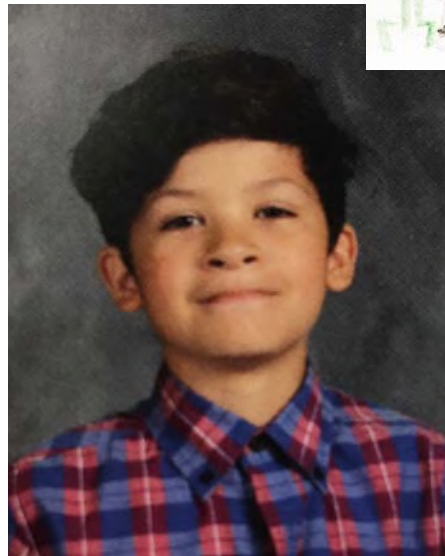


My name is Anthony. Sometimes I stutter, but when I do stutter I take a deep breath and think about what I'm going to say. It doesn't really bother me, but if it does, which is only once in a while, I'll just start over. **And if it bothers you when you stutter, just take a deep breath and start over.** Because then you can think about what makes sense. Sometimes it doesn't because you go into a fff-ffff-fff or hhhhh or get stuck on a letter of the alphabet.

Anthony, 7, Lumberton, NJ



**Maxim, Federal Way, WA**



**Hi, my name is Jessen.**

I am eleven years old. I am in 5th grade in Sioux City, IA. I started stuttering when I was like 5 years old. Stuttering stinks!

I like to play soccer but I don't get many chances to play it. My family makes me do a lot of chores. I don't like to do the chores, but it teaches

responsibilities for me when I am older and on my own. Something I like about my family is we make delicious food.

My best skill to help with my stuttering is tapping with my finger. So, instead of moving my body, I can just tap my finger. "Stop and start over" is another technique that helps me not stutter. Goals for me are to stop stuttering.

I am interested in learning about biology. If I study biology then I could be an Internist, a Doctor, or a Physician's Assistant. This career would be interesting to learn how the body works. If I couldn't get that type of job, I'd like to work with computer coding.

I am in a pretty good chill state now. I don't have much to worry about.

Jessen, 11, Sioux City, IA

Hi,

My name is Ms. Caudill. I am a speech teacher at Arcado Elementary School in Lilburn, GA. I love using speech strategies to help me communicate! I also love teaching and sharing these strategies with my speech students!



Ms. Caudill, SLP, Lilburn, GA



Hi, my name is Aspyn. I like to listen to music and draw. I like to go on vacations. In the summers, we go to see my aunt in Las Vegas.

### Sometimes my speech gets stuck in my voice box

and my mouth is open, but nothing comes out. I have learned to use stretchy speech, bumpy speech, and to stop and think.

I'm proud of who I am and who I want to be. I want everyone to be proud of who they are, not just their eyes, or stomachs, or mouth, but being free to be who they want to be. I stutter too, so don't be lonely. We can do this together!!

Aspyn, 11, Aurora, CO



My name is Jason. I am 10 years old. I'm in 4th grade and I stutter. I like to use the slide for a strategy. My favorite sport is football. Stuttering can become a bigger problem in the teen years.

Jason, 10, Shepherd, MI



My name is Antoni. I'm in 3rd grade. My first memory of stuttering is in first grade in the speech room and downtown at a speech building. When I was about to say "like," it didn't come out right. When I stutter, I feel uncomfortable. Not when I'm talking to someone, just in general, and because when I'm out of breath I don't get a chance to finish my sentence. Something helpful that I've learned in speech class is belly breathing because it helps me to relax. This helps me because it's like a stress ball to calm you down. **But there is more to me than stuttering!!!!** In my spare time I like to play my Nintendo Switch or watch TV. People would be surprised to know that I'm good at playing video games. When I grow up, I want to be a plastics engineer. One thing I want the world to know about me is I want to clean up litter (garbage). My advice to kids who stutter is: use easy onset and wait time to become better communicators.

Antoni, 3rd grade, Pittsburgh, PA



Hi my name is Brody. I am 8 years old. And I am in 3rd grade.

stuttering isn't something you should be afraid of. There are lots of people that stutter. And you can use strategies to reduce stuttering. I usually stutter when I'm nervous. When I get stuck I feel like my throat is clogged. This is my speech monster. He barks my words so I have to say them again and



Brody, 8, Great Falls, MT



My name is Simon. I am 11 years old and I am in the 5th grade. I like to draw, play games, and play sports. I love football and Adam Thielen is my favorite player. **I stutter mostly outside of school**, and my speech therapist has helped me with stuttering. I mostly stutter by saying the word, 'can' in conversations, like, "C-C-Can I get an apple?" and my speech therapist helped me with that. Me and my therapist learn facts about famous people, read books, and overall have fun! If you work on your stuttering, you will get fluent and you will be surprised!

Simon, 11, St. Paul, MN

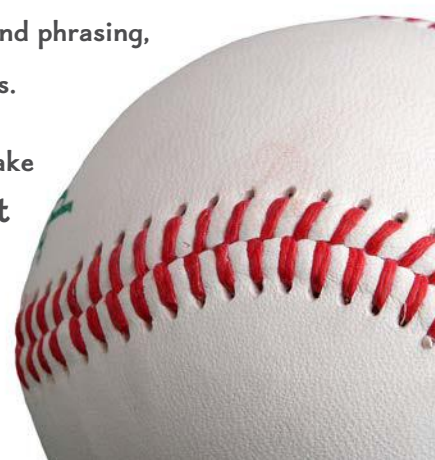
Hello, my name is Jaelyn. I'm 13 years old. I like playing basketball and video games. I also like eating at Pizza Hut. The thing I love the most is playing with my dog. I've been stuttering ever since I was born. Over the years I realized that stuttering can't be cured, but it can be helped. When I stutter, I try to use my strategies like slow rate, stretchy speech, and easy onset. **I'm not ashamed I stutter, but it is something I will have all my life. It just won't change the dreams I have in life.**

Jaelyn, 13, Chase City, VA

Hello, my name is Zach. One thing I like to do is play baseball. The positions I play are pitcher, 1st base, and shortstop. My speech therapist is Ms. Jane. In speech therapy, we learn tools like slow stretchy speech, pausing and phrasing, slide outs, and cancellations.

Remember it's okay to make mistakes but just don't be hard on yourself.

Zach, 3rd grade





stuttering from <sup>easy</sup> onset

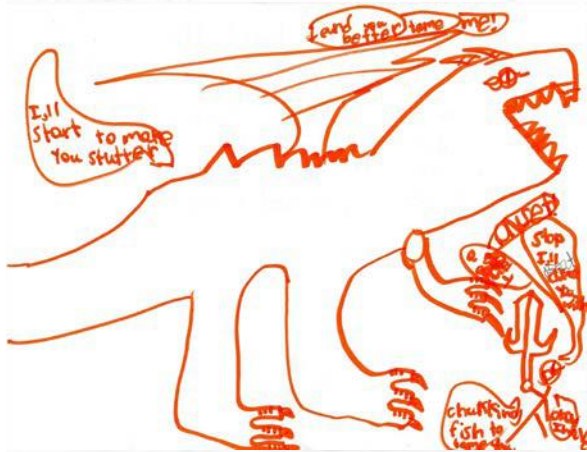
to

# Chunking

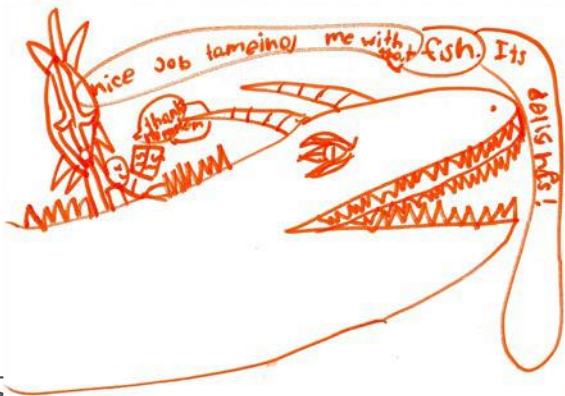
from how to tame and train your dragon

By: Noelle French

It all began in land that lived dragon. one day he was fly to fire Island to look for fire food sence he is a fire dragon but there he found a human the human was ready to until the dragon used words.



and thats how the dragon story began as I TAMED AND TRAINED MY FIRST DRAGON



And remember I was the dragon tamer in the book and I tolled the intire story to the reader.

# THE END

ps I hoped you enjoyed my book

Hello my name is Noelle and I'm in 2nd grade. I'm 8 years old and I go to Summit Street School I feel <sup>like I want to flip out</sup> when I'm stuttering I use almost every strategy. My favorite strategy is easy onset. It helps me think what I'm saying.



My name is Conn. I live in Co. Wexford Ireland. I go to Tara Hill National School. I don't mind stuttering. Unless ~~people~~ people make fun of me for it. I have 1 brother 1 sister and a dog named Aya. I like playing soccer and Gaelic football. Gaelic football is a mix between rugby and soccer.

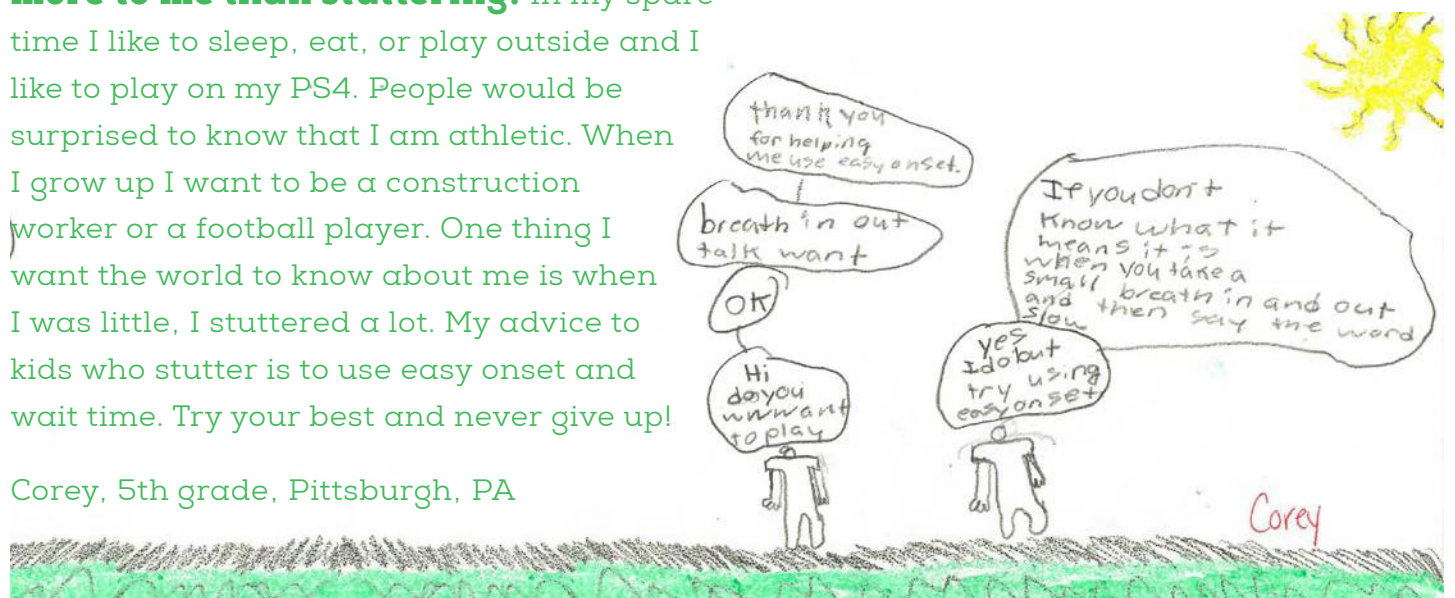


Don't let the Speech Player possess your speech like it did to Will. **You can be as powerful as eleven** when it comes to fighting the Speech Player.

Tyler, 11, Sutton, MA

My name is Corey. I'm in 5th grade. I've been stuttering for about 3 years. My first memory of stuttering is when I was in 3rd grade and my grandma told me to take a deep breath. When I stutter, I feel bad because my speech gets stuck in my throat and I can't say the word. Something helpful that I've learned in speech class is easy onset because it helps you to relax when you are talking. This helps me so I can be a better communicator when talking. **But there is more to me than stuttering!** In my spare time I like to sleep, eat, or play outside and I like to play on my PS4. People would be surprised to know that I am athletic. When I grow up I want to be a construction worker or a football player. One thing I want the world to know about me is when I was little, I stuttered a lot. My advice to kids who stutter is to use easy onset and wait time. Try your best and never give up!

Corey, 5th grade, Pittsburgh, PA







My name is Dean. I am in 2nd grade. I like Thanos. Thanos is a villain. My favorite lego is Thanos. I celebrate Ramadan. At Ramadan I fast. The end of Ramadan it is EID! At EID I get money. When I stutter I repeat words. **Light contacts is a strategy I use.** It helps me not to put my lips together hard.

Dean, 8, Milwaukee, WI

Hi! My name is KiRon. I go to Yough Intermediate Middle School. I am 13 and I am going to tell you how I fix my stuttering. When I stutter, I take deep breaths, slow down, or start the sentence over. My speech teacher taught me all that stuff. **If I keep it up, I will improve my stuttering.**

I like football and like to watch the NFL. I hope to someday be in the NFL. My favorite teams are the Cleveland Browns, the Pittsburgh Steelers, and the New York Giants. That is how I help my stuttering and the stuff I like.

KiRon, 13, Irwin, PA

Dear Stutter (Karen),

When I first met you, you were really annoying.

You would pop out of nowhere and I didn't know what to do with you. I would try and replace you, try to restart, but that didn't work all that well. Then I learned to stretch you out and breathe. Or sometimes I would let you

stay until you leave. **Now I don't avoid you, I work with you.** I get along with you, and now I understand you. But in the future things might start to get complicated again. You will be annoying and get in the way, but we understand each other and I will work with you once again.

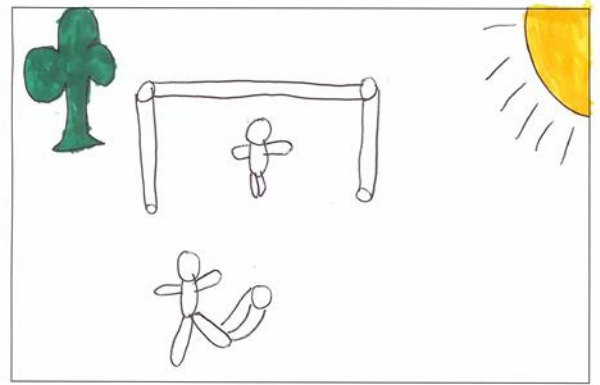
Maddie, 13, Germantown, MD



**My name is Kamari. I am 8 years old. I am in the third grade. I play Sims 4 and school games on the Nintendo Switch. I also like to play soccer.**

**I stutter when I talk. Because I stutter I go to speech. When I go to speech class I practice my strategies. I use pausing in my sentences when I talk. I take full breaths when I talk because it helps me too. I feel good about stuttering and other people should feel good about themselves as well.**

Kamari, 8, Clarksville, VA



Stammering deprives you of fluency when you speak. **If you don't mind it, it won't mind you.** My name is Iarla and I stammer and I am 12 years old.

Iarla, 12, Gorey Co. Wexford, Ireland

Sup. My name is Franklin. I am 8 years old and I go to Brigadoon Elementary School.

I use easy beginnings to stop my stuttering from happening because when I stutter, it gets kind of annoying, but I don't mind.

**Do easy beginnings and don't let stuttering drag you down!**

Franklin, 8, Federal Way, WA

Hi my name is Orrin. I am 9, I am in 2nd grade.

I call my speech monster The Blob- because it starts underground and sucks up the dead bodies of my words

How I defeat it is yelling into my arm. I actually do that at home, but at school I just breathe. Then the monster sinks back into the ground. There's a giant dirt bed and in 5 seconds the grass grows up in the dirt and the monster turns into rocks with green goop inside of it and if you break the rock there are more + more monsters and they turn into one big one.



Hi, my name is Markez, and I go to speech 2 times a week. In speech, I work on my fluency and how I say my speech sounds, I work on fluency because I stutter, I also stretch out my speech so my words can still come out but in a different way.

When I stutter it makes me feel different from others. I feel like I stutter tons of times, but I always know other people stutter, I like stuttering so it makes me work on something different.

I like playing sports like soccer, basketball, baseball, wrestling and kickboxing. I like to play video games on my free time like Fortnite and Roblox. I also like to facetime my friends, I always feel confident when I talk.



Markez, 9, Turnersville, NJ

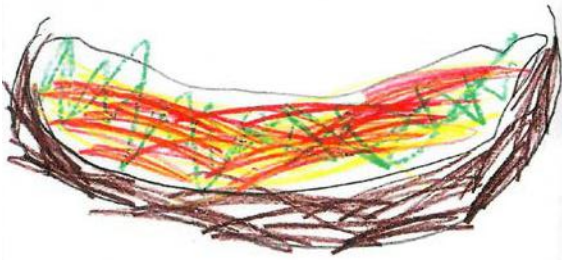
Fortnight



Hi, my name is Ethan. It's okay to stutter because if you stutter you might get nervous about something. I stutter too because when I talk fast, I stutter. **And my worst enemy is fast speech** because you might get stuck because you feel a block on your throat, but it is okay to speak fast or if you stutter. And I have a speech teacher. Her name is Ms. Caudill. I live in Georgia, and I'm 8 years old.

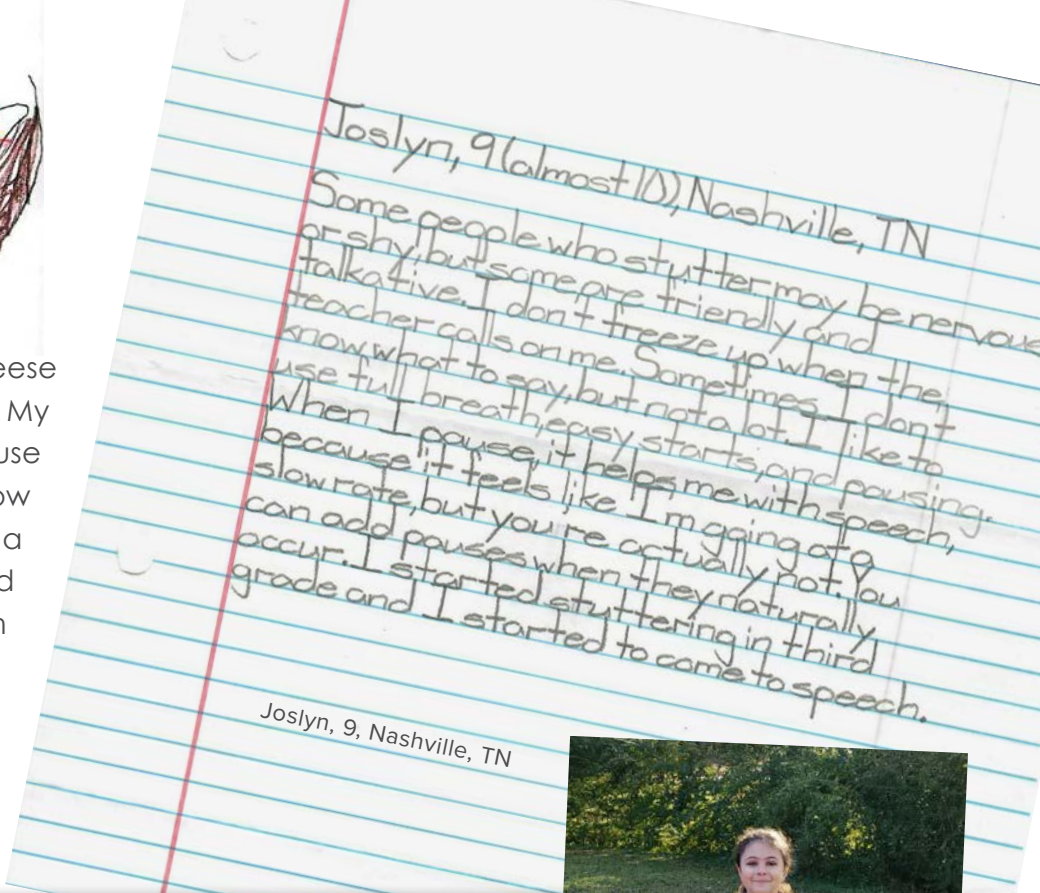
Ethan, 8, Tucker, GA





Hi, my name is Noah. I like chili cheese dogs. I like Stephen Curry, too. My speech teacher is the best because we play games and work on slow and easy speech. Stuttering is a dream! I like that I am funny and my speech teacher thinks I'm awesome!

Noah, 8, Lilburn, GA



Hi! My name is Sanni. I am in 4th grade at Chief Joseph Elementary School in Portland, Oregon. I love reading books because they help me get better at reading. I also like to draw. Sometimes I stutter because I feel upset or excited. My family tells me to take a deep breath. My favorite strategy is stopping and taking a deep breath.

Sanni, 10, Portland, OR





We are thrilled to announce the launch of Stuttering Foundation Podcast this fall. We're proud to continue to deliver relevant and accessible learning opportunities, now on the podcast platform.

Podcast episodes will feature a variety of topics: practical clinical knowledge, research updates, support and advice for parents, special segments (such as supporting therapists working in the school setting), and more!

We'll also be taking our Stuttering Foundation Podcast 'on the road' for the first time to the ASHA Convention in November. Tune in for in-depth reports on featured talks, research updates, and take-home points.

Find us this fall and subscribe!

## FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION

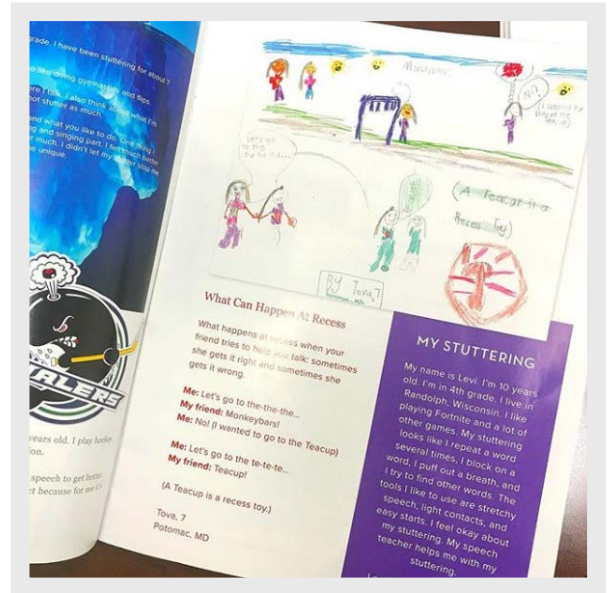


Pictured above is longtime Foundation Friend, Arthur Wiener with his daughter, Ruth, and grandson, Gavin.

Send your photos wearing Stuttering Foundation gear and you may be featured in our magazine! Email your name and photo to [info@stutteringhelp.org](mailto:info@stutteringhelp.org).



@stutteringfdn  
SFA on INSTAGRAM  
#stutteringfoundation



ki.speechtherapy  
Texas

Follow

ki.speechtherapy I just love reading the letters by kids in the @stutteringfdn publication. I would encourage any SLPs who work with children who stutter to share these pages with them. Maybe you could help them submit a note or story, too. #stutteringfoundation #stutteringawareness



42 likes



Be sure to tag us in your Instagram posts, we'd love to feature you in our next issue! #stutteringfoundation

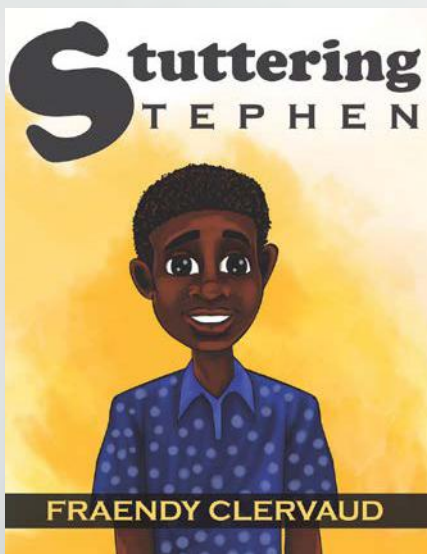
# STUTTERING TO SPEAK

by Fraendy Clervaud

*“Ughh!!! Why is it taking so long for the words to come out of my mouth?”* This was a thought I often entertained as a stuttering child. I can remember stomping my feet and rolling my eyes hoping the words would come out quicker. These were outward expressions of how frustrated I was because of the challenges I experienced with my speech.

My story isn't exactly the same today, however. Over the years, my speech improved because of the strength of my faith and the dedication of my parents. Both were instrumental in my journey to reduce the tension I felt as I prepared to speak.

Fast forward to years later and the young boy who stuttered is now a broadcast journalist. Who would have thought that would be possible? Today, I anchor the morning news for a television station in South Carolina.



USE YOUR VOICE TO MAKE CHANGE. MAKE THE CHANGE AS IF SOMEONE'S FUTURE DEPENDS ON IT...BECAUSE IT DOES.

With more than a decade of broadcast experience, I am living proof that individuals who stutter can improve their speech and become anything they want to be. Now, I understand that outcomes vary, but I want to serve as a source of inspiration for those who are looking to improve their speech. As I like to say: “Don't let your obstacles hinder you from making a difference.”



My obstacle was not only a catalyst for journalism, but also for authorship. In 2018, I published a children's book based on my experience entitled, *Stuttering Stephen*. This award-winning book focuses on a young boy named Stephen who stutters and believes he'll never become a speaker at his school. However, he later learns that finding help with his speech makes it possible.

*Stuttering Stephen* serves as an encouraging tool for those who stutter and their families. All in all, I've learned that a challenge like stuttering, or anything else, cannot stop you from being impactful. Don't think about what you don't have or can't do. Rather, consider what you do have and can do. Choose to live up to my mantra that emboldens you to: **"Use your voice to make change."** **Make the change as if someone's future depends on it...because it does.**

Connect with Fraendy Clervaud on Facebook at /fclervaud, on Instagram @trendyfraendy and Twitter @FraendyNewsman. For more information about his book, visit [www.stutteringstephen.com](http://www.stutteringstephen.com) and follow his Instagram page @stutteringstephen.



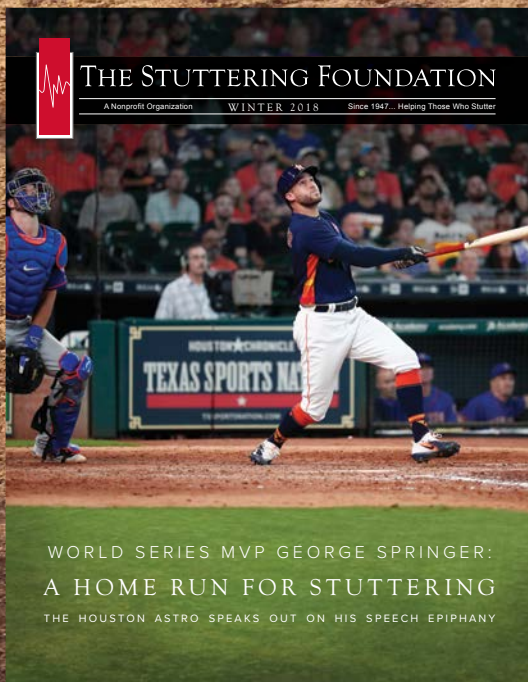
Opposite page, top to bottom: Fraendy talks to a group of students about stuttering; Fraendy reads his children's book to a group of elementary students in South Carolina; Clervaud's book, *Stuttering Stephen*



# BRINGING IT

# HOME

by Loryn McGill, M.S., CCC-SLP



When Brandon stepped into my office a few weeks ago, he did not know the word 'stuttering'. Yet, surely in his own way, he did know it. It was the name of what caused him to struggle in conversations and to lose his breath; to add filler phrases in subconscious desperation, creating confusion for listeners when he talked. Other people could talk smooth and he talked bumpy. Previous speech therapy had attempted to teach him to "not stutter" and praised fluent speech.

In his world, he was the only person like him.

As a Speech-Language Pathologist and Professor who exclusively works with people who stutter, I have seen what happens when we as professionals avoid talking about stuttering. We perform verbal dances and issue magic phrases to keep from using the word: 'stuttering'. In so doing, we convey to children that what they are doing is bad. So bad that the mere use of the word 'stuttering' is taboo. The word becomes shame, pressuring the child to stop and reinforcing the great lengths many will go to in order to do so.

The struggle that Brandon exhibited in his speech was intense. Our first session was spent talking about stuttering and understanding everything that came with it. How it made his eyes look away, throat feel tight, and words feel scary. As he learned more that day about the word - 'stuttering' - he found himself on his way to becoming an expert on his own stuttering.



For our second session Brandon came in wearing a Houston Astros hat. I pulled out a copy of the Stuttering Foundation newsletter and showed him the picture on the cover of MVP George Springer from the Houston Astros. The revelation for Brandon that a player on his favorite team stuttered was one of pure disbelief.

In fact, it turned out that Brandon was going to an Angels v. Astros game a few weeks later for his 6th birthday. I shared with Brandon and his mother all about the work that George Springer does as a spokesperson for SAY (Stuttering Association for the Young). I suggested to Brandon that he make a sign telling George that he, too, stuttered.

Brandon and his family went to two games that week. At the first game, Brandon and his family got to the stadium early for batting practice. George waved to a group of fans who were there close to the field and Brandon was certain that George was waving at him. He was hard to miss: Brandon could also be seen during the post-game show that night with his colorful sign, "Springer #4, I Stutter Too!".



When Brandon went back for the second game that week, he got his chance. George saw Brandon with his poster and came over to talk to him. He told Brandon that it was okay to stutter, autographed a baseball card, ball, and took photos together. He then went back to the dugout and brought back a pair of his batting gloves. Brandon still wears them to sleep every night.

Brandon disclosed to everyone through his sign that he stuttered all because he saw someone that he admired and identified with, decreasing the stigma he felt about his own stuttering. He continues to grow in sharing his understanding of stuttering, now more confidently responding to questions from peers about his speech. He now knows he is not alone in his stuttering, and that it is okay to be open about his struggle ... just like George Springer.

Meeting George was surely a long shot on a summer night, but one that was only possible when we stayed true to our words.



# EASTERN WORKSHOP 2019

JUNE 2019 . BOSTON UNIVERSITY



Row 1 (front): Ali Berquez, Diane Constantino, Jane Fraser, Elaine Kelman; Row 2: Daniela Zackiewicz, Megan MacPherson, Barbara Brown, Kelly Brown, Jeanne Avitto, Lori Holmes, Päivi Kantomaa, Humera Badar; Row 3: Eileen Krieg, Maria Vargas, Francine O’Leary, Nicole Aben, Elaine Robin-Kruijd, Monica Spurgeon, Marcia Hurt; Row 4: Jahgen de Jesus-Calcaño, Lauren Linkie, Molly Stepaniak, Elizabeth Kuhfuss-Beville, Elizabeth Aber, Row 5: Eileen Krieg, Maria Vargas, Francine O’Leary, Nicole Aben, Elaine Robin-Kruijd, Monica Spurgeon, Marcia Hurt




“I GAINED A NEW  
FOUNDATION FOR WORKING  
WITH ALL CHILDREN AND  
FAMILIES I SERVE (NOT  
ONLY CHILDREN WHO  
STUTTER).”








  
 7/24/2019

Thank you so much for offering the Western Workshop at UW, & for accepting me as an attendee! It was wonderful to work with Susan again & meet other SLPs who can support each other, you are making the world be better place-



July 20, 2019

I want to personally thank you for inviting me to the 2019 Western Workshop. Jennifer, Susan, and Melissa put on a fantastic workshop. I learned quite a lot while making new friends. I consider myself lucky that I got to sit next to you that one day.

Somehow, I failed to sign the card the group got for you (My fault on that one! I said down to sign it and just then the group was off to dinner. When we returned, it slipped my mind.) Please accept my belated contribution to the Stuttering Foundation. As I told you in Boston a little more than two years ago, the Foundation has helped me immensely in my life. I have had the good fortune of having many capable and willing mentors in the stuttering community. I count the Stuttering Foundation among the best of them; your videos and book as well as support (people, financial, etc.) have always been there - and continue to - for me.

I am so grateful to you, Jane, and your father Malcolm, (as well as your mom who ran the shipping department!) for your generosity and labor of love.

Hope to see you soon.

Row 1 (front): Melissa Kokaly, Jennifer Watson, Jane Fraser, Susan Hamilton Burleigh, Dr. David Prins; Row 2: Chella Plastiras, Larissa Peizer, Jill Hubbard, Steffi Paul, Janine Baker, Joanna Szymczakowska, Joyce Wilkenfeld, Junko Maekawa, Natasha Arora, Kelli O'Hanlon; Row 3: Mark Shohet, Stephanie Nawalany, Jessica Courtade, Heather Carpenter, Deanna McDonald, Ellen Amundsen, Denise Taylor, Shannon LaLonde, Molly Poole, Phillip Hewitt



JULY 2019 . UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, SEATTLE

# WESTERN WORKSHOP 2019





EAMONN HUBERT

# ROCKS *the* STUTTER

Ever since he was 6 years old, Eamonn Hubert has been performing. While he's been in countless shows with his dad, thanks to their band Hot Dogs & Gin, this year he performed on one of his biggest stages yet – School of Rock the Musical. While Eamonn, 10, was on a U.S. tour with the group, we caught up with him to learn more!





### WHAT IS THE SCHOOL OF ROCK THE MUSICAL BROADWAY TOUR? WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

School of Rock the Musical is based on the 2003 School of Rock movie starring Jack Black about a down-and-out aging rocker who can't pay his rent and dreams of winning Battle of the Bands. After the band he started kicks him out, he takes a call intended for his housemate, a substitute teacher, and shows up at a fancy prep school pretending to be his housemate and takes the job. He finds that the grade-grubbing kids in his class are also gifted musicians and then recruits them into his band for the Battle. He almost pulls it off, but not quite... Everyone learns that it's best not to judge a book by its cover and also to be who you are, not who someone else wants you to be and never give up your dreams. Everyone is great at something!

The tour has been going on since 2017 and wraps up this June. I joined in January 2019 and have been in rehearsals since then. I am a swing which is sort of like an understudy, but I will cover 4 different male kid roles when the primary actors are out for whatever reason. There are several child and adult swings in the Company, some of whom know as many as 10 or more tracks or roles! My debut was March 13 as guitar whiz Zack Mooneyham. I was also on as Billy the stylist and then James.

### WHAT WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH AUDITIONS?

The casting associates for the tour saw some YouTube videos of me playing guitar. They contacted my mom and invited me to send in a video audition. I learned the songs and a few lines and sent in my tapes. They then invited me to come to NYC for an in-person audition when I was about 8. It was my first time visiting the city! I got to the final 8 but didn't get cast. It was disappointing, but they told me they would be calling for me again and they did, about 6 months later. I went back to NYC, auditioned again, got to the final 8 again, but didn't get cast. Then I sort of forgot about the show and kept performing at home with my band and taking violin lessons. I got a couple of lead parts in my local theater's productions of Willy Wonka, Jr. and Wizard of Oz. I worried that maybe my stutter was the reason I wasn't cast, but casting is a complicated process and you just never know what all is behind the decisions.

To our surprise, just before Christmas 2018 my mom got another email from casting inviting me to return to NYC for another audition. This time, I made it to the final 2 boys and got the part!



## HOW DID YOU REACT WHEN YOU GOT THE PART?

I was SOOOOOO excited and couldn't believe how lucky I was to get such a hard to get part! I was nervous too because I knew it meant a big change for my family and I needed to get to work!

## DOES YOUR STUTTER AFFECT YOU IN YOUR ROLE AT ALL?

It hasn't so far! When I am first learning my lines, I do stutter often. But once they are deeply memorized, I don't stutter at all when I say them on stage! I did stutter some on stage during my last community theater production, but not with School of Rock.

## DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU FIRST BEGAN TO STUTTER? DOES IT RUN IN YOUR FAMILY?

I don't really remember a time when I didn't stutter, I think it started around age 4. It came and went then, but it wasn't long before it became pretty much a constant thing. Stuttering doesn't run in our family – I am the only one that we know of.

## HAVE YOU SOUGHT TREATMENT? DID IT HELP?

Yes, I spent about a year doing Skype stuttering therapy at school and at home twice a week, and I also went to my therapist's home monthly for individual and group sessions. It was helpful, but I found the slow-stretchy speech techniques strange sounding, so I didn't like to use them much. What DOES work for me is just remembering to breathe before and while I'm speaking! I stopped therapy on my own last year because I wasn't making much progress and I decided I don't really mind that much that I stutter.



## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES STUTTERING HAS PRESENTED TO YOU?

Sometimes I feel like people who don't understand stuttering or don't know that's what I am doing might think something else is wrong with me or they get impatient waiting for me to finish what I am saying. Sometimes I wish I didn't stutter, but it's mostly for how others see and hear me, not for how I do. I worry that later it might affect me in job interviews, but I can choose to use my tools when I feel like I will need to stutter less.

## BASED UPON YOUR EXPERIENCES, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TELL OTHER CHILDREN WHO STUTTER?

I would tell them not to let stuttering get in the way of trying things if they really want to do them! I thought my stutter would prevent me from getting an acting role, but I kept trying and hoped the casting people would give me a chance and see me for who I am. There are a lot of actors and other famous people who stutter but not when they are performing, so I think the casting people probably know this. I feel like when I don't worry as much about how people will react to my stuttering, I am more relaxed. It is part of who I am, and I can control it when I want to, but usually it doesn't bother me. I just tell people it is like hair color or skin color, it is how my brain works and that's that!





### WHAT ELSE DO YOU LIKE TO DO?

I am in my school band (saxophone) and orchestra (violin), and I spend most of my other time playing music or my favorite video games and spending time with my parents, pets, and friends. I drove a go cart for the first time last year, and that was AWESOME! I really love cars and games that simulate driving.

### TELL US ABOUT YOUR BAND!

I play lead guitar and sing harmony vocals and sometimes lead vocals in my band called Hot Dogs & Gin. My dad is the lead vocalist and plays rhythm guitar, and we also have a drummer, keyboard and harmonica player, and bass player. We play mainly blues and classic rock but also a lot of 80's rock like Bon Jovi and Guns n Roses. My dad and I also play as a duo when the venue or event calls for it. I have been performing since I was 6 and have played hundreds of shows.



### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT PERFORMING?

I LOVE when the crowd is really into the show. I love ripping guitar solos and can play some note for note but also improvise and play cover songs my own way. It's a lot of work lugging equipment around and staying up late on weekends, but it's also a LOT of fun!

### WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE KNOW?

You should know that I'm also on the autism spectrum, have ADHD, and perfect pitch. I call them my superpowers – they can be a pain at times, but they also help me focus, learn, and play music very easily.

I have a 26-year-old sister, Rhiannon, who lives on her own and I live with my mom and dad. My mom is a Probation Officer, and my dad is a high school Science teacher and musician. I have 2 pets: a Golden Retriever named Gibson and Acat named Tele'cat'ster.

I like to play Minecraft and driving video games, draw, and build with Legos. I like to re-enact my favorite movie and TV scenes with my cars and other miniatures. I am really interested in cars and auto mechanics. I love music, specifically guitar, but I also play ukulele, mandolin, violin, bass guitar, piano, and a little banjo.



Here's what some of our more than **269,000 friends** are talking about in our Facebook community

Stuttering Foundation @stutteringhelp



Stuttering Foundation



**Stuttering Foundation Facebook Poll: *Did stuttering affect your ability to make friends?* 203 votes**



**Jose:** As a kid and teenager, yes. Not so much as an adult now.



**Christine:** It also affected my career decision. I wanted to teach but was afraid to stand up in front of a class so I became an associate instead, making less money.



**Anurag:** Despite my stammering I have many friends who respect me; they do not isolate me and they don't bother to make fun of me. They also take advice from me.



**Jason:** Absolutely, the very few friends I had didn't care either way. Most of the kids saw my stuttering as something to make fun of in large groups. So, therefore, I am an introvert.



**Christopher:** Nope, because if they had an issue with my stutter, they weren't worth my time.



**Cristina:** Yep.

*\*some comments have been edited for content, length, and/or grammar; profile photos have been changed.*



Stuttering Foundation



**Looking for a new job?** Here are 7 tips to help you prepare for the interview..



**Avilesh:** I dread those "tell me about yourself and talk me through your resumé questions".



Stuttering Foundation



**Did You Know** about 5% of all kids go through a period of stuttering that lasts six months or more?



**Nancy:** Early intervention is best when speech skills and environmental speaking situations can be modified to support fluent speech! It's better to ask a specialist in stuttering than to wait and worry.



**Cara:** I stuttered as a toddler, but it resolved without therapy. All three of my kids started stuttering when they were two. My oldest is 8 and has a severe stutter; my second stopped stuttering after about 6-8 months; my youngest is four and still stutters. "Risk factors" are interesting, but I wonder what family history or genes have to do with it?



# THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION REMEMBERS GLORIA VANDERBILT

Heiress and fashion designer Gloria Vanderbilt, the mother of CNN commentator Anderson Cooper, died at age 95 at her Manhattan home. The great-great-granddaughter of railroad and shipping tycoon Cornelius Vanderbilt and hailing from one of the most socially prominent families in the U.S., Vanderbilt was nationally famous at a young age for being the center of a child custody case between her mother and her paternal aunt. In the tabloid coverage of the custody battle, she became known as “the poor little rich girl.”

Ms. Vanderbilt was a model, actress, fashion designer, artist, heiress, and socialite. People who were around in the 1970s and 1980s will remember how she jump started a \$100 million-dollar fashion empire, mostly with designer jeans, but also blouses, shoes, jewelry and perfume.

Later in life she experienced tax, legal and money problems. She was married four times, divorced three times, and gave birth to four sons.

With her obituary appearing in major newspapers throughout the world, the obituary in the New York Times, “Gloria Vanderbilt Dies at 95; Built a Fashion Empire,” is unique in that it mentioned that Vanderbilt stuttered badly as a child. It stated, “But behind the flair and the practiced, throaty whisper... there were hints of a little girl from the 1930s who stuttered terribly, too shy and miserable to express her feelings.” A few hours after the Times obituary mentioned her stuttering, it was added to the Boston Globe’s obituary.

Unlike so many other famous people who have struggled with stuttering, Ms. Vanderbilt’s stuttering was not widely known. A Google search reveals only two previous references to her stuttering, one in the form of a profile article in the June 10, 1985, issue of PEOPLE magazine, which stated, “She speaks in a voice that creeps up your neck and crawls in your ear. Her words come out in Katharine Hepburn cadences, accented with the clear suggestion of a Brahmin. Hers is a careful, tentative approach to speech, perhaps because she stuttered as a kid, stammered as an adult, and now has only the slightest hesitation every several sentences.”

The opening paragraph of the biographical article on Your Dictionary.com puts forth, “The girl who stuttered



and could hardly put her feelings into words grew into a woman who discovered herself through acting, writing, drawing, painting, and designing. Her efforts led to the creation of a world-famous line of goods, all bearing her highly recognizable name.

While CNN host Anderson Cooper is not on record as addressing his famous mother’s stuttering, he has acknowledged his own issues with stuttering. An October 12, 2010, profile of Cooper in Salon recounted his appearance on “The Ellen DeGeneres Show” in which he offered a commentary on bullying:

“I went to a very small school. I only had about a hundred kids in my graduating class. But I think I was more of a bystander.” Cooper then recalled that he witnessed a kid in his class being picked on for his stutter, and that he didn’t intervene because he was so relieved that he himself wasn’t picked on, given that he had a slight stutter and still sometimes does.

Maybe after her passing, more will become known about Gloria Vanderbilt’s early struggles with stuttering. The stuttering community is no doubt surprised to count her among our ranks. We send out sincere condolences to her family.



A man with a beard, wearing a grey baseball cap, a bright yellow hoodie, and grey track pants, stands in front of a large, vibrant mural of a pink flower. The flower is the central focus of the background, with its petals in various shades of pink and magenta, and yellow stamens. The man is looking to his left, and his hands are in his hoodie pockets. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor setting.

**DJ FLUENCEE:**  
**SPINNING THE**  
**STRUGGLE**





Jason Heffler, aka DJ Fluencee, found his voice through music. Growing up with a stutter, he struggled against bullies and feelings of isolation, but his family always had his back. Now, the LA-based DJ and producer is following his dreams and performing his music in front of large crowds. Read more to find out about his experience growing up with a stutter and breaking through the music industry.

**Do you remember when you first began to stutter? Does it run in your family?**

It does not run in my family. I don't remember the first time I actually stuttered, but I remember it starting at a young age. Probably around 7 or 8. It came out of nowhere.

**Have you sought treatment? Did it help?**

I went to a few speech pathologists when I was a kid, but none of them helped. I also tried out this strange device you insert in your ear, which was meant to reduce stuttering by the way you hear your own voice, but it was ineffective and also very uncomfortable. Eventually, in high school, I took part in an intensive 12-day stuttering program.

**Tell us about your experience with stuttering.**

It's been pretty rough. I got bullied a lot as a kid and I had a hard time making friends. It also affected me as an adult; even when my speech is nearly perfect, one tiny stutter on a single word in a job interview would deter an employer from hiring me because they didn't think I could communicate well. Eventually I decided to explicitly state that I have a stutter which doesn't affect my communication skills and actually makes me work harder to prove myself. I've found that if you have what you perceive as a flaw, it's best to acknowledge it and spin it as a positive to exude confidence.

**Has stuttering impacted your career as DJ?**

It's had a positive impact. People have responded to it even better than I hoped. Plus, there's no better feeling than rejecting a bully from your past who asks for tickets to a show!





**How do your audiences react if you stutter?**

Believe it or not, the stutter vanishes when I hop on the mic. I think I'm in such an adrenaline rush that I don't even think about it, and the words just spill out.

**What is your favorite part about performing?**

My favorite part about performing is that it gives me the opportunity to step into a new persona. Unless I'm with my family or friends, I'm kind of a quiet guy. But when I'm on stage, I go buck wild.

**What are the biggest challenges stuttering has presented to you?**

Public speaking and presentations in general. When you know for a fact that everyone's eyes and ears are on you and they're zeroing in on every word, it presents a serious challenge.

**Based upon your experiences, what would you like to tell other children who stutter?**

All of the experiences that come with stuttering—whether it be bullying, struggling to make friends, or anything else—will make you a stronger person. Much stronger than someone who doesn't have any real-world challenges to deal with. Everyone will eventually face some kind of adversity in life, but they won't be able to overcome it like you because of the toughness you gained from dealing with the obstacles of a stutter. The key is to not let it define you.

*Read more about Jason and listen to his latest single at <https://fluencee.com>.*



**THANK YOU**  
to the Stuttering Foundation partners in radio.

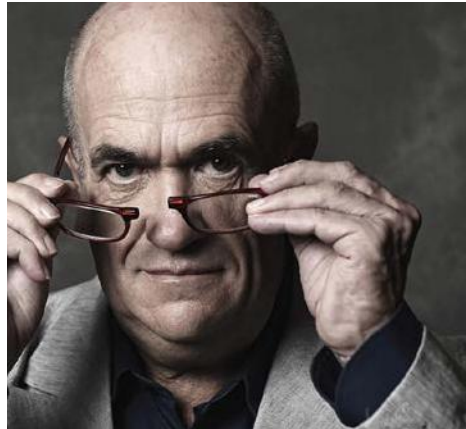








A STUTTERING FOUNDATION TRIBUTE  
ESTEEMED IRISH AUTHORS  
COLM TOIBIN . ELIZABETH BOWEN . DERMOT BOLGER



## COLM TOIBIN

One of the most prolific writers of the last 50 years, Colm Toibin, was born in County Wexford in 1955, and graduated from University College Dublin, working as a journalist while pursuing his own writing. Toibin has published nine novels, several of which have been bestsellers and won awards, in addition having published numerous works of non-fiction. His novel *Brooklyn* was made into a 2015 feature film while his 2012 short novel *The Testament of Mary* was made into a Broadway show in 2013 and was nominated for three Tony Awards.

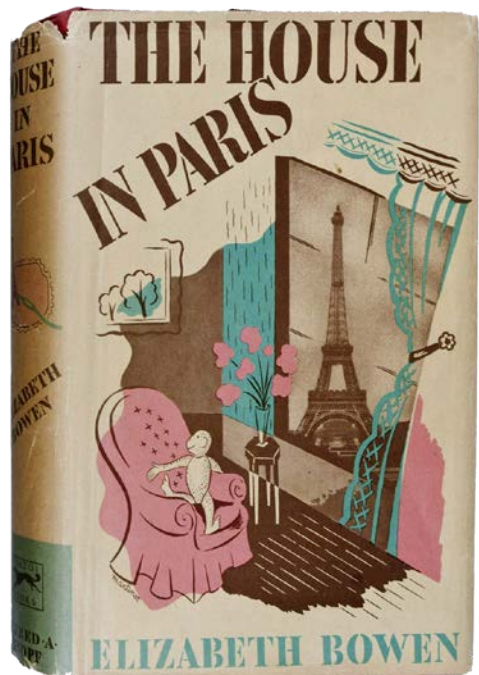
"I still couldn't say my own name, for example. But I wouldn't try. I would think carefully and get around it in some way or another."

- COLM TOIBIN

Toibin discussed his stuttering in a January 3, 2016 opinion piece for the Irish Independent entitled "*My Father's Illness Affected Me So Deeply That I Developed a Stammer*". An April 29, 2009 New York Times article "*The Novels of Colm Toibin Are All About Searching for Home*" quotes the author as saying, "I still have a stammer that I can control by not opening a sentence with a hard consonant, or by concentrating for a moment, breathing down."

His 2014 novel *Nora Webster* has a young character who develops a bad stuttering problem. When asked about his own speech in an interview about the novel in the Irish Times on September 27, 2014, Toibin answered, "I have it still, yes. I still couldn't say my own name for example. But I wouldn't try. I would think carefully and get around it in some way or another."





*The Last September, The House in Paris, and The Heat of the Day.* Her books of nonfiction included *English Novelists, A Time in Rome,* and *Seven Winters: Memories of a Dublin Childhood.*

The 1989 biography *Elizabeth Bowen* by Allan E. Austin quotes an Oxford friend of Bowen, the distinguished classics scholar C.M. Bowra, as saying, “She had a slight stutter which added force to her remarks.” Austin wrote that the hesitations in her speech did not dissuade her from frequent appearances on BBC radio programs or prevent her university work. “She was largely able to command it, but in any event, it was looked upon as an endearing characteristic.”

## ELIZABETH BOWEN

Elizabeth Bowen (1899 – 1973) was born in Dublin to an Anglo-Irish aristocratic family that was granted a huge track of land in County Cork on account of their ancestor being a loyal colonel in Lord Oliver Cromwell’s army as it waged its campaign against the native Irish. Moving to England at age eight, she was educated there and began her writing career. She inherited her family’s sprawling estate, known as Bowen’s Court, in Ireland and returned there to live with her husband in 1952.

Her works encompassed novels, short story collections, and nonfiction. Her first book was a collection of short stories entitled *Encounters* which was published in 1923. During World War II she worked reporting on Irish opinions for the British Ministry of Information. After the war, she traveled among elite literary circles and published more books. Some of her novels were

“(Her stutter) did not indicate any lack of confidence in what she was saying; and was often found by others to be an additional charm in her.”

- BIOGRAPHER VICTORIA GLENDINNING,  
ON BOWEN

The 1977 biography *Elizabeth Bowen: A Biography* by Victoria Glendinning put forth, “Elizabeth’s stammer, though it caused her agony as a girl, became very much a part of her as a woman. It was a stammer- not a stutter – she was particular about the distinction: stutterers were an altogether different class of person. Elizabeth’s stammer was a pronounced hesitation, a complete stalling on certain words. She would help herself out by gestures of her hands, and by substituting a different word. The severity of it varied; it was worse when she was tired, and sometimes almost non-existent when she spoke in public or on television. It did not indicate any lack of confidence in what she was saying; and was often found by others to be an additional charm in her.”

## ELIZABETH BOWEN

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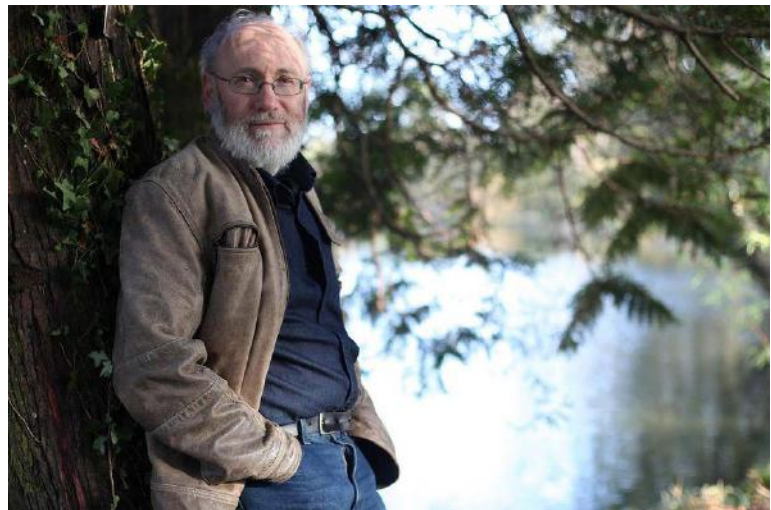
A wealthy friend encouraged her to see a well-known Austrian psychiatrist, and even paid for the sessions. The doctor was supposed to “cure” Bowen. The sessions ended after several visits when the author did not concur with the psychiatrist that traumatic events in her early life caused her stuttering.

Records of Bowen’s speech were kept in the archives of the British Council in the form of internal memos, which are most revealing about her stuttering and how she handled it. Following her successful lecture tours for the British Council in the years following the War, there were questions as to her suitability for continued lecturing on account of her stuttering. The memo in response answered, “She is a most successful lecturer with a most successful stammer.”

*Elizabeth Bowen: The Shadow Across the Page*, a 2003 biography by Maud Ellman 2003, “Elizabeth’s famous stammer, which emerged during her father’s mental illness, consistently balked on the word ‘mother’. But the bereavement that scarred her speech also galvanized her writing.”

”I was caged by a terrible stammer. To be a child so afflicted back then was to suffer daily public crucifixions.”

- DERMOT BOLGER



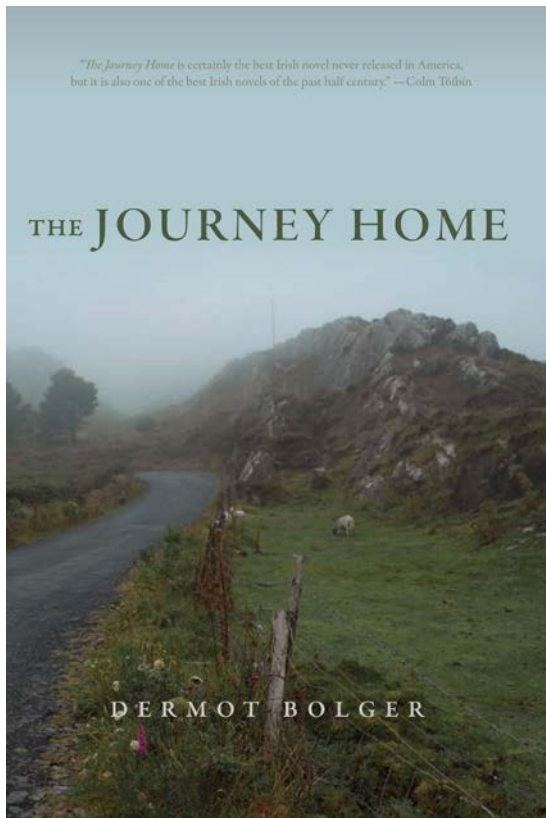
## DERMOT BOLGER

Dermot Bolger was born in Dublin in 1959. Dermot’s writings (especially novels and plays) usually strive to convey the experiences of working-class Irish people who feel alienated from society. His first novel, *Night Shift*, was published to much critical acclaim, and is now noted for having introduced many of the themes that would resurface in later novels. His 1990 novel *The Journey Home* was a highly controversial bestseller in Ireland, and deals with a Donegal family in which members take diverse political and socio-economic paths after the Irish War of Independence. Other novels include *The Woman’s Daughter*, *Emily’s Shoes* and *External Affair*.

Bolger has always been open in interviews about his struggle with stuttering. In fact, right before the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists, he wrote an op-ed “*My Stammer Made Me Feel Like the Greatest Fool ..... Now I Make My Living Giving Public Lectures*”, which appeared in the Irish Times on May 1, 2019.

*continued on page 43*





One of his many poignant statements he made in that commentary was, "I was caged by a terrible stammer. To be a child so afflicted back then was to suffer daily public crucifixions. My panic at being sent to the shops began before I left the house. By the time I reached the shop it crystallized into palpable terror."

In his praise for the upcoming 50th anniversary of The Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists, Bolger addressed his mother's concern for her young son. "Her concern for her youngest son – considered a dunce due to my inability to speak – was greatly alleviated by my kindly therapist who assured her, 'he is under a cloud now, but is actually a bright penny.'"

*While the Irish literacy legacy is historically rich with famous writers, it is important to recognize that some of these writers have struggled with stuttering, as has been the case for many authors all over the world. It is an understatement to say that Irish people who stutter – as well as all people who stutter – are proud of these Irish writers.*

## THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION REMEMBERS SISTER CHARLEEN BLOOM



Sister Charleen Marie Bloom, CSJ (Sister Albert Joseph), 83, died Tuesday, July 16, 2019, at the Community Hospice Inn at St. Peter's, Albany. She had been a Sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet for the past 63 years.

Sister Char received a bachelor's degree in elementary education from The College of Saint Rose, a master's degree in speech from the Catholic University of America and a doctorate in speech-language pathology and audiology from the University of Illinois at Champaign. In addition, she received a master of social work degree from the University at Albany (SUNY).

In the early years of her life as a Sister of St. Joseph, Sister Char taught in schools of the Albany and Syracuse Dioceses. In 1971, after completing her doctorate, Sister Char began a 40-year career at The College of Saint Rose during which she helped to establish the college's program in communications disorders and served as professor, department chair and professor emerita. Under Sister Char's guidance, the program offered a four-year undergraduate degree program, added a five-year program of study, received certification from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and became one of the most respected clinical speech-language-pathology programs in the country.

Sister Char also founded weekly and annual programs to assist persons who stutter, and her pioneering workshops on stuttering have become a national model. In addition, she co-authored several textbooks and presented extensively at local, state, national and international forums.

Motivated by her belief that communication is at the heart of life, Sister Char touched thousands with her expertise, warmth, compassion, hospitality and humor, and her spirit will long remain in our hearts.



THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION CELEBRITY CORNER

# ADRIAN PETERSON

AN NFL SUPERSTAR AND STUTTERING SUPERHERO

Adrian Nicholas Peterson is known as a former running back for the Chicago Bears in the NFL, but he is more than just an athlete; he is also an inspiration to people who struggle with stuttering.

Peterson was born on July 1, 1979, in Gainesville, Florida. His athletic ability was apparent from the start; he was a two-time all-state, all-area selection and team MVP at Santa Fe High School in Alachua, Florida. His ability to speak publicly, however, did not come so naturally— he struggled with stuttering growing up. He excelled on the field but was afraid to speak up in the classroom.

In a 2013 interview with First Coast News, Peterson talked about what it was like growing up with a stutter: "Growing up it was rough starting out. Every kid wants to be normal. My mom and dad noticed I had a speech impediment at the age of four. When a lot of the other kids were doing a lot of talking, I shied away from it. We had to read aloud in class, and I struggled. The whole day it seemed like none of my words would come out."

Peterson said he would be teased about his stuttering. "You hear in the background the snickering and laughing and giggling," he said. "But from that point I understood, 'Adrian you stutter. Let's accept it and move forward.'"

In a 2005 interview with The Chicago Tribune, Peterson recalled the encouragement of his father. "My dad, Porter, would always tell me that it could've been worse," he said. "I could've not been able to talk at all. If so, then I probably would've had to take a different route and might never have played in the NFL."



Peterson didn't let other students' teasing stop him, and it paid off. "I didn't change," Peterson told First Coast News. "I didn't change who I was. I was still active with my sports. And in school if I had to do a presentation, it may take me five minutes, 10 minutes or even 30 minutes. But I got up there, stood strong and did it."

Peterson went on to play football at Georgia Southern University, where he dominated from 1998-2001. He finished his college career with 6,559 rushing yards, a Division I football record. He was among the top three vote-getters for the Walter Payton Award in all four of his college football seasons, and he was inducted into the Georgia Southern hall of fame in 2012. He made it to the NFL and played professionally from 2002-2010 for the Chicago Bears.



Peterson worked with a speech pathologist named Sharon Milner at Georgia Southern and said he still considers her a close friend. Ultimately, however, accepting his stutter was the biggest accomplishment: "Being able to speak is good," Peterson said. "If it takes me 15 minutes to do an interview or two minutes to do an interview, I get my point across without using any other special methods. That means a lot to me."

Now, Peterson spends his time helping others. In September 2012, Peterson published a book called *Don't Dis My Abilities*, where he discusses his struggles with stuttering and other hardships in his life. He also travels to schools and other events to talk to students who may be struggling with stuttering or other issues.

"You never know who is in the audience when you go to an elementary school and give a speech," Peterson said. "You might have a straight-A student, but he or she might have a speech impediment. Instead of taking that extra step to be an excellent student, he or she might settle for being average because they're embarrassed."

Peterson never let his stuttering get in the way of achieving his goals, and his work speaking to other students who struggle with stuttering provides a much-needed source of inspiration and encouragement to the stuttering community. "If I can motivate someone to do what's right, that's great," Peterson said of his school speeches. "I enjoy doing these events. And I just try to do what's right. We're all human, so I wouldn't set myself apart. But I do hope I can help."

Since the release of his book, Peterson was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2017 and hosts youth football training camps that make the game more accessible to lower-income students and families. Additionally, he was hired by his alma mater, Georgia Southern University, as Director of Student-Athlete Development for the football program.



He's continued to speak at schools and graduation ceremonies across the country. At Hesse K-8 School's 2017 graduation, he spoke to a group of rising freshmen about the challenges he faced with his stutter, "My parents put me in speech therapy, and I felt embarrassed when I would get pulled out of class."

He told the students to give their best effort in overcoming the challenges they will face in life because it is not an option to let embarrassment keep them from their dreams. Following one's dreams and giving back were themes also reflected in his commencement address to Georgia Southern University in the fall of 2017. He told the students: "Go back to your communities, and help the young kids, because those are the ones who need it the most."



## FOLLOWING UP WITH AN SFA AMBASSADOR

# Vanessa Tremonte

*When we first interviewed Vanessa, she was our teen spokesperson and had just won the Miss Arizona Jr. National Teenager pageant. Since then, she's grown up, started a career and a family. Although she decided to move on from pageantry to focus on school, Vanessa tells us her exposure to and experience in pageants gave her the confidence and poise she needed to be her best self and overcome her fear of public speaking.*



Pageants taught Vanessa that poise and confidence are key in how you present yourself to others. "It's all about progress versus perfection – even if you stumble (literally or in your speech!), you must pick yourself up and move forward. Learning to not be paralyzed by a situation or occurrence is a life skill that can be applied to speaking fluently and beyond. Check in with the situation, figure out what went great/what needs improvement, and move on."

Beyond pageantry, Vanessa has continued to challenge herself daily when it comes to public speaking. As a management consultant, she is constantly speaking with clients, pitching ideas to her team, and guiding her direct reports on their career development. Influencing and persuading others through speech is a daily ask of her profession.

She never sought any formal treatment or therapy, but competing in pageants, joining her high school's speech and debate team and finding other ways to put herself out there to practice her speech was her own form of personal therapy.

"Practice, practice, practice – it's the only true way to become fluent! It's all about progress versus perfection – I still have days that aren't great when it comes to my speech, specifically when I'm under a lot of stress or pressure. On these days, I remind myself to take it slow and breathe! I do a lot of introspection to consider what I could improve the next time: Were there certain words/consonants I had trouble with? If possible, did I rehearse or practice what I was going to say ahead of time? Was there a way to reduce my stress level (e.g., deep breathing)?"

**"Be kind to yourself! Being afraid to speak in public is a fear held by many people, not just those who stutter."**

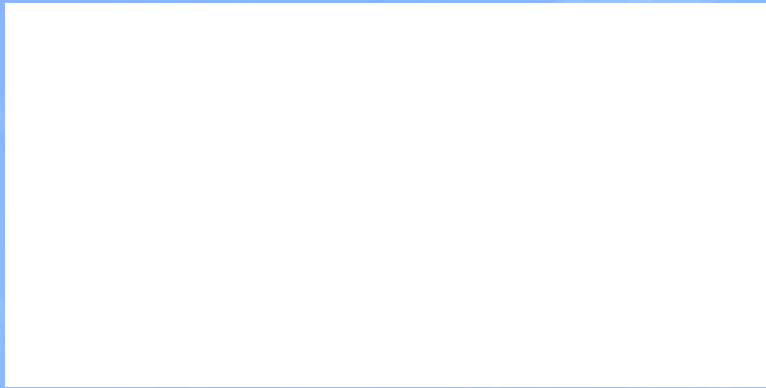
While there are still times when she gets nervous before having to speak in front of others, Vanessa has found that practicing before a presentation, pitch, or team meeting has helped her to be as comfortable as possible with the situation before going into it. If it's not a situation that allows her to prepare ahead of time, she reminds herself to stay calm, breathe and speak slowly.

What's one tip Vanessa would give others in her shoes? "Be kind to yourself! Being afraid to speak in public is a fear held by many people, not just those who stutter."



Today, Vanessa Tremonte works as a Consultant Manager in Mesa, Arizona with her husband and two young sons, Hudson and Connor.





The Stuttering Foundation of America is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and is classified as a private operating foundation as defined in section 4942(j)(3). Charitable contributions and bequests to the Foundation are tax-deductible, subject to limitations under the Code.

**"We are dedicated to improving the lives of those who stutter."** - Malcolm Fraser, SFA Founder

Since its beginning in 1947, the Stuttering Foundation has created a community of millions through research, education, and support. **Founder Malcolm Fraser's vision and our continued mission is to bring hope and help to those who stutter, all over the world.** Thank you to our generous family of supporters, who together with the Stuttering Foundation, are making Malcolm Fraser's dream a reality.

Special thanks to: Patty Reed, Ron Shafer, Rachelle Loir, Donna White, Madison White, Greg Wilson, Patricia Adams, Jane Fraser, Scot Squires, Laura Spence, Kiersten Hizak, and Sara MacIntyre

