



RESEARCH CORNER

My client isn't fluent – but is it stuttering?

By Vivian Sisskin, M.S.,
and Nan Bernstein Ratner, Ed.D.
University of Maryland

Atypical Disfluency - Part 2

In the last column, we began to tackle the increasingly reported



Vivian Sisskin, M.S.



Nan Ratner, Ed.D.

cases of children who are referred for “stuttering,” but whose fluency profiles do not comfortably fit conventional definitions. We started by discussing children who seem to have language formulation problems, rather than stutter, and apparently touched a nerve, since Nan’s inbox

basically flooded with reader reports of children with exactly this type of profile. Unfortunately, as many noted, performing a good differential diagnosis and qualifying the child for services seemed problematic, let alone developing an appropriate treatment plan.

We agree that it is currently challenging to find appropriate tasks or tests to use in these cases and are compiling a list of potential resources to include in our next column. In the meantime in this issue, we will discuss another increasingly reported fluency concern: children whose disfluencies are strikingly unlike stuttering, primarily because of location within words and clauses. The most frequently remarked atypical disfluency is

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One Size Does Not Fit All

Therapy needs to be tailored to the individual needs

Voon Pang, BSc (Speech Pathology), MNZSTA
Auckland, New Zealand

I was recently made aware of Speech Pathology Australia’s* proposal to the Australian government to provide reimbursement for families who received only one type of treatment for pre-schoolers who stutter. One could argue that the proposal is helpful in providing affordable treatment for parents of pre-

schoolers who stutter. However, I believe that the negatives outweigh the positive for the following reasons:

1) The concern of the consumers’ — both child and parent — and service provider’s — speech-language pathologist — freedom of choice being taken away and subsequently the ability to jointly decide on what

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New Translations Reach 8,000,000 People

Thanks to Burim Azemi and the Kosovo Stuttering Association, five books, *Self-Therapy for the Stutterer*, *If Your Child Stutters: A Guide for Parents*, *Sometimes I Just Stutter*, *Trouble at Recess*, and *Stuttering: Straight Talk for Teachers*, and four brochures, *Myths About Stuttering*, *6 Tips for Speaking with Someone Who Stutters*, *8 Tips for Teachers*, and *7 Tips for Parents*, have been translated into Albanian, a language spoken by approximately 8 million people worldwide. Download these resources at www.StutteringHelp.org/albanian.



10 Ways to Celebrate Stuttering Awareness Week

Stuttering Awareness Week begins May 11th. Here are some ways to celebrate:

1 Watch a New Video: Know a person who stutters, a concerned mom or dad, or a school speech therapist? Ask them if they've seen our most recent video titled *Kids Who Stutter: Parents Speak* available online or in DVD format featuring proven tips from parents and hands-on speech-language pathologists.

2 Design a T-Shirt: At every convention we attend, and on our online store, we sell out of our T-Shirts regularly. Help us create a new design! Submit your ideas to info@stutteringhelp.org.

3 Sign Up for Social Media: Visit us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest. Engage with thousands of others on topics about stuttering and fluency. Please engage with us on our social media channels and share our content. We love when people "Share" our Facebook posts on their page because it helps us

reach more of the stuttering community. We also love when you "Retweet" us on Twitter.

4 Find a Referral: Wonder where to turn for help? The Stuttering Foundation offers referrals to therapists in the U.S. and around the world.

include name, age, and contact information with postal mailing address of parent or SLP.

6 Learn about a Famous Person Who Stutters: Learning about famous people who stutter helps us to understand we are not alone in our struggles with fluency. It provides hope and inspires our community with the knowledge that great things can be achieved by people who stutter. Read our ever-growing list of famous people who stutter.

7 Get Information: Visit your public library and ask if they have materials on stuttering from the Stuttering Foundation. If they don't shelve them, tell them they can get a set easily by contacting info@stutteringhelp.org.



5 Share Your Child's Art: In our newsletters and on our website, we feature the drawings, letters and poems created by children who stutter. Please help children who stutter to understand they are not alone! Children wishing to share their artwork with us can do so by sending it to info@stutteringhelp.org. Please

8 Sign up for our Newsletter: The Stuttering Foundation creates three newsletters each year – Winter, Summer and Fall – and sends a paper copy to everyone on our mailing list. If you wish to receive a copy, please send your mailing address to info@stutteringhelp.org.

9 Read a Book: There are many excellent books on stuttering. The Foundation offers several for free in E-book format. Many have been translated into other languages.

10 Listen Patiently: When talking with a person who stutters, avoid finishing their sentences unless they invite you to do so. Keep eye contact and be patient – many people who stutter just need a little extra time to finish their sentences. For more tips, see our brochure.

To make it easy, we've put links to all these ideas on our website, www.StutteringHelp.org/NSAW

Annual Audit

The Foundation's Financial Reports for 2014

The annual audit of the Stuttering Foundation financial reports for 2014 will not be completed as of press time. It is being performed by the accounting firm of Cannon and Company, Certified Public Accountants, Memphis, TN. Following is an unaudited recap of funds and expenditures for the year.

The 3.7% of expenditures for administration and general expenses and 8/10

of 1% for fundraising are very low, and since we are fortunate to have an endowment which more than covers our overhead expenses, donors can be assured that their gifts will go directly to support our program services.

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) operating foundation which expends its funds on its own programs and operations and does not make grants to other institutions.

Funds expended for:

Creation, production, printing and distribution of educational materials	\$803,470.....37.3%
Public information and education	672,280.....31.2%
Research, treatment programs, and symposia	490,127.....22.8%
Maintain Web site and toll-free information hotline	93,976.....4.4%
Total for Program Services:	\$2,059,854...95.5%
Other expenditures:	
Administration and general	79,243.....3.7%
Fund-raising expense	17,557.....0.8%
Total Expenditures:	2,156,653.....100%

Pediatric Nurse Practitioners on Board for Early Intervention

Kids Who Stutter: Parents Speak Sent to 9,958 NPs

“When parents are concerned about their child’s stuttering, I refer them to a speech-language pathologist right away,” said a pediatric nurse practitioner from Nevada upon receiving the new DVD for parents of young children who stutter.

“When stuttering appears out of the blue, parents are often quite frightened and puzzled; they need the reassurance and guidance that an experienced therapist can give,” she added.

Another nurse practitioner from Maryland wrote, “I’m happy to be able to offer better support and guidance to concerned parents. I’m impressed with the scope of your outreach program and applaud the Foundation for doing such excellent work!”

The Stuttering Foundation sent a copy of the new video, *Kids Who Stutter: Parents*

Speak to 9,958 pediatric nurse practitioners on March 15, 2015.

Several commented on how the Stuttering Foundation literature supported them in how to best handle periods of disfluency or stuttering problems with their own children as well as their patients.

“Pediatric nurse practitioners are often the first person a parent sees when concerned about their child’s speech. There is no doubt that the onset of stuttering, as noted above, can be quite frightening for them and for

their child as well,” said Jane Fraser, president of the Stuttering Foundation.

“We have made the leading voices on preschool stuttering freely available to parents to answer their tough questions, offer practical strategies, and build confidence. It is our hope that parents who seek advice about stuttering from their trusted medical professional will find the help they need.”



Photo by Daniel Leal-Olivas/Press Association

Actor Colin Firth and Jane Fraser, president of the Stuttering Foundation, during a fundraiser in London.

Firth and Fraser Raise Money for Stuttering

Four years after winning an Oscar for his role as the monarch who stuttered in *The King’s Speech*, Colin Firth launched a major fundraising campaign on behalf of Action for Stammering Children aimed at increasing support and training for speech and language therapy at an event in London in February. Jane Fraser, president of the Stuttering Foundation, joined the award-winning actor at this event.

Funding recipients of the campaign – titled ‘Unlock a Child’s Voice’ – include the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children. Firth and Fraser are both vice presidents of the Michael Palin Centre.

“*The King’s Speech* was a turning point in history for the stuttering community, bringing worldwide attention, mainstream understanding and hope for those who struggle to speak,” said Fraser. “Colin’s commitment to helping children is key to helping families unlock the mystery of stuttering.”

NUMBERS

- 410,705 free brochures and flyers were downloaded from *StutteringHelp.org* this past year.
- More than 1,453,388 minutes of video were watched on our YouTube channel.
- Free e-books have been downloaded more than 792,000 times this past year.
- Google has donated more than \$679,000 in free advertising through Google Grants.

Dr. Fred Murray lives, and writes, *A Stutterer's Story*

Dr. Frederick Murray, 89, whose stuttering began suddenly and violently at an early age, is a retired speech pathologist who taught at the University of New Hampshire and directed the stuttering therapy program there for many years.

and more helpful types of therapy. Others led inward in a scrutinization for more self-knowledge.

“The first thing everyone notices about *A Stutterer's Story* is how beautifully written it is,” said Stuttering Foundation President Jane Fraser. “Fred has the gift of bringing great understanding to his readers through his prose.”

Fraser first met Dr. Murray in 1980, when he was presenting to the stuttering community in France. “I met Fred in Paris some 35 years ago, and since that time, his seminal book has opened up the door of understanding stuttering for thousands of readers,” added Fraser.

Fraser also said Dr. Murray had the benefit of phenomenal memory, vividly recalling the lectures and work of many of the pioneers in stuttering

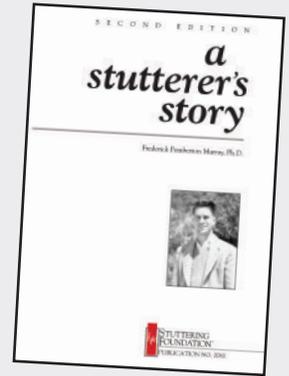
therapy, including Charles Van Riper, Joseph Sheehan, Wendell Johnson, Dean Williams, Lee Travis, Bryng Bryngelson and others.

Dr. Murray might best be remembered for his courage to tackle the issue of relapse from stuttering treatment.

Fluency of speech, so easy to achieve under carefully contrived conditions, often collapses like a house of cards when the stutterer interacts in daily life situations involving communicative pressure.

“*A Stutterer's Story* has had a profound impact on many readers, my mother among them,” said Fraser. “Although she lived side by side with my father, who often stuttered severely, I recall her telling me that it was Fred’s book that truly made

her understand the plight her husband Malcolm faced each day of his life. I always thought that was the best review anyone could give a book about stuttering.”



Frederick Murray's book, A Stutterer's Story, is in its second edition. It is currently in the process of being converted to an e-book for the Kindle and iPad.

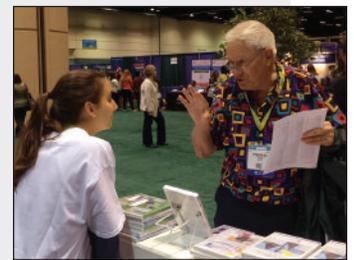


Madame Lalique and Fredrick Murrary in Paris in 1980. As a life-long collector of Lalique crystal, Dr. Murray was excited when Madame Lalique herself accepted a lunch date with him at the famous Paris restaurant, Lasserre. Jane Fraser served as interpreter for Madame Lalique during that memorable luncheon.

He has lectured worldwide in English, Spanish and French on the subject of stuttering. He is also the author of one of the Stuttering Foundation's most treasured publications — *A Stutterer's Story* — first published in 1980 and available in its second addition for a nominal charge from the Foundation's store.

Dr. Murray's book is an autobiography of a severe stutterer, now adequately fluent, who, having attained fragile fluency several times, tried to assemble the pieces of wreckage following each relapse and to construct something substantial and lasting from each.

According to the author, this called for searching and self-inquiry. Some of these quests led toward better organized



Dr. Murray at the Stuttering Foundation booth during ASHA in November.

Dr. Murray's preface reveals his clear intention for writing the book: "The message herein is one of hope and encouragement, provided that the stutterer is ready to give up his entrenched illusion of the nonexistent 'perfect cure' and to begin to assemble, within himself, that which is needed in order to manage effectively what heretofore has overwhelmed him. Such sincere efforts will, of themselves, kindle and maintain the flame of human spirit, for without it, nothing worthwhile can be accomplished."

An interview with Dr. Fred Murray can be seen on the Stuttering Foundation's YouTube Channel, www.Youtube.com/StutteringFdn



Q & A

with Leana S. Wen, MD, MSc

In October 2014, The Washington Post ran an article by Dr. Leana Wen about an experience she had in the emergency room treating a patient who stutters who arrived seeking emergency medical treatment for chest pains. She touched on her own experience with stuttering in her article. We contacted Dr. Wen for an interview after the article ran, when she held the position of Director, Patient-Centered Care Research and Assistant Professor, Departments of Emergency Medicine & Health Policy at The George Washington University. Earlier this year, Dr. Wen became the Baltimore City Health Commissioner.

Q: Where are you from, where do you live now?

I was born in China, grew up in Los Angeles, and am living and working now in Washington, DC.

Q: What's your passion?

As a healthcare professional, I'm passionate about bridging the gap between what patients need and what the healthcare system provides. I consider myself a patient and public health advocate.

Q: Do you remember when you first began to stutter?

It was in grade school. I didn't tell people I stuttered. I was good at hiding it. I felt it was shameful.

Q: Did you seek treatment? Did it help?

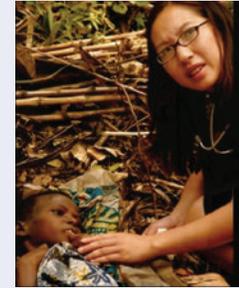
I never received any treatment. My parents knew. I taught myself to just slow down, don't be so nervous. That was the key for me.

Q: Tell us about your experience with stuttering as a child.

I always hid my stuttering, but sometimes I couldn't hide it. I remember a school presentation on the Roman Empire. I had trouble with the letter "R". I remember jabbing a pencil in my leg.

Q: Has your stuttering gotten worse or better since you were younger? How?

After becoming less covert and learning to talk about it, my fluency increases. I needed to learn not to be so fearful. My stuttering became less and less. I needed to become less



fearful. Today I'm not 100% fluent or comfortable with my stutter, but it is not the impediment I thought it was. This realization made a huge difference for me.

Q: How did it affect you growing up?

Because I worked so hard to hide my stutter, even from those I care about, it made me disconnected from many people. I've only recently come to terms with it. I realized that speech is so integral to our lives and our relationships; it wasn't worth hiding my true self from my friends and the people I love.

Q: How does stuttering affect you as a doctor?

I believe it makes me a much more empathetic doctor. Many patients have struggles. Some have medical issues, some have disabilities, and some have trouble communicating. I understand that these struggles can be a source of shame, and we share that common bond and perspective.

Q: What are the biggest challenges stuttering has presented to you?

Every time I have a job interview or big challenge, I think about the impact of my stutter. Will I stutter? Will I lose the job? Sometimes I've shared my stuttering with a prospective employer and sometimes I've chosen not to mention it. Showing it is a recent thing for me to do, and I'm now comfortable with that decision.

Q: What is your greatest accomplishment with regard to stuttering?

Coming out and talking about it was difficult for me, so my greatest accomplishment was becoming open about my stuttering and speaking up to other doctors, med students or others who stutter.

Q: Was there much discussion of stuttering in your med school classes?

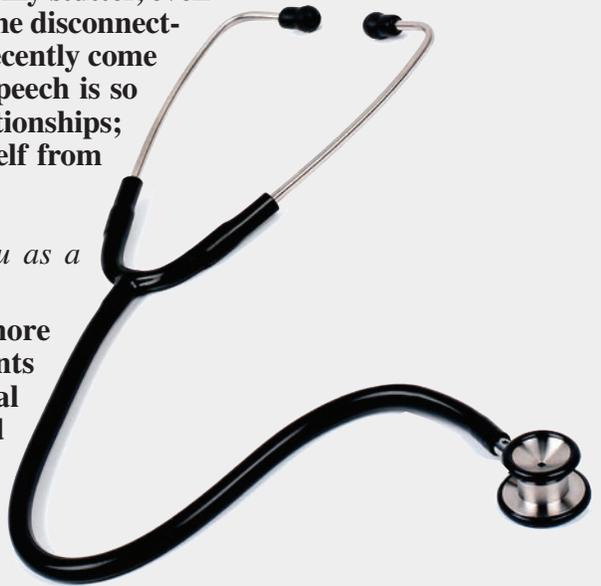
There was no discussion in med school.

Q: Based upon your experiences, what would you like to tell children who stutter?

Seek treatment. The earlier you seek treatment, the better. Avoidance reduction therapy is critical. And be open about it.

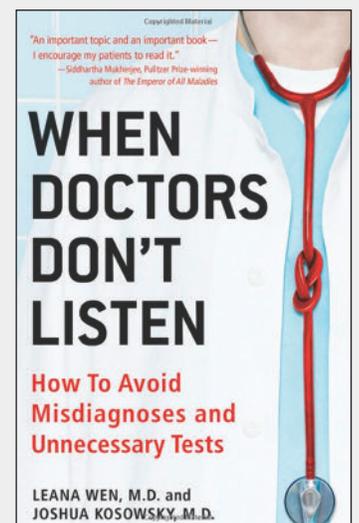
Q: Based upon your experiences, what would you tell parents of children who stutter?

Be understanding, accepting, and ask for help early.



Learn more about Dr. Wen at DrLeanaWen.com

Follow on Twitter: [@DrLeanaWen](https://twitter.com/DrLeanaWen)



Dear SFA:

Send letters to:
 The Stuttering Foundation
 P.O. Box 11749 • Memphis, TN 38111-0749
 or e-mail info@StutteringHelp.org

Not Embarrassed

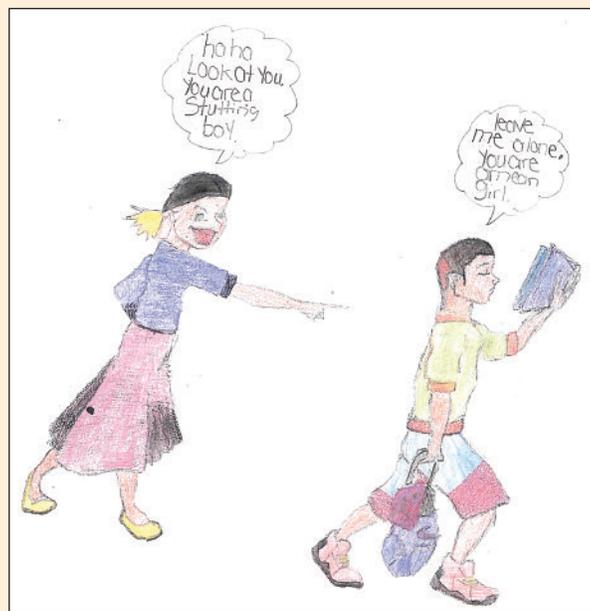
My name is Kyle, and I'm 12 years old and in the 7th grade. I live in Seal Rock, Oregon, and I go to Crestview Heights in Waldport. I think I started stuttering at 9 years old, and I have had a stutter ever since. I don't feel embarrassed to tell people about my stutter, and you shouldn't either. I have worked with two speech therapists, Mrs. N. and Mrs. F. The strategies I learned are to take a breath before you say something, or think before you speak, slow down and pause, but don't slow down too much, but calmly slow down. If you have a bad stutter, just read lots of lists of words so you can process the words right. I like the outdoors. I like to play with RCs, ride my bike, and swim. I also like to fish, ride my dirt buggy, and play video games.

Kyle, 12

Seal Rock, OR

Practice Your Tools

My name is Cristina. I am 9 years old. I am in 4th grade and I stutter. I like to do gymnastics and soccer. I will tell you some tools that help me. First, sliding. Sliding is when you hold onto the letter like "ssssslide." Next, light contact. Light contact is when you whisper into the word. Easy onset. Easy onset is just like light contact but you only use it on vowels. Now I will tell you how I feel. Well, stuttering is not bad. Lots of kids have it. I feel maybe a little sad because when I want to say something, I know I



Hi, my name is Iazic. I am 11 years old and in the 5th grade. I live in Orlando, Florida. My favorite sports are football and basketball. I like going to my grandma's house. My favorite subject in school is math. I like to eat cheese pizza. I live with my mom and my stepdad.

Sometimes, I stutter. Stuttering is bad for me because every time I stutter, I always get picked on in my class. One time, when I was talking to my friends, I began to stutter, and this girl began to pick on me. She was being very mean to me. I began to feel bad. So I walked away and told my teacher, and she got in trouble and never picked on me again.

In speech, I work on how to get better at my stuttering. I practice using my strategies. I like using them because they help me talk better. I would tell other kids who stutter to not let other people judge how they talk or look. They are ok just the way they are. Just tell the teacher if someone picks on you because they need to stop picking on you.

Iazic, 11, Orlando, FL

will stutter.
Cristina, 9
Beach Park, IL

Questions for SFA President

Questions from the 5th grade class at Vandenberg Elementary in Box Elder, SD:

Dear Jane Fraser,

We are fifth grade students from Vandenberg Elementary, and we have some questions for you:

Is your job fun? **Yes!** How come it's so hard to figure out how people talk? **It's the most complicated thing we do!!** How close are you to finding a cure for stuttering? **We don't really know.** What inspired you to become a speech scientist? **My father stuttered.** Do you teach sign language? **No.** Do adults stutter? **Yes, they do!** We want to wish you good luck on finding a cure for stuttering.

Jacob and Joha

We read an article about speech disorders, and one of them was stuttering. How do you help people not stutter? **The key is sometimes to stutter more easily.** Do you do surgery on people who do, or is it not curable? **No surgery, but lots of therapy.** Is your job easy or hard? **Both.** What is the hardest part of your job? **Dispelling myths about stuttering.** What is the easiest part of your job? **Seeing people get better.**

Bailey and Milayna

We just learned how children across the world suffer in silence because of speech disorders. **Over 70 million people worldwide**

stutter, children and adults. Now we understand how hard it is for scientists to create a cure and improve people's lives by giving them the courage to speak up. **We encourage everyone to speak up – what you have to**





say is more important than how you say it. We think that children across the world should have the opportunity to enroll in speech and not have to bear the burden of not being able to communicate properly alone. We encourage you to find a cure for speech disorders because people everywhere deserve it. **Thank you for your encouragement! The word “cure” may not apply – we want to help people speak with ease!**

Mya, Lamara, and Joslyn

Editor’s Note: Jane Fraser is the president of the Stuttering Foundation. Her father, Malcolm Fraser, stuttered and he created this foundation so people could receive help and to encourage research. She tells us, “Anyone who stutters or is interested in stuttering can be a ‘speech scientist,’ though, and I encourage these 5th graders to keep asking questions!”

11-Year-Old Soccer Player

I am 11 years old. I am in the 6th grade. I like to play soccer. Some things that help me not stutter are sliding and light contact. Sliding gives me help on the words you could slide on like snake, shake, and more. Light contact gives me a good beginning like for the words: bat, talk, and dog.

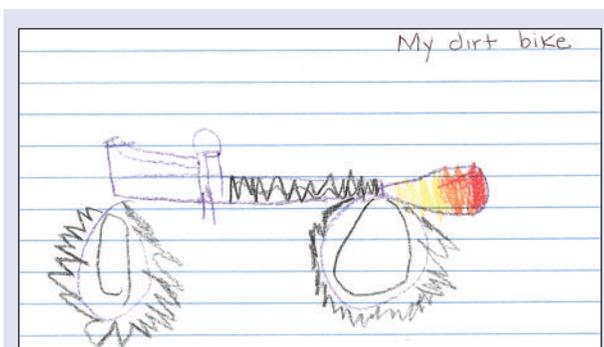
*A.M., 11
Plymouth, MI*

No Stuttering When Singing

Hi! My name is Rayne. I live in Menasha, Wisconsin. I have been stuttering since I was four. I am eight now, and I’m in third grade. I like to play on my Wii, and I like to read for fun. I also like to sing, and I think it’s weird that I don’t stutter when I sing. I have been going to speech therapy

since I was in kindergarten. I think my speech has gotten better since kindergarten. I also don’t feel embarrassed by it anymore and you shouldn’t either. I gave a presentation for my class so that my friends could understand what stuttering is. They thought it was really cool, and they asked a bunch of questions. Now my friends know what stuttering is and how it feels to stutter. Maybe this is something you could do for your class.

*Rayne, 8
Menasha, WI*



Hi! My name is Rashad. I am 7 years old. I like to ride my dirt bike. I stutter sometimes. I get sad when I stutter. I like to bounce to help me.

Rashad, 7, Ashville, NC

Stuttering Strategies

Hi my name is Jasmine and I’m 11 years old and I’m in fifth grade. I have some strategies that can help you. I use them a lot. First one is easy onset, then light contact, bouncing, forward flowing speech, and sliding. Those may help you a lot. When I started stuttering I was in first grade. I’ve been in speech about 4 to 5 years already. If you publish me, I want to help other people to just be yourself, and don’t listen to bullies who can hurt your feelings.

*Jasmine, 11
Beach Park, IL*

Here Comes the Speeder!

Hi, my name is Tessa. I am 9 years old. I am a speeder. I speed in my talking which causes me to stutter. Before I started

speech therapy people said “You said, *the* 4 times!” I was sad and upset. So when I started speech therapy my friend Genevieve and I wrote out a presentation to read to our class at school. It worked out great!! :) I think it’s important for kids not to worry about their stuttering. Some of my strategies are to belly breathe, break up sentences, and to slow down. I love my speech therapy teacher. She really helps me. I like to read other people’s letters because they give me advice.

*Tessa, 9
Eagan, MN*

This Could Help You!

Hi! My name is Genevieve. I am 8 years old. I stutter sometimes, and I know it is not easy. When I stutter, it is hard to stop. When I was in second grade, my friend Tessa and I started speech therapy. It is fun. I learned to slow down, belly breathe, and phrase sentences. I’m getting better at practicing these strategies. This could help you too. I think it could help everyone. I still stutter every day, but it

helps me a lot.

*Genevieve, 8
Eagan, MN*

Presentation was Awesome

Hi, my name is Quincy, and I am 8 years old. I like baseball, basketball, and soccer. I stutter. I go to speech therapy at my school. The tools I use the most to help my speech are easy repetitions and sound stretches. My advice: do lots of sound stretches to make your stuttering easier. My speech teacher and I did a presentation on stuttering in my class and that was awesome. It helped my friends and classmates understand stuttering and not make fun of me anymore.

*Quincy, 8
Elwin, IL*



My name is Te'Asia. I am seven years old and live in Charleston, West Virginia. I am in second grade at Kenna Elementary School. I like to do gymnastics. One day I went outside to see my friend Shalisa. It started raining and I didn't have an umbrella. I started to stutter. I used to think that is why I stutter.

I've been stuttering for four years. It is getting better because I go to speech, and the speech therapist is helping me to slow down and stretch out my words. I use a little toy turtle to help me remember to slow down.

Going out in the rain without an umbrella doesn't make you stutter, but getting speech therapy does help to make it better.

Te'Asia, 7, Charleston, WV



Hi! My name is Savannah. I'm 11 years old and I'm in 6th grade. I live in Waupaca, Wisconsin. I started stuttering when I was 7 years old. When I stutter I use pause and sound stretch. Pause is taking a breath at a punctuation, and a sound stretch is you stretch the word you're stuck on. What I like to do is sleep on the weekend, and I like to go to the Comet games on Fridays. When I see a girl or a boy stuttering I would say don't let that affect you. So make a great big smile on your face.

Savannah, 11, Waupaca, WI

Letters

Continued from page 9

I Like Sports

Hey guys, my name is Devin. I'm in 4th grade at Beattie Elementary School. I'm 9 years old. I started stuttering when I was in 1st grade. Sometimes I like stuttering and sometimes I don't like stuttering. My speech tools are Try Again and Stretch Words. Going to speech helps me get rid of my stuttering problems. Other people help me by not teasing me. I also like football, soccer, baseball, and basketball.

Devin, 9

Lincoln, NE

A Poem About Stuttering

Hello. I am Sara, and I am

grateful to be able to share my poem with you.

Everyone says words matter
But do they?

If somebody says "you did great,"
after beating you by a mile
Do they really mean it?

If someone stutters, are they
nervous or afraid?

Or are they just straining
To hold back the
wave of emotion
and knowledge

That might come pouring out?

Is stuttering a problem?
Or is it a tempo to a beautiful song?

Like a bass drum keeping a
steady beat

If someone says "slow down"
or "you afraid?"

They are blinder than the
blindest being on earth
Deafier than the deafest man
More cold than the coldest ice
of the Arctic

Because it's not the words
outside that matter.
It's the ones inside.

Thank you again.

Sara, 12

Lake Oswego, OR

Teachers Help Me

I am nine years old. I am from Framingham, MA. I cannot remember when I started stuttering — it's been a long time. Once I

Hi, my name is Amiya and I stutter. I am from Dover, New Hampshire. I go to Horne Street School and I am in the 3rd grade. I started stuttering when I was about 5 years old, and I kept on stuttering until I was 6. Then it stopped for a while and started again. Now I am 8 years old and I stutter. The strategies that help me not to stutter are: "slide out your words" and "go back and stretch it out."

I like snowboarding. Snowboarding is my favorite sport. I might go snowboarding this winter or next winter. When I stutter the most, it means I am probably nervous or excited. Stuttering doesn't bother me. It doesn't bother my friends either. Everybody stutters. Some people just do it more than others. Elvis Presley stuttered. And so did the actor (James Earl Jones) who did the voice (of Mufasa) in *The Lion King* movie.

Amiya, 8, Dover, NH





Drawing by Terrance

Our names are Jamail and Terrance. We go to Amboy Elementary and we are in the 3rd grade. We are writing this letter in our speech class. We like to play computer games, go to recess, and ride bikes. Our strategies to help us not stutter are relax your muscles, talk while breathing out, stay calm, and use slow, easy speech. It doesn't matter if you stutter – we are just proud that you can do some things that you want to anyway. Don't be afraid to talk. Terrance wants to be a big-truck driver. When Jamaail grows up, he is going to be an Army guy and save people. This letter is to support people who stutter and to say never be afraid to talk.

Terrance and Jamaail, 3rd grade, North Little Rock, AR



Drawing by Jamail

stuttered so much, I screamed and went to my room I was so mad. I stutter when I'm nervous and when I talk fast. Sometimes people make fun of me. And when they say, "Why do you do that?" sometimes it makes me sad. Sometimes on the first day of school, I'm nervous because my classmates might make fun of me. What I do to help is I pause and use an easy onset and I talk slow. I pause when I stutter. I start easy and I use cancellations and pullouts. My teachers are Miss S. and Mrs. W. They helped me since I was in kindergarten. My favorite subjects are gym and speech. My favorite foods are ice cream, pizza and cake.

Ethan, 9 Framingham, MA

Another Student Makes Fun

My name is Omar and I am 10 years old. I live in Framingham, MA. Sometimes I get mad when I stutter and I do not like it! One time in school a girl and I were partners, and I was stuttering when I was talking. She was copying me in a making fun of me way. It made me very ANGRY!!! Then I learned how to use my techniques: easy onsets, slow rate,

speech breathing, cancellations, and, I am learning how to use pullouts. My teachers are Ms. S. and Mrs. W. and I love them!

Omar, 10 Framingham, MA

It Doesn't Mess with Me

Hi, I'm Kamar. I'm 9 years old and I stutter. But it doesn't mess with me. I just take a deep breath and calm down. I've been in speech for 5 years. Just remember, it's ok if you stutter.

Kamar, 9 Omaha, NE

Bullying Stopped

It is me, Unique. How are you guys? I am now 12 years old and a 6th grader at a South Carolina Middle School this year. I have six new teachers and lots of new friends. Well, I had a big situation earlier this school year, where students were picking at me on the bus and in the classroom about my bad stuttering. I told an adult at school and they handled it. Now it is all good. So if kids pick at you about your stuttering, don't be afraid to tell someone. Thanks!

Unique, 12 Georgetown, SC

A Lot of People Stutter

Hi my name is Dana and I stutter. If you stutter, here are some tips: talk slow, stop and start over, and stretch the word out. Sometimes I also pretend to be an ice cube and then melt into a puddle. This helps me feel relaxed. Most times when I was younger people used to laugh at me but then I told my speech teacher and she made me feel better. She made me feel better because we would talk about it and she would say it's okay and that a lot of people stutter. So if you have any problems with stuttering, tell your speech teacher. She or he will take care of it and make you feel better.

Dana L., 10 Brooklyn, NY

I'm Cool With It!

My name is Bryshawn and I go to Whitehead Elementary School in Rockford, Illinois. I am 11 years old and I stutter. I started stuttering in first grade, 2011. I was surprised when it first started because I didn't know what was wrong with my voice. Then it got worse, and after that I started to go to my

Editor's Note: We attempt to answer every child's letter personally so please include a contact name and postal address for either a parent or the SLP of the child along with your submission. Thank you!

Letters

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speech teacher at school. I learned it was called stuttering.

My speech teacher taught me different ways to not stutter when I talk. Here are the tools I use: talk slow, take a breather and say words only once. After that, I got better at it and nobody knew how much I used to stutter.

Then one of my friends heard me stutter. He told my other friends, then my whole class knew and I was so embarrassed. Nobody talked about me but they kept asking me questions. I just tried to ignore all of them and stay cool. I was cool with it because I just kept talking a lot to other people and then they were cool with me talking to them. Now they think that I don't stutter any more. That's because I don't do it so much now. I use my speech tools every day when I talk to others.

*Bryshawn, 11
Rockford, IL*

Want to Share A Story

Ever since 7th grade when I would talk about One Direction I wouldn't stutter, and still to this day it's true. I'm in 10th grade and my teachers even say every time I talk about them it's like the stuttering disappears. Even on my worst stuttering days when I talk

about them it's, like complete magic — I'm not even kidding! What do you think? I've been stuttering since I was 3 years old. I'm 15 now and I've been in speech therapy for 11 years!

*Victoria, 15
Rio Hondo, TX*

first I didn't know how to control it. When I started going to speech I started to learn tricks about how to overcome it. My feelings about stuttering are that when I started stuttering I was scared, but when people got to know me very well they didn't get annoyed with my stuttering. It's because they have seen me stutter a lot and they got used to my stuttering. Stuttering isn't something that will take over your life. You can overcome it.

*Eric, 10
Smyrna, TN*



My name is Perla. I am eight years old. I am in third grade and I live in Cicero, Illinois. I like to play dolls with my friends. My favorite subject in school is math. Sometimes I stutter when I want to tell something exciting. When I stutter I keep repeating my words. Sometimes I get stuck on a word. My dad always says to breathe in and breathe out. At speech we pause and slide. When we are stuck on one word, we use slides like in 'chi-iiiildren.' We pause when we are stuck on more than one word like 'and then.' Pausing and sliding help you stop stuttering.

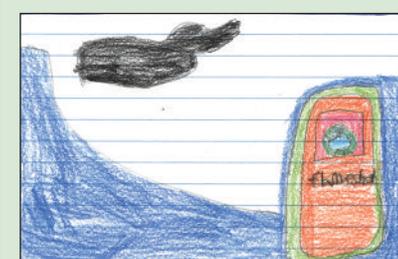
Perla, 8, Cicero, IL

I was Scared at First

My name is Eric and I am 10 years old. I am from Smyrna, Tennessee, and I go to Smyrna Elementary School. I'm in 5th grade and I stutter. I'm not sure when I started stuttering but at

You Are Not Alone

My name is Sarita and I live in New York City. I am 16 years old and in the 11th grade. I first started stuttering when I was in first grade and did not receive any



My name is Walker. I am 10 years old. I started to stutter when I was 4 or 5 years old. My favorite strategy is easy onset. Stuttering does not bother me. I like to collect Pokemon cards.

Walker, 10, Ashville, NC

Letters

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speech. For example, I stutter when I am shy, nervous, and frustrated. These are some emotions that might make you stutter, and I have ways to control them.

My amazing speech teachers, Mrs. S and Mrs. M, have taught me various strategies to help control stuttering. For example, sliding out of a word, bouncing the letter you're stuck on, and cancellation, which is totally cancelling out a word.

If you get bullied, here's a tip: Who cares what they think! Don't see stuttering as a weird thing you do, instead, see it as a unique feature. But remember, practice makes perfect, and if you practice, you can shoot for extraordinary limits of fluency!

*Matthew, 9
Old Bridge, NJ*

About My Speech

My name is Sofia. I am 11 years old. I go to speech to learn how to control my air flow. It helps me when I am doing lots of stuttering. Air flow makes the words come out easier. When I get stuck on a word, I repeat it again and again. When I am reading a book or working on the iPad, I never repeat any words. I am never teased at home or at school. It is ok to come to speech. Sometimes it is fun. Sometimes it is hard work.

*Sofia, 5th grade
Cedar Rapids, IA*

Stuttering is Tough

My name is Dae'Von. I stutter a lot. Stuttering is tough. My

speech therapist's name is Ms. F. Sometimes when I stutter, it's hard for me to get words out. I am in the 6th grade. I am 11.

The best technique that works for me is BOSS. "B" is for "breath" and "O" is for "open tube" (keep your voice on). One "S" is for "softly" and the other "S" is for "slowly." I use this technique when I speak, and it helps me a lot. I learned that stuttering is tough. So what if people make fun of me? There's nothing wrong with stuttering. It's OK to stutter.

*Dae'Von, 11
Elk Grove, CA*

Others in Family Also Stutter

My name is Lizzie, and I am 7 years old. I am in 2nd grade. My brother and my dad stutter. My brother stutters the most. I stutter the most at school. It makes me feel nervous when I stutter. I go to speech therapy. It helps me to breathe before I talk and use smooth, slow speech. I want to be a painter when I grow up.

*Lizzie, 7
Kingsport, TN*



Lizzie

I Like Karate

Hi, my name is Mason. I am 7 years old. I like to do karate. When I grow up, I want to be a teacher, a doctor, or a weather reporter. There is so much in life you can learn. My stuttering



Mason

doesn't really bother me. My speech teacher tells me I can be anything I want to be. My stuttering can't stop me.

*Mason, 7
Kingsport, TN*

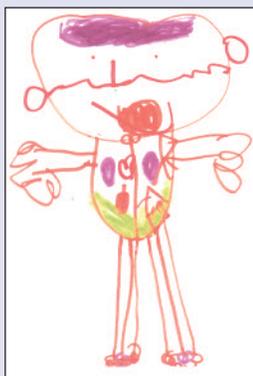
It's OK to Stutter

Hello. My name is Lamere. I am 10 years old and I live in Erie, PA. I like playing football, basketball, baseball, and soccer. I like to sled and spend time with my family. I've been stuttering since I started talking. When people make fun of my stuttering I just say "I don't care. What if you stuttered? Would you like people making fun of you?" When I stutter, I feel like its okay to stutter because a lot of famous people stutter. When I do stutter, I use my speech tools such as slow speech, pausing, cancellation, and easy onset. If you stutter, don't get mad if people make fun of you. Tell people about stuttering. Stuttering doesn't mean something is wrong with you. We don't know what causes stuttering. It is a problem with your brain talking to your speech helpers, like your vocal folds and mouth. Don't feel bad if you stutter too.

*Lamere, 10
Erie, PA*

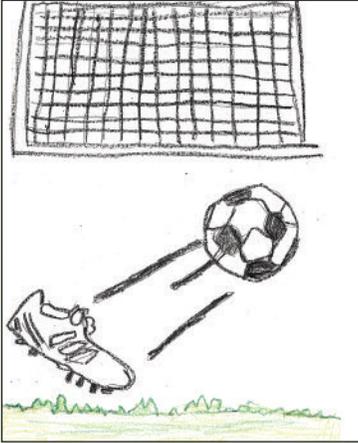
Don't Fight Stuttering

My name is Lily and I stutter. I'm nine years old and I go to school at Sherburne-Earlville. I started stuttering in kindergarten and I started speech therapy. Some strategies I use are bouncing



My name is Tristan. I am 7 years old and I am learning what happens to my body when I stutter. When I get stuck I feel it in my neck. Here is a picture of your body to show you what it does when you talk. The purple on the head is the brain. The red line is the thing that leads to your brain and under that is your mouth that has your tongue. First air goes down your mouth, then into your lungs (the purple circles with the heart near it). You have vocal folds inside your neck that stop food from going in your lungs and help you talk. There are bones (ribs) that protect your lungs. The food goes down under your lungs. The more I learn about the body, the more I'll know what to do when I get stuck.

Tristan, 7, Lake Geneva, WI



My name is Armando and I'm in the fourth grade. I like to play the goalie on my soccer team. I'm very good at soccer. In the last few years, I had a lot of problems with my stuttering. I felt frustrated and mad when I talked to my friends and with my teacher. I went to speech and I learned a lot of speech tools. When I'm in class, I ask the teacher if I can have a moment to answer. My strategies are slides, bounces, stretches, full breath, and pausing. Kids who stutter should go to a speech class so they can take deep breaths and use tools. I like reading the newsletter stories about other kids who stutter. Did you know that famous people stutter too? I have pictures of Darren Sproles and Lazaro Arbos on my tool box. They are cool people because they have to practice their speech tools just like me! Thank you for reading my letter!

Armando, 10, Denver, CO

which means I tear the word apart and I sound out each letter. Another strategy I use is clumping words together. I say two words together then I pause. I continue clumping words till I finish my sentence. My advice to you is to not fight with your stuttering. Be friends with it. Also my advice is to tell people to ask one question at a time because the more questions asked the more overwhelmed I am and I stutter more.

Lily, 9

Norwich, NY

Keep Practicing

I am 7 years old. My name is Dominic. My stuttering teacher helps me with my stuttering and she tells me to talk like a turtle! We also work on breathing in and out and tapping on my leg. My favorite strategy is tapping on my leg. I hope my stuttering will go away some day. If it doesn't, I will just keep practicing!

Dominic, 7

Lewistown, MO

My Speech Class is Fun

Hi, my name is Max. I stutter a lot. I started stuttering when I was 5 years old. When I told my mom about it, she signed me up for speech. My speech teacher is a really good teacher. She teaches me about all new tips about stuttering. I go to speech therapy every Monday and Thursday. She lets me and my friends play games, and she teaches

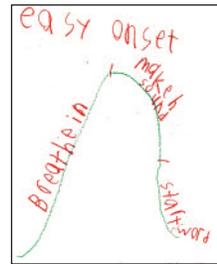
us. Some kids work on something else, like 's' sounds and 'er' sounds. My speech class is really fun!

Max, 9

Miami, FL

Let It Go, Let It Go

My name is Evan. I am seven years old. I live in Lincoln, NE.



Last year I started to stutter. Now I use some strategies like easy onset and catching the stuttering and letting it go. If you stut-

ter, my advice to you is catching the stuttering and letting it go and doing the easy onset.

Evan, 7

Lincoln, NE

Sometimes I Get Mad

Hi, my name is Zamaryon and I am 11 years old. I'm in the 4th grade, and I stutter when I talk too fast. My mom always tells me it is okay to stutter. My speech teacher teaches me how not to stutter, but it doesn't bother me. My uncle stutters too. Sometimes I get mad, but I take a deep breath and slow down. Thank you for reading my story.

Zamaryon, 11

Ocala, FL

Stuttering is Like Quicksand

My name is Larithza and I am in 5th grade. I think that stutter-

ing is like quicksand. Sometimes when I stutter, I sink faster. When I stay calm and think about it, I can "get up"! If you get a block, don't struggle ... instead, take a deep breath and start over.

Sometimes I get nervous when I have to read aloud in front of classrooms for leadership group. When I had to read out loud in my former third grade class, I didn't stutter too much because I had this particular teacher, and I practiced reading my passage out loud at home at least 2 times a day. This helped me to not block as much.

Other strategies that help me are: slowing down my speech, using continuous voice, and sometimes looking over the sentence and reading it to myself before I speak. I have two very close friends, Ellie and Jazmin, who I have known for 3 years. They are patient with me when I am in a block. They also make sure that others don't rush me when it's my turn to read or talk. I feel good because I have such good friends.

Larithza, 10

Eden Prairie, MN

I Want to Be a Teacher

Hi, my name is Jori. I started stuttering when I was 2. I am the only one in my family that stutters. I want to stop that, so this is why I have Ms. M. to help me with my speech. She is so good

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My name is Chloe. I am 9 years old and I am in 3rd grade. I have been stuttering for as long as I can remember, and I've been going to speech therapy for years. For me, stuttering happens when I am nervous. I sometimes get nervous when talking to friends at school or to people in the front office. Where do you stutter the most? To help me, I pause before I speak. What strategies to you use to help you?

Chloe, 9, Ft. Lauderdale, FL



My name is Connor and I am 8 years old. I repeat my words when I stutter. I just started speech therapy at Bayview Elementary. I learned that if you stutter you are the same person. It does not change who you are. I am lucky that no one teases me. I am good at soccer.

Connor, 8, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Letters

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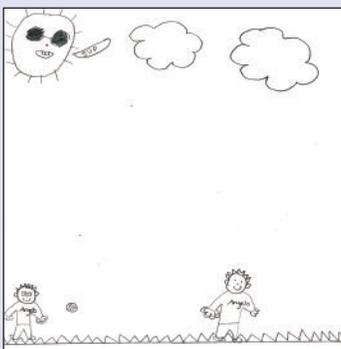
that I want to be a speech teacher just like her. I come here every Tuesday. I like to come to her, but when it is not Tuesday, I am sad. I wish today was Tuesday because I just want to come here so bad, so that I can stop stuttering. I like speech. I

don't like stuttering, especially when the kids make fun of me. This is why I have breathing strategies. So, when I grow up, I might be able to stop. I don't want to move from Ms. M.'s speech, so I want to still come to her when I'm in a higher grade. When you stutter, kids laugh at

you because they think it's funny, but kids all around the world kind of stutter. Everyone will get a turn to stop stuttering. This is why I want to stop stuttering. I want to be a girl that's free and not stutter.

Jori, 7

Pembroke Park, FL

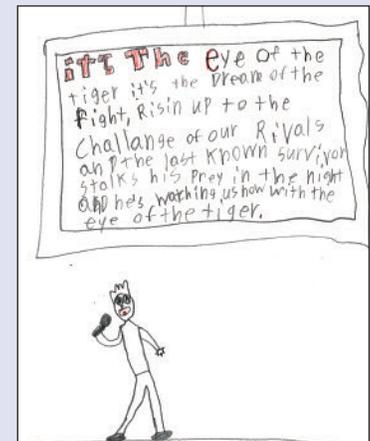


Hi, my name is Paul. I am 10 years old. I live in La Mirada, CA. I go to Gardenhill Elementary and I stutter. I have been teased and bullied by other kids. When kids tease me, I either walk away or I tell them I stutter. They usually say "sorry" after I tell them that. I have been going to speech therapy since I was in preschool. My teachers are Mrs. M. and Ms. H. They are the best teachers in the world. When I stutter, I slow down when I talk to help me have more control. My favorite thing to do is play baseball. When I grow up, I want to be a pro baseball player like Mike Trout on the Angels. Speech therapy has helped me a lot to control my stuttering and to speak in front of people.

Paul, 10, La Mirada, CA

Hi, my name is Jason. I am 11 and I live in La Mirada, CA, and I go to Gardenhill Elementary. I usually don't get teased for my stuttering, but it still causes me a lot of problems. So what I do is I either start all over when I stutter, or I sing. When I sing it helps me get better control of my voice. My favorite songs are Let it Go, Thriller, Hot Potato, and Eye of the Tiger. I like singing – it gives me confidence, and I think you should do it too. ©

Jason, 11, La Mirada, CA

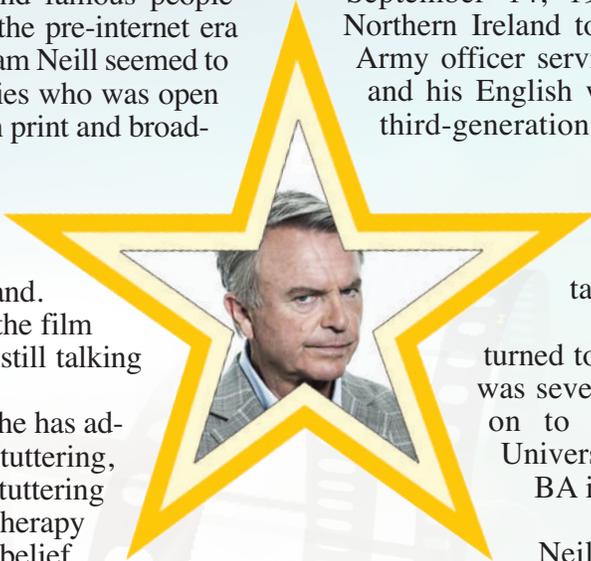


Actor Sam Neill Talks About Stuttering



Since the Internet permeated world culture 20 years ago, it has been easy for people to do searches to find famous people who stutter. However, in the pre-internet era of the early 1990s, actor Sam Neill seemed to be one of the few celebrities who was open about his stuttering in both print and broadcast media. At the time, he spoke openly of his stuttering on entertainment shows in the U.S., U.K., Australia, and New Zealand. More than 20 years later, the film star from *Down Under* is still talking about stuttering.

Over the last two years he has addressed not only his own stuttering, but also his daughter's stuttering and subsequent speech therapy underscored his longtime belief that there is a genetic predisposition for stuttering. In addition, he has not been shy about voicing his displeasure with certain aspects of the 2011 movie *The King's Speech* while stating that he liked the film overall.



Stuttering aside, the life of Sam Neill has been interesting to say the least. He was born September 14, 1947, in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland to Dermot Neill, a British Army officer serving with the Irish guards, and his English wife. Neill's father was a third-generation New Zealander whose own father owned and operated Neill and Co., the largest and most well-known liquor retailer in New Zealand.

The Neill family returned to New Zealand when Sam was seven years old. He would go on to graduate from Victoria University in Wellington with a BA in English literature.

Later pursuing acting, Neill's career took off as he starred in high-profile New Zealand and Australian films. His breakthrough role came in 1981 as the star of *Omen III: The Final Conflict* in which he portrayed Damien Thorn, the son of the devil. The brilliant career of this talented actor is too large to cover in full, but the roles continued with films such as *Dead Calm*, *The Hunt for Red October*, *Jurassic Park*, *The Piano*, *Rudyard*

Continued on page 22



One Size *Continued from the front page* works ‘best’ for the consumer.

This concern transcends preschool stuttering therapy and applies to all other facets of health care. To demonstrate the point, I would encourage you to Google “one+size+fits+all” with



Voon Pang

any human condition (i.e. asthma, anxiety, cancer and so on) to see that there is never one treatment approach which successfully remediates any of these conditions.

The bottom line is that each child is different, and therapy needs to be tailored to the individual needs of the child and the family. Prescribing a single treatment program to all pre-schoolers who stutter is not the answer.

2) We know that there is a range of treatment options for preschool children who stutter which has been researched and published in scientific journal articles (see reference list). So far one approach has not been identified as being superior to another approach.

I have been fortunate to be trained in Demands and Capacities treatment, Palin Parent Child Interaction therapy as well as the Lidcombe Program and each approach has been effective in stuttering prevention in young children.

I recently had one family se-

lect a Demands and Capacities treatment approach because the mother felt that her son would not respond well to his speech being praised and/or gently corrected. Some of the other factors, which contributed to the decision-making process, included the dad being a person who stutters himself — and not feeling comfortable with the idea that his son’s bumpy talking had to be ‘corrected’ — the child having a sensitive temperament and the child having high standards of his own speech fluency.

Together, Mom and I spent six sessions learning how to modify her communicative interactions and reduce the environmental demands so that her son could develop fluent speech. At follow up twelve months later, the family had no concerns and the child was speaking fluently.

To summarize, if we are to be effective in treating stuttering,



we need to be a Swiss army knife and know when to use each tool/treatment approach as opposed to being a hammer and trying to force a “square peg into a round hole.”

Speech Pathology Australia’s aim to reduce the cost of stutter-

ing treatment for pre-schoolers is a step in the right direction.

However, to endorse only one approach, and one that has not been shown to be superior to other approaches, is a major misstep in health care.

Finally, to limit the choices consumers have in preschool stuttering therapy is a disservice to parents of children who stutter and to speech language pathologists. Parents who seek help for their pre-schooler who stutters have a right to select a treatment approach that would best suit their family. To have no choice in the matter — despite all the research evidence any treatment program may have — would be unethical.

**Speech Pathology Australia is the professional organization representing speech-language pathologists.*

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Check out Voon Pang’s latest blogs at www.StutteringHelp.org/blog

More than \$16,000 has been donated to the Stuttering Foundation by Cookie Lee, which is now ViVi Jewelry.



For summer camps and programs, visit StutteringHelp.org/clinics-summer.

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.

Stuttering Community Remembers Two Pioneers

Gene J. Brutten

Gene J. Brutten, Ph.D., 84, a globally recognized expert in the field of speech-language pathology, died on March 4th of heart failure at Florida Hospital in Orlando.



Dr. Brutten devoted his professional life to experimental and clinical research related to the nature, assessment, and treatment of stuttering. His research led to the development of the influential *Two Factor Theory* of stuttering documented in the seminal book *The Modification of Stuttering* co-authored with Dr. Donald J. Shoemaker.

His 50 year professional career started as a speech-language pathologist at Long Island University. He later joined the faculty at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale until 1993.

In 1994, Professor Brutten joined the faculty at the University of Central Florida in the Department of Communication Sciences

and Disorders.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association bestowed its highly-prized honors upon Dr. Brutten in recognition of his lifetime accomplishments in the field of communication sciences and disorders. He also received two Fulbright-Hays Awards.

George H. Shames

George H. Shames, Ph.D., professor emeritus in communication disorders and psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, died March 1, 2015. He was 88.

Dr. Shames was renowned as an expert in stuttering. He developed

an innovative therapy technique in the 1970's (with C. Florance) about which he delivered numerous invited guest lectures, nationally and internationally.



As a graduate student he entered and won a competition, sponsored by the American Speech and Hearing Association, (ASHA) and supervised by Charles Van Riper, for developing one of the most original and creative ideas for a new therapy for stuttering.

He was named a Fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and in 2006 received ASHA's highest recognition, "Honors of the Association" for lifetime achievement.

Shames was a prolific author of numerous research articles and other publications. He was the senior author of several editions of a popular textbook in speech-language pathology, several books on stuttering, and a textbook on interviewing and counseling persons with communication disorders.



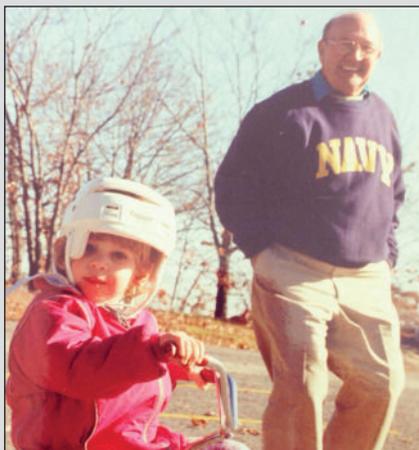
Gene Brutten and George Shames were part of the Stuttering Foundation's 1970 conference. Attendees, from left, were Drs. Bruce Ryan, George Shames, Gene Brutten, Charles Van Riper, Helbert Damste, Stan Ainsworth, Malcolm Fraser, Dick Boehmler, Al Murphy, Woody Starkweather, and Joe Sheehan.

World War II Veteran Remembered for His Sense of Humor

George E. O'Brien, Jr, 93, passed away March 9. He is the grandfather of Stuttering Foundation friend and former intern Susannah Parkin.

He served in the U.S. Navy in World War II, on the LST 48. The ship was active on DDay in the invasion at Utah Beach and in the invasion of southern France.

George had a great sense of humor. He loved his family with all of his heart, his church, his neighbors, a good golf game, Syracuse football and basketball teams, and the New York Yankees.



A young Susannah Parkin with her grandfather George O'Brien, Jr.

The family asked that donations be made to the Stuttering Foundation.

Gifts received as of April 1 in Memory of George E. O'Brien, Jr.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| The Staff of New Jersey State Library | Jeffrey & Judith O'Neil |
| Jessica Adler | Leon P. Parkin |
| Ann Conlon | Joel Pava |
| Bridget Flynn | Susan Peplau |
| Henry Frey | Kathleen Rusch |
| David & Alisabet | Audrey E. Russo and Family |
| Mischoulon | Robin Simmons |
| Ann O'Connor | Peter & Pamela Somers |
| Elizabeth O'Connor | Janice Washburn |

Research *Continued from the front page*
final repetition of sounds or utterance components.

What do we know?

Atypical disfluencies are generally not seen in the majority of children with developmental stuttering (child onset fluency disorder). While uncommon, more and more cases are being reported through online communities by speech-language pathologists seeking guidance for treatment. The most common atypical disfluency of concern is word-final repetition (“home-home”; “playground-playground”), though there are increasing reports of mid-word insertions, described as an insertion of /h/ or a glottal stop mid-vowel (“we-he”; see-?ee).

Historically, final-word repetition has been documented in cases of acquired stuttering and in children with neurological impairment (Ardila & Lopez, 1986; Bijleveld, Lebrun & Leleux, 1985; Lebrun & Van Borsel, 1990; Lebrun & Van Dongen, 1994; Van Borsel, Van Coster, Van Lierde, 1996). In terms of developmental disfluency, some documented cases reported rapid remission in young children (Camarata, 1984; Mowrer, 1987; Rudman, 1984). Atypical disfluencies have been documented in case studies of typically developing children (Humphrey, 1997; McAllister & Kingston, 2005), as well as with children who present with features of autism spectrum disorder (Scaler Scott, Grossman, Abendroth, Tetnowski, Damico, 2006; Scaler Scott, Tetnowski, Flaitz, Yaruss, 2014).

At this point, the nature and origin of these disfluencies are not clear. Case studies conjecture

that these may be perseverative behaviors, a form of covert repair, a form of palilalia, symptoms of efforts to self-regulate, or perhaps a subtype of developmental stuttering.

Although there are growing numbers of published case reports, there are only a few published treatments (Sisskin & Wasilus, 2014; Van Borsel, Geirnaert, Van Coster, 2005) for decreasing the frequency of atypical disfluencies. As with other communication disorders without clear etiologies, the above



case studies demonstrate positive outcomes through behavioral treatments; we can successfully treat some disorders without understanding their cause or how they emerge.

What is the diagnostic profile?

What does the multi-dimensional assessment profile look like for these cases? Among the neurotypical children (children without ASD), we have seen average to above-average language skills, and in some cases, vocabulary levels in the superior range. The profile among the children with autism is less consistent. In terms of disfluency, most of the children displayed stuttering-like disfluency (part-word and whole

word repetition) and between-word disfluency (interjections and phrase repetitions) in addition to atypical disfluency, but at a lower frequency. No secondary physical concomitant behaviors were noted and while awareness varied, there was minimal concern, anxiety, or reactive behavior on the part of the child. *Scores on The Overall Assessment of the Speaker's Experience of Stuttering for School-Age Children (OASES-S)* has typically indicated a higher life impact than what would be expected

from children who do not stutter, but from our experience, it was possible that the children with atypical disfluency were judging their experience as communicators more generally, as some of these children had co-existing pragmatic language concerns.

What are some potential treatment ideas?

Individual case studies show good promise for treating atypical disfluency. In one case where the frequency was initially very high and speech was difficult

to follow, frequency of word-final disfluency was brought down to less than 2% of spontaneous speech, in all speech contexts, even several years post-therapy (Sisskin & Wasilus, 2014). In other cases we have treated, involving final-word repetition or mid-word insertion, atypical disfluency became unnoticeable to the unfamiliar listener.

Treatment strategies involved identification and correction of atypical disfluency. In contrast to stuttering, where “suppression” might lead to escape or avoidance behaviors, no replacement behaviors or covert concealment strategies resulted. *Identification*

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On the Road Again



Charlie Osborne manned the Stuttering Foundation booth, which was right in the conference room, during the Cooperative Educational Service Agency 5 conference March 9-10 in Wisconsin Dells, WI. More than 450 speech-language pathologists attended.

with Resources to Help Those Who Stutter



Ed and Patty Reed ran the Stuttering Foundation booth at the Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association Convention in San Antonio in March.

A special thank you to all the volunteers: Megann McGill, Zoi Gkalitsiou, Tricia Krauss-Lehrman, Rossanna Portley, Mary Johns, Brandon Young, Sara Welch, Anabel Gordon, Jamie Putnam, Greg Smith, and Jeannie Barrett.



Neill
Continued from page 17

Kipling's The Jungle Book, Bicentennial Man, Merlin, and Merlin's Apprentice in addition to various high-profile mini-series. Also, Neill was a leading candidate to succeed Roger Moore as James Bond, a role that ultimately went to Timothy Dalton. His screen test for James Bond can be seen on the special features section of the DVD of the 1987 Bond film *The Living Daylights*, and can be viewed on YouTube.

Sam Neill has always been open that stuttering affected his childhood. During an interview in 2004 on the Australian talk show *Enough Rope*, which is available on YouTube, the actor was asked by interviewer Andrew Denton about his stuttering. Neill responded that the speech problem greatly affected his childhood and that he always hoped people would not talk to him so he would not have to answer back. The actor added, "I kind of outgrew it. I can still....you can detect me as a stammerer."

On September 20, 2013, an article about Neill and his stuttering appeared in the *Daily Mail* with the revealing headline "The stutter that cursed my family: He's starred in 70 films, but Sam Neill reveals he suffered from a childhood stammer – and he fears he passed it on to his daughter." *The New Zealand Star* quoted him about his struggles with stuttering, "I was painfully shy, probably because of it. When people said something to me, I was afraid I'd have to reply so I really didn't say much."

While the worldwide stuttering community heralded the movie *The King's Speech* as a ground-breaker, Neill offered a frank view, "I have to say, as much as I

liked the film, I did take issue with it. In the movie George VI had been bullied by his father and his stutter was the result of that, but the idea that a stutter is caused by childhood trauma has been rather discredited. It's more like a genetic disposition."



The article continued with Neill frankly addressing his daughter's stuttering, "I discovered this [genetic disposition] because my youngest child Elena stuttered very badly, and we took her to a therapist who asked if there was a history of it in the

family. I told her I used to stutter, and after six months of exercises Elena was absolutely OK. Acting has had a therapeutic effect on me and it probably helped give me confidence."

On the website of The British Stammering Association there is a page entitled "The Actor Sam Neill's perspective" in which he addresses various topics relating to stuttering. One of those topics is "The Importance of Gaining Confidence" in which the actor relates his own experience, "I don't know what I did to change the stutter, I think I just forgot it, by degrees and in part I always thought that actually ... I was sent on one of those, kind of, outward bound things where you had to run across logs or fall in the river and drown, and that did a lot for my physical self-confidence. At about the same time I was kind of doing better at school, and I was learning to debate, and I was involved in drama and plays and so on. I was becoming kind of a confident person, and I suspect that all of that kind of worked on the stuttering and vice versa, and so there was no particular game plan, it just sort of happened organically."

In addition to being public about his stuttering, Neill is a supporter of both the Australian Speak Easy Association and the British Stammering Association. The worldwide stuttering community should rejoice in having such a high-profile actor to speak on behalf of both people who stutter and the power of speech therapy. The fact that Sam Neill was so vocal about his stuttering in the pre-internet era and continues to be so today strongly conveys his commitment and compassion to bringing attention to stuttering.

Comments from [Facebook.com/stutteringhelp](https://www.facebook.com/stutteringhelp)



Christine said this about *6 Tips for Speaking with Someone Who Stutters*, “Every person in the world should read this and perhaps maybe even experience stuttering for a single day, to be able to be more empathetic.”



In a discussion about bullying, Larry said, “The teasing and bullying I experienced were tough years on me until I realized just how incompetent and sad the bullies were. In retrospect, I feel sorry for them and feel somewhat glad that I brought some semblance of joy to their unhappy lives. Yet, much pain remains when I see those poor individuals. I hope they have all discovered their strengths instead of focusing on their incompetencies for they could speak freely and used it badly.”



Award-winning actor Colin Firth is helping raise money to help children who stutter. Robin had this to say, “I’ve always loved Colin Firth, but now I love him more!”



When it comes to stuttering therapy, one size doesn’t fit all. Susan writes, “People are different in every way. One approach will never work for all people.”



You shouldn’t finish sentences for someone who stutters. Julie agrees, “Yes! I see how defeated my son looks when someone finishes his sentence. Patience is a practiced skill.”



Self-Therapy for the Stutterer is available free as an e-book at StutteringHelp.org. Here’s what Ray had to say about it, “It’s a wonderful book ... such simple tips, such as slowing down, evaluating yourself, and discovering what unique solutions you can come up with to help yourself are invaluable. As a designer who is constantly evaluating and iterating in my own work, the book codified a lot of what I was subconsciously doing in my own day-to-day life as a stutterer.”



NBA star Michael Kidd-Gilchrist was the focus of a *Sports Illustrated* article about how therapy helped him with his stuttering. All Island Speech

and Stuttering Therapy wrote, “Thank you for posting inspirational articles. The children especially love reading about the sports stars.”

Chicago Bears player Matt Slauson talked about how he was bullied as a kid because he stuttered. Jarvis posts, “Noticing more people are opening up about their stuttering. Very liberating and inspiring.”



A posting about a Cleveland police cadet reportedly prevented from graduating due to his stuttering drew a number of responses, including this one from Sean, “Became an Army officer and served in two war zones with a stutter. We don’t need to buy into the idea that ‘we can’t do that.’ No matter what ‘that’ is.”



Huffington Post columnist Madeline Wahl says stuttering shouldn’t hold a person back when pursuing a career. Susan, agrees, “Oh Yes! God given gifts and talents are wonderful and we are certainly grateful for them; however, achieving, problem solving, and overcoming an obstacle because of perseverance and hard word reminds you of your power, capabilities, inner strength, and belief in yourself.”



Actor James Earl Jones turned 84, and Facebook was flooded with well wishes. Including, this one from Teresa, “Happy Birthday, Mr. Jones!!! I love how you are inspiring others to reach for their dreams!”



Jan responded to an article in which columnist Bobby Caruso talks about his own stuttering. Jan writes, “What an honest, beautiful voice!”



Numerous people responded to posted chapter from the book *Sometimes I Just Stutter*. Ed said, “I stutter everyday. It doesn’t stop me from livin’ my dream life. It makes you a stronger person!”



Harrison Craig was a contestant on *The Voice Australia*. After hearing him sing, our Facebook follower Tobi wrote, “He is awesome. Simply Wow.”



Research *Continued from page 20*

involved active monitoring in game formats. Initially, monitoring of non-speech behaviors needed to be taught directly, gradually leading to self-monitoring of the target behavior. *Correction* involved “canceling” the entire word followed by fluent repetition. Initially, verbal contingencies were used, eventually moving to self-correction.

Special attention and care was taken to program for carryover and generalization. This required active parent participation and home assignments to spend time each day on games to reinforce new behaviors. We might go as far as to say that the most important components of the therapy for these cases included implementation of creative teaching strategies (catering to the learning style of the client), individualized counseling (as some children questioned the rationale for reducing atypical disfluency in their speech); and attention to behavioral principles that lead to long term change.

What's next?

We must emphasize that the information we provided here is based on individual therapy cases of children with atypical disfluency. We need further research to determine if these cases differ fundamentally from developmental stuttering, or might be a subtype among other subtypes. We have a good deal of anecdotal evidence from speech pathologists that commonly used fluency strategies have not been

successful in treating most of these cases.

To be honest, we have both been rather surprised by the outpouring of feedback on the first column on this topic, and more frequent postings of reports of atypical disfluency on professional listservs. It is clear we need more research, assessment development and intervention reports on these clinical cases.

If you would like to help us explore the dimensions and characteristics of clients pre-



senting with atypical disfluency, please complete a short anonymous survey at https://umdsurvey.umd.edu/SE/?SID=SV_5j7YxjpAOWSj4ln

Knowing your concerns about clients with difficult to characterize fluency profiles will greatly help us explore what is needed to best address their problems. We will share results of this survey in an upcoming column.

Do you have questions for Researcher Corner? Email Dr. Ratner at nratner@umd.edu.

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Website Increases Stuttering Awareness

By Haj Khalsa, in partnership with Rick Arenas

As a person who stutters, I am always looking for ways to better manage my stuttering, but I am also very interested in ways to raise awareness about stuttering in the world at large.



Haj Khalsa



Rick Arenas

Several years ago, I started giving presentations about stuttering to classes at the University of New Mexico. The therapeutic benefits to me were obvious and the response from my audience was great. As a result, I felt I had happened upon a powerful way to touch on both of these goals.

I wanted to see if I could share these benefits with a



larger audience, so I created *StutterAware.com*: an online portal to link people who stutter and audiences.

The mission of the website is twofold: raise awareness about stuttering and make life easier for people who stutter.

As we all know, stuttering is a unique and complex pathology that presents a lifelong challenge to people who stutter and those who love them.

In my view, increased public awareness and sensitivity towards stuttering in society at large can help lessen that challenge and make life easier for people who stutter.

So how does *StutterAware.com* help to achieve these goals? People who stutter who would like the opportunity to practice public speaking and share their experiences can register as pre-

senters and organizations (e.g. schools, churches, government offices, businesses, etc.) can register as interested audiences.

StutterAware.com presentations are a way for people who do not stutter to learn about stuttering first hand from a person who does stutter. What is it like to live with stuttering? Is there a cure? Are there ways to help? At the same time, it's an opportunity for the presenter to gain the therapeutic benefits of sharing openly the experience of being a person who stutters.

Hopefully, the end result is increased awareness and more sensitivity towards stuttering in society at large. So, if you are a person who stutters who would like to be a presenter or an institution that would like to host a presentation, we would love to hear from you!

You can contact us through *StutterAware.com*.

All presentations are free of charge.

Chat and Chew Fundraiser

Wendy Walsh, speech-language pathologist at Old Fort Elementary School in Old Fort, NC, developed a fundraiser for the Stuttering Foundation in recognition of Better Speech and Hearing Month, which coincides with National Stuttering Awareness Week each May.



Mrs. Walsh created a lesson plan she calls *Chat and Chew*, in which students could buy bubble gum and enjoy conversation time with each other. Who could resist that combo? The lesson plan was developed to raise awareness of stuttering and also to address Common Core objectives related to conversation skills.

Four teachers at the school agreed to participate, and they and their students were enthusiastic about being part of this fundraiser!

A special thank you to Mrs. Dyer's class, Mrs. Spivey's class, Mrs. Mercurio's class and Mrs. Trembeth's class for their participation.

Several students showed an act of kindness by donating extra money for the cause. The event in March was so successful and popular that Mrs. Walsh held another *Chat and Chew* in April and will donate all proceeds during Better Speech and Hearing Month in May.



Wendy Walsh chatting with students.



Mrs. Dyer and her students.

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Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Speech and Language Pathologists

Sponsored by the Stuttering Foundation and Boston University, this two-day workshop is Sept. 12 and 13, 2015, at Boston University. Workshop leaders are Carolyn Cheasman, BSc (Hons) PgDipSLT cert. MRSLT, and Rachel Everard MSc, Cert. MRSLT, both from City Lit, UK Specialist Centre in adult stuttering therapy. Conference coordinator is Diane Constantino, M.S., CCC-SLP, of Boston University.

Deadline to apply is Aug. 29. There is a \$125 fee. To register, <http://www.bu.edu/sargent/acceptance-and-commitment-therapy>.

8th World Congress on Fluency Disorders will be July 6-8, 2015, in Lisbon, Portugal.

A pre-conference workshop co-sponsored by the Stuttering Foundation and the International Fluency Association on *Basic Clinical Skills* is July 4-5.

For more information, visit www.theifa.org/Legacy/IFA2015/Announcement/index.html.

The 18th Annual Friends Who Stutter Convention is July 16-18, 2015, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Raleigh, N.C. For more information, visit <http://www.friendswhostutter.org/annual-convention/>



The National Stuttering Association will hold its 32nd Conference from July 1-5, 2015, in Baltimore. For more information, visit www.westutter.org.



Using Cognitive Approaches with People Who Stutter

The Stuttering Foundation's Five-Day Eastern Workshop is June 22-26, 2015, at Boston University.

Workshop leaders are Elaine Kelman, MSc, Cert CT, Cert MRCSLT; and Alison Nicholas, MSc, BA (Hons), Reg MRC-SLT, of the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children. Conference coordinator is Diane Parris Constantino, M.S., CCC-SLP, of Boston University.

Diagnosis and Treatment of Children and Adolescents Who Stutter: Practical Strategies

The Stuttering Foundation's Five-Day Western Workshop is from June

9-13, 2015, in Portland. It is co-sponsored by The Stuttering Foundation and Pacific University. Workshop leaders are Stephen Hamilton, M.A., CCC-SLP, University Way Speech Services; Jennifer Watson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Texas Christian University; and Ellen Reuler, M.A., CCC-SLP, Pacific University.

Websites:

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