



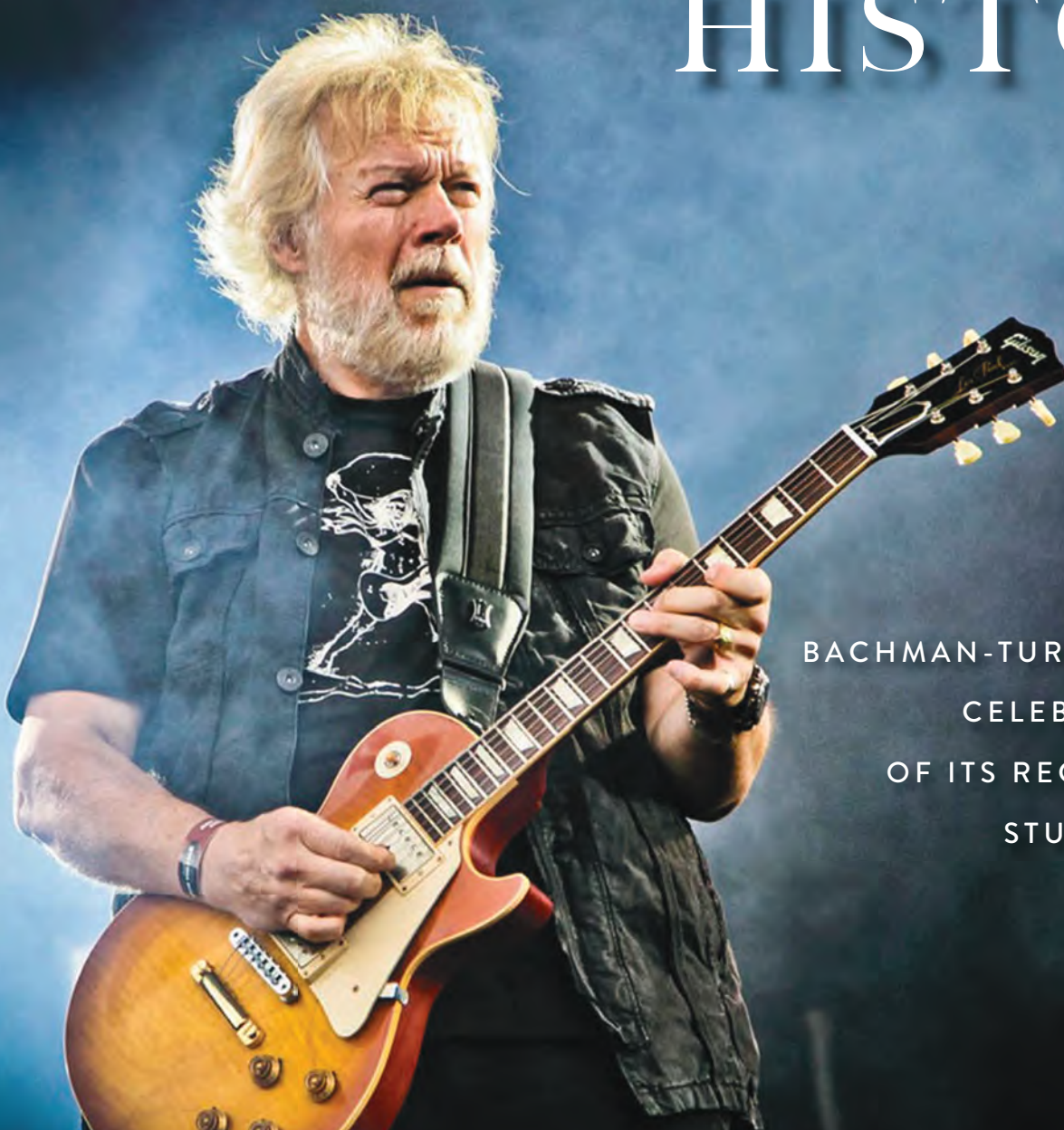
THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION

A Nonprofit Organization

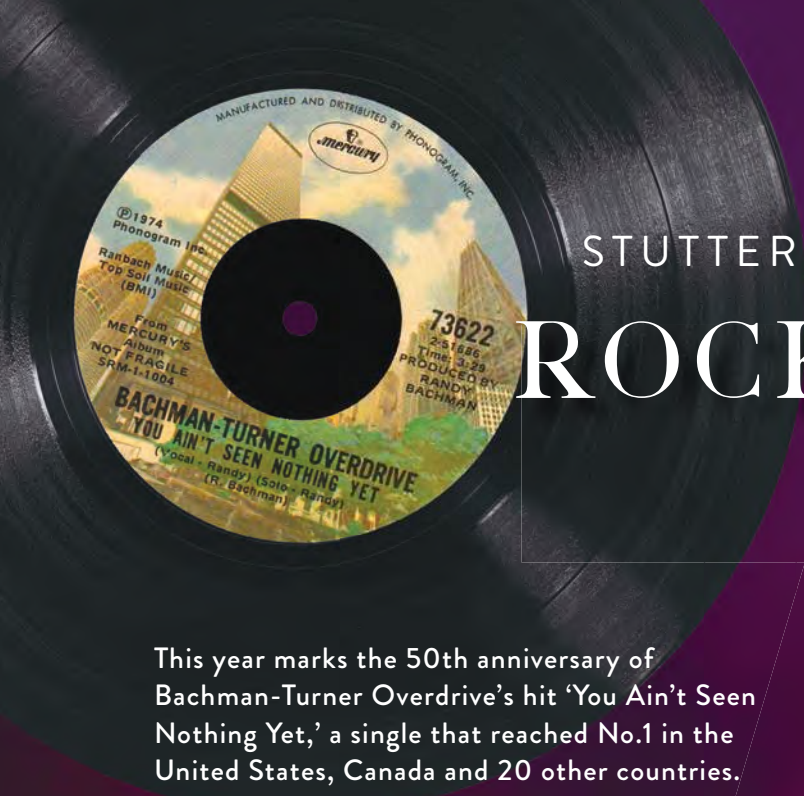
FALL 2024

Since 1947... Helping Those Who Stutter

STUTTERING TAKES THE STAGE IN ROCK 'N' ROLL HISTORY



BACHMAN-TURNER OVERDRIVE
CELEBRATES 50 YEARS
OF ITS RECORD-BREAKING
STUTTERING SINGLE



STUTTERING TAKES THE STAGE IN ROCK 'N' ROLL HISTORY

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Bachman-Turner Overdrive's hit 'You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet,' a single that reached No.1 in the United States, Canada and 20 other countries.

However, this 1974 classic rock anthem by the Winnipeg-based band created a wave of attention in 2011, which resulted in positive karma for countless Canadians who stutter.

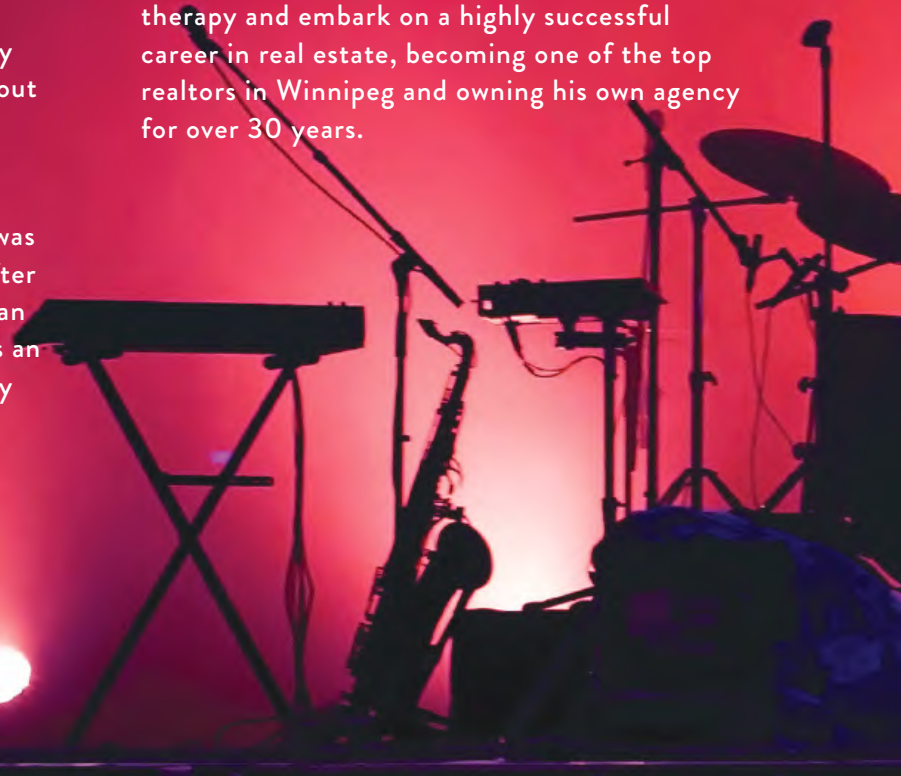
That year, the Stuttering Foundation issued a press release titled "Stuttering to the Top of the Charts," in which it named BTO's song as the top stuttering song of all-time, beating out famous tunes such as Elton John's 'Bennie and the Jets,' The Who's 'My Generation,' David Bowie's 'Changes' and many others.

We chose BTO's song because it was the only such song with stuttering vocals that was about a real person who stuttered; the backstory underscores the power of speech therapy.

Bachman-Turner Overdrive's first manager was a Bachman brother, Gary, who stuttered. After Gary left his role as manager, Randy Bachman sang their new song with stuttering vocals as an inside joke, with the intention that only Gary would hear the tape.

After recording their new album Not Fragile, their record company, Mercury Records, had room for another song on the LP. Randy played 'You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet,' explained that it was a joke and agreed to include the song on the album if the band could re-record it. The team at Mercury Records hated the new "serious" version of the song and demanded the inclusion of the version with the stuttering vocals for the album.

What sets 'You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet' apart from many other songs with stuttering vocals is that it's not only about a real person who stuttered, but the second part of the backstory is even more compelling. Gary Bachman would later overcome his stuttering through speech therapy and embark on a highly successful career in real estate, becoming one of the top realtors in Winnipeg and owning his own agency for over 30 years.





When the Stuttering Foundation sent out its press release in 2011, a Winnipeg newspaper wrote an article about the press release titled “BTO Song Singled Out,” in which they interviewed Gary Bachman. This article went out on the Canadian newswire and was picked up by virtually every newspaper in Canada. The result was that the true story behind ‘You Ain’t Seen Nothing Yet’ was revealed some 37 years after the fact.

We here at the Stuttering Foundation were absolutely swamped by a tsunami of emails and calls to our toll-free 800 number in Canada from Canadian communications people who stutter.

Many called to say that they were inspired by the story behind the BTO song and the fact Gary Bachman found fluency through speech therapy.

They wanted advice on pursuing speech therapy themselves. Others called to say they had entered speech therapy after reading the article. One person called to tell us that for 37 years, he had to change the station every time the song came on because it was too painful. Now, it was his favourite song of all time!

How wonderful is it that 37 years after topping the charts, a classic rock song helped to transform lives by leading people who stutter in Canada into speech therapy?

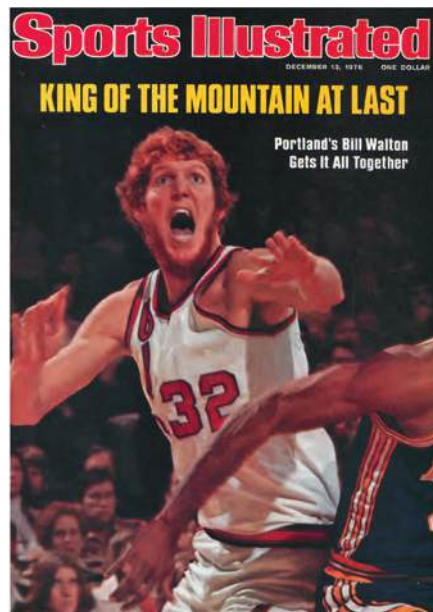
Every time Randy Bachman does an interview and mentions the song’s background, we receive inquiries for guidance in speech therapy.

On the 50th anniversary of ‘You Ain’t Seen Nothing Yet,’ we thank Bachman-Turner Overdrive, Gary Bachman and especially Randy Bachman. We hope his interviews around the world continue to send people who stutter to speech therapy.

Canada should not only be proud of the song’s half-century of success, but also of the ironic twist of how it has served to help so many adults and children who stutter throughout the provinces, territories and beyond.



STUTTERING FOUNDATION REMEMBERS
BILL WALTON
AMERICAN COLLEGE & NBA BASKETBALL LEGEND



The Stuttering Foundation mourns the passing of college basketball and NBA legend, broadcaster, and stuttering advocate Bill Walton.

Featured nearly 30 years ago in The Stuttering Foundation newsletter, Walton spoke about his stuttering through childhood, college, and even in his professional career. Following is excerpted from that article:

He used basketball as a sanctuary, a place he didn't have to think about his speech. "I never had any trouble yelling at the refs," Walton said. "During college, the teasing was tough."

Remembering the basketball techniques he had learned from UCLA basketball coach John Wooden, Walton said he "thought about fundamentals and how to start with the basics like ability to mechanically duplicate moves on the basketball court. And I just applied that to speaking."

When he began broadcasting for NBC Sports, all of the fears resurfaced. Off the court, he was still afraid to talk. He describes his first broadcast as "painful" but knows now the worst is over. "I used to be really embarrassed about stuttering. But now I realize that it's something that is a part of me...something that I have to deal with and work on every day. If I don't work on it, I'm not going to be able to do my job. It's always a challenge," he added.

Walton served as national spokesperson for The Stuttering Foundation in 1996, during National Stuttering Awareness Week.

"It's important to know that help is out there. The ability to talk is easily the greatest thing I've ever done," said Walton. "Winning two NCAA championships and two NBA titles was nice, but I knew that was going to happen. But learning how to speak has given me a whole new life. I have been set free."

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON STUTTERING DRAWS PRAISE FROM ATTENDEES



Using Cognitive Approaches to Working with People Who Stutter, an international workshop, was held in Boston, Massachusetts, from June 3-7, 2024, and cosponsored by the Memphis-based Stuttering Foundation and Boston University.

Twenty-three speech-language pathologists from around the world were selected from a highly competitive pool of applicants.

“For almost 40 years, we have conducted these intensive workshops to increase the pool of speech-language pathologists trained in the latest techniques for the treatment of stuttering,” said Jane Fraser, president of the Stuttering Foundation. “We were fortunate that once again Elaine Kelman and Ali Berquez, joined by Sarah Delpeche, from the Michael Palin Centre in London led this year’s expert training.”

“I was so excited to welcome this year’s incredibly talented group of SLPs to Boston, some to the U.S. for the first time,” added Caroline Brinkert, M.S., of Boston University, and coordinator of the Workshop. “Ali, Elaine, and Sarah foster such a rich learning environment in the ‘classroom’ through their dynamic and interactive presentation style. I learned so much from the unique perspectives and experiences each attendee contributed to discussions, and in individual conversations

we had over the course of the week. The Stuttering Foundation Eastern Workshop is truly unlike any other SLP workshop in terms of the community and impact it creates.”

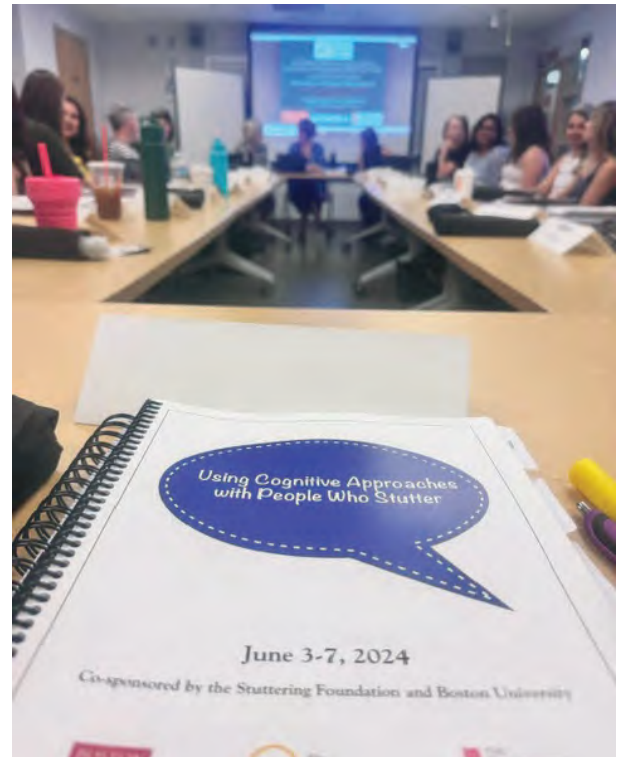
“The 2024 Eastern Workshop was a wonderful gathering of shared knowledge and expertise, open hearts and minds, and a collaborative endeavor to develop specialist skills in order to meet the needs of children, young people and adults who stutter and their families,” said Elaine Kelman, MSc, FRCSLT, HCPC, Cert CBT. of The Michael Palin Centre. “This was a truly international group from varying clinical and academic settings, some with a couple of years of experience and some with decades. It is such a privilege to be able to contribute to this Stuttering Foundation initiative each year and it is always a personal highlight.”

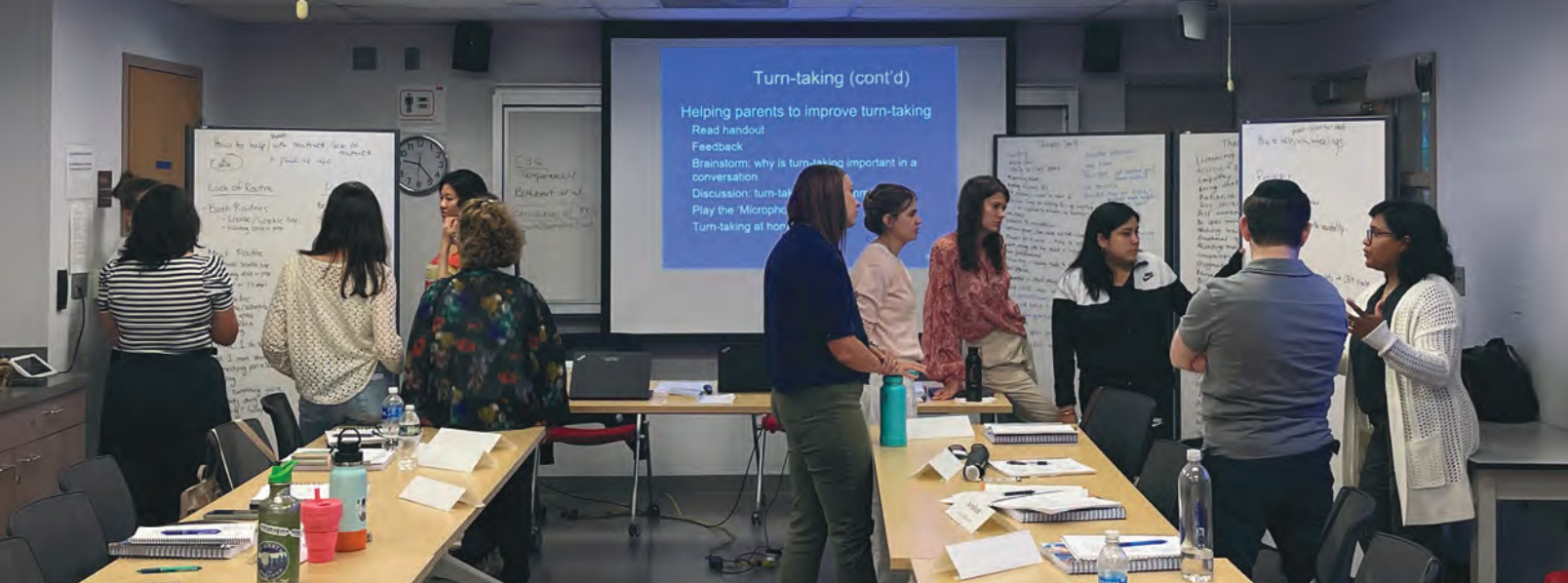
BACK ROW: Ladan Koshbin, Matteo Scalabrin, Paige Lane, Maria Silvia Mazzochi, Armin Bings, Katie Winters, Kerri Berard, Kaisa Punkeri, Leetal Cuperman, Rebekka Pavlak. Center row: Sandra Gimenez, Claudia Zapata, Michelle Kusturiss, Avrohom Steinmetz, Angelica Bernabe Roman, Ana Karina Espinoza Pena, Amanda, Rudine Fetahaj, Faith Leung Hiu Lam, Dimitra Makaroni, Liveem Thakaram, Hillary Baker, Shirley Feng. FRONT ROW: Sarah Delpeche, Elaine Kelman, Caroline Brinkert, Ali Berquez

“The 2024 Eastern Workshop in Boston was such a special experience, added Ali Berquez, MSc, PG Dip. CT (Oxford), BRIEF Cert. SF Practice, MRCSLT, RegHCPC, of The Michael Palin Centre. “A time to talk, learn, reflect and practice skills in CBT, SFBT and Palin PCI with therapists from the U.S. and around the world including Canada, India, Malaysia, Chile, Argentina, Kosovo, Italy, Finland and Hong Kong who dedicate themselves to serving the families they support. This wonderful collaboration was made possible by the Stuttering Foundation, and I feel deeply honored to be a part of it.”

“It was an honor to be part of the Stuttering Foundation’s 2024 Eastern Workshop in Boston for my first time this year,” said Sarah Delpeche, MSc, BSc(Hons), MRCSLT, RegHCPC of The Michael Palin Centre. It was a week of learning, collaborating and sharing, in addition to strengthening and forming new professional networks and relationships. A highlight was Jane Fraser joining us virtually to individually connect with each of the 23 participants who expressed their gratitude for this wonderful learning opportunity. It was clear from the participant feedback that this workshop will have a far-reaching impact on the lives of children who stutter and their families.”

This year’s workshop attendees are already providing stuttering therapy from California to Maine, from Brazil to Hong Kong to Malaysia.





"The workshop was truly fantastic, and I am incredibly grateful for the chance to learn from experts who shared their professional knowledge and experience. I am committed to sharing the valuable information gained from the workshop. I will be attending the 7th International Summit on Speech Language Pathology in China from July 4th to 7th, and I will be delivering an oral presentation to share insights and learnings from the workshop. Furthermore, I am honored to represent the Taiwan Stuttering Association and will also be presenting to Chinese-speaking speech therapists in late July. My goal is to effectively convey the knowledge and strategies discussed in the workshop to benefit a broader audience. Additionally, my team of six clinicians is eager to learn from my experiences at the workshop. I am committed to sharing detailed insights with them and providing guidance to enhance our clinical practices collectively."

"I gained incredible knowledge that will have a profound shift in my approach as a therapist! Trust yourself and the process! I'm the ripple in the pond!"

"My biggest gain was an entirely new mindset on stuttering therapy followed by many new, practical ideas, resources, wording and activities. Also, the gain of a global group of colleagues is immeasurable."

"I got a great deal of knowledge about coping better with parents and children who stutter. It helped me to organize my planning of all the different areas I should work with."

"I had a lot of good conversations with other participants as well giving me new perspectives and advice for things I find challenging."

"I gained confidence working with clients and their families, specifically on CBT, solution focused therapy and the power of silence."

"It was a mindset shift. I gained practical ways of working with people who stutter."

"I learned a very novel method. It was very practical."

"I gained deep insight into the programs, believe in the process and will be more mindful of working with families and children who stutter."

"I got to meet and learn from colleagues with expertise that is far beyond what I have available at home."

"The course gave me not only new theoretical knowledge, but also (and more importantly) essential skills for a therapist. It has been an amazing opportunity to grow from both a professional and personal point of view."

The Stuttering Foundation estimates that more than 80 million people stutter worldwide. It notes that the more than 400 past graduates of the Boston Workshop program have created a "ripple effect" back in their home communities as they continue to share their knowledge.



INSIGHTS INTO THE FUNDAMENTAL **MECHANISMS OF BRAIN FUNCTION**

It is not feasible to non-invasively study complex behaviors at the molecular, cellular, and circuit levels in humans during development, and animal research is crucial in understanding the developmental intricacy of brain functions. These models offer a controlled environment to study the impact of changes in genetics, epigenetics, internal states, or external environments, providing insights into the fundamental mechanisms of brain function and the pathophysiology of neuropsychiatric conditions.

Historically, animal models have played a vital role in numerous groundbreaking discoveries in neuroscience. The use of animals has been essential in understanding neural circuits, synaptic transmission, and neuroplasticity. For instance, Alan Hodgkin and Andrew Huxley's research on the giant squid axon elucidated the ionic mechanisms underlying action potentials, the fundamental mechanism underlying signal transduction along brain cells, earning them the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1963. Similarly, Eric Kandel's work with sea slugs (*Aplysia*) uncovered the molecular mechanisms of

learning and memory, leading to his Nobel Prize in 2000. In fact, approximately 85% of Nobel Prize recipients in the Physiology or Medicine category used animal models in their research, underscoring the indispensable role of animal research in contributing to significant scientific and medical advancements.

Similarly, animal research is essential for enhancing our understanding of human speech. Speaking is one of the most complex behaviors, involving the coordinated effort of various brain regions and over 100 muscles in the body. In a simplistic view, key brain areas involved include Broca's area, responsible for language production and constructing grammatically correct sentences; Wernicke's area, essential for language comprehension and coherent speech formulation; the motor cortex, which plans and executes voluntary movements necessary for speech; the basal ganglia, which coordinate the timing and smoothness of speech movements; and



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the cerebellum, which ensures smooth and coordinated speech by integrating sensory inputs and fine-tuning motor activities. The process of speech production begins with conceptualization, where the intention to communicate is formed, followed by formulation, where linguistic forms are selected, and sentences are constructed, and articulation, where the motor cortex signals muscles to produce sounds. Auditory feedback helps monitor and adjust speech in real time. Neural pathways like the arcuate fasciculus connect Broca's and Wernicke's areas, facilitating speech production and comprehension coordination. The basal ganglia's motor loop refines articulatory movements by promoting the correct motor action and impeding competing drives. As speech development progresses, the basal ganglia motor loop assumes control over the sequencing of individual phonemes, allowing higher cortical regions to handle more complex tasks. Speech disorders such as aphasia and stuttering can result from disruptions in the coordination of these brain pathways/regions,

and understanding these mechanisms at the molecular, cellular, and circuit levels certainly offers critical insights into speech disorders and potential therapies.

Although human speech fundamentally differs from most animal vocalizations, animal models have been invaluable in studying the motor circuits that control vocal production. Various animal models, including vocal learners and non-vocal learners, have been used to explore the genetic, cellular, and circuit mechanisms underlying speech production. Some species, like humans, whales, dolphins, elephants, and certain birds (songbirds, hummingbirds, parrots), learn to produce novel vocalizations. This vocal production learning depends on specialized brain motor circuits and sensory feedback from the auditory system. These species are valuable models for studying vocal learning and the brain pathways involved. While not typically considered vocal learners, rodents show some degree of plasticity in their vocalization behaviors.

continued on p. 10



Like bats (and a few other species), rodents produce ultrasonic vocalizations (USVs) that vary with their emotional state and social interactions. Although we cannot hear USVs and special microphones and software are required to record and analyze these types of vocalizations, studies on rodent vocalizations have provided significant insights into the neural circuits involved in vocal production and how these might relate to human speech disorders, including stuttering.

"Iron dysregulation might disrupt the normal function of brain circuits involved in speech."

A significant breakthrough in stuttering research in recent years has been the development of the first transgenic mouse model carrying a variant in the *Gnptab* gene, which is associated with stuttering in humans, by Dr. Dennis Drayna and his colleagues at the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD). Previous data from Drayna's lab, together with our data, showed that the vocal behaviors of the mutant mice are different from their normal siblings. It is important to note that since human speech and mouse vocalizations are fundamentally different (audible speech vs. USVs), we should not expect that stuttering phenotypes in mice would mirror those observed in humans. The generation of the mouse model significantly helped researchers explore the genetic basis of stuttering and discover that stuttering might be related to a dysfunction of astrocytes, star-shaped cells in the brain.

Another significant contribution of the *Gnptab*-mutant mice involves the discovery of iron accumulation. Recent research has highlighted the potential role of iron accumulation in the brain in people who stutter. Iron is essential for normal brain function, but its dysregulation can lead to neurodegenerative and neurodevelopmental disorders. A recent study by Cler and colleagues, using advanced MRI techniques, found that individuals who stutter exhibit abnormal iron accumulation in the basal ganglia. This finding supports and expands on an earlier study by Liam and colleagues that used transcranial ultrasound to reveal increased brain iron level in adults who stutter. Surprisingly, we also found iron accumulated in the *Gnptab*-mutant mice's basal ganglia and other brain circuits involved in stuttering. The fact that 'stuttering mice' also showed iron accumulation strengthens the hypothesis that iron dysregulation might disrupt the normal function of brain circuits involved in speech, contributing to the development of stuttering. For the first time, these mice provide a platform to study stuttering at the molecular and cellular levels in the brain.

Developmental stuttering affects over 80 million people globally, and its root causes remain largely unknown. Basic and clinical studies in individuals who stutter often employ non-invasive techniques to study brain regions linked to stuttering. Still, these methods lack the resolution to explore the molecular, cellular, and circuit mechanisms involved. Animal models, however, are crucial for advancing our understanding of stuttering. They offer a great opportunity to explore the basic science of vocal production at the cellular and circuits levels and investigate the genetic and molecular mechanisms underlying stuttering.

STUTTERING FOUNDATION Q & A: RANDY CURRY



About Me:

I was born and raised in Houston, Texas. I recently retired at the age of 68 after working for 45 years in the Consulting Business. For the last 18 years, I was the CEO of a 200 person Mechanical & Electrical Engineering Firm.

About My Family:

I have been married for almost 42 years, have three children and 11 grandchildren.

My Hobbies and Passions:

My hobbies include golf, fishing, guitars, fixing stuff, and watching my grandkids play sports. I enjoy helping people, showing kids that you can win in life and stutter, giving advice based on my experiences (good and bad,) on their careers, and their finances.

My Career Success:

I have been successful in my career by never giving up, always looking forward, and being surrounded and supported by family and friends the whole way.

Do you remember when you first began to stutter?

My parents said I began to stutter when I was three.

Does it run in your family? Who else stutters?

One of my sons has a mild stutter that he controls beautifully.

Did you seek treatment? Did it help?

Yes. My parents had me in Speech Therapy for as long as I remember. Not until I was in my early forties and I started going to my speech therapist (Sally McKee) did I notice any improvement.

Tell us about your experience with stuttering as a child.

It wasn't terrible all of the time, but I disliked talking on the phone, ordering at restaurants, introducing myself and saying my name, oral reports, and/or talking with a large group. I had the advantage of being very outgoing and I had a lot of friends. These two things helped immensely.

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

It has gotten better. I am more confident, have a lower baseline of stress, and I have learned to phrase and stretch (which doesn't always work).

How does stuttering affect you in your career?

When I was younger I thought that every time I didn't receive a promotion or would be laid off, it was because I stuttered. Later in my career, a lot of people knew me and that I stuttered so it was just some speaking quirk that I had. I learned to relax and admit it when I spoke to a large group.

How is your stuttering today? What do you do to control or manage it, if anything?

Today I call myself a reluctant stutterer. I am never 100% fluent, but I am more confident. Since 2005 at work, I had to speak often in front of the whole Company (around 200 people). I would write my speeches down and practice them before I gave them. In 2010, my speech therapist referred me to a doctor, who prescribed a very low dose of a very mild sedative. I took one dose on work days and it helped me. It helps soften the block when I feel one coming on. I guess you could say that it relaxed me.

What are the biggest challenges of stuttering?

To be a key business player, in most cases you have to be a good communicator. Nowadays, oral communication is not used as much due to texting and e-mail. However, in my opinion, oral communication is still the most effective and the most convincing. You cannot replicate tone in any other form of communication. Because of this, stuttering is an impediment to climbing the company ladder. This CAN be managed. Thanks to my speech therapist (speaking techniques) and my doctor (medication,) I was able to manage my speech and still be an effective communicator while stuttering.

What is your greatest accomplishment with regard to stuttering?

Two things: first, my Family. Being a stuttering husband, Dad and friend can have some unique challenges that pop up from time to time. Things like talking to the teacher at Open House in front of the other parents, ordering for a family of 5 in a Drive Thru (a nightmare sometimes), talking to one of my kid's College Deans about a matter. My wife almost didn't go out with me when I asked her for a date over the phone back in 1982. She thought that I had been drinking. Kids nowadays have it so easy with e-mails & texts, but I digress. My second greatest accomplishment is in my work life. I have risen to the role of CEO over a 200 person firm and have worked there for 38 years.

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

Each case is different. You may not get to 100% fluency, but there are many ways and techniques that will enable you to speak effectively. I know that you are your worst judge. The way that people hear you speak is much better than you think it sounds. You can get to where you can speak comfortably in stressful situations.

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

After having gone through therapists like Dr. Battin in Houston in the 60's, Martin Schwartz in the 70's, the SpeechEasy from East Carolina University in the 2000's, there really is no cure except hard work and perseverance to utilize techniques like phrasing, stretching and speaking slow. It can be done. Also, it's important to know that 100% fluency is a lofty goal, but 75-80% is reachable in my opinion.

What else should we know?

A few years ago, my doctor and his partner conducted research and developed an experimental extra-cerebral magnetic therapy, which they tried on me. Although I was encouraged with the success of this therapy, it eventually died due to lack of funding.



STUTTERING FOUNDATION Q & A: JAFNAR GUEYE



About Me: I was born in Senegal but left when I was one. I spent my childhood in Maryland, my early teenage years in Cape Verde, and my early adulthood in France before coming back to the States almost 20 years ago. I'm a public servant and serve as the Chief Financial Officer of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB).

About My Family: I'm the second youngest of five and the oldest boy. I grew up around dozens of cousins, uncles and aunts. My wife and I have been married for almost twelve years. We have a wonderful 6 year old son, and many amazing nieces and nephews. My family is a very multicultural one where you walk in anyone's house and people are speaking 2 to 3 languages at the same time.

My Hobbies and Passions: I have a lot of hobbies but probably being a private pilot is the most interesting one. I absolutely love to fly and often take my wife and son to cool places. It was always a dream of mine but when I was young, I thought I could never be a pilot because of my stuttering, yet here I am. I am passionate about a lot of things. First among them is family. I'm also passionate about helping others and leaving the world a better place than I found it. I am a passionate problem solver, sometimes to a fault.

My Successes: I think I've been successful by being the critical thinker, the one who can take a step back, take in the environment and sift through the noise to find the heart of the problem before offering a path forward. This is something that I believe growing up stuttering was a direct contributor to. When you stutter you learn to listen, to observe so I was naturally able to bring that to my career.

Another aspect would be having the confidence to know that I don't have to be the center of attention or the center of every solution or decision. Again this is one area where growing up stuttering helped a lot, since I was perfectly comfortable not being the center of attention because of my stutter. In my career it translates into an ability to seek out those that can best contribute and to elevate them and allow them to contribute. This is why I think I've become really good at building and motivating successful teams that solve deeply complex challenges.

Do you remember when you first began to stutter?

As far as I can remember I've been stuttering since I started talking.

Does it run in your family? Who else stutters?

Yes, my brother and an uncle stutter and my dad used to stutter when he was younger.

Did you seek treatment? Did it help?

My father made us do these speech exercises when we were younger from a speech therapy book (I can't remember the name). I don't think it helped and don't look back fondly on those memories.

Tell us about your experience with stuttering as a child.

Growing up stuttering was rather difficult but at the same time taught me a lot about myself and people. I was made fun of, but it thickened my skin. I grew quiet, speaking only when absolutely necessary but it taught me to actually listen and to make my contributions count. I'm an introvert and I think stuttering was a big factor but it made me more self aware. The list goes on and on.

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

It's gotten markedly better. If you listen long enough you'll hear me miss a word here and there but when I was a kid I couldn't line up more than 3 words. When I get tired or stressed I stutter more. Also I barely stutter when speaking English, but stutter more in French or Wolof which I find fascinating.

"At some point I stopped caring what people thought of my stutter and that was absolutely liberating. Arguably that's when my stutter started to get significantly better."

How does stuttering affect you in your career?

My first real job was being a teacher, so you can imagine stuttering as a teacher. But I think it didn't affect me much beyond the qualities that I mentioned earlier. At some point I stopped caring what people thought of my stutter and that was absolutely liberating. Arguably that's when my stutter started to get significantly better.

How is your stuttering today? What do you do to control or manage it, if anything?

I would say if I try hard, I can go without stuttering. It would likely involve choosing my words more carefully or pacing my breathing. When I'm giving speeches in front of crowds I try to be mindful of it, but if I stumble on a word, I'm not stressing over it at all. This may sound strange but thinking of the words help me tremendously as opposed to just mindlessly speaking. When I think of the words I'm about to say, I almost never stutter.

What are the biggest challenges of stuttering?

I would say people at first think you're not as intelligent or something is "wrong" with you. It made it so I've had to always overcome that additional barrier when meeting new people. Now I see it as a self filtering mechanism. Also people eventually figure out that you're smarter than average.



What is your greatest accomplishment with regard to stuttering?

I would say pushing myself to hold jobs, like my current one, or teaching, that involves significant public speaking roles. Another may be becoming a pilot and being able to overcome my fear of stuttering while communicating over the radio.

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

You may not think it now, but your stuttering is truly a superpower. It will give you skills that people spend hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars trying to learn. When someone tells me they stutter I automatically assume they have certain traits: toughness, resiliency, attentiveness, self awareness. I am yet to be wrong. Harness these superpowers even if you lose your stutter as you grow up. Your stuttering doesn't define who you are, it's just any other feature (like your hair color, your gait, etc.)

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

When I was a kid, I was once really struggling to speak. I mean full speech block, tears rolling down my eyes, getting angry and hating everything about myself. A teacher walked up and said "it's ok, don't rush for the world, let the world wait for you, it may not even deserve what you have to say." For some reason those words marked me profoundly. It gave me and my words worth. And it gave me permission to take the time I needed to speak. The lesson here for parents is:

1) When your child is stuttering they feel way worse about it than you ever will. Please be supportive. Please understand that if they could help it, they wouldn't stutter.

2) Give your child the gift of your patience and allow them the confidence to demand that patience from others. Protect that demand and foster an environment where your child knows that they can take all the time in the world to say what they have to say.

What else should we know?

While I would definitely forgo some of the childhood heartache associated with stuttering I am immensely grateful for the skills it has given me. Things that are natural and easy for me, seem hard and tedious for others. Being able to mostly overcome my stutter means that I now have the best of both worlds and that truly is a superpower.



DEAR SFA:

KIDS' LETTERS TO THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION

We'd love to hear about your dreams, your victories, the fears you have faced, the ways you've been challenged, or anything you wish people knew about stuttering! If you would like to send us a picture, letter, or poem, please e-mail us at info@stutteringhelp.org. We'll make sure you get a permission slip to fill out the needed information. We attempt to answer every child's letter personally, so be sure to include a contact name and postal addresses for either a parent or the SLP of the child along with your submission.*

**Please mail original artwork submissions on plain, unlined paper. Photocopies, scans and faxes of artwork cannot be accepted. Colorful markers and crayons are encouraged as pencil drawings can be difficult to reprint. If you'd rather submit a photo, it can be mailed directly along with your permission slip and letter; digital photos can be sent via email.*

For more information and/or to receive a permission form via email, please contact us at info@stutteringhelp.org.

Mail your letter, permission form, original color artwork and/or photographs to:

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

My name is India, I am 7 years old. I like to play outside.
When I grow up I want to be a cheerleader. When I
stutter I take a deep breath and turn my vocal folds on.
Speech is a good place to practice getting better
at not stuttering.

India, 7, Winterville, NC





Hello, my name is Gabriel, and I am in 3rd grade. Stuttering is something that I deal with. I use different strategies to stutter more easily. Stuttering doesn't mean that you're not smart. I think that stuttering is like another part of your life. Something that I love about speech is what I learn, like not stopping stuttering but stuttering less. Something about me is that I love animals.

Gabriel, 8, Marietta, GA



My name is Harley, and I am 7 years old. I am in the 2nd grade. I live in Tennessee, and I like to ride my 4-wheeler and play Roblox. The type of stutter I have is prolongations and talking slower helps me not stutter as much.

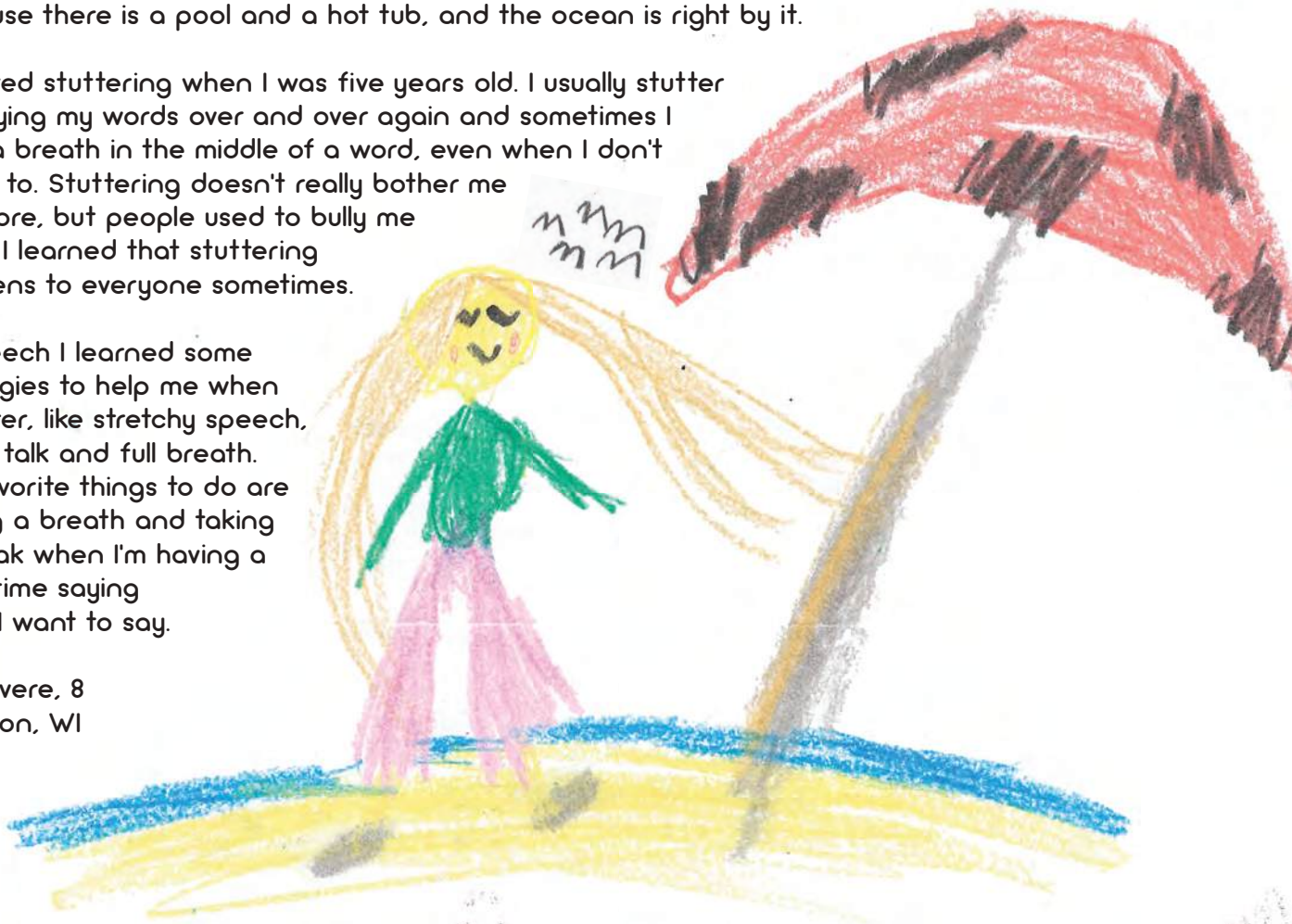
Harley, 7, Smyrna, TN

My name is Guin and I'm 8 years old. I live in Madison, Wisconsin with my 2 dogs and four family members. I love to draw princesses and have been practicing for 3 years, and I also really like to make sculptures. My favorite season is summer because every summer I go to Florida with my family to visit my grandma and cousins. It is super fun because there is a pool and a hot tub, and the ocean is right by it.

I started stuttering when I was five years old. I usually stutter by saying my words over and over again and sometimes I take a breath in the middle of a word, even when I don't mean to. Stuttering doesn't really bother me anymore, but people used to bully me for it. I learned that stuttering happens to everyone sometimes.

In speech I learned some strategies to help me when I stutter, like stretchy speech, turtle talk and full breath. My favorite things to do are taking a breath and taking a break when I'm having a hard time saying what I want to say.

Guinevere, 8
Madison, WI



My name is Bra'lon and I am 10 years old. I am in 4th grade; I like to play basketball and football. I play football for the Jaguars, and we just won the National Championship (my dad is our coach!). I have 2 brothers who both like to also play football and 2 sisters. I started going to speech in 3rd grade to help with my stutter. Sometimes my stutter is worse than other days and occasionally gets in the way of me talking. I have learned to use easy onset, extreme prolongations and robot voice to help me overcome my stuttering. I have bad stuttering when I talk in large groups and in my classroom it's worse because everyone looks at me!

Bra'lon, 10, New Bern, NC

Hi my name is Maddie and I am 10 years old and I am in 4th grade. Also I live in Danville California and I like to play soccer and do dance. Also I like to do some drawings with my sister. Also I stutter. My favorite strategy is easy onset. Just because you stutter doesn't mean you can't do stuff. Don't let anyone tell you that you can't. Do this if you stut don't stop trying. Keep on going, never stop. And I love riding my bike and hanging out with my friends.



Maddie, 10
Danville, CA

Hi, my name is Matthew. I enjoy smashing open geodes and playing geometry dash. I stutter and it's ok. I think about what to say. I started stuttering in second grade.

P.S. speech lessons help me. I can do lots of talking but my speech sometimes gets bumpy and I sometimes have to pause. I can take deep breaths and I can move my teeth gently so then I don't get as bumpy. It sometimes takes concentration to not bump while talking and it is sometimes very hard. I get bumpy ALL the time but it does not bother me as much since I do speech lessons daily each Wednesday. I can sometimes handle talking so I have to take deep breaths so I don't bump or get blocked while I talk. It can be annoying, but I have gotten through it. If you stutter, you aren't the only one. We have all went through this. There can be words like, supercalifragilisticexpialidocious which are hard to pronounce, but remember, you can do it. You can do it even if it is very hard. So remember that you can use your strategies if you have bumpy speech sometimes. I also enjoy learning about space and rocks. Speech is also very hard to control. Sometimes it is annoying to be bumpy in the middle of talking.

Everyone will soon or might get bumpy daily, but remember, it is normal so take a deep breath and you will be back to normal and you will use SLOW SPEECH, PEANUT BUTTER SPEECH, and more. So, remember that you will always be fine and try to talk slowly.

The end.



Matthew, 9, Dublin, OH



Mat + hew 9y-0



Hi, my name is Archie. I'm 9 years old. I like to play tennis and football. I sometimes stutter. When I do I think of a wave. The wave helps me to pause and take a breath. When I do that, I don't stutter. Those are the things I learned in speech.

Archie Archie, 9, Fredericksburg, VA



Dear Kids of the world, ♡

Date: Jan, 25,

My name is Angela Viljoen and I like soccer,
I am almost 10 years old. I want you to
all know your stuttering makes you special!

I know you might feel alone or scared at first,
but if you use your strategies and work hard,
you can do anything! Don't listen to those who
discourage you. Here are some strategies I use,

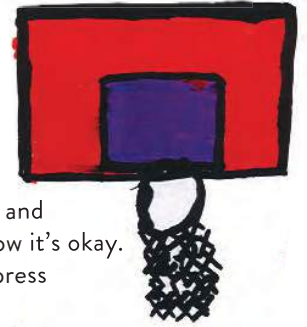
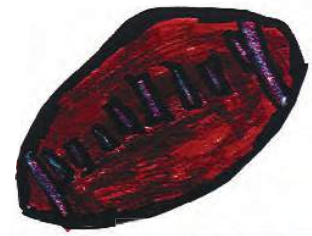
1. slow down
2. think of what you want to say
- 3 say it!



I have two birds skylar and emily, I stuttered
all my life! I just have one message for you...
never give up! bye!!!



FORTNITE



Hi! My name is Micah. I'm 8 years old and I'm from Lancaster, PA. I like playing basketball and football with my friends. I also play video games. I enjoy playing outside with my friends at recess. We play a game called, "Jackpot Football."

My favorite smooth speech strategies are slowing my rate of speech and pausing/phrasing. If you stutter or clutter like me, I want you to know it's okay. You should start over and use your strategies. It is important to express yourself and have your voice heard.

Micah, 8, Lancaster, PA

Hi, my name is Mikey. I am 10 years old, and I like soccer, baseball, basketball, and football. I also like video games like Fortnite. I also like collecting sports cards. It doesn't matter that you stutter because you are more than just your stutter. Sometimes I just stutter, and I don't care because my friends are always there to stick up for me. Stuttering is like a river; it is calm and flowing.

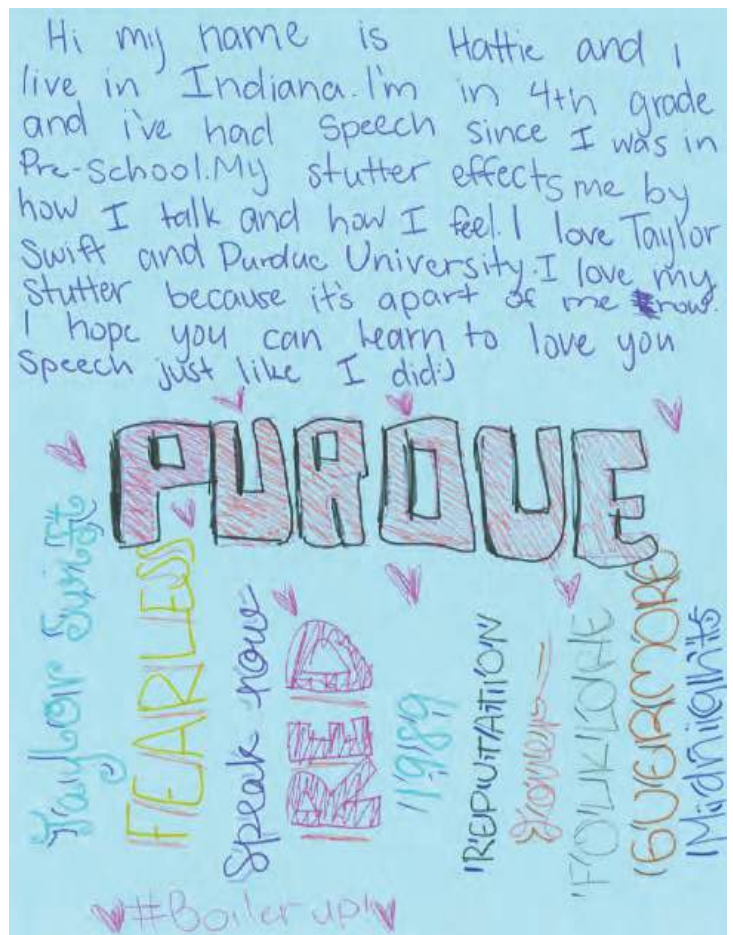
Mikey, 10, Ringwood, NJ

My name is Niko. I am 8 years old. I live in Saint Paul, MN. My school is Highland Park Elementary and I am in 2nd grade. I like to play Sonic, and Sonic Super Stars. I like to eat chicken. I like going to the park and playing basketball. I like to draw with chalk.

I am good at reading. I live with my mom and grandma. Every other weekend I stay with my dad. I have 3 cats and a dog. I think speech is cool and fun. I use the strategy to think before you speak. It is important to share your ideas.



Niko, 8,
St. Paul, MN



Hattie, 10, Carmel, IN



Hi, my name is Aubrey. I am 7 years old, and in first grade. I like kittens and dragons. I also like video games. Stuttering often starts during unexpected moments. People never look at me much but not knowing what they are thinking makes me feel strange. When I stutter it feels normal to me, but I mostly don't stutter much. I feel okay when I stutter with my parents.

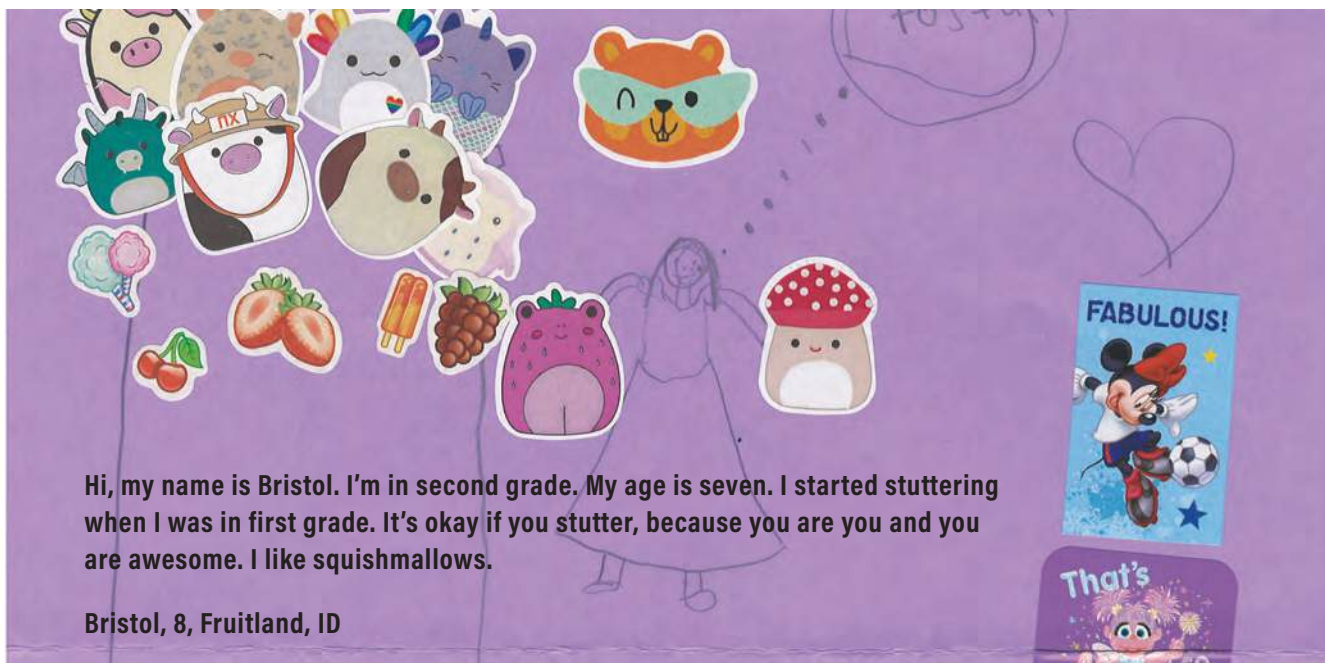
What helps me a lot is slow rate and easy speech; those are strategies I use. When I'm at school I mostly don't care about my stutter because it's okay to stutter and it's just who I am. I stay calm and don't feel awkward. Stuttering is just a thing that comes from your body, and you can't control it. It's something that makes you special.

Aubrey, 7, Duluth, MN



Hi my name is Henry and
I am 8 years old. my
favorite stretch is stretch
speech. stretch speech
is when you stretch
your sound

Henry, 8, Marietta, GA

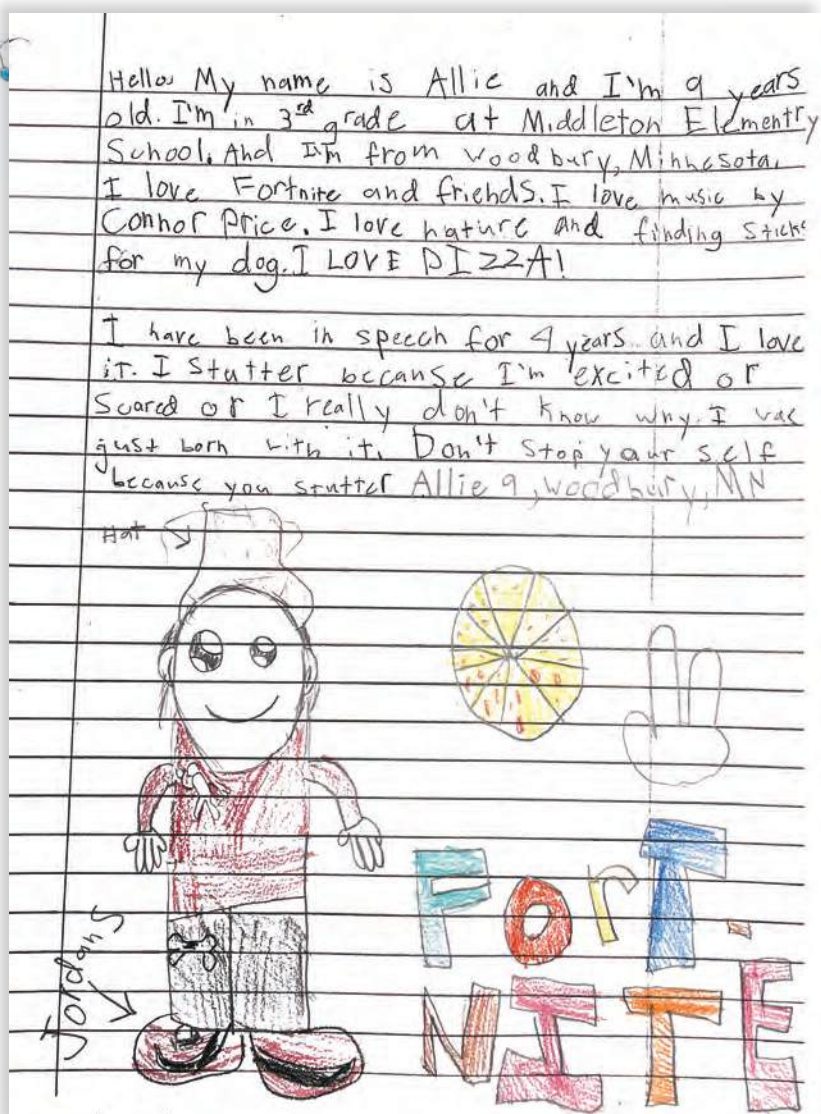


My name is Inaya. I live in Riverside, CA. I am 8 years old. I'm in 3rd grade. I like to do art like painting and coloring, and I like to play soccer. My favorite subjects are math and science.

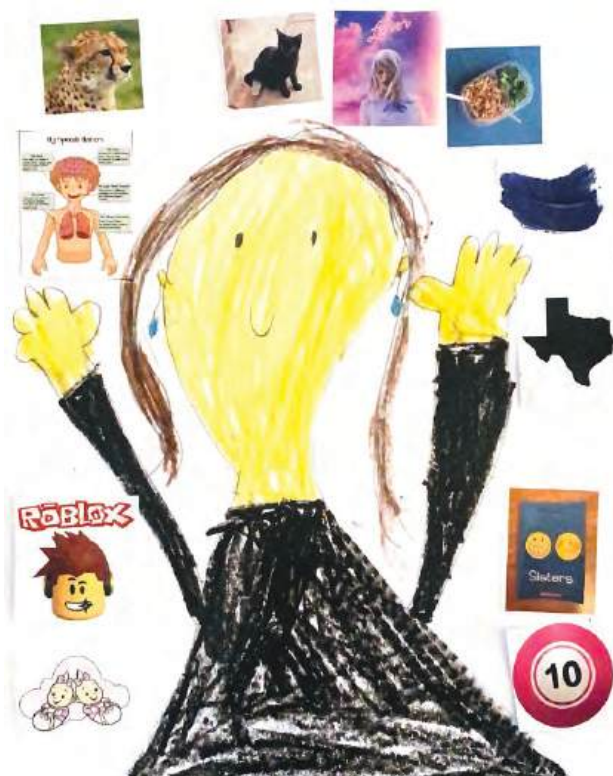
When I stutter, I have bumpy speech and I feel frustrated. My favorite tool is turtle talk. I have learned that it is okay to stutter.

One day I want to be a scientist and study animals and plants.

Inaya, 8, Riverside, CA



Allie, 9, Woodbury, MN



Hi. I'm Olivia and I stutter. I'm proud of my stutter, and you should be too! So, if you're new to speech therapy here are some tips:

1. Breathe. Breathing helps me when stuttering.
2. Picture something cute. That always helps me.
3. Advocate for yourself. Advocating is when you stand up for yourself or something important.

I have a twin sister who also stutters. Isn't that cool? I also have two dogs. They are a Border Aussie and a Pointer mix. Their names are Potts and Ripley. Ripley's 4 years old and Potts is 3. My favorite food is tuna salad. And my favorite animal is a cheetah.

All these things make me, ME!

Olivia, 10, Austin, TX

Hi, my name is Isaiah, and I am 10 years old. I live in Bowdoin, Maine.

I like to play Fortnite online with my friend, and I like to play Legos, as well. It's fun to have sleepovers with my friends, Steven and Grant. I really like to draw and play with Legos, and I might want to try hockey. I'm also good at wrestling. I got a dog, Biscuit, last spring, and she's super adorable. I call baby dogs, "baggies", and now everybody in my class does, too. Maybe I started a fad.

In kindergarten, I didn't say my r's correctly, and they teased me for it in First Grade. After First Grade, my brother helped me say my r's, but it was very hard to figure it out. I eventually got it. I started stuttering in Second Grade. I said to myself, 'why is everyone else's speech fine, and mine's not?' I got a speech teacher, and she helped me.

What I learned so far is that there are tools that help your speech get better. For example, you can slow down and use stretchy speech. Also, you can ease into words or get through a bump and do it over again in a less tense way. Another thing you can do is notice tension and slide out of it. But it's what you say that is important and not how you say it, which means you are perfect the way you are.

My goal in speech is to be a stuttering manager. This means I can control my stuttering by using pull outs and cancellations. I am a proud stutterer.

Isaiah, 10, Bowdoin, ME





Hi, my name is Brynn, I am 9 years old and from Glen Rock, New Jersey. My favorite sport is soccer, and my role model who plays soccer is Alex Morgan! I started stuttering at 4-5 years old but thanks to my speech teacher I'm getting better! I love dogs, ice cream, reading and obviously soccer! Also, a quote that Alex Morgan once said that I love is, "There's really no secret to success. You make your own success." - Alex Morgan. That quote inspired me to keep trying.

Brynn, 9, Glen Rock, NJ

Hi, my name is Carly. I live in California, and I am 8 years old. I love cats. My favorite color is pink. When I stutter, I have repetitions. I like to use slow speech. I love coming to speech.

Carly, 8
Fresno, CA



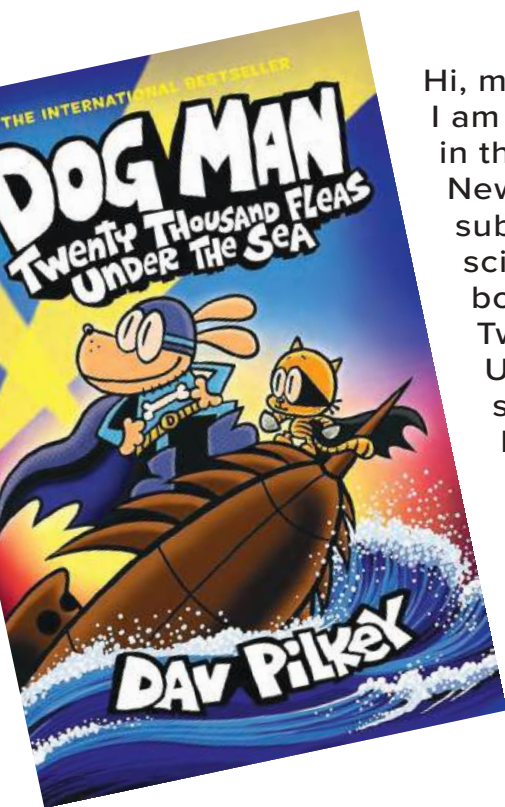
My name is Orion and I'm 9 years old. My initials spell OW. I like Fortnite, video games, dinosaurs, and bananas. I have 3 brothers, a mom, a dad, my dog Obi, my cat Talon, 9 chickens and 3 fish. I go to FES (Forest Edge Elementary). I have ADHD.

I stutter. I don't care that I stutter. I go to speech therapy to help. I have many strategies that help me like easy onset, cancellation, pausing, and stretchy speech.

So yeah, I stutter. Stuttering is not bad. Don't think stuttering is bad. I like millllllk!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Orion, 9, Fitchburg, WI





Hi, my name is Raymond. I am 8 years old. I am in third grade. I live in New Jersey. My favorite subjects are math and science. My favorite book is Dog Man: Twenty Thousand Fleas Under the Sea. When I stutter, the strategies I use are easy onset and rate pacing. Just remember if you stutter that doesn't mean you can't follow your dreams.

Raymond, 8
Glen Rock, NJ

My name is India. I am 7 years old. I like to play outside. When I grow up, I want to be a cheerleader. When I stutter, I take a deep breath and turn aplace to practice getting better at not stuttering.

India, 7, Winterville, NC



My name is Carter. I am 8 years old, and I live in North Carolina. I love sports and playing with people. I like using my tablet, playing soccer, golf, and playing knee hockey. And a lot of other things.

Stuttering is when words get stuck, and they just don't come out right. When I stutter, I mostly have prolongations and repetitions. A prolongation happens when a sound gets held out for a long time. A repetition is when you say a letter or a word more than once.

My favorite strategies are probably pull out and phrasing. For a pull out, you can slow it down and keep going. How to do phrasing is we take a break and breathe and pause between every few words. Other things I learned in speech therapy are the speech machine and pseudostuttering (fake stuttering). My question is why do we have stuttering?

My advice for other people who stutter is to not get frustrated. If you get frustrated, you might stutter more.

Carter, 8
Holly Springs, NC

Fortnite

Hi, my name is Ethan. I live in California, and I am 9 years old. I like games. My favorite game is Fortnite. When I stutter, I have repetitions. I like to use light contact strategy. I like coming to speech.

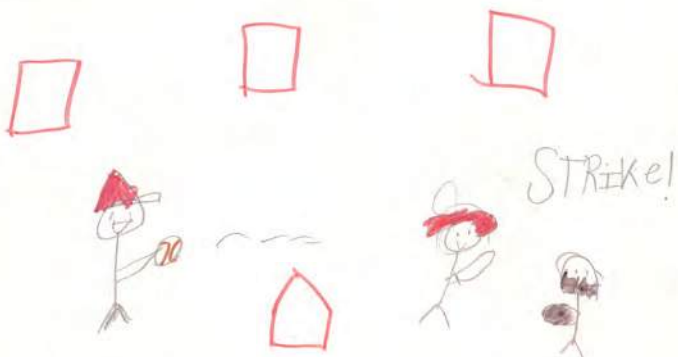
Ethan, 9, Fresno, CA



Hi, I am Jayce. When I was about in 1st grade I started to stutter. When I started stuttering, I really didn't think anything about it, but when I was in 3rd grade I started to think about how I can stop stuttering. And I started to go to speech class more often. And my speech teacher showed me strategies to stop stuttering. It really didn't help. But when I used them more often it helped me, but I still stuttered a lot. People made fun of me for stuttering, but I didn't think anything about it. Then I saw the slow rate strategy. Then when I got into 4th grade I started not to stutter that much. Now I am almost in 5th grade, and I don't stutter more often. I like to play video games, Fortnite, Madden, NBA2K, and MLB The Show, and I play baseball. Did you know Ed Sheeran stutters too?

Jayce, 10, Arbutus, MD

Sincerely, Jayce



My name is Charlotte. I am 10 years old. I have 2 dogs named Ripply (4) and Mrs. Pots (3). I have a Twin sister. My favorite colors are red, blue, pink and black. When I stutter I take a deep breath. Don't be embateested to talk. I love to cook with my mom. I also love to read my favorite books are sisters and wings of fire. My favorite character is man warden. That is evrey thing that make Charlotte

Charlotte, 10, Austin, TX

My name is Jake, and I am ten years old. I live in Acton, MA. I am comfortable with my stuttering. I think it kind of makes me unique in a good way. I think it makes me unique because stuttering makes me who I am and without it I would not be me. But there are some unfortunate parts about stuttering. This one time two years ago I had to read a book online and there was a timer that was set for 15 minutes, and it was a long book. It took me 56 (2 ½ hours) attempts to finally read it. Sometimes I get teased for the way I talk. DO NOT EVER care what people think. It matters about what you think. Stuttering is a good thing. Though it depends on how YOU look at it. That is what I learned from being teased. Besides you even have an excuse to talk slower or even softer, also you learn how to talk like a robot.

Jake, 10, Acton, MA



My name is Rafi. I have an identical twin brother; he stutters just like me. My twin brother's name is Mack. We like to play SMM2, and we like to play Minecraft. My favorite color is red. I stutter a little bit more than my brother. I use my robot voice and easy onset to help me not stutter. Taking deep breaths before talking can help you to not stutter as much too! I go to speech with Ms. Caity and my speech buddy. This is Ms. Caity's first year of being a speech teacher, my one from last year left. If you have your voice box in your throat always on, you can't stutter. Here's a tip for stuttering.... If you sing you actually can't stutter at all while you sing. If you know about Pokémon, talk like a Froaky (they sound like robots). Sometimes I forget my techniques because I get so excited and forget I'm stuttering, but I'm still working on it!

Rafi, 8, New Bern, NC

Hello. My name is Joseph and I'm 8 years old and I stutter. I live in Dillsburg, Pennsylvania. The kinds of stutters I do are repetitions, prolongations, and sometime blocks.

I like watching football and I also like playing it. I love baseball and my favorite baseball team is the Phillies. My favorite player is Bryce Harper. I also like collecting baseball cards. I play baseball, too.

My advice to kids who stutter is, 'It's ok to stutter because everybody stutters here and there. Everybody's different.'

Joseph, 8, Dillsburg, PA





Hi! My name is Ronnie. I am 11 years old. I have been stuttering on and off since I was 5 and have been taking speech therapy since only last year. I love music, and my favorite artists are Tally Hall/Miracle Musical, and Lemon Demon. I have repetition stuttering, and I use pseudostuttering and the pullout technique to make it seem like I'm not stuttering. I think what causes my stutter is anxiety, because usually when I feel lonely, I stutter a lot more. Some advice on if you stutter, is if people are making fun of you for your stutter, just politely ask them to be more patient. I have experienced types of negativity over my stutter, and after it happens enough, you should get over it.

Ronnie, 11, Philadelphia, PA

HI, MY NAME IS JAYDEN. I AM 10 YEARS OLD. I WAS BORN ON FEBRUARY 16, 2013. I LIKE TO PLAY SOCCER AND I LOVE TO PLAY VIDEO GAMES LIKE CALL OF DUTY, RUST, AND RESIDENT EVIL. I STARTED STUTTERING WHEN I WAS 4. I STARTED SPEECH THERAPY WHEN I WAS 6. I USE SLOW TALK TO HELP MY STUTTER. I FEEL OK STUTTERING. IT'S OK IF YOU STUTTER A LOT. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

JAYDEN, 10, RAHWAY, NJ

Hi, my name is Sudhathri, I live in Redmond, Washington and I am 10 years old. I'm in the 5th grade. I like to dance, sing (K-Pop music), do Art and play with my friends. I also like to play video games like Roblox and Genshin Impact, especially Genshin Impact. I go to Ben Rush Elementary School. I also stutter. I started stuttering since kindergarten. When I stutter, I always have tension in my jaw. I thought it was weird. People even stared at me weirdly, which hurt my feelings. I put some pressure on myself. I tried to improve but it didn't work. I thought I was the only one who stuttered. Since I stutter my parents enrolled me into a group for people who stutter. In the group we learned to use "tools," the tools we use are easy bouncing, stretching, and pausing. These tools helped me improve, now often I don't stutter but I still stutter a little. For the people who stutter I say you're not the only one who stutters.



Sudhathri, 10, Redmond, WA



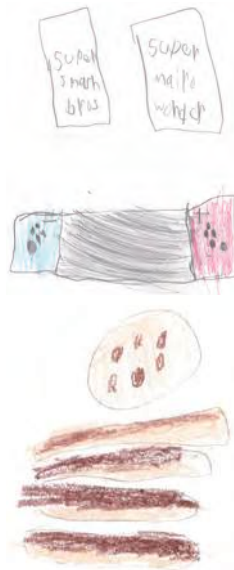
Hi, my name is Diego. I stuttered 2 times. I am a smart kid though I just stuttered. I am very great. I love my speech teacher. But when you stutter, you can use smooth speech and when I stutter, I use pullouts. They can help you with stuttering.

Diego, 8, Clovis, CA

"Stuttering is not a sickness
its something you control."

Hello, my name is Daniel. I am 11 years old and I'm in the 5th grade. I started to stutter at the age of 5 years old. To this day I am still going to speech and working on my fluency. What really helps me to not stutter is singing/listening to music. I really enjoy playing video games and watching movies. If you stutter, you are not alone.

Daniel, 11, Napa, CA



Hi, my name is Ryan. I live in California and I am 9 years old. I like donuts and cookies. My favorite games are Super Mario Party and Super Mario Wonder. When I stutter, I have repetitions and prolongations. I like to use pullout.

Ryan, 9, Fresno, CA

Hello, my name is Kanoa. I live in Redmond, Washington, and I go to Benjamin Rush Elementary. I am 9 years old. I have been stuttering for as long as I can remember. My hobbies are playing video games, origami, drawing, and playing the piano. I love Pokémon and building Gundam. I have learned that stuttering is not a bad thing. It is what makes you unique. My favorite strategies are easy bouncing, stretching, and thinking about how fast I am talking. The most important thing when somebody is talking is their ideas.

Kanoa, 10, Redmond, WA



Hello, my name is Eddie. I am 9 years old, and in 3rd grade. I go to Hearst Elementary in San Diego, CA. I like playing Fortnite and basketball. I also like to play strategy games. I go to speech and work on my strategies. In my opinion my stuttering does not hold me back.

Eddie, 9.5, San Diego, CA

Hi, my name is Owen, and I am 10 years old. I like to play Fortnite and Roblox. I am from Tennessee. The type of stutter I have is repetitions. Talking slowly helps me not stutter.

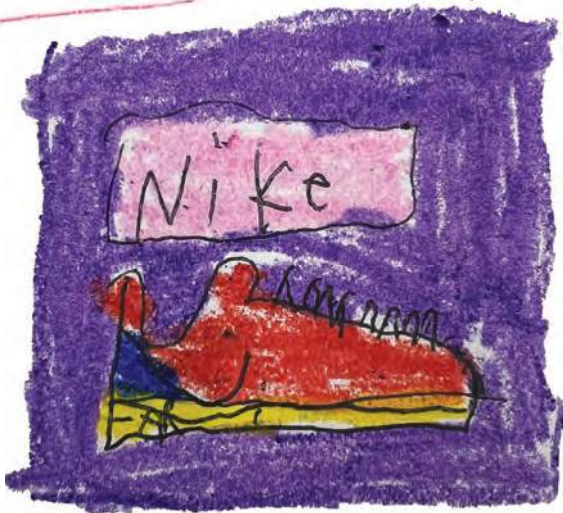
Owen, 10, Smyrna, TN

Hi, I am Leo, and I am in fourth grade. I am 9 years old. I live with three brothers – Orion, Xavier, and James. I live with my mom and dad and my dog Obi. I have 1 cat, 9 chickens, and 3 fish. I go to Forest Edge Elementary School. I also like Fortnite. If you have not heard of Fortnite, it is a game where you explore and get weapons and try to win. I like tigers and any big cat.

Sometimes I stutter. I don't care if I stutter because when I stutter, I am around my friends, and they understand me. I go to speech therapy. What I have learned in speech therapy is that when you take a deep breath before you talk, it helps your speech.

I think if you keep practicing, you cannot stutter anymore. So yeah, it's corn. Have a cornstastik day.

Leo, 9, Fitchburg, WI



My name is Desten, and I am 10 years old. I play football and I sing. I want to talk about my stuttering because sometimes I stutter. I know the strategies for stuttering. I have gotten bullied before, but I know to walk away. Now I don't get bullied anymore because I am getting better at my strategies.

Desten, 10, Waco, Texas





Hi, my name is Liam, and I am 9 years old. Stuttering is very hard to live with. And I want to inspire other people to think of stuttering as a superpower not a disorder. It doesn't matter if you're different, it's all about how you are. But on the contrary, here's a picture of me!

Liam, 9, Marietta, GA



Hi, my name is Ethan, and I am 8 (eight) years old and I stutter and I'm going to tell you two strategies! Number one – stretchy speech. What is it? Try stretching out your sound. It works best to stretch out your vowel sounds (aaaapple). Why does it work? It gives your mouth time to catch up to your brain. Number two – slow rate. What is it? Talk a little slower, pause in between words and sentences. Why does it work? It gives your mouth time to catch up to your brain. And that's it, bye bye!!

Ethan, 8, Marietta, GA

Hello, my name is Linc and I am 10 almost 11. I have a dog named Ruffles who is the cutest, and I have done speech since I was in kindergarten. I can tell I have improved a lot over the time I have done it.

It is okay to stutter. Stuttering still happens to me a lot. It makes people stop listening to me and it could be important. I want people to listen to me. The last few years I have done a slideshow for my class of what stuttering is, and famous people who stutter and at the end we do a game, a Kahoot or Blooket. It makes me feel better about stuttering and not having to tell them personally but explaining it to everyone.

Every Friday I do speech therapy with other kids one or two grades younger than me, so I feel like a mentor to them to help them. I also like to go around and help younger kids by playing games with them and explaining how to play. They look up to me and the stuff I do.

Personally, my favorite strategy is turtle. I feel like it helps when you can just slow down and restart. Something that is not a strategy but what I like to do when I really start to stutter and the strategies just aren't working, sometimes I will speak in an accent (which always ends up Australian no matter what I do) I feel like it helps by kind of covering it up and making it sound like, what I meant or changing the words if I ever get stuck on them. I think it is okay to stutter because everyone does it. It doesn't make you different, it makes you unique and yourself.

Lincoln, 11, Carmel, IN



Ty'Ron, 7, Louisville, KY

I am Ty'Ron and I am 7 years old. I like to go play outside.

I have 5 siblings. I stutter sometimes. Stuttering is hard. Sometimes when I stutter I use the H sound or I stop and start over. I want to tell other kids that stutter that it is okay if somebody laughs and don't be nervous. Stuttering is not bad and not your fault.

Ty'Ron, 7, Louisville, KY



My name is Even. I live in Riverside, CA. I am 8 years old. I am in 2nd grade. I like to play video games. And I like to play Minecraft. I am kind. I am good at math. I am strong. I am helpful. I like to play Five Nights at Freddy's.

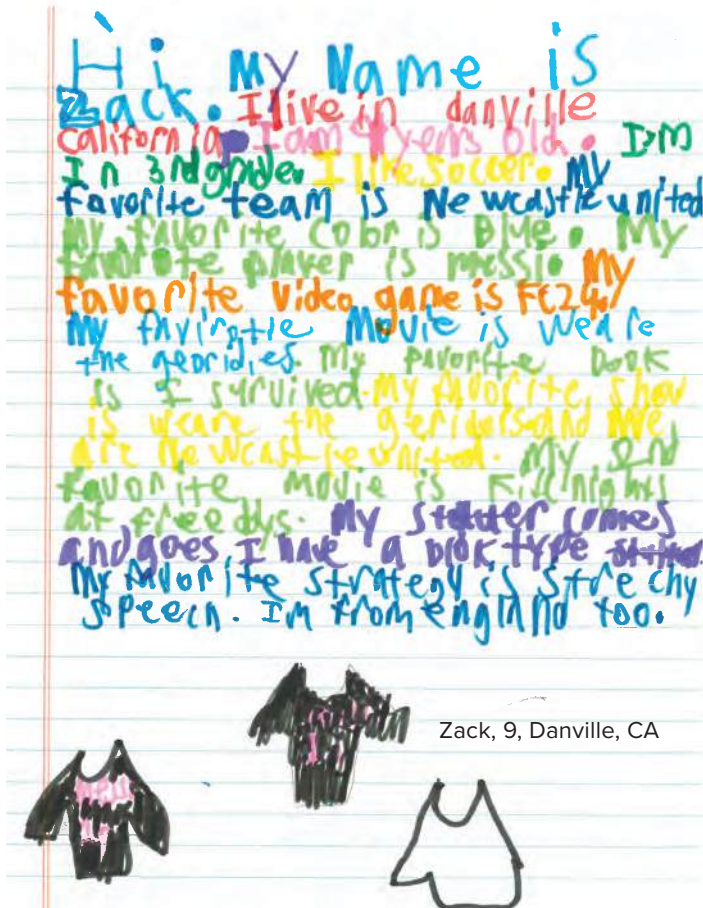
When I stutter I feel mad and sad. I like using turtle talk and deep breaths. I learned that it's okay to stutter. One day I want to be a YouTuber.

Even, 8, Riverside, CA

NETFLIX

My name is Mack, and I am 8 years old! I stutter sometimes but not often. I love speech!! I like doing my work and doing fun arts and crafts I do a lot. I love my speech teacher, and yes, I am including a couple of hours with my old speech therapist. My favorite color is black. In the future, I am gonna make a series on Netflix called "Black Mack and Red Rafi." Black Mack is the main character. I'm not going to give you full details, you'll just have to watch. Speech therapy is really fun, and I love my speech buddy. Even my brother Rafi also stutters! I have learned how to use robot voice to overcome my stutter and to take a deep breath before talking. I even use my speech techniques when I'm not in speech! You should probably use robot voice like me if you stutter :) I like Sponge Bob. THE END.

Mack, 8, New Bern, NC



Zack, 9, Danville, CA

Hi, my name is Keahi. I am 9 years old. I live in Oregon. Some of my hobbies are Legos and coding horror games on Scratch.

I've been stuttering since I learned how to talk. My feelings for stuttering are anger and embarrassment. I was better in 2019 but Covid hit and I lost my flow.

What helps with my stutter is 'Shark Talk.' 'Shark' Talk is like fluency talk. I talk slowly and calmly, and my voice goes up and down. I also use "sudo stutter." My advice for kids who stutter is to work hard to talk fluently. My hope is that in the future kids who stutter won't be made fun of.

Keahi, 9, Eugene, OR





BY BRITTANY RODRIGUEZ

Do you have a favorite coffee order?

One of my favorite orders at Starbucks is a Venti White Chocolate Peppermint Mocha. It's my go-to order during the holidays and one I turn to when I'm needing comfort during the year. For those who stutter, being able to order exactly what you want is not as simple as pulling up into the drive-through and making your request.

Before the time of Uber eats, Postmates or making an online order through an app, we had no choice but to order with our voice. This requires verbally making your request face-to-face, through a drive-through or over the phone. What seems like a small and insignificant task can be anything but for those who are not fluent.

Although I use masking techniques that help me “appear” fluent, ordering food and drinks has been a struggle more times in my life than I can even count.

My stutter is worse when I’m tired, like first thing in the morning before I have had my coffee, or when I’m stressed. A technique I use many times to appear fluent is to change a word that I can feel is going to be an issue. When you’re ordering something specific, this is not a technique that works. The result is often being forced to stumble through a repetition which, if you are comfortable with your stutter, you may have no issue doing. Often the issue is with the person who is taking your order not being able to understand what you have said, forcing you to repeat the process over and over again and hoping the end result is a correct order. The other option is to just order something that is easier to say. This often feels like defeat.

Even in this digital age, I still order my coffee verbally through the drive-through. I still go to restaurants and order my food face-to-face. Sometimes this results in a back and forth with the speaker box because I’m struggling with my order or pointing to the food item on the restaurant menu because the waitress is very confused, but I am okay with it. This is my normal. But...that wasn’t always the case.

I was a kid who always ordered the same thing time and time again. When I became a teenager and started gaining some independence, I was forced to start ordering for myself because there was no parent to order for me. This was my first experience with ordering anxiety. I remember going to my favorite smoothie shop after my shift at my after-school job and trying to order my favorite raspberry strawberry smoothie. I walked up to the counter and no matter what I did I had a complete verbal block. To anyone else I just appeared to be very indecisive. The nice person at the counter, in an attempt to help, simply

said “would you like a suggestion?” I immediately responded with “order me your favorite.” This was the beginning of what would now be my new way of ordering for the next few years. Within several months I had tried everything on the menu and even every drink on their “secret menu.”

After years of this approach, I was exposed to a wide variety of items. I tried things at restaurants I never would have on my own (like sushi, which has become my favorite food) and have also had my share of food and drink items I learned I really do not like. Eventually I gained the confidence to order what I wanted on the menu, but I also had the confidence to try something new. I still order every new coffee at Starbucks and can confidently say there isn’t a latte flavor on the menu I do not like. But I also learned that I deserve to order what I WANT, not just what I can say.

I am so grateful that we have ways to digitally order these days. I no longer have to order takeout over the phone and risk getting hung up on when I hit a verbal block. However, I am not afraid to use my voice. To my peers in the stuttering community, do not be afraid to use yours. We hide our stutters so often that when people hear them, they don’t know how to react. Our voices are beautiful, even when we are not fluent. We deserve patience. We deserve to be heard. But most importantly, we deserve to order a Venti white chocolate peppermint mocha when we are having a rough morning and need a pick-me-up.

VIRTUAL STUTTER: REMOTE COMMUNICATION

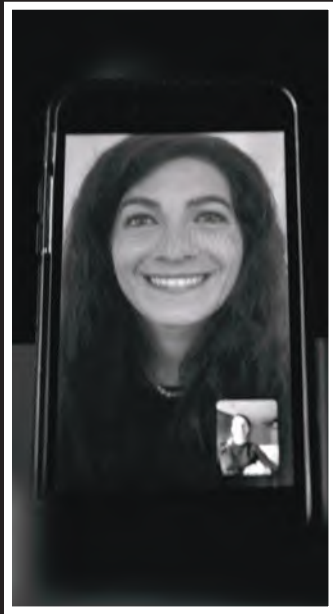
BY MADELINE WAHL



"Virtual Stutter: Remote Communication" is a photo series with images that highlight some of the complexities which arose when stutterers communicated virtually during an unprecedented pandemic.

Shifting communication to mostly virtual platforms allowed ease of communication. However, complications also popped up during this shift. The use of face masks has helped decrease the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses. While wearing a face mask is essential to ensuring the safety of themselves and those around them, it does hinder communications. How will someone know if someone is trying to speak without reading body language or noticing an opened mouth?

The photographs were taken virtually and in natural light; the photographer took photos of the computer and technological devices. The socially distant photos were taken on separate screens; no photos were taken in person during the series.



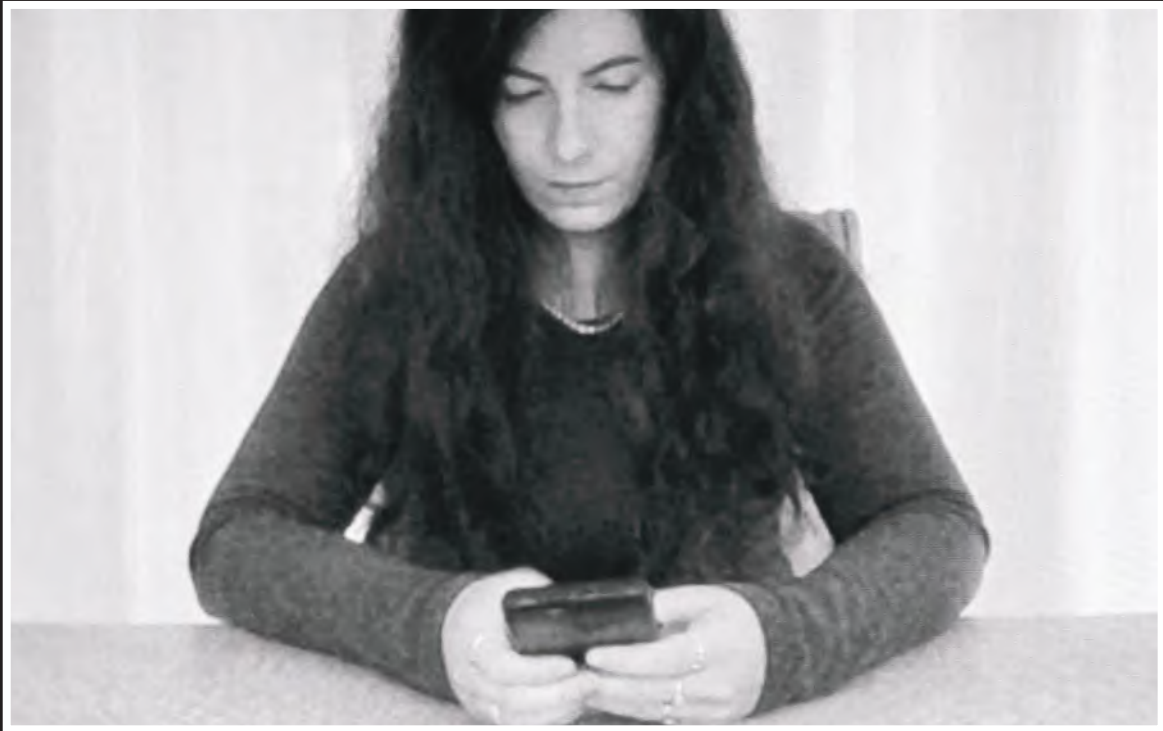
CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

Many of my in-person happy hours or walks in the park with friends have been replaced with phone calls and Zoom dates...in my bedroom. Instead of getting together for drinks at a bar, my friends would gather around our phones or computers for Zoom dates. Sometimes, during family Zoom calls, my computer screen would freeze. If there's a bad internet connection, will my face freeze? Likewise, is this frozen screen similar to how I look when I stutter? While I'm thankful for the option of virtual communication, there's an extra pressure for people who stutter virtually. The listener may interpret the stutter as a slow internet connection, or may interpret a silent block as a dropped call and hang up. I've had people hang up the phone in my moment of silence, the pause in between words. Or, when someone answers, I quickly hang up the phone rather than stumble over my name and introduction, hoping I can call back at a later point in time. In real life, face-to-face, I can't "hang up" on a conversation.



HOW HAS MY STUTTER CHANGED IN THE PANDEMIC?

The pandemic changed many things about everyday life, including how I view myself and how I view my stutter. Has my stuttering changed during this time? When I worked from home, I was in the comfort of my room and behind a screen instead of at my desk in an office. However, I've realized that no matter where I am, my stutter will always be with me. My pre-pandemic stutter and my post-pandemic stutter remain the same. However, perhaps it's a bit more prevalent now. While I don't have as many face-to-face interactions and therefore less chances to stutter in real life, I do miss the vocal aerobics I used to go through. The interactions with others. Hearing myself talk and hearing the other person say something back. I've noticed a change in myself alongside how I communicate with a stutter. I've never focused so much on my stutter than when I am at home behind a screen.



ON READ OR UNREAD?

When talking in a conversation, there are pauses and spaces between words. In texts, that space is often conveyed on certain phones with three dots that indicate the person on the other end of the conversation is typing but hasn't sent their thoughts yet. Sometimes, I wonder if there would be a way to communicate this in verbal conversations. There are words I want to speak but need a bit of time, encouragement, and coaxing in order to be spoken out loud and communicated. Via text, it's easier to express that I need a few more seconds while compositing my thoughts. Other times, the three dots do the communicating for me.

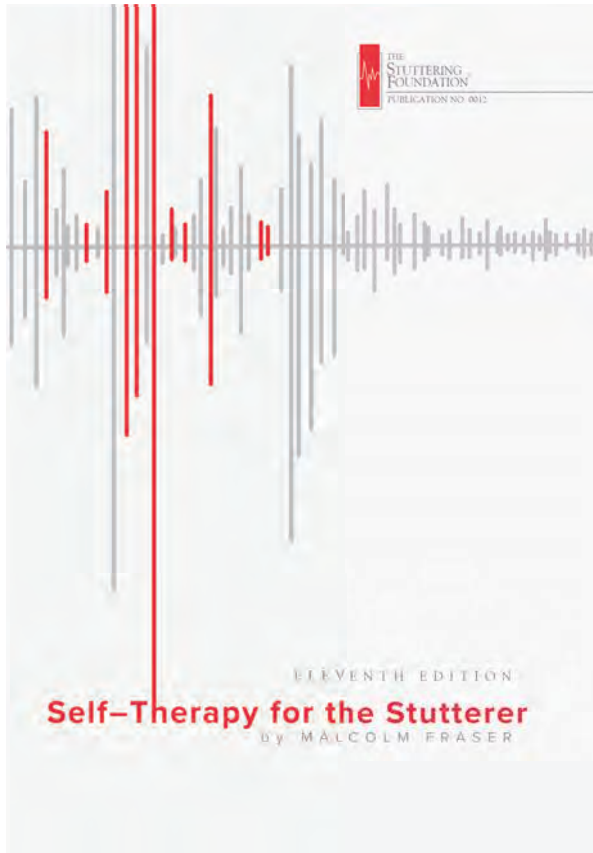
What does a stutter look like in a text message? When I read a text from a person who stutters, I don't add in a stutter. I read the text as is—whole. When we communicate in person or on the phone, our words and expressions are peppered with extra syllables, vowel elongations, and repeated phrases. The closest thing that comes to a stutter is autocorrect, which adds in unwanted words or incorrect spellings. There is another layer to receiving texts from friends and family: on read. With the pressure of the pandemic and the pressure to speak even more fluently on a phone call because of decreased face-to-face communication, I sometimes let texts go unanswered for a period of time. I read their words and then formulate a reply and then...don't.

This is also simulated in texting when the three dots appear...and then disappear. Communication takes energy and is, at times, exhausting. The pressure to reply to a text is even more apparent during a time when communication through technology seems to be more prevalent than talking face-to-face.



REVIEW FOR

Self-Therapy for the Stutterer



"We spent the morning with a family of a teenager who will be coming to our clinic next month. The family had been frustrated that they couldn't get the therapy they needed locally, which is why they reached out to us. They also decided to skill themselves up, and they told me they'd bought a great book which had inspired them to support their son. I asked the name of the book, and it was your father's - *Self-Therapy for the Stutterer*. It has clearly had a very positive impact on this family - they respond to their son who stammers with kindness and understanding; they support him to speak and continue speaking and they let him know that they're listening, they talk openly about stammering as a family; above all they value their son and what he has to say, and he knows that they will want to hear what he has to say no matter how long it takes him. As a result, he feels incredibly well supported by his family. We just wanted to let you know the ongoing impact of your father's work - what a great legacy!"

To purchase your own copy please visit www.StutteringHelp.Org/store or download for free at www.Stutteringhelp.Org/free-e-books

I KNOW WHAT TO SAY, BUT...

POETIC MEMOIR: A STUTTERER'S LAMENT

by Rose Cordero-Gonzales

My brain swirls with new hope each time I struggle to speak,
but my words get stuck in my throat.

My stuttering may cause some hesitation,
but I beseech you to remain calm and don't rush me.

Please, my friend, don't tell me to slow down
because I've heard it all before.

My stuttering is just a small part of me, but if you wait,
you will see there is much more to me.

My stuttering can be overwhelming,
but I promise I'm more than that.

Please, my friend, don't tell me to slow down
because I've heard it all before.

My stuttering has adopted me into her shroud,
but she has also taught me patience and tenacity.

My stuttering has been such an excellent teacher
because she has given me a path to self-acceptance.

Please, my friend, don't tell me to slow down
because I've heard it all before.

My stuttering may make you back away,
but don't be hesitant to speak with me.

My stuttering may sometimes hide away,
but she is always lurking behind some word
ready to pop out at any opportunity.

Please, my friend, don't tell me to slow down
because I've heard it all before.

My stuttering is just a part of who I am.
I refuse to let her define me.



STUTTERING FOUNDATION CELEBRATES STUTTERING MOMENTS IN MUSIC

There is a monumental milestone in the stuttering world. It is the 50th anniversary of the song “Bennie and the Jets” by Elton John becoming the first song with stuttering vocals to reach number one on the Billboard Hot 100. The song was written by lyricist Bernie Taupin and Elton John.

Originally, Elton did not want “Bennie and the Jets” released as a single in the U.S., but lo and behold it gave him a number one song on the Billboard Hot 100, and even crossed over onto the Billboard Soul chart; this accomplishment of which earned him an invitation to appear on the show Soul Train, thus exposing Elton to new audiences.

In the UK, “Bennie and the Jets” was the B-side to “Candle in the Wind” and did not chart. In 1976, it was released as an A-side single in the UK and reached number 37.

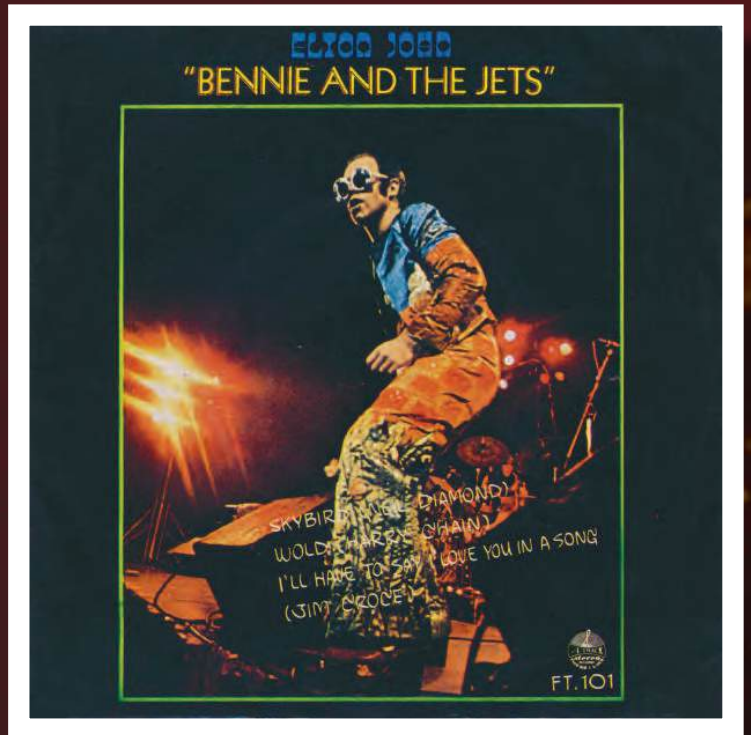
“Bennie and the Jets” entered the Top 40 on March 2, 1974 and spent 16 weeks in the Top 40. It reached number one on April 13, 1974, staying in the top slot for one week. It was Elton John’s second number one hit on the Billboard Hot 100, the first being “Crocodile Rock”, which topped the charts for three weeks in February 1973.

Previous to the “Bennie and the Jets” release, two other songs from Goodbye Yellow Brick Road were released as singles and charted in the Top 40. “Saturday Night’s Alright for Fighting” reached number 12 on the charts, while “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road” stalled for three weeks at number two in December 1973 and could not make the jump to the top position.

For “Bennie and the Jets”, Bernie Taupin wrote the lyrics with the imagine of a female leader of a rock band who was almost a sci-fi rock goddess. He wanted the song to be futuristic in that they were supposed to be a prototypical female rock and roll band out of science fiction. Taupin stated in an interview with Melody Maker that it was entirely Elton’s idea to use a stuttering vocal and he thought it worked out well with his futuristic robotic lyrics.

There had been songs with stuttering lyrics prior to “Bennie and the Jets” reaching number one on the Billboard Hot 100. Ironically, soon after “Bennie and the Jets” there would be other number one songs with stuttering vocals, such as “You Ain’t Seen Nothin’ Yet” by Bachman-Turner Overdrive (1974), “Jive Talkin’” by The Bee Gees (1975), “Changes” by David Bowie (1975), “Saturday Night” by The Bay City Rollers (1976) and “My Sharona” by The Knack (1979), “The Reflex” by Duran Duran (1984), “Sussudio” by Phil Collins (1985), and a couple of others.

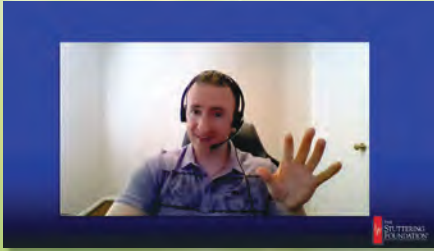
Let us not forgot that we are upon the 50th anniversary of Elton John landing “Bennie and the Jets” on to the top of the charts to be the first song with stuttering vocals to reach number one. Such a milestone should be recognized by the stuttering community.





New Continuing Education Courses

These courses are available online at www.StutteringCEUs.org



Shifting Perspectives Within School-Based

Stuttering Treatment In this one-hour presentation Timothy Flynn, M.S., CCC-SLP, a speech-language pathologist within Arlington Public Schools, Virginia and owner of Forward Steps Therapy, discusses the shifting perspective of working with children who stutter. How do we define “impact?” How do we define “success?” Tim Flynn presents rationales for changing perspectives, examples of clinical applications, accommodations, and specific challenges that SLPs face working with children who stutter in the school setting.



Assessment with School-Aged Children Who

Stutter There are several assessment tools available to therapists to use when working with school-aged children who stutter. In this one-hour presentation, Sharon Millard, Ph.D., RegMRCSLT, RegHCPC, of the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering in London, considers the factors a clinician might take into account when selecting the most appropriate assessments, as well as some examples of available tools.



Cluttering: Expanding Your Evaluation and

Treatment Horizons Given the new information we are learning from people who clutter, modifications to existing assessment and treatment protocols are warranted. In this one-hour presentation, Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-F discusses changes to the evaluation process to obtain a holistic picture of clients' needs, ongoing assessment of readiness for change as applied to cluttering, ways to decide upon treatment focus, and activities to include in treatment.



Culturally Responsive Guidelines for Serving

Families of Bilingual Children Who Stutter In this 75 minute presentation, Ana Paula G. Souza Mumy, SLPD, CCC-SLP discusses cultural responsiveness as it pertains to working with bilingual families, with a special focus on bilingual children who stutter. She talks about the vital role of the home language as well as the far-reaching detrimental effects of removing or reducing use of the home language within the family. She also challenges the notion of treating bilingualism as a "demand" or "burden" on a child's linguistic system. She examines how language and culture tie to the importance of clinical and patient evidence when making treatment decisions, particularly when research evidence is lacking. Finally, she explores guiding principles for family-centered treatment, viable solutions, and practical recommendations for working with bilingual children who stutter and their families.



Demystifying Word-Final Disfluency: Findings from a Pilot Therapy Program

In this one-hour presentation, Vivian Sisskin, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF, and Samantha Wasilus, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF, report therapy data for 20 successfully completed therapy cases of WFD in children using Structured Awareness Therapy for Word-Final Disfluency (SAT-WFD)©. Promising pilot therapy data support the need for research in (1) Incidence/prevalence, and relationship to developmental stuttering (2) potential causes or functions, and (3) evidence-based therapy approaches. Sisskin and Wasilus describe their therapy protocol to support SLPs/SLTs currently experimenting with therapy approaches that have proved unsuccessful.



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TIPS FOR SPEAKING WITH SOMEONE WHO STUTTERS

1. Don't make remarks like: "Slow down," "Take a breath," or "Relax." Such simplistic advice can be felt as demeaning and is not helpful.
2. Let the person know by your manner that you are listening to what he or she says — not how they say it.
3. Maintain natural eye contact and wait patiently and naturally until the person is finished.
4. You may be tempted to finish sentences or fill in words. Try not to do so.
5. Be aware that those who stutter usually have more trouble controlling their speech on the telephone. Please be patient in this situation. If you pick up the phone and hear nothing, be sure it is not a person who stutters trying to start the conversation before you hang up.
6. Speak in an unhurried way — but not so slowly as to sound unnatural. This pro-motes good communication with everyone.



STUTTERING FOUNDATION Q & A: JEFF WALZ



About Me:

I currently live in Louisville, Kentucky. I am the Head Women's Basketball Coach at the University of Louisville.

About My Family:

I have two older brothers and a younger sister. We were all very active in athletics growing up. We have wonderful parents who supported us.

My Hobbies and Passions:

I love working around the house, playing tennis and golf, snow skiing, and spending time with my family. I also enjoy coaching basketball, and traveling.

My Career Success:

I have been successful in my career with hard work, surrounding myself with great people, and never being satisfied.

Do you remember when you first began to stutter?

I remember at a very young age having a stutter. I went to speech therapy classes all through elementary school.

Does it run in your family? Who else stutters?

No one else in my family stutters.

Did you seek treatment? Did it help?

I did have speech therapy in school and it was helpful. It taught me different techniques to try and help minimize my stutter.

Tell us about your experience with stuttering as a child.

It was difficult in school when trying to ask questions or having to read aloud in class. I would at times not ask a question in fear that I would stutter. I was a decent athlete growing up so playing sports was a way for me to express myself without having to do too much talking. It can be very lonely and hard when you know what you want to say but the words just won't come out. I know before I even speak if I am going to stutter on a word, which would stop me from speaking in groups.

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

My stuttering has gotten better as I have gotten more confident in myself and less concerned about what others think. I have used my platform to let other stutterers know that anything is possible even with a stutter.

How does stuttering affect you in your career?

Stuttering was a challenge at first as I was nervous about all the media obligations that I had to do. The anxiety that would take over as I was waiting to get interviewed before or after a game. It took me a couple years to just be comfortable with who I am and understand this is how God made me different. I would also let the media know that I do have a stutter so they would not be caught off guard.

How is your stuttering today? What do you do to control or manage it, if anything?

My stutter is much better today but I still do have times where it is more noticeable than others. I did go to our speech pathology department here at the University of Louisville a couple times and they just told me that I am very good at word changing.

What are the biggest challenges of stuttering?

The biggest challenge was becoming confident enough with being a stutterer and not worrying about what others said or thought. I know that is easy to say at the age of 52 because I know how cruel kids can be to each other. I always wanted to be a head coach and I knew that my stutter would be one of my biggest hurdles for me to overcome.

What is your greatest accomplishment with regard to stuttering?

Getting to a point in life to not worry about what others think or say! I am a stutterer and will always be one. Once I got confident in myself, my stuttering has gotten better and I feel much more confident when I have to go speak to large or small groups.

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

Stuttering is how God made us different! Don't be embarrassed by your stutter, embrace it. I know how cruel and mean other kids can be but don't let others define who you are. Stay positive and understand that you will have some good and bad days with your stutter and that is ok. Your true friends and family will look at who you are as a person and judge you by how you treat others and what you do in life, not by your stutter.

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

I would tell them to be patient with your child and support them. They don't want to stutter and try so hard not to. Don't finish their sentences for them and give them the confidence to know it's OK to be a stutterer. Have compassion and understanding for your child. I promise they would do anything to not have a stutter



SINGING AND STUTTERING

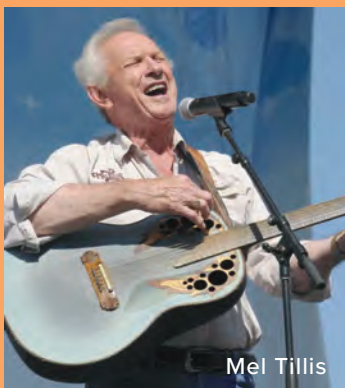
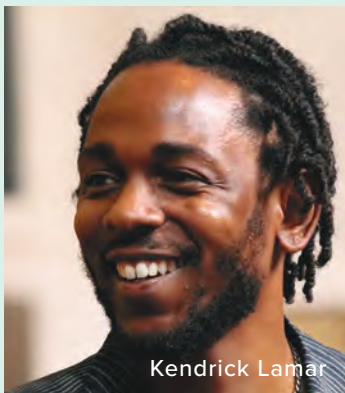


Did you know that many famous singers who stutter began singing to overcome their stutter? Singers like Ed Sheeran and Kendrick Lamar started singing as an outlet.

Dr. Barry Guitar of the University of Vermont says, "understanding what dramatically reduces stuttering during singing may eventually help us understand stuttering better."

Dr. Guitar offers the following comments on why singing may work to reduce or eliminate a stutter:

- *In singing, we use our vocal cords, lips, and tongue differently than when we talk.*
- *There is no time pressure in singing nor is there any communicative pressure.*
- *The rhythmic pattern of music tends to help regulate a person's breathing.*
- *There is now evidence that the brain functions differently for singing than it does for talking.*
- *When we sing, we generally know the words of the song by heart. Sometimes "word retrieval" or searching for the words plays a role in stuttering.*



Want to read more about singing and stuttering? Check this out: "When I put some melody and rhythm behind my voice, the stutter lost all its power"

tinyurl.com/SFAMelody

If you are a person who stutters and are interested in the effects of singing on stuttering, you may want to visit

<https://www.singwell.ca/newsletter-main/>

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

There are many proven, effective ways to reduce stuttering. Doing nothing is not one of them.

We can help.



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Kay Armstead	Jane Holmes
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David R. Berry, Sr.	Laura Judge
Curt Betebenner	Arlene Kempe
Dennis W. Blager	Dorothy LaTourette
Dr. Oliver Bloodstein	Patsy P. Livingston
Sister Charleen Bloom	C.L. Lott
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Patrick Todd Griffin	Dr. Bruce Witkind
Ruth E. Healey	Dr. and Mrs. Elliot Witkind
Robert Hejna	Mitchell Wyatt
James D. Hellwege	Catherine H. Zimmer

THE 2024

Deso Weiss Award



Dr. Susanne Cook was presented with the Deso Weiss Award on May 16, 2024, for her outstanding contributions in the field of cluttering. Other distinguished past recipients include Dr. Isabella Reichel, Dr. Klaas Bakker, Dr. Kathleen Scaler-Scott, Dr. Yvonne Van Zaalen, Dr. Ken St. Louis, and Dr. Florence Myers.



Speak with your child in an unhurried way, pausing frequently.





THE LORE OF LORD STANLEY'S CUP

EXPLORING HOCKEY, HISTORY, AND THE SKATERS WHO STUTTER

The Stanley Cup, also referred to as Lord Stanley's Cup, is the oldest trophy to be awarded to a professional sports franchise in North America. The trophy was commissioned in 1892 and named after Lord Stanley of Preston, the Governor General of Canada, who donated it as an award to Canada's top-ranking amateur ice hockey club. First awarded in 1893 to the Montreal Hockey Club, some 34 years later it would exclusively become the championship trophy of the newly aligned National Hockey League. Since then, it has been the goal of every NHL team to try to win the Stanley Cup.

The stuttering community should be aware that there have been some players who stutter on Stanley Cup winning teams. Currently, Bryan Rust continues to star for the Pittsburgh Penguins. He won Stanley Cups with the Penguins in 2016 and 2017. On May 2, 2016, he became the first rookie in NHL history to score two goals in a game seven of the Stanley Cup playoffs, helping the Penguins to victory in game seven of the semi-finals. After this publicized feat, Sports Illustrated published an article about Rust and his brother Matt, also a player in the Penguins' minor-league system. "Born three years apart, Matt and Bryan were



Bryan Rust, Pittsburgh Penguins

bonded by more than hockey. As children, both attended speech therapy to help their stutters, and found themselves subject to the same type of teasing from their peers. "It's not the easiest thing to go through as a kid," Matt said. "We were always there for each other. That's probably a story in itself."

An inspiring article in the February 3, 2024 edition of the Pittsburgh-Tribune Review, "Penguins Forward Bryan Rust Speaks Up for Those Who Stutter" detailed the Michigan native's work with The National Association of Young People Who Stutter (known as "FRIENDS"). Through his work with FRIENDS, Rust has met with many young people who stutter after Penguins' games and given them encouragement.

The Washington Capitals joined the NHL as an expansion team in 1974-1975 and won their first and only Stanley Cup so far in 2018. Capitals' star Niklas Backstrom, a native of Sweden and a person who stutters, played a pivotal role in the Capitals' finally winning Lord Stanley's Cup. Chosen fourth overall by the Capitals in the first round of the 2006 NHL Entry Draft, Niklas Backstrom has played his entire 17 NHL seasons with Washington, scoring 271 goals and 1,033 points in 1,105 games. In the wake of the Stanley Cup triumph, Backstrom was profiled in a Washington Post article titled "Backstory" on September 27, 2018. The article touched upon



Niklas Backstrom, Washington Capitals



his childhood stuttering and how it has continued into adulthood. He was quoted, “...because sometimes I want to say one thing, and I know I can say it, but sometimes I start to stutter, so I have to redo the phrase. I’m not shy. I just pick my spots. Obviously, you don’t want to be in a live interview when it happens, but it is what it is.”

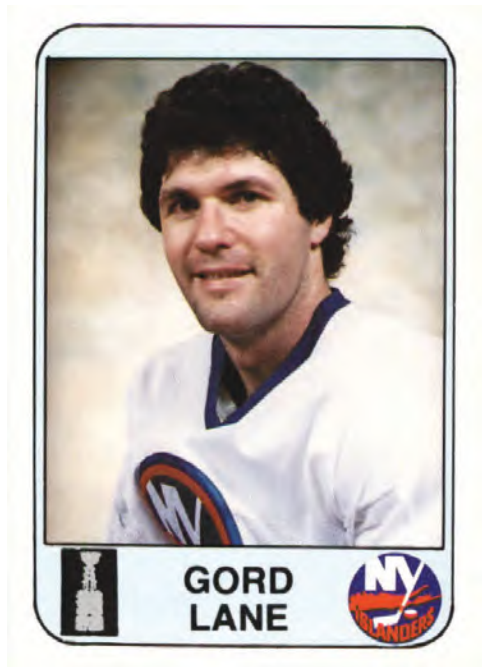
In terms of retired players, likely no former player who stutters achieved more Stanley Cup rings than Gord Lane, the tough defenseman for the New York Islanders in their amazing run of four consecutive Stanley Cups from 1980-1983. Gord Lane’s life and career is one of perseverance and triumph over the odds. At age 19 after playing for the New Westminster Bruins of the WCJHL, he was drafted by the Pittsburgh Penguins in the ninth round of the 1973 NHL draft in an era when ninth round picks had little if any chance of making the NHL. Never giving up, he played three seasons in the International Hockey League, a lower-tier minor league. It was an extremely difficult task for an IHL player to make the NHL in that era, but Lane

was offered a tryout with the Washington Capitals and was signed to a contract. He quickly earned a reputation as the Capitals’ “enforcer,” and in his fifth season with the club was traded to the Islanders on December 7, 1979, and the rest is history.

On a team of many stars and high scorers, Lane anchored the defense for the Islanders as a defensive defenseman that was a needed contrast to the high-scoring Islanders defensemen. Lane played six seasons with the Islanders from 1979-1985 and was noted for his physical play and stay-at-home defensive style. An integral part of the Islanders’ four consecutive Stanley Cup championship teams, his keen defensive style was regularly noted in the media. The Islanders top scorer Brian Trottier has told people over the years that Gord Lane was the “unsung hero” of those four championship teams. During the 1982 Stanley Cup finals when Lane had an incredible game, an article in the sports section of Newsday reported that Islanders coach Al Arbour passed Lane in the locker room and said, “Hi, Conn,” a reference to the Conn Smythe Trophy, which is awarded to the most valuable player of the Stanley Cup playoffs.

On a few occasions during his days as an Islanders, Gord Lane addressed his stuttering in newspaper interviews, and won admirers in the process. He was one of the first pro athletes to speak openly about his stuttering and in one newspaper interview spoke about a speech therapy program he was taking and the support meetings he was attending with other people in that therapy. Lane’s going public about his stuttering during his days with the Islanders certainly made him a role model to many young hockey fans who also stuttered, not to mention admired by the hockey world for rising above his challenges to star at defense for the Islanders.

One NHL superstar who unfortunately never won a Stanley Cup is Dave Taylor, the all-star right wing for the Los Angeles Kings for 17 seasons from 1977-1994. The Levack, Ontario native was viewed as too light to play in amateur hockey in Canada so instead he took a scholarship to Clarkson College in Potsdam, New York in 1973. Unlike today, very few college players made it into the National Hockey League. Taylor set all the Clarkson scoring records and in his last year was named both an NCAA All-American and the ECAC player of the year.



Gordie Lane, New York Islanders

After an outstanding college career, Taylor was selected in the fifteenth round as the 210th player overall. In those days, someone selected in the fifteenth round never made it into the NHL. Some say his 150 pounds deemed him an unlikely pro prospect. Taylor proved them wrong as he not only earned a spot on the Kings but had an impressive rookie year in 1977-1978 with 22 goals and 22 assists. The next season Taylor would start playing on the famed "Triple Crown Line" with perennial superstar Marcel Dionne and top goal scorer Charlie Simmer. The trio tore up the NHL for a few years.

Dave Taylor has always been open about his stuttering. He has admitted in public that he once had to drop a class in college when he found out that an oral presentation was required. Also, early in his NHL career Taylor, when interviewed after games on the radio, would often fake hyperventilation to guide him to fluency. Taylor credits his triumph over stuttering to his work with famed SLP Vivian Sheehan in Los Angeles.

On February 5, 1991, Taylor scored his 1,000 career NHL point, putting him in an elite group of NHL players throughout history. He was the first player to achieve that milestone that was a product of the U.S. college system. Dave Taylor's number 18 was only the third number retired in Los Angeles King history. While videos of Dave Taylor's abilities on the ice, both scoring and fighting, are available on YouTube, people who stutter will continue to be inspired by Taylor's never-ending triumphs over the odds. His enthusiasm and dedication will never be retired.

The Anaheim Mighty Ducks entered the NHL as an expansion franchise in 1993 and shortened their name to the "Anaheim Ducks" in 2006. The Anaheim Ducks won the Stanley Cup in 2007. In the 2023 NHL Entry Draft, Anaheim selected Leo Carlsson, a highly rated 18-year-old forward from Sweden, with the second pick in the draft. The fact that Carlsson is a person who stutters did not go unnoticed in the media. The Athletic ran an article on April 25, 2023, titled "Meet Leo Carlsson, No. 2 Draft Pick by the Ducks, Whose Stutter Is Just 'Part of Me.'" On November 10, 2023, he scored his first career NHL hat trick and gave an interview afterwards, which is available on YouTube. It is obvious by the interview that he speaks with confidence despite his stuttering. Maybe someday the name Leo Carlsson will be engraved on Lord Stanley's Cup.

The fact that 1% of adults stutter and that the Stanley Cup has been awarded for 131 years means that there are likely more people who stuttered whose names are engraved on the Stanley Cup as well as other NHL players in the past whose stuttering was never publicized. However, with the identified NHL players in this article making it to the NHL and being heroes to young people stutter, it really does not matter whether or not they won the great Stanley Cup because they have always been champions in the eyes of the stuttering community.



Leo Carlsson, Anaheim Mighty Ducks



Send your story or advice to the Stuttering Foundation and be featured in an upcoming magazine! Please send your letters, artwork and/or photos via email to info@stutteringhelp.org or mail to: **The Stuttering Foundation P.O. Box 11749 Memphis, TN 38111-0749**



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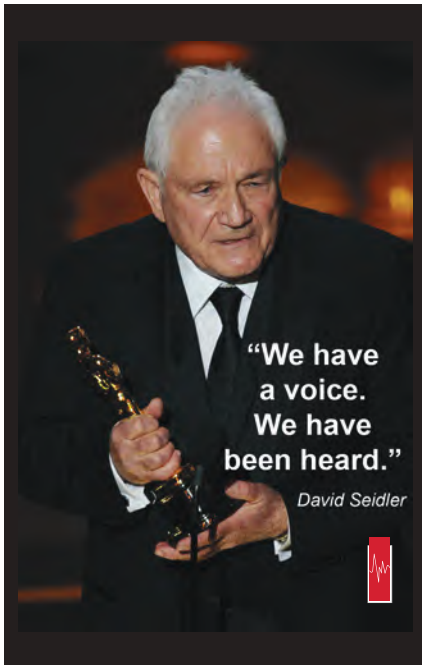


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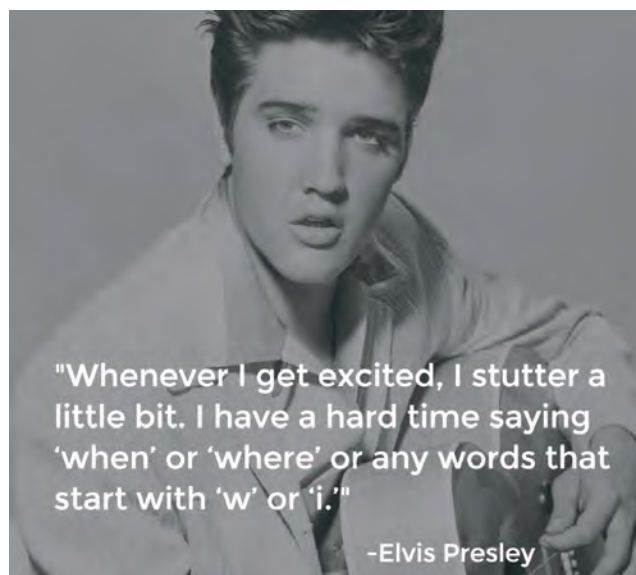
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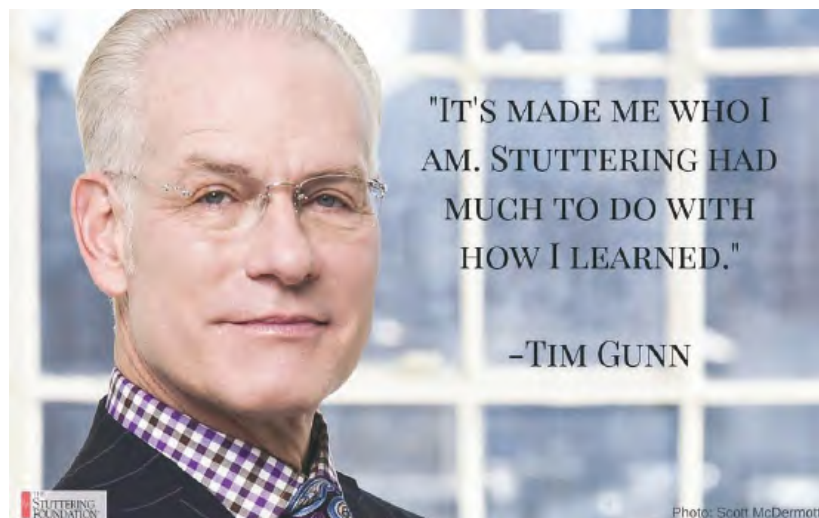


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