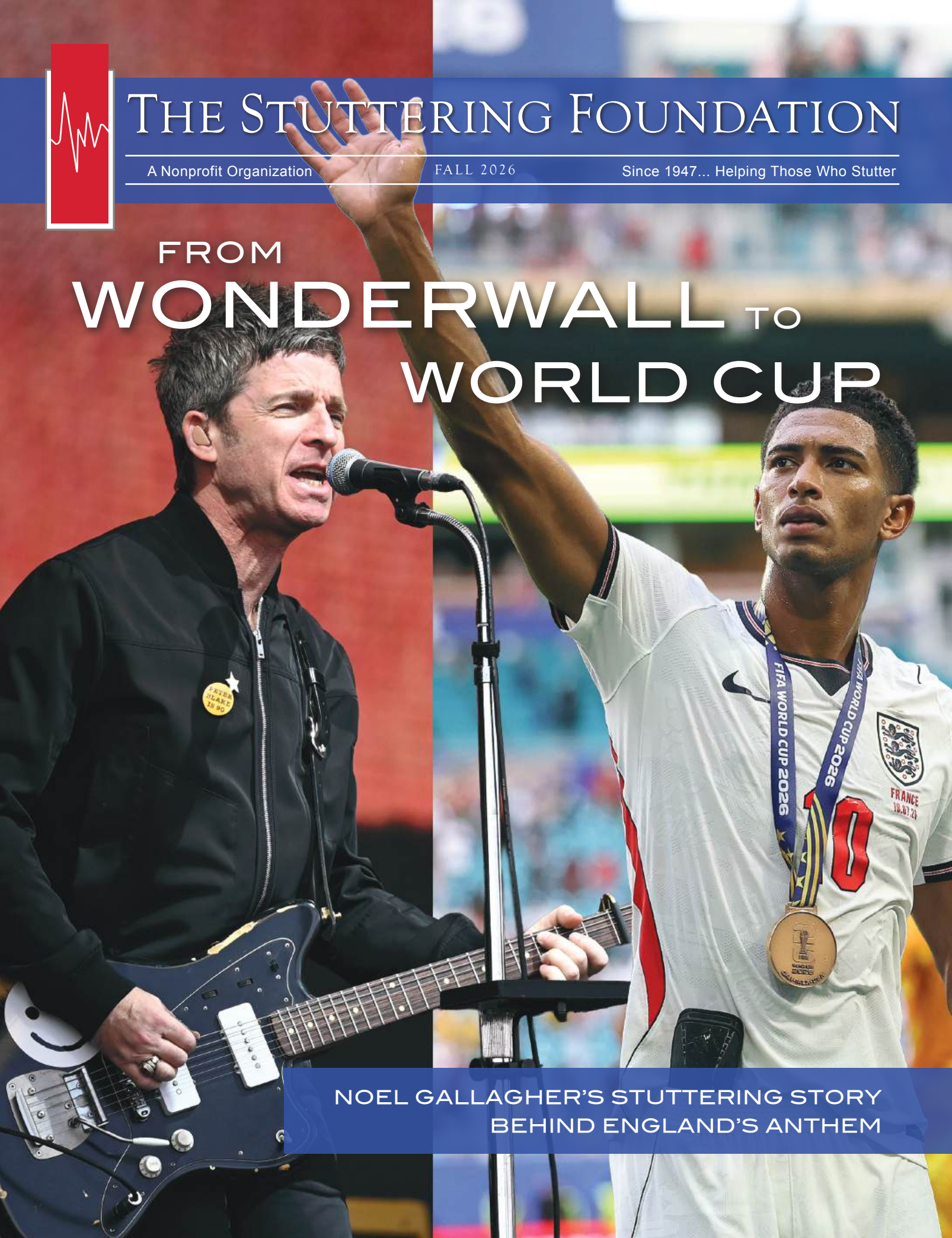
THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION
A Nonprofit Organization
FALL 2026
Since 1947... Helping Those Who Stutter

FROM WONDERWALL TO WORLD CUP



NOEL GALLAGHER'S STUTTERING STORY BEHIND ENGLAND'S ANTHEM

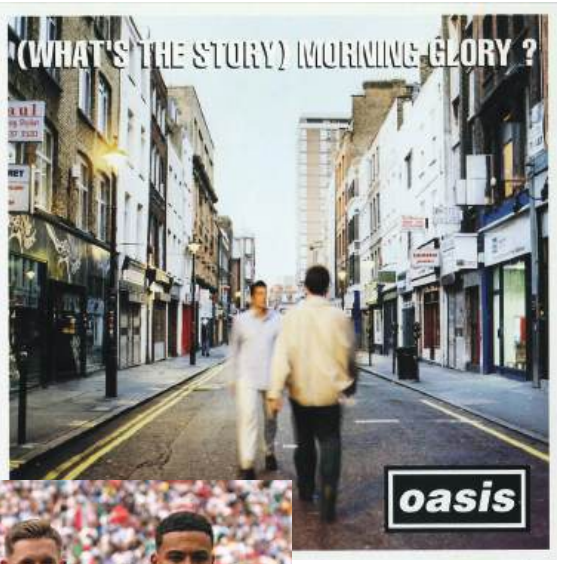
FROM WONDERWALL TO WORLD CUP

The whole world knows that *Wonderwall*, Oasis' 1995 international smash hit, became the unofficial anthem of England's 2026 FIFA World Cup team, whose remarkable run ended Wednesday, July 15, with a quarterfinal loss to Argentina. The song was written entirely by Oasis guitarist Noel Gallagher, who was previously featured in one of our Celebrity Corner articles, "Noel Gallagher of Oasis Rocks On," detailing his early struggles with stuttering and how he overcame them through many years of weekly speech therapy.

Every great football tournament seems to find its defining soundtrack, and for England at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, that song was Oasis' timeless classic, *Wonderwall*. What began as a spontaneous singalong after England's opening victory quickly evolved into one of the tournament's most memorable traditions, uniting players and supporters in a shared celebration after every win.

With captain Harry Kane, Jude Bellingham, and their teammates standing shoulder to shoulder before thousands of traveling fans, the familiar chorus echoed through stadiums across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The emotional post-match scenes became almost as anticipated as the football itself, symbolizing the bond between the squad and its supporters. Kane described the celebrations as some of his favorite moments in an England shirt, highlighting the unique connection between the team and its fans.

The song experienced a dramatic surge in streams and sales, climbing to No. 2 on Spotify's Top 50 Global chart, trailing only Shakira and Burna Boy's *"Dai Dai,"* an official anthem for the tournament. The classic also jumped 20 places on the UK Official Singles Chart from the previous week and could surpass its original peak of No. 2. Fan-created videos of England's celebrations flooded social media.



Michael Spencer Jones; Design: Brian Cannon/Microdot



Luke Hales/Getty Images



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First sung by Three Lions players and fans at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, following England's opening 4-2 victory over Croatia, the celebration quickly became a tournament tradition. Reflecting on the moment, England's all-time leading goal scorer Harry Kane said, "That was one of my favorite moments ever in an England shirt."

Wonderwall was written for Oasis' second album, 1995's *(What's the Story) Morning Glory?* It was written exclusively by Noel Gallagher and sung by his brother Liam. In a 2002 interview with the BBC, Noel explained the song's meaning, saying, "It's about an imaginary friend who's gonna come and save you from yourself," despite having said in 1995 that it was inspired by his then-partner, Meg Mathews.

The resurgence of *Wonderwall* has extended far beyond the football terraces. Streams of the Britpop anthem have soared, Noel Gallagher has embraced its new role by saying the song "belongs to the people," and Liam Gallagher has enthusiastically supported England's World Cup campaign on social media. More than three decades after its release, *Wonderwall* has found an entirely new generation of football fans singing every word.

A July 3, 2007, article in the British tabloid The Sun titled "Idol Can Beat Stammer" cited Noel Gallagher's experience as an inspiring example, noting that "Noel Gallagher and his brother Paul went through years of speech therapy to get over their stammers."

There are also several interviews available on YouTube in which Noel discusses his childhood stuttering, including a 2006 appearance on ITV's Positivism.

Older brother Paul Gallagher, who is not a member of Oasis, wrote the biography *Brothers: From Childhood to Oasis: The Real Story*. Several times throughout the book, Paul recalls that both he and Noel struggled with stuttering. He wrote:

"At play time I was always on my own, the other kids used to make fun of my stammer. I had a really bad one, and so did Noel. Our stammers were so pronounced that in the end our Mam took us for speech therapy every week for four years to clear them up."

It is especially encouraging for young people who stutter to know that a world-renowned songwriter and musician such as Noel Gallagher once shared their struggle—and that he successfully overcame it through years of speech therapy.

Although England ultimately did not lift the World Cup trophy, *Wonderwall* has already secured its place in football folklore. In a tournament defined by passion, hope, and togetherness, Oasis provided the soundtrack to England's journey—and gave supporters an anthem that will be remembered long after the final whistle.

Cover Photo Credits, L to R: Kate Green/Getty Images; Buda Mendes/Getty Images

SFA IN BOSTON: JUNE 1-5, 2026

THIRTY YEARS OF TRAINING, A WORLDWIDE RIPPLE EFFECT



Back: Hannah White, Sarai Gomez, Holly Cardinal, Lori Scott-Sulsky, Szymon Gacek, Rebecca Simon, Amy Baker, Kara Nunziato, Magdalena Steller, Nikki Martin. Middle: Kimberly Groves, Maria du Toit, Sara Marchetti, Kimberly Aridano, Lea Ayuyao, Yana Melnikova, Antea Šalinović, Amanda Fransen, Mary Sisk. Front: Caroline Brinkert, Sarah Delpeche, Ali Berquez

This year, the Stuttering Foundation and Boston University celebrate a significant milestone: the 30th intensive workshop dedicated to strengthening the skills of speech-language pathologists who work with children who stutter.

Twenty clinicians from around the world were selected to attend Working with School-Age Children Who Stutter and Their Families, held June 1–5 in Boston. The workshop provides advanced clinical training while encouraging participants to learn from one another's professional and cultural perspectives.

Leading this year's workshop are Ali Berquez, MSc, PG Dip. CT (Oxford), BRIEF Cert. SF Practice, MRCSLT, and Sarah Delpeche, MSc, BSc (Hons), MRCSLT, of the Michael Palin Centre in London.

The workshop's influence extends far beyond the clinicians in the room. Participants return home better equipped to support children who stutter and their families—and to share their knowledge with colleagues, schools and communities. This year's class includes clinicians already providing stuttering therapy from Colorado to Georgia and from Canada and Croatia to Poland and South Africa.

Over the years, more than 600 clinicians have completed the Boston Workshop program. Each has helped create a ripple effect, passing along knowledge that strengthens care and understanding for generations of people who stutter.

With more than 80 million people worldwide affected by stuttering, the value of this shared expertise is immeasurable. Thirty workshops represent not only an enduring commitment to professional education, but also a growing global network dedicated to helping people who stutter communicate with greater confidence and freedom.







"I learned a different way of interacting with and incorporating parents into assessment and therapy."





"I feel prepared to put more effort into family therapy."

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN STUTTERING

BY EHUD YAIRI, PH.D.
Professor Emeritus
University of Illinois



Let me begin with a general truism: Language can exist without speech but speech cannot exist without language. That is, language is independent whereas speech depends on an internal language system to produce meaningful vocal sounds. Although stuttering is widely recognized by the general public, professional speech clinicians, and people who stutter, as a disorder of speech production, one cannot escape recognizing that language components are also involved. Perhaps the first to do so are people who stutter, both older children and adults, who, based on self-experiences, have realized that certain speech sounds, that are not necessarily more motorically demanding and/or multisyllabic words, are more difficult for them to speak. Indeed, there is strong evidence that a person's instances of stuttered speech do not occur at random. Early modern research (e.g., Brown, 1937, 1945; also see review by Bloodstein et al., 2021) demonstrated strong influences of apparent linguistic features on the specific locations where stutter events, sometimes referred to as "moments of stuttering," occur. For example, stuttering events tend to occur at the beginning of sentences and phrases, on words of certain grammatical classes, such as verbs and adjectives, etc. Still, some or much of this phenomenon can also be ascribed to motoric factors.

Another line linking stuttering to language seems to be especially intuitive in relation to young children, as most begin to stutter by 36 months of age. An intensive longitudinal study reported that nearly 38% of stuttering onsets occur by 30 months of age (!), reaching over 65% by 36 months of age (end of 3rd year of life), increasing to 85% by 42 months of age and to 95% by age 48 months -- the 4th birthday (Yairi & Ambrose, 2005).



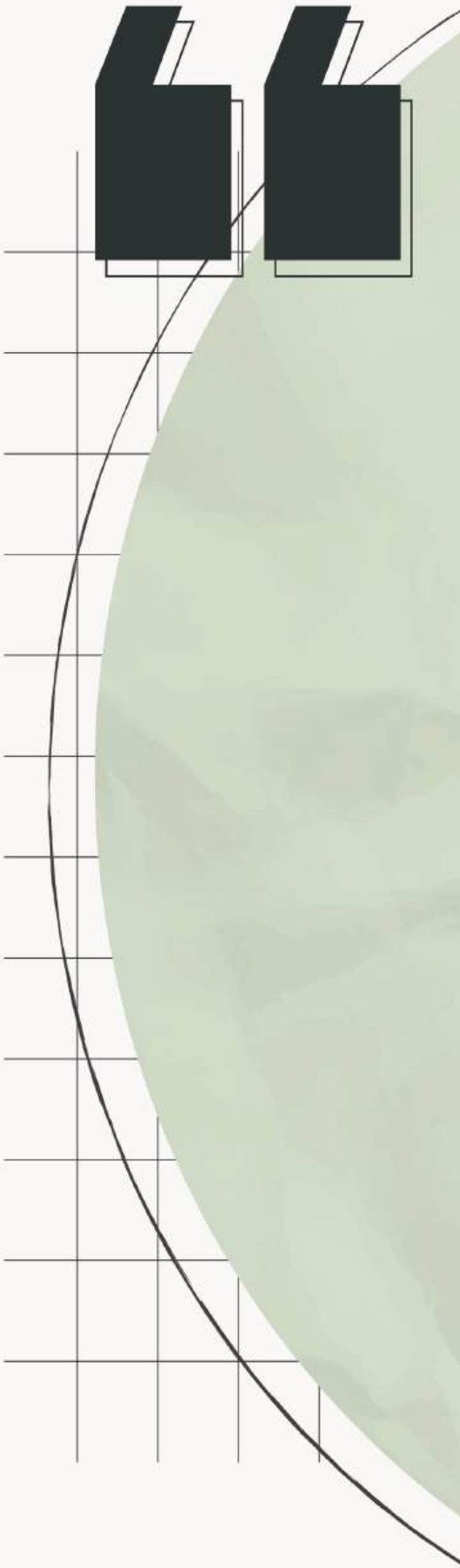
The mean age at onset according to 5 robust studies is very young --**32 months** (Yairi, Seery, & Singer, 2025). One study even reported a mean of only 29 months (Reily et al., (2009)! This is the period when children's expressive and receptive language capacities rapidly expand (Levina, 1963; Ratner, 1997). Is it possible that the fast-growing language skills are taxing the child's speech production system? Nearly 60 years ago Cheverkeva (1967) went so far as proposing that stuttering is a disorder of language development, a notion subsequently echoed by Bloodstein (2002). Perhaps. However, as pointed out by Alm (2004), this is also the peak period for dopamine receptors to occur in the basal ganglia affecting the ability to produce timing cues. In any event, considering the principle of parsimony, that is, applying the smallest number of variables to account for the largest number of facts, and based on available scientific information, my current view is that stuttering is basically a motor disorder* affected by other domains, such as emotionality and language, including the demands of social discourse, as communication does not occur in a vacuum. Interestingly, in this respect, Alm (2026) has pointed out that the overwhelming majority of children with low linguistic abilities do not stutter! Scientific views, however, should accommodate new information as presented later in this paper. Also, many years ago we suggested the possibility that stuttering, phonology, and language problems occurring simultaneously in young children arise independently from a common biological cause (e.g., E. Paden in Yairi & Ambrose, 2005).

A growing interest in the language aspect of stuttering has also been reflected in several psycholinguistic models of the disorder as depicted in the Fault Line Hypothesis (Wingate, 1988), the Covert-Repair Hypothesis (Postma & Kolk, 1993), the Trade-Off Hypothesis (Ratner, 1997), the Cognitive Interference Model (Bosshardt, 2002), and others. They do not propose that people who stutter lack knowledge of the vocabulary or phonology of their language nor do they suggest that stuttering results from motoric interference. Rather, they propose that stuttered speech events result from subtle aberrancies in mental operations that plan and transform intended language messages into articulated words. Thus, a theory may assert that stuttering is a disorder of phonological encoding -- an impairment of the processes responsible for timely/precise retrieval of sequential phonological elements, primarily phonemes (the smallest speech sounds units of a language), for smooth speech outcome. That is, speakers have problems with timely assembly of their intended verbal message even if they know the intended words, the required speech sounds, and the rules for their use. Clearly, the psycholinguistic viewpoint shifts the focus from the motor system of speech production to central (brain) processes involved in the planning of intended speech. The clinical implications of the psycholinguistic theories are that people who stutter (1) should slow down when initiating and continuing to talk, allowing extra time for their systems to plan the correct sequence/timing of speech sounds, and (2) practice speech sound combinations to increase their speed and accuracy. Young children would be expected to benefit from phonological awareness activities. Here I note that a very recent NIH-sponsored study of single brain cells (Jing et al., 2026) appears to strongly support the role of the above-mentioned psycholinguistic processes, commending the practice of sequentially programmed phonological elements for running speech. They reported that certain neurons represented the detailed grammatical relationship

between words; that neuronal recordings observed just before participants spoke predicted many properties of their subsequent speech production. There was a division of labor among neurons, with some reflecting basic information, such as the meaning and roles of specific words, while others tackled more complex tasks, including grouping phrases into structured sentences. Hopefully, such research will be expanded to stuttering, shedding light on the role of language in the dynamics of stuttered speech.

In the past, language research in relation to stuttering dealt with five distinct variables: (a) Language Complexity: the intricacy of vocabulary, sentence structure, and the broad range of ideas expressed, (b) Pragmatics: how language is used in real-life communication, (c) Phonology: the proper use of the language sound system, (d) Loci of stuttering events, and (e) Language Skills: the ability to understand and use language effectively. Most of this work has been conducted with children. For example, investigators reported increased stuttering as a function of language complexity (Logan & Conture, 1995; Zackheim & Conture, 2003). A very comprehensive review can be found in Bloodstein et al. (2021). Particularly relevant to clinicians and parents is the question of whether children who stutter (CWS) are more likely than children who do not stutter (CWNS) to exhibit language development difficulties, or even impairments. Bloodstein et. al. (2021), and Yairi et al. (2025) noted some support to this notion, whether in data or scholarly opinion, published early in the current century, including Arndt & Healey (2001), Wingate (2001), and Blood et al. (2003), as well as more recently (e.g., Luckman et al. 2020 and Koenraads et al., 2025). The Blood et al. (2003) team reported that 26% of school-aged CWS revealed language disorders. Several years later, an analysis of 22 studies, mostly of school-age children of up to age 8, concluded that CWS scored lower than CWNS on standard measures of both receptive and expressive language (Ntourou et al., 2011). Note, however, that (a) lower scores do not necessarily mean a “disordered” classification, and (b) the participant children were years beyond the typical age at stuttering onset that occurs at a mean of 32 months as mentioned above. Hence, their results pertain to only a **small minority** -- 20% or fewer -- of all children who ever stuttered because so many of them have already stopped stuttering due to natural recovery (see Yairi & Ambrose, 1999).

A more recent analysis of 19 studies of **general population** samples, aged 1 to 16 years, totaling nearly 25,000 children (Hill et. al., 2023) revealed prevalence of low **expressive** language skills ranging from 7.7% to 25.2% and prevalence of low **receptive** language skills ranging from 5% to 16.9%! Also, the Language section at NIH’s link, https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/quick-statistics-voice-speech-language, reveals a 7% figure for incidence of language disorders in children nation-wide. Unfortunately, similar data for a stuttering population aged 1 to 16 are not available. One may, however, roughly infer the missing information from Blood et al.’s (2003) finding that 26% of school age CWS demonstrated language disorders. Note that by age 8 or so, their results pertain only to a minority of 20%-25% (likely only 20%) of the original population



of the schoolchildren who stuttered – the ones who did **not** experience natural recovery. Now, if we assume that the 75% of CWS who have already recovered did **not** have histories of language disorders, then 26% of schoolchildren who stuttered would correspond to **only 6.5%** of the **initial total** population of children who ever stuttered presenting with disordered language -- close to the 7% national population incidence as per the NIH summary. In this case, it is possible to infer that stuttering, in general, is not associated with a higher risk of language disorders than what occurs in the general population and that only the persistent group may exhibit such problems. But, if this assumption is wrong, and some or many of the 75% of children who recovered from stuttering also had language disorders, then language skills are not a dependable risk predictor of persistency and recovery. Still, perhaps only a sub-population of children who stutter, those who persist in stuttering, present such problems. In this case, language status may have some prognostic value.

A few studies explored language skills in young preschool children close to the time of stuttering onset, reflecting the status prior to natural recovery among a much larger stuttering population. Early results indicated typical language skills. For example, Bernstein Ratner, and Silverman (2000) studied 15 3-year-old CWS under 4 months post stuttering onset finding language scores within the normal range. Similar conclusions were reported by Ryan (1992), Anderson and Conture (2000; 2004), and Anderson et al. (2005). Of special interest are the Kloth et al., 1995a, 1995b studies that tracked 96 children at risk for stuttering because one or both of their parents stuttered. The 26 children who, after one year, began stuttering, did not differ from the CWNS on speech-language measures made prior to stuttering onset. In my judgment, due to the unique nature of this study, its findings are particularly convincing. Also, at the University of Illinois Stuttering Research Project, in a large longitudinal study of 84 children, ages 2 to 5, all tested close to stuttering onset, language skills data yielded mean scores within the norm (Watkins, Yairi & Ambrose, 1999). The minority of children who continued to stutter, however, presented greater variability and atypical patterns of language production compared to those who later recovered naturally. A German team also reported that preschoolers who stuttered had language skills at or above age norms (Hage, 2001; Rommel et al., 1999), as did an Australian team whose longitudinal study tapped children very close to stuttering onset. Their CWS had higher verbal and nonverbal language scores than CWNS (Reilly et al., 2013). Interestingly, it is not infrequent that parents report that their child had a spurt of language development just prior to the onset of stuttering including speaking in longer sentences and using new words. They often say that "his brain seemed to be working faster than his mouth" could manage.

In discussing the Illinois studies, Nippold (2012) concluded that a stuttering-language connection was not supported and posited that language difficulties in CWS, when existing, are but a reflection of a compromised motor control system. Initially R. Watkins of the Illinois program, concluded that “there is virtually no evidence that language development is vulnerable in any significant

number of young children who stutter" (see her chapter in Yairi & Ambrose, 2005). Later analyses of our complete data, however, did conclude that at one or two years post-onset, both expressive and receptive language abilities in the subgroup of children who persisted in stuttering lagged behind those observed in children who recovered (Ambrose et al., 2015). Still, the mixed findings led us to question the predictive power of a child's language skills regarding persistency or natural recovery. Note again that "lag behind" does not necessarily mean "disordered." Five years later, a meta-analysis of 11 studies conducted by Singer et al. (2020) also concluded that children who persisted in stuttering performed lower than those who recovered on standardized language tests. Subsequently, Sugathan and Maruthy (2021), in reviewing 19 pertinent studies, also concluded that, at the time of stuttering onset, children who later persisted in stuttering exhibited lower **expressive** language skills compared to those who eventually recovered. I question, however, the validity of their statement regarding "...time of stuttering onset" – as most studies were not careful at establishing this all important parameter.

Our question, then, is how strong the language predictor is, and how it compares with other predictors? Of course, it all depends on the strength of the research concerned with natural recovery/persistency and two all-important parameters: (1) children's age at the initial observation in a longitudinal study, and (2) the time interval between that initial observation and the stuttering onset as accurately determined. These two parameters determine the validity of the reported rate of natural recovery and how well it represents the **general population** of preschool children who ever stuttered. Clearly, the older the children, and the longer the elapsed time from stuttering onset at the beginning of a longitudinal study, the less accurate the findings will be because children who naturally recovered prior to the starting point of the study will not be accounted for. The potential recovery predictors for these already-recovered younger children also will be missing. Are such potential predictors also language related? Furthermore, this missing early recovered group may be significant in size. That natural recovery also occurs in two- and three-year old children who stutter has been repeatedly reported (Ryan 2001; Yairi & Ambrose, 1999, 2005; Mansson, 2005). Hence, unquestionably, studies that tracked stuttering from ages 4 or 5, or even later, missed all those cases of earlier recovery. Therefore, their reported rate of natural recovery is rather inaccurate for the stuttering population of young children.

Illustrating the preceding comments is a study of 91 Swedish school children reporting only 47% recovery over 10 years (Fritzell, 1976). It is hopelessly flawed because many participants were first observed between ages 7 and 9, some even older, whereas many natural recovery cases occur several years before this age. Likewise, the Purdue University studies (e.g., Spencer & Weber-Fox, 2014; Leech et al., 2017; Gerwin et al., 2019; Walsh et al., 2021; 2022) were initiated with 52 children, 36 boys and 14 girls, aged 4 and 5. The absence of younger children who stutter (e.g., ages 2 and 3) is reflected in their appreciably low natural recovery rate, only 44%, when the expected rate is 75%-80% or even higher. This means that at least 30% of children who began stuttering were not covered in these studies! Should we accept that recovery/persistency predictors derived from 4- and 5-year olds' language skills are applicable to all preschoolers who stutter, many of whom are only 2- and 3-years old when first observed to stutter? Should we assume that the language skills of children who recovered at earlier ages were above par? Also, inasmuch as children's language performance is known to be higher for girls than for boys, the children's sex distribution is another overlooked factor in early prediction studies that employed 4 and 5 year old preschoolers. Whereas the male/female ratio of 4:1 is recognized for the general population of people who stutter, it is only 2:1 at the initial stage of the disorder (Yairi & Ambrose, 2005; 1999a). By ages 4 and 5, however, that ratio is appreciably altered in favor of males due to the earlier natural recovery of girls. Thus, whereas the Illinois studies began with a 2:1 male to female ratio, it was 3:1 in the Purdue studies. Obviously, risk factors based on language skills of 4-5-year-olds cannot be applied to 2- or 3-year olds who stutter when the mean age of stuttering onset according to several studies is about 32 months. Therefore, in my view, a low language score as a risk factor for persistent stuttering, is insufficient. It may contribute to clinical decisions of older preschoolers only as a supplementary sign. There are no language-based risk signs for 28-month-old children who begin to stutter! One additional reason for the limitations of past language studies stems from the global nature of the language measures employed that yield superficial information, particularly regarding handling online demands of language use in context. Finer language tasks may contribute to clarifying the developmental relation between stuttering and language in general, especially at the early stages of the disorder.

Finally, more than 20 years ago, Yairi and Ambrose (2005) delineated 15 risk predictors for early childhood stuttering to become a persistent disorder. These were identified through their intensive longitudinal investigation that followed 84 children from close to their stuttering onset and for several years with a mean age at stuttering onset being 33 months. These predictors were grouped into three levels according to their predictive power. Risk factors in the strongest group in order are: (1) positive family history, (2) gender, (3) overt stuttering trends, (4) time since onset, (5) age at onset. They advocated for the inclusion of multiple factors in each case. Note that language data were not included. With the most recent advances in the genetics of stuttering (e.g., Polikowsky, et al., 2025) it would appear to me that transitory skill domains, such as motor and language, will become less significant in early prognosis of persistency in, or recovery from, stuttering.

**I expressed a similar view in a term paper presented in my first year as an M.A. student at the University of Iowa in 1965.*



Ehud Yairi, Ph.D., is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Speech and Hearing Science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and an internationally recognized authority on stuttering. His research has focused especially on the onset, development and treatment of stuttering in young children. Yairi has received major honors for his contributions to speech-language research, including the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's Kawana Award for lifetime achievement.

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Sam Neill, Acclaimed Actor Who Helped Give a Voice to People Who Stutter, Dies at 78

Career Spanned More Than Five Decades and 150 Roles

His family announced his death in a statement on Instagram, saying, "Sam was surrounded by family and passed with the dignity that has characterized his whole life." The family noted that his death was sudden and unexpected and that he remained cancer free following several years of treatment for blood cancer, according to NBC News.

Although audiences around the world knew Neill as Dr. Alan Grant in *Jurassic Park*, the calculating Damien Thorn in *The Omen III: The Final Conflict*, and for memorable performances in *The Piano, The Hunt for Red October, Dead Calm, Event Horizon* and dozens of other productions, many within the worldwide stuttering community admired him for something even more enduring: his willingness to speak openly about his lifelong experience with stuttering.

Long before social media made personal stories commonplace, Neill was one of the few internationally recognized actors willing to discuss his speech openly in newspaper interviews and television appearances across New Zealand, Australia, Britain and the United States. For many people who stutter, his candor provided reassurance that success and a speech difference were not mutually exclusive.

Born Nigel John Dermot Neill on Sept. 14, 1947, in Omagh, County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, he moved with his family to New Zealand at age seven, where he would eventually earn a degree in English literature from Victoria University of Wellington before embarking on an acting career. His breakthrough came in the late 1970s and early 1980s, leading to international stardom and a career that included more than 150 screen credits.

But behind the celebrated performances was a childhood shaped by severe stuttering.

"I was pretty silent as a child," Neill told the Sydney Morning Herald in 2023. "I didn't really want adults to talk to me because I wouldn't be able to reply. And it wasn't until I got to about the age of 14 or 15 that the stutter started to go away. And that coincided with getting some sort of confidence in my life as well."

Years earlier, during a 2004 interview with Andrew Denton on the Australian television program *Enough Rope*, Neill recalled that his speech profoundly affected his childhood.



Brendon Thorne/Getty Images

"I always hoped people wouldn't talk to me so I wouldn't have to answer back," he said. "I kind of outgrew it. I can still… you can detect me as a stammerer."

The Washington Post later reported that Neill first discovered something remarkable as a schoolboy: his stutter disappeared whenever he performed on stage. Acting became not only his profession but, in many ways, a path to confidence.

In his 2023 memoir, *Did I Ever Tell You This?*, and in reporting by The New York Times, Neill described the challenges of adapting to life in New Zealand as a child. Along with his pronounced British accent and the name "Nigel," he struggled with a childhood stutter that made fitting in especially difficult. Reflecting on those years, he wrote, "To land in a pretty rough playground in a New Zealand primary school with a plum in the voice and Nigel for a name was asking for trouble."

Rather than hide that part of his life, Neill increasingly embraced it.

In a 2013 interview with the *Daily Mail,* he reflected, "I was painfully shy, probably because of it. When people said something to me, I was afraid I'd have to reply so I really didn't say much." He also discussed his daughter Elena's childhood stutter, explaining that her successful speech therapy reinforced his belief that stuttering often has a hereditary component.

"I discovered this because my youngest child Elena stuttered very badly," Neill said. "We took her to a therapist who asked if there was a history of it in the family. I told her I used to stutter, and after six months of exercises Elena was absolutely OK."

Neill frequently challenged outdated misconceptions about stuttering. While praising the Academy Award-winning film *The King's Speech*, he publicly disagreed with its suggestion that childhood trauma caused King George VI's stutter.

"As much as I liked the film, I did take issue with it," he said, according to the Daily Mail. "The idea that a stutter is caused by childhood trauma has been rather discredited. It's more like a genetic disposition."

His perspective closely reflected modern scientific understanding and made him a respected voice among speech-language professionals and advocacy organizations.

The British Stammering Association featured Neill discussing the importance of confidence in overcoming the limitations imposed by stuttering. Looking back, he credited growing self-confidence through school, debating, drama and outdoor experiences rather than any single breakthrough.

"There was no particular game plan," he said. "It just sort of happened organically."

Neill also supported both the Australian Speak Easy Association and the British Stammering Association, lending his international profile to organizations working to educate the public and support people who stutter.

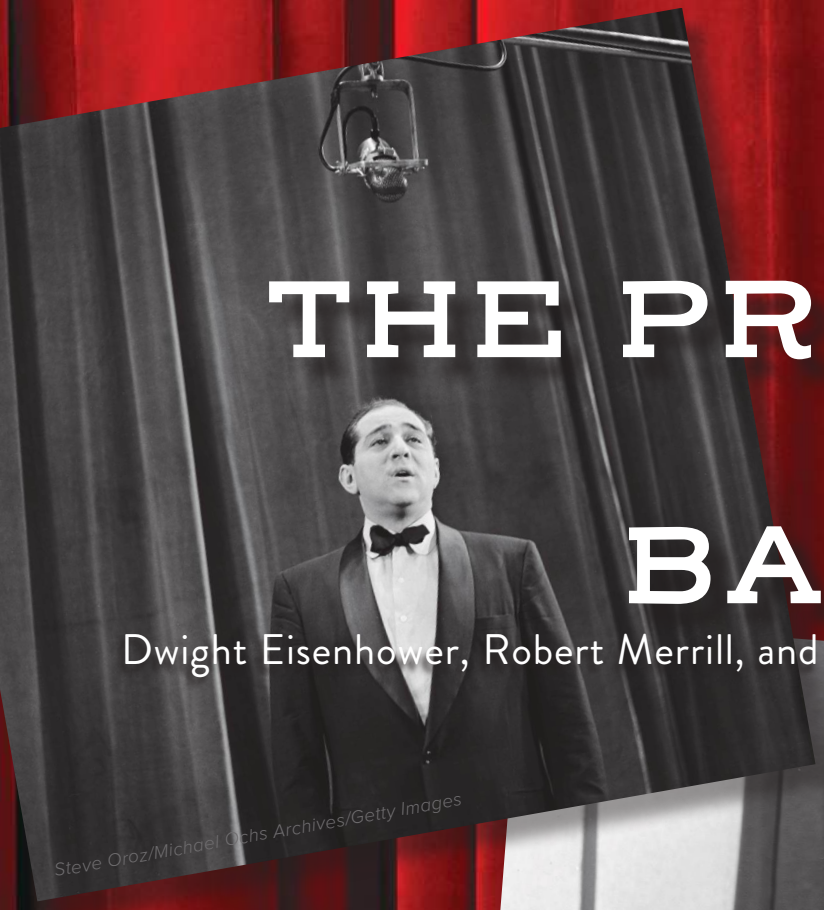
Professionally, Neill remained one of New Zealand's most celebrated actors. He earned Emmy and Golden Globe nominations, was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1991, became a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2007 and accepted a knighthood in 2022.

Following his diagnosis with a rare form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma, Neill approached his illness with the same openness that characterized much of his public life. Speaking with The Guardian in 2023, he acknowledged the uncertainty of his future while expressing gratitude for the life he had lived.

"I can't pretend that the last year hasn't had its dark moments," he said. "But those dark moments throw the light into sharp relief… and have made me grateful for every day."

He is survived by four children and eight grandchildren.

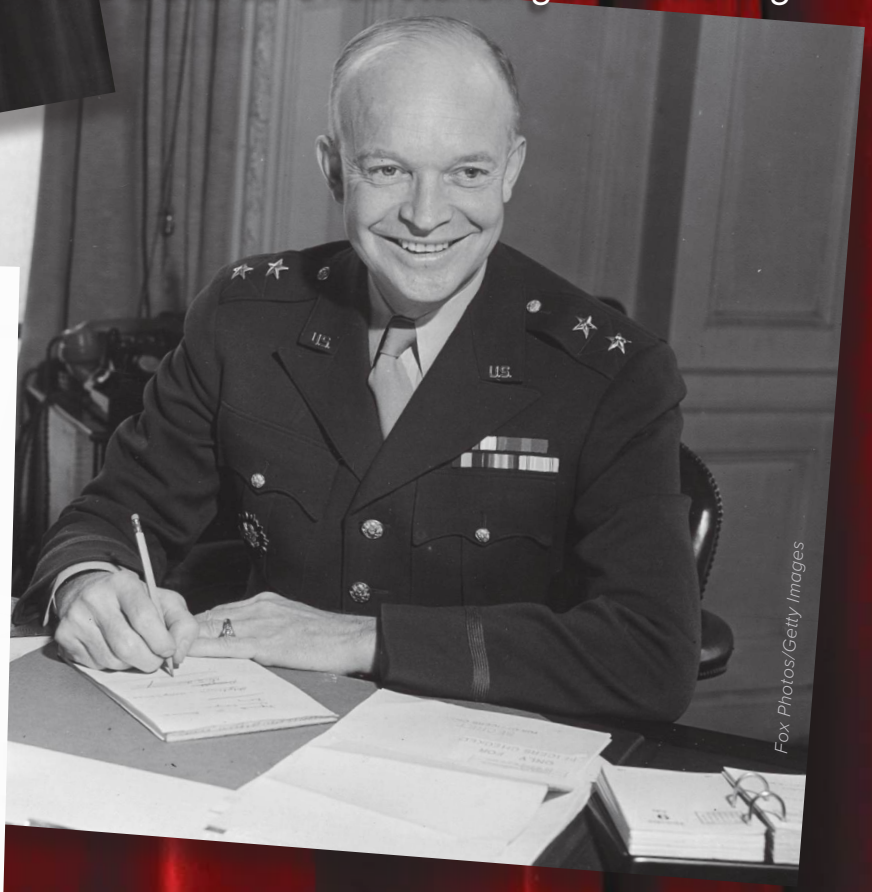
For millions, Sam Neill will forever be remembered as one of cinema's most versatile and compelling actors. For countless others who stutter, however, his greatest performance may have occurred off screen—using his own voice to help others find theirs.



Steve Oroz/Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

THE PRESIDENT AND THE BARITONE

Dwight Eisenhower, Robert Merrill, and a Shared Understanding of Stuttering



Fox Photos/Getty Images

Merrill Recalls Meetings with Another Famous Person Who Stuttered

Early on in his career, Robert Merrill came face to face with another famous person who stuttered: General Dwight D. Eisenhower.

"We were performing outside in Denver," recalled Merrill, "and General Eisenhower, his wife Mamie and his mother were in the audience. A rainstorm temporarily halted our performance, and General Eisenhower came on stage and we had a lovely, lovely talk. But I noticed he started some of his sentences in the same way that I did."

After the Denver concert Merrill said he and General Eisenhower discussed stuttering. Eisenhower explained to him that he had stuttered as a child. "I don't think he had as much



Robert Merrill, the celebrated American operatic baritone, spent much of his early life fearing that others would discover he stuttered. Decades later, after his voice had carried him to the Metropolitan Opera and international fame, Merrill became a longtime friend of the Stuttering Foundation and its national spokesperson during the eighth National Stuttering Awareness Week in 1995. In that role, he shared not only his own experience but also the story of an unexpected bond with General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who would become the 34th president of the United States.

As a child, Merrill avoided school whenever possible because he feared being called on in class and ridiculed for his speech by classmates and even teachers.

"No one, not teachers, schoolmates, or even my mother, seemed to understand that stuttering was not something that I could control," Merrill said. "They thought I was nervous or trying to talk too fast—or, worse, stupid."

The man who would become one of the greatest baritones of his generation recalled that when his mother asked him to sing for guests and relatives, he would perform only if the lights were turned off or if he could stand alone in the bathroom.

"Stuttering makes you unsure of yourself; it makes you feel that you are really less than you are—which is a terrible thing," he said.

Born in Brooklyn on June 4, 1917, to Jewish immigrant parents from Poland, Merrill was encouraged by his mother to pursue voice training because he did not stutter while singing. As a teenager working in Manhattan's garment district, he often passed the old Metropolitan Opera House. After seeing baritone Richard Bonelli sing *Count di Luna* in *Il Trovatore*, Merrill was hooked.

He began singing at bar mitzvahs, weddings and Borscht Belt resorts, where he met agent Moe Gale. Gale helped him secure work at Radio City Music Hall and with the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Arturo Toscanini. Merrill studied extensively with vocal teacher Sam Margolis and, after winning the Metropolitan Opera Auditions of the Air, made his Met debut in 1945 as Germont in *La Traviata*.

His career quickly flourished. Time described him as "one of the Met's best baritones," and he became the company's principal baritone in 1960. Music critic Peter G. Davis later wrote in *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* that, in vocal endowment, technical security and longevity, Merrill "was unequaled among baritones of his generation at the Metropolitan." His *New York Times* obituary described him as one of the greatest Verdi baritones of his generation, admired for the strength and security of his sound and the precision of his two-octave range.

Merrill celebrated his 500th performance at the Metropolitan Opera on March 5, 1973, and remained on its roster until 1976. His career also extended to radio, television, film, nightclubs and Las Vegas. For 30 consecutive seasons, he sang *"The Star-Spangled Banner"* on Opening Day at Yankee Stadium, and a recording of his rendition was used for years to open Yankees home games.

Yet even at the height of his career, Merrill never forgot how stuttering had shaped his childhood. He said singing helped him find his own voice and cadence. Although he had not received formal speech-language therapy himself, he strongly encouraged others who stutter to seek help and cautioned that moments of stuttering could recur without warning.

One such moment came while he was meeting the renowned conductor Toscanini. That experience reinforced a lesson Merrill later shared through the Stuttering Foundation: lapses in fluency can occur even after a person has made substantial progress, and they do not erase that progress.

It was another encounter, however, that gave Merrill a particularly powerful story to tell. Early in his career, he performed at an outdoor concert in Denver attended by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Eisenhower's wife, Mamie, and his mother. A rainstorm temporarily halted the performance, and the general came onstage.

"We had a lovely, lovely talk," Merrill recalled. "But I noticed he started some of his sentences in the same way that I did."

After the concert, the two men discussed stuttering. Eisenhower told Merrill that he had stuttered as a child. "I don't think he had as much difficulty in childhood as I did," Merrill said, "but he definitely did have the problem."

Eisenhower's path to that Denver stage had been very different from Merrill's. Born on October 14, 1890, in Denison, Texas, and raised in Abilene, Kansas, he graduated from West Point in 1915. During World War II, he oversaw the Allied invasions of North Africa and Sicily before serving as Supreme Commander of the Allied forces that invaded France and Germany. After the war, he served as military governor of the American-occupied zone of Germany, Army chief of staff, president of Columbia University and the first Supreme Commander of NATO.

Eisenhower was elected president in 1952 and reelected in 1956. By then, Merrill had another opportunity to speak with him—this time while performing at the White House.

"We talked about it again, and I noticed great improvement in his fluency," Merrill said. "But if you listen to his speeches, you'll notice that he sometimes hesitates when starting his sentences."

Eisenhower's history of stuttering was not widely known. The Stuttering Foundation learned of it through Merrill in 1995, when he recounted their conversations for the Foundation's spring newsletter. Merrill believed the story deserved to be shared because people who stutter could draw strength from knowing that stuttering had touched the lives of accomplished figures in very different fields.

"President Eisenhower never let stuttering stand in his way," Merrill said. "It can be a very frightening disorder, but we need to work to overcome it."

That same conviction made Merrill an effective spokesperson for the Stuttering Foundation. During National Stuttering Awareness Week in 1995, he helped the Foundation share accurate information about stuttering in children and guide teenagers and adults toward effective treatment and support.

At the time, Foundation president Jane Fraser said, "We are very pleased to have someone as our spokesperson who has given joy and inspiration to the world through his own voice. Mr. Merrill did not let stuttering stand in the way of success, and we hope that his message of hope will encourage anyone who deals with a stuttering problem."

Robert Merrill died at his home in New Rochelle, New York, on October 23, 2004, at age 87. His extraordinary career left an enduring musical legacy, but his willingness to speak openly about stuttering gave the stuttering community something more personal: an honest account of childhood fear, hard-won confidence and the discovery that even a famous general and future president had once faced a similar challenge.

Merrill and Eisenhower found their voices on very different stages—one at the Metropolitan Opera, the other in military command and the presidency. Their intertwined story remains a reminder that stuttering does not determine the reach of a person's life, leadership or contribution.

80

THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION

1947 - 2027

Celebrating 80 Years of Help and Hope

In 2027, the Stuttering Foundation will celebrate its 80th anniversary—eight decades of providing trusted information, resources, support, and hope to people who stutter and their families around the world.

Beginning this fall and continuing throughout 2027, the Foundation will mark this milestone with a series of special video, social media, and multimedia awareness projects. These initiatives will highlight our remarkable 80-year history while looking ahead to the work still to come.

As the world's first and largest nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to the prevention and improved treatment of stuttering, the Foundation now reaches more than one million people annually. We remain committed to providing free online resources, services, and support; advancing research into the causes of stuttering; and serving the global stuttering community for decades to come.

More details will be shared soon as we prepare to celebrate 80 years of changing lives—and the beginning of our next chapter.

STUTTERING FOUNDATION CELEBRITY CORNER

DON GIBSON

AMERICA'S "SAD POET" OF COUNTRY MUSIC

The stuttering community is well aware of the fascinating life of country music legend and former Stuttering Foundation national spokesman Mel Tillis. But Tillis was not the only country music star who stuttered. Don Gibson carved out his own remarkable career as both a recording artist and songwriter.

Donald Eugene Gibson was born on April 3, 1928, in Shelby, North Carolina, into difficult circumstances. He was the youngest of five children born to sharecropper parents who were struggling economically during the Depression. He dropped out of school in the second grade to work in the fields with his family.

Turning to music in his teens, his first band, Sons of the Soil, made recordings for Mercury Records in 1949. His big breakthrough came as a solo artist after he moved to Nashville in 1957 to work with famed producer Chet Atkins. With Atkins, he recorded his self-penned songs *"Oh Lonesome Me"* and *"I Can't Stop Loving You"* for the RCA Victor label. The result was a double-sided hit on both the country chart and the Billboard Hot 100. Following this success, his song *"Blue Blue Day,"* which was recorded prior to *"Oh Lonesome Me,"* was re-released and topped the country charts. Many other country hits followed, including *"Look Who's Blue"* (1958), *"Don't Tell Me Your Troubles"* (1959), *"Sea of Heartbreak"* (1961), *"Lonesome No. 1," "I Can Mend Your Broken Heart"* (1962), and *"Woman (Sensuous Woman),"* which topped the country charts in 1972.

Gibson was also known for recording duets with well-known female country artists. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, he recorded several highly acclaimed duets with Dottie West, the most successful of which was 1969's *"Rings of Gold,"* a number-two country hit. The following year, the duo had a top-10 country hit with *"There's a Story Goin' Round."*

West and Gibson also released a best-selling album together in 1969 titled *Dottie and Don*. In the mid-1970s, Gibson teamed



Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

Donald Eugene Gibson, professionally known as Don Gibson, was an influential American country music singer and songwriter who helped pioneer the smooth "Nashville Sound." Nicknamed "The Sad Poet," he wrote legendary country standards such as "Sweet Dreams" *and* "I Can't Stop Loving You," *which achieved massive cross-genre success and were covered by countless artists.*

up with Sue Thompson for several duets that made the charts, including *"I Think They Call It Love," "Good Old Fashioned Country Love,"* and *"Oh, How Love Changes."*

Many of Gibson's songs have been covered by other artists. For instance, his song *"I Can't Stop Loving You"* has been recorded by more than 700 artists, with Ray Charles' 1962 rendition among the most famous. Roy Orbison was such a fan of Gibson's songs that in 1967 he recorded an album of them titled Roy Orbison Sings Don Gibson. Gibson's wide appeal was also evident in the rock world when Neil Young recorded *"Oh Lonesome Me"* on his acclaimed 1970 album After the Gold Rush, marking one of the rare times in Young's career that he recorded a song he did not write himself.

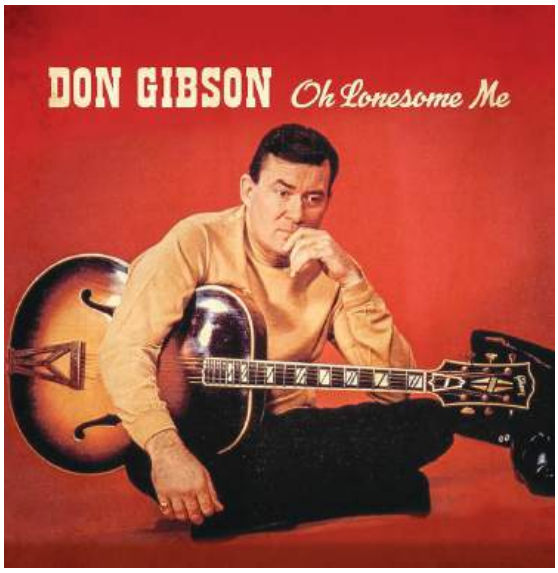
Gibson was inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1973 and the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2001. He was posthumously inducted into the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame in 2010. He died of natural causes on November 17, 2003, at the age of 75.

Compared with some other famous people who stutter, there is relatively little documentation about Gibson's stuttering. The Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame website states, "A shy kid with a stuttering problem, he found escape in the local pool hall and to listening to country music on the radio. At 14, Don bought a cheap guitar and started learning songs by his heroes Red Foley and Tennessee Ernie Ford."

AllMusic describes his speech this way: "He was hopelessly shy throughout his life, defensive about his appearance – to the point where, as a boy or a young man, he would avoid walking into places that were too crowded – and also about his voice, which was characterized by a pronounced stutter while he was growing up."

A write-up of a podcast on Amazon Music Japan titled "Don Gibson: The Stuttering Boy Who Wrote Country Gold" similarly notes, "Don Gibson dropped out of school in the second grade because a paralyzing stutter left him unable to speak. That silenced North Carolina kid grew up to become country music's 'sad poet,' writing some of the most coveted songs in American music history and helping define the Nashville Sound era of the 1950s."

Don Gibson became a country music star whose stuttering did not keep him from pursuing his dreams. His songs are still heard and celebrated decades later, and his life and career hold a special place in the history of famous people who stutter.



Rca Victor / Sony Music Entertainment



Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

NEW SCHOOL YEAR, NEW CASELOAD

Free Resources To Help School-Based SLPs Support Students Who Stutter From Day One

As school-based speech-language pathologists prepare to receive their fall caseloads, many will discover they are working with one or more students who stutter—some returning for continued therapy, others newly referred or identified during the opening weeks of school.

Those first few weeks present a unique opportunity. Before classroom routines become established and before students settle into patterns of participation—or avoidance—SLPs can help shape positive experiences that influence confidence and communication throughout the school year.

To support clinicians during this critical time, the Stuttering Foundation is offering a comprehensive collection of free back-to-school resources, therapy materials, videos, classroom strategies and evidence-based guidance at StutteringHelp.org.

"Every school has students who stutter," said Jane Fraser, president of the Stuttering Foundation. "The beginning of the school year gives speech-language pathologists an opportunity to establish relationships with students, collaborate with teachers and help create classroom environments where children feel comfortable communicating from the very start."

Approximately one in every 100 people stutters, and an estimated one in 20 children experience stuttering during early childhood. While many students who stutter communicate confidently, others may enter a new school year wondering whether classmates will notice their speech, whether teachers will understand, or whether speaking aloud will become an uncomfortable daily experience.

School-based SLPs are uniquely positioned to influence those outcomes—not only through direct therapy, but through consultation with teachers, collaboration with families and advocacy throughout the school community.



PHIL COLLINS' "Sussudio" A NO. 1 HIT WITH STUTTERING VOCALS

It is common for online music publications and websites to publish lists of the "Top Stuttering Songs" from time to time, featuring songs one would expect, such as *"My Generation"* by The Who, *"Changes"* by David Bowie, *"Bennie and the Jets"* by Elton John, and *"You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet"* by Bachman-Turner Overdrive.

One song that always makes these lists is *"Sussudio"* by Phil Collins, which topped the Billboard Hot 100 in 1985.

Two years ago, in 2024, the Stuttering Foundation recognized Elton John's *"Bennie and the Jets"* on the milestone 50th anniversary of its reaching number one on the Billboard Hot 100 in the U.S. It was the first song with stuttering vocals to reach the number one position, breaking the glass ceiling for other songs to follow.

Other songs with stuttering vocals that later reached number one included *"You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet"* by Bachman-Turner Overdrive (1974), *"Jive Talkin'"* by the Bee Gees (1975), *"Saturday Night"* by the Bay City Rollers (1976), *"My Sharona"* by The Knack (1979), *"The Reflex"* by Duran Duran, and a couple of others.

Phil Collins will be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for a second time on November 14, 2026, in a ceremony at the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles. He will be inducted as a solo artist, having first been inducted in 2010 as a member of Genesis, along with bandmates Tony Banks, Mike Rutherford, and Peter Gabriel.



Getty Images / Elsa

"Sussudio" was the second song released from Collins' 1985 solo album *No Jacket Required*, following *"One More Night,"* which also hit number one on the Billboard Hot 100. These two number one hits gave Collins three consecutive number one singles, including *"Against All Odds (Take a Look at Me Now)"* from 1984.

This feat made Collins one of only five artists in the rock era to have three consecutive number one singles, the others being Elvis Presley (five in a row), Andy Gibb, Michael Jackson (five in a row), and George Michael (four in a row).

In addition, Collins is one of only three rock artists to have sold more than 100 million album units both as a solo artist and as a member of a band, the other two being Paul McCartney and Michael Jackson.

The album *No Jacket Required* followed his first two highly successful solo albums, *Face Value* (1981) and *Hello, I Must Be Going!* (1982).

"Sussudio" entered the Top 40 in the U.S. on May 11, 1985, and stayed there for 14 weeks. It topped the chart for a single week on July 6. The video immediately received heavy rotation on MTV.

Oddly, the song peaked at only number 12 on the UK Singles Chart. It topped the charts in Peru and Panama and was a top-ten hit in countless other countries.

The video for the song was filmed at the Shepherd's Bush in West London, a pub that was owned at the time by Virgin founder Richard Branson, who coincidentally has identified himself as a person who stuttered early in life.

"Sussudio" was criticized for sounding too much like a Prince song. Collins addressed this criticism by saying that he is a big fan of Prince and had to make the original version of the song sound less like one of Prince's songs.

Collins has described the word *"Sussudio"* as a pseudoword he came up with during a practice session. It was a word he made up to verbalize the sound of the drum roll he uses on the track.

In a 1997 installment of *VH1 Storytellers*, he explained how the word was improvised while he was tinkering with the drum machine and added, "I kinda knew I had to find something else for that word, then I went back and tried to find another word that scanned as well as *'Sussudio,'* and I couldn't find one, so I went back to *'Sussudio.'"*

In an interview with *Record Mirror*, he elaborated on the song's other lyrics: "It's about everything and yet it is about nothing. Seriously, it's about a younger man's fantasy for an older woman."

A year after *"Sussudio"* Collins reunited with Genesis for an album, and the band had its first number one hit with *"Invisible Touch"* in July 1986.

Phil Collins was born in London on January 30, 1951, and began playing drums at age five. His mother was a talent manager, and a 13-year-old Phil Collins can be seen as an extra in the crowd in the 1964 Beatles movie *A Hard Day's Night*; the shot of the young Collins in the famous movie can be seen on YouTube.

He joined Genesis in 1970 as its drummer and moved up to lead vocalist when Peter Gabriel left the band in 1975.

He played drums on the highly successful 1984 charity single *"Do They Know It's Christmas?"* by Band Aid. In July 1985, he famously played at both Live Aid concerts in London and Philadelphia, traveling by helicopter and Concorde and becoming the only person to perform at both concerts that day.

After *"Sussudio,"* he scored four more number one hits in the U.S.: *"Separate Lives,"* a duet with Marilyn Martin in 1985; *"A Groovy Kind of Love"* in 1988; *"Two Hearts"* in 1989; and *"Another Day in Paradise"* in 1989.

Overall, as a solo artist, he has placed 21 songs in the Top 40, including 14 top-ten singles, in addition to selling more than 100 million albums worldwide apart from Genesis.

Stephen Lovekin/Getty Images



Collins left Genesis in 1996 to concentrate on a solo career, but he has since reunited with his old bandmates twice for Genesis tours. In 2007, the classic Genesis trio lineup of Phil Collins, Tony Banks, and Mike Rutherford toured Europe and North America on Turn It On Again: The Tour.

In 2021, the same classic lineup embarked on The Last Domino? Tour, which ran from September 2021 through March 2022 and was presented as Genesis's farewell tour. The band's final show was held on March 26, 2022, at London's O2 Arena.

For the band's farewell tour, Collins was unable to play drums because of health issues, so his son Nic handled the drumming while Phil sang seated.

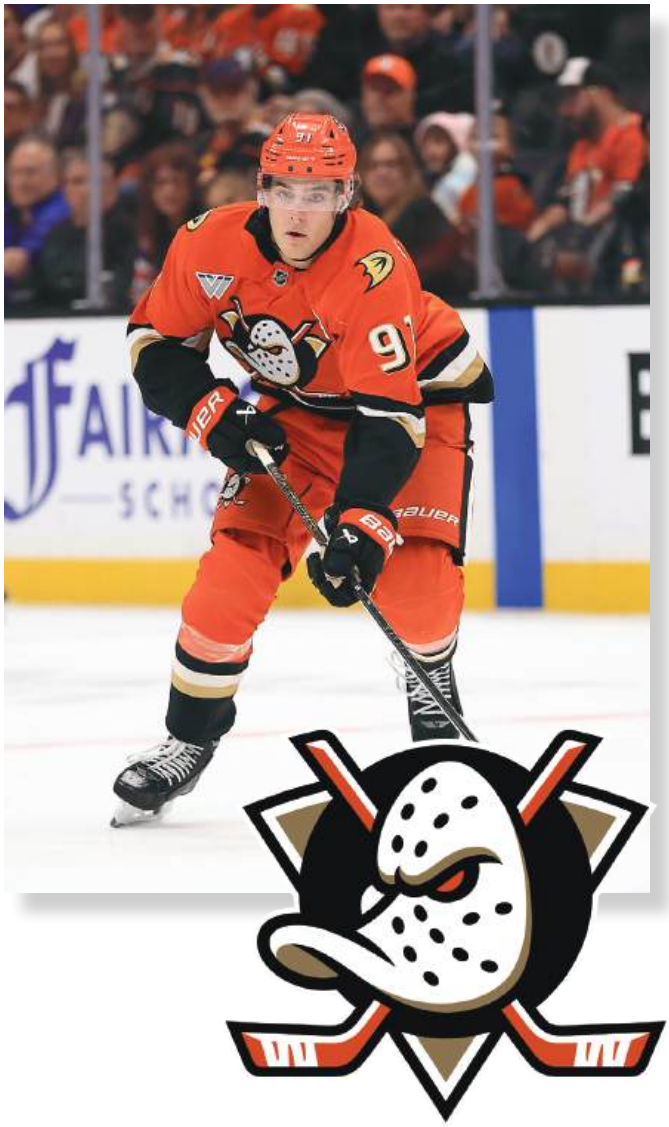
Phil Collins has retired from touring and regular live performances because of multiple health issues. In his remarkable career as a member of Genesis and as a solo artist, he has achieved highly distinguished milestones in recording history, in addition to winning eight Grammy Awards and receiving 19 additional nominations. He also won the Academy Award for Best Original Song in 2000 for *"You'll Be in My Heart"* from Disney's animated film *Tarzan*.

We recognize *"Sussudio"* as one of the few songs with stuttering vocals to have topped the Billboard Hot 100. We congratulate Phil Collins on his second induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and wish him all the best as he faces his health challenges.

STUTTERING FOUNDATION CELEBRITY CORNER

LEO CARLSSON

HIGHEST PAID HOCKEY PLAYER IN THE NHL



Sean M. Haffey/Getty Images

Leo Carlsson, the star center for the Anaheim Ducks who was prominently featured in our 2024 article “The Lore of Lord Stanley’s Cup," has just become the highest paid player in the National Hockey League after signing a five-year, $90 million dollar contract paying him $18 million dollars a year. This salary eclipses the $17 million per year paid to Minnesota Wild star Kirill Kaprizov, who was previously the league’s highest paid player.

Carlsson, age 22 with three NHL seasons under his belt, in 70 games in 2025-26 scored 29 goals and 38 assists for 67 points. He also scored four goals and seven assists in 12 playoff games. The native of Sweden was the second player chosen overall in the first round of the 2023 entry draft by the Anaheim Ducks, who signed him to a three-year entry-level contract.

Entering the 2026 off-season as a restricted free agent, the Philadelphia Flyers submitted an offer sheet to Carlsson, offering a five-year, $90 million contract on 3 July 2026, making Carlsson the highest paid player in the NHL with an annual salary of $18 million. On July 9, Anaheim matched that offer sheet, wanting to keep their star center and alternate team captain.

The fact that Carlsson was highly touted as a top pick prior to the 2023 NHL draft meant that his stuttering did not go unnoticed. The prominent Canadian sports blog *Dose.ca* ran the article “Leo Carlsson: The CH is the only team he’s talked to about his stuttering” which described that the Montreal Canadiens, a team which had hoped to draft Carlsson, inquired about his stutter because he would have to face the media in both French and English in the hockey-crazed bilingual city. Carlsson communicated with the Canadiens about his stuttering and added that he had taken French lessons in the past and was in awe of the



Sean M. Haffey/Getty Images

Canadiens hockey tradition. Of course, the Montreal Canadiens missed out on drafting Carlsson.

The Athletic ran an article in The New York Times on April 25, 2023, titled “Meet Leo Carlsson, No. 2 Draft Pick by the Ducks, Whose Stutter Is Just a ‘Part of Me’." When he scored his first career NHL hat trick on November 10, 2023, he gave an interview, which is available on YouTube.

When Carlsson was selected as the No. 2 pick overall in the NHL draft by Anaheim, former Stuttering Foundation spokesperson Bill Walton, who had been the number one pick in the NBA draft nearly 50 years previously, found out that Carlsson struggled with stuttering and did not receive any previous media training in Sweden. Walton, who always was selfless in helping people who stutter, immediately reached out to Carlsson and offered to mentor him as he started his odyssey in the pro sports world. The pair initially had great early communications, but unfortunately Walton’s intended mentorship of Leo Carlsson did not come to fruition due to the basketball legend’s battle with colorectal cancer, from which tragically died in May 2024.

Through his speech therapist in the Los Angeles area, Carlsson has become involved with the National Association of Young People Who Stutter (FRIENDS). He has met up after games with young people who stutter. On March 11, 2025, he gave 100 complimentary tickets to members of the stuttering community for a game against the Washington Capitals that was a celebration of an evening in which the team gave away a bobblehead in his image to all spectators in attendance at the game.

It is a heartwarming and prideful achievement for the stuttering community to have the highest paid player in the National Hockey League be a person who stutters. We wish Leo Carlsson and the Anaheim Ducks a highly successful 2026-2027 season. There seems a likelihood that the name Leo Carlsson will soon be among the NHL players who stutter whose name will be engraved on Lord Stanley’s Cup.

Dr. Jeanna Riley

Pioneer in Stuttering Research and Clinical Care, Dies at 94



Dr. Jeanna Riley, a pioneering psychologist, speech-language pathologist, researcher, educator, and clinician whose life's work transformed the understanding and treatment of stuttering, passed away peacefully on June 8, 2026, at her home in Laguna Beach, California, surrounded by her loving family. She was 94.

For more than five decades, Dr. Riley devoted her career to improving the lives of children and adults who stutter. Through groundbreaking research, innovative clinical programs, and compassionate mentorship, she helped shape modern approaches to stuttering assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. Her influence extended far beyond the clinic, touching countless families, speech-language pathologists, and researchers around the world.

Born Rae Jean Norris on May 24, 1932, in Glendale, California, to Edna B. Murphy and Charles P. Norris, Jeanna graduated from Chino High School in 1950. Even as a young woman, she was drawn to psychology and human behavior, a calling she would pursue with remarkable determination while raising a family. She earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from California State University, Fullerton, in 1967, a master's degree in speech pathology in 1971, a doctorate in psychology from the California Graduate Institute in 1983, and became a licensed clinical psychologist in 1986.

Her marriage to Glyndon Riley in 1968 began one of the most productive professional partnerships in the history of the stuttering field. Together, the Rileys developed a body of work that continues to influence clinicians and researchers worldwide.

Among their most enduring contributions was the development and refinement of the Stuttering Severity Instrument (SSI), which became the most widely used standardized measure for evaluating stuttering severity in both clinical practice and research. They also advanced the understanding of developmental stuttering through research demonstrating that stuttering is a heterogeneous disorder with multiple contributing factors. Their work identifying subgroups of children at risk for persistent stuttering helped lay the foundation for today's early identification and intervention efforts. Their Component Model of childhood stuttering anticipated concepts that would later evolve into the capacities-and-demands framework that remains influential today.

The Rileys also translated research into practical clinical applications. Their Speech Motor Training Program provided a research-based treatment approach for young children who stutter, while their NIH-supported clinical trials comparing treatment methods represented one of the largest controlled studies of childhood stuttering therapy conducted at the time. Jeanna also collaborated with Dr. Gerald Maguire and Dr. Riley in developing innovative self-report measures to better understand the personal experience of stuttering.

In 1971, Jeanna and Glyn founded the Riley Speech and Language Institute in Santa Ana/Tustin, California, where they combined clinical excellence with research and professional training for more than three decades. In 1995, together with colleagues Robert Emry and Elizabeth Mechling, they established the nonprofit Center for Children Who Stutter at California State University, Fullerton. The Center became nationally recognized for providing expert diagnosis, prevention, treatment, clinician education, and community outreach, while ensuring services remained accessible regardless of a family's

ability to pay. In 2007, the California Speech-Language-Hearing Association honored the Center with its Program of the Year Award.

Dr. Riley's contributions were recognized with many of the profession's highest honors. She became a Fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association in 1997. In 1998, she and Dr. Riley received the Malcolm Hough Fraser Award for Clinical Excellence from the Stuttering Foundation, recognizing their extraordinary and lasting contributions to the field.

Following Dr. Riley's death in 2014, Jeanna remained actively engaged with the stuttering community. She continued participating in professional discussions, maintained her deep interest in research, and practiced clinical psychology until 2019, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to serving others well into her late 80s.

Those who knew Jeanna remember not only her remarkable intellect but also her warmth, humility, optimism, and extraordinary gift for listening. Colleagues admired her openness to differing perspectives, her thoughtful mentorship of generations of clinicians, and her genuine belief that scientific rigor and compassionate care must always go hand in hand. As one tribute to the Rileys observed, "Their demonstrable appreciation for different views has provided us with a model of positive attitudes toward other professionals... they elevated the professional dialogue concerning stuttering."

Dr. Jeanna Riley leaves behind an extraordinary legacy. Through her scholarship, clinical innovation, mentorship, and unwavering compassion, she fundamentally advanced the understanding and treatment of stuttering while improving the lives of countless children, adults, families, and professionals. Her work will continue to shape the field for generations to come.

2026: IN MEMORIAM

Sulaiman AbdulNour
Joseph Agnello
Clark Andrews, Jr.
James W. Bell
Curt Betebenner
Barbara Bingham
Harry L. Borger
Mariah D. Buck
Lee Caggiano
James M. Campbell
Michael Carlberg
Dr. Sylvester Clifford
Edith Comito
Michael and Mary Cristiano
Jane DelVicchio
Katharyn Elizabeth Fell Demaree
Ray Diament
Dr. William Dopheide
Connie Dugan
Jean Fraser Duke
Richard Duncan
Major James Duricy
Carol Ecke
Larry Eckloff
Edmund A. Evans
Florence Filley
Sander A. Flaum
Malcolm Fraser
Joseph R.G. Fulcher
Keith Gadbois
Ulises Giberga
Morris and Marietta Gjessing
Annie Glenn
Frank J. Golembiewski
Nick Goodban
Dr. Hugo Gregory
Clarence Percival 'Pete' Hathaway, III
Dr. Stephen B. Hood
Marilyn K. Johnson
James Earl Jones
Antanas Kiselis
Sue Knight
Dr. E. George Linke
Patsy P. Livingston
Casey L. Lott
Bob Love
Susan McCullough
Timothy McGuire
Christina Mullin
Dr. William P. Murphy
Dr. Frederick Murray
Dr. Lois Nelson
Jodi M. Nesi
Bill Norton
Irene Olshewitz
Kathleen C. O'Neill
Joseph Orzechowski
James Pappas
William A. Parker, Jr.
Alys Pitzer
Philip E. Powell
Larry and Sandra Prince
Dr. Robert W. Quesal
Edward F. Quinn, Jr.
Dr. Alan Rabinowitz
William T. Rigotti
Dr. Howard Schwartz
Dr. Lisa Scott
Vivian Sheehan
J. Stanley Smith
Dorothy Solomon
Alfred Steinmetz
Lizbeth J. Stevens
Ursula and Neal Tash
Larry Thompson
Phyllis Thurm
Peter Tsimbidaros
Dr. Charles Van Riper
Luz Marina Vargas
Fred and Virginia Wagner
Mary Weadon
Jonathan Weinberg
Sherrie L. Kofsky Weinstein
Richard H. Wells
Raymond Wichowski
Dr. Bruce Witkind
Dr. and Mrs. Elliot Witkind
Erik R. Yehl
June Yenco
Catherine H. Zimmer

HIGHLIGHTING

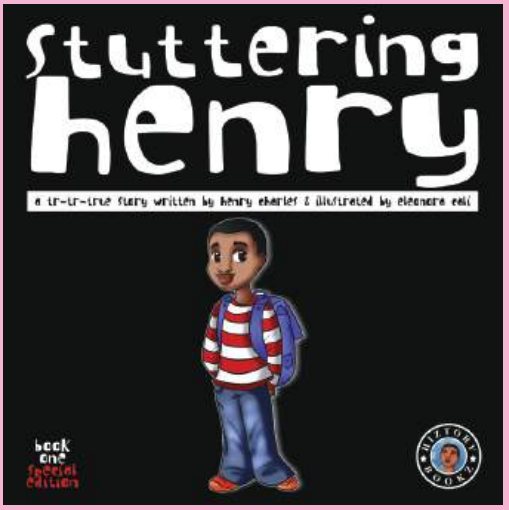
STUTTERING HENRY:

A STORY WHERE EVERY VOICE MATTERS

Stuttering Henry, written by Henry Charles and illustrated by Eleonora Cali, is another wonderful book for young readers who stutter—and for classmates, families and educators who want to better understand their experiences. The story follows Henry, a bright, outgoing elementary school student who loves learning but sometimes holds back in class because he stutters. With a warm message of self-acceptance and confidence, the book reminds children that the goal isn't to hide stuttering, but to remove the shame that can surround speaking.

For families in the New York City area, author Henry Charles will also take part in a special ***Stuttering Henry:* A Stuttering Awareness Family Event in Brooklyn** this October, featuring a live reading, discussion, activities and opportunities to meet speech-language professionals. Admission is free, with registration encouraged. Event details and tickets are available through Eventbrite here:









Things I Say Before I Say My Name

By Vince Vawter

After a lifetime of stuttering, I like to say that I have now found my voice. All that means is that there is no situation in which I am not comfortable speaking out even though I will always be a person who stutters,

However, there is one situation that tends to make the hairs on the back of my neck prickly. It's those horrible words by any session leader: "Okay, let's all go around the room and introduce ourselves."

If you read my novel, *Paperboy*, you may recall a scene where the young protagonist passes out trying to tell the wonderful "Mr. Spiro" his name. I wish I could say that scene was pure fiction. It's not. Do scars ever heal completely?

Recently, I took an inventory on the different ways I might approach the situation. I have named them.

FIRSTEST WITH THE MOSTEST — When the facilitator asks the people in the room to stand up and introduce themselves, I jump up and say something like: "Since I'm a person who stutters, I'd like to go first and so I can just get it out of the way and not have to die a thousand deaths."

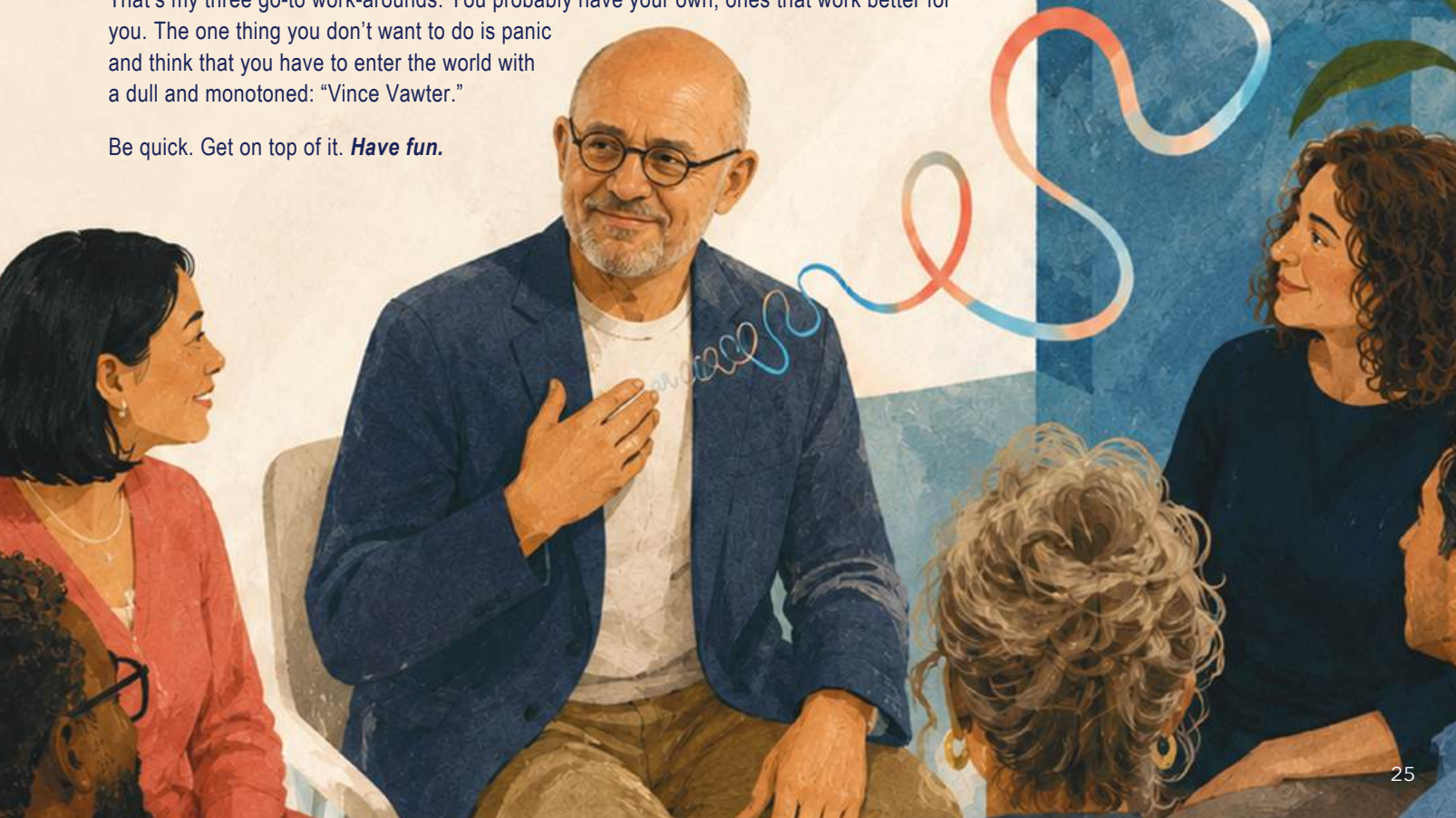
THE WANNABE TEACHER — "All you folks in the room think that what you have just done is easy-peasy. For a person who stutters, that's not the case. Saying one's name often makes up the hardest sounds that a person who stutters may ever have to utter.

STAND-UP COMEDIAN — "Since I'm a person who stutters, we could be here all-day...but I'll give it a shot. I'm . . . That wasn't too bad now, was it?" From the voice of experience, don't give in to the temptation to pause just before you say your name.

That's my three go-to work-arounds. You probably have your own, ones that work better for you. The one thing you don't want to do is panic and think that you have to enter the world with a dull and monotoned: "Vince Vawter."

Be quick. Get on top of it. ***Have fun.***

Vince Vawter is the Newbery Honor–winning author of the autobiographical Paperboy *trilogy—*Paperboy, Copyboy, *and* Manboy*—which follows a young person who stutters from childhood into adulthood. His recent nonfiction work,* The Stuttering Stoic: How an Ancient Philosophy Helped Me Find My Voice*, explores how Stoic philosophy shaped his journey toward acceptance, courage, and inner peace.*



2026:
ANOTHER OUTSTANDING **FLASHA CONFERENCE**

The Stuttering Foundation was proud to participate in the 2026 FLASHA Annual Convention, where our exhibit booth was staffed by speech-language pathologist Matthew O'Malley and Tom Scharstein—both of whom are people who stutter. There is something especially meaningful about engaging with conference attendees through the combined perspectives of professional expertise and life experiences of someone who stutters themselves.

One of the highlights of the conference was sharing the Stuttering Foundation's growing commitment to Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking communities, including the introduction of our newest Spanish-languagepublication, *la tartamudez y su niño: preguntas y respuestas.*. Expanding access to high-quality, evidence-based resources across languages remains an important priority as we work to serve individuals and families around the world.

It was also a pleasure to reconnect with longtime Stuttering Foundation supporter Dr. Rachel Williams, who graciously invited Tom to speak later this month during Nova Southeastern University's two-week intensive stuttering training program. We were equally delighted to visit with speech-language pathologist Jennifer Avellino, who previously participated in one of the Stuttering Foundation's clinical training programs.

One message resonated throughout the conference: the next generation of speech-language pathologists is eager to learn practical, evidence-based approaches to supporting people who stutter. Those conversations are both encouraging and inspiring, underscoring the importance of mentorship, continuing education, and ensuring that clinicians are equipped with a full range of resources to meet the diverse needs of those they serve.

As the world's most trusted source of information about stuttering, the Stuttering Foundation was honored to share the breadth and depth of its educational materials with so many dedicated professionals committed to improving the lives of people who stutter.

Our sincere thanks to Dr. Lyndsey Zurawski and the entire FLASHA team for hosting another exceptional conference. We are grateful for your ongoing commitment to the speech-language pathology community and look forward to returning next year.







CONGRATULATIONS TO ELAINE KELMAN ON MBE HONOR



The Stuttering Foundation extends its heartfelt congratulations to Elaine Kelman, recently retired Head of the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering, on being awarded an MBE in the 2026 King's Birthday Honours.

The honor recognizes Elaine's outstanding services to speech and language therapy. Throughout her distinguished career, she has supported countless children and adults who stutter and their families, while helping to advance therapy, education and understanding of stuttering around the world.

Elaine's compassion, expertise and leadership have made a profound and lasting difference. Her influence will continue to be felt through the many clinicians she has trained, the programs she has helped develop and, most importantly, the lives she has touched.

Congratulations, Elaine, on this richly deserved recognition!

2026 GIFTS IN HONOR

2025 Eastern Workshop
Ranya Agrawal
All my past students who stuttered
All who stutter
Anyone who has a stuttering problem
Dr. Rick Arenas
Edgar Arroyave
Sam Bagshaw
Michael Baker
Finn Balan
Thom and Oliver Bawden
Dominique Bell
President Joe Biden
Holly Bishop
Nicholas Boody
Susan Hamilton Burleigh
Casey
CDS 582 SUNY Fredonia
James Crennan
Susan Dietrich
Dolores Donovan
Dr. Dennis Drayna
Abigayle Eller-Price
Shawn Fagan
Mark Fanta
Jane Fraser
Judith C. Gelderman
Brett Gibbs
Jay and Mary Gibson
Eric T. Greene
Mitch Guerra
Melissa Gula
Avori Guzman
Gabi Guzman
Stephen Hamer
Fr. John Hanley, OSFS
Alejandro (Alex) Hernandez
Evan Herrington
Michael and Kacie Herrington
Allene Higgins
Charles Austin Hollenbeck
Isabelle
Mary Johns Nichols
Jacob Kerwin
Kids Who Stutter
laurabriguglio6
Dr. Pat and Harla Levitt
Ben Lorber
Cohen B. Lott
Dr. David Luterman
Eva Lutgen
Kunal Mahajan
Devin Melchor
James T. Mills, Sr.
Tommy Milot
Mission MS Speech Students
My son
Erin Nichols
Eric J. Notkin
Augustus Casey O'Neil
Susannah Parkin
Max Phillips
Sadie Pierson
Tanner Raines
Dr. Isabella Reichel
Dr. Jeanna Riley
Christine Rose
Lynn Royster
Lenore Salzman
Dr. Nicholas A. Skezas
Joshua Snider
George Springer
John G. Stebbins
Mark and Donna Storm
Lauren Strada
Students Who Stutter
Adam Tankersley
Erick Tash
Those in the struggle
Those struggling
Dr. Julia Unger
Taylor Voorhees
Mac Wilson
Mary Ellen Wishne



말더듬과 함께하는 사회적협동조합

Korean Cooperative Expands Access to Stuttering Resources

The Stuttering Foundation extends its sincere thanks and congratulations to Moonja Shin, vice president of The Walk with Stuttering Korea Social Cooperative, and the entire organization for translating several Foundation resources into Korean.

The newly translated materials include the CDs *Basic Clinical Skills* and *Dealing Effectively with Attitudes and Emotions*, as well as the book *Do You Stutter? A Guide for Teens*. The cooperative generously provided the Foundation with copies of each translation.

Based in Seoul, The Walk with Stuttering Korea Social Cooperative works to reduce discrimination and disadvantages experienced by people who stutter. Through community support, counseling, public-awareness programs, and specialized workshops and camps, the nonprofit creates welcoming spaces for children and adults who stutter and their families.

These translations will make valuable information and guidance more accessible to Korean-speaking people who stutter, families, and speech-language pathologists. We commend Moonja Shin and the cooperative for their dedication to expanding understanding, building confidence, and ensuring that people who stutter have access to helpful resources in their own language.



CHRIS DIFFORD:

OWNING HIS VOICE THROUGH SONG

Chris Difford is famous in the music world as the guitarist, lyricist and occasional lead vocalist for the British band Squeeze, which came to prominence in the United Kingdom in the late 1970s and gained popularity in the United States in the early 1980s as part of the "Second British Invasion," fueled in part by the launch of MTV in 1981.



Bob Bromide / A&M Records

Chris Difford was born on November 4, 1954, in Greenwich, London, the youngest of three sons born to Sidney and Isabel Difford. His mother was a native of Belfast, Northern Ireland, and his father met her while stationed there during World War II. Leaving school at age 16, Difford was intent on pursuing music, but his parents insisted that he get a "regular job." He tried various jobs but eventually devised a plan. In his 2017 autobiography, *Some Fantastic Place: My Life in and out of Squeeze*, Difford recalls how he first connected with Glenn Tilbrook in April 1973: "I put an advert in a shop window for a guitarist to join a band. I had no band. It said I had a pending record deal and a tour lined up. I had neither deal nor tour. The advert cost me 50p—I took the money from my mum's purse. That 50p got me to where I am today, which is some journey.... Maxine, Glenn's girlfriend, talked him into calling the number on the ad."

Getty Images/Mike Prior/Redferns


Joe Maher/Getty Images

Thus, the famed songwriting team of Difford and Tilbrook was formed in 1973, when Chris Difford was 19 and Glenn Tilbrook was 16. The two spent endless hours writing hundreds of songs and formed various configurations of pub bands. The name Squeeze was taken from the title of The Velvet Underground's 1973 album *Squeeze*. The lineup for their self-titled 1978 debut album included Difford and Tilbrook on guitars and vocals, founding member Jools Holland on keyboards, Gilson Lavis on drums and Harry Kakoulli on bass. The second album, *Cool for Cats*, was released in 1979 and gave the band its two highest-charting singles in the United Kingdom: *"Cool for Cats"* and *"Up the Junction,"* both of which reached No. 2. "Cool for Cats," which features Chris Difford on lead vocals, remains one of the band's best-known songs.

For the third album, John Bentley replaced Harry Kakoulli on bass and became a mainstay with the band. Argybargy was released in 1980 and proved to be a breakthrough of sorts, as the singles *"Another Nail in My Heart"* and *"Pulling Mussels (from the Shell)"* received airplay on rock stations in both the United States and Canada. The year also proved to be a transitional one for the band: Jools Holland left to pursue a solo career and was replaced on keyboards by Paul Carrack. At the time, Carrack was best known for fronting the 1970s British band Ace, which had the classic 1974 hit "How Long," written and sung by Carrack. Carrack, who stayed with Squeeze for one album and a tour, famously sang lead vocals on *"Tempted,"* which appeared on the 1981 album *East Side Story*. Difford wrote the song's lyrics while the band was taking a taxi to Heathrow Airport; its description of a failing relationship is interspersed with references to sights in London and at the airport. The song saw a resurgence in 1994, when the band remixed and overdubbed the original recording for a new version used in the movie *Reality Bites*. Over the years, Carrack has rejoined Squeeze for concerts on special occasions.

"Tempted" coincided with the 1981 launch of MTV, which helped bring Squeeze to a wider U.S. audience. During the network's first year and a half, many of the videos in its rotation featured British and Australian bands. Older Squeeze videos received regular airplay, as did the newer *"Tempted"* and *"Black Coffee in Bed."* However, just as Squeeze had established

a strong foothold in the United States through MTV and the release of the 1982 greatest-hits album *Singles—45's and Unde*r, the band broke up in late 1982.

In a May 12, 2007, an article in *The Telegraph*, "They Never Thought It Would 'Appen," Difford commented on how the band never reached the commercial heights its early hits had promised: "We missed the boat. We missed several boats. Ocean liners, pedalos. Some of our own doing, and some of doings well beyond our sphere of influence."



Chalkie Davies and Barbaramn Reeves / A&M Records



Mike Putland / A&M Records

Early on, many critics described the Difford-Tilbrook songwriting partnership as the heir to Lennon-McCartney, a comparison that did not sit particularly well with the duo.

Squeeze reformed in 1985 with Jools Holland back in the lineup and disbanded again in 1999. The band reunited in 2007 to tour the United Kingdom and the United States. Along the way, Squeeze has delivered highly acclaimed albums of new material, including *Cradle to the Grave* in 2015 and *The Knowledge* in 2017.

There have been numerous lineup changes, with many members leaving and returning. Sadly, longtime drummer Gilson Lavis—a hero to the members of Squeeze and an entire generation of drummers—died in 2025.

In his 2017 autobiography, Difford addressed his stammer and its effect on his early school years: "My stammer and my lack of self-confidence slowed me down. I sat at the back of the class next to kids who chewed crayons and threw paper and rolled nose-pickings into a matchbox. I went to elocution lessons in Deptford to try and correct my speech impediment. I was always gasping for words with my friends at school and this always made me feel one step behind the rest."

He became aware of his stuttering when he was seven or eight years old and trying to converse with his peers. Of his elocution lessons, he said, "From memory, I think they used headphones and noises that repeated in my ears while I filled in a board with plastic pins."

Difford still remembers difficult experiences with his speech: "Mostly when I was a teenager, and also when I had to talk about our songs on tour to a journalist, I think this was joined with the amount of drink I was using at the time and later drugs, too."

Difford says no one else in his family has stuttered. He feels that his stammer fueled his creativity as a songwriter and musician. "It made me still and quiet. I spent many hours on my own working with my imagination and not saying much, and that has not changed."

When asked how he coped with stuttering and what advice he has for others, he said: “I coped with it all and took it on the chin. Keep it simple. Don’t rush and own your voice, your words and the things you say.”

In 2026, Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook find themselves in a most interesting place. When they first connected in 1973 through the advert in a candy-store window, they wrote countless songs. Among them was a rock opera called *Trixies*, which was never recorded. Fifty-two years later, the album was finally recorded by Squeeze and released on March 6, 2026. Conceived in the tradition of the concept albums popular at the time, it tells of the goings-on at a fictitious London nightclub called Trixies. It existed entirely in Difford’s imagination: he was reading a great deal of Damon Runyon at the time, and the two teenagers were too young to enter nightclubs. While Squeeze’s self-titled 1978 debut album helped establish the band in the British New Wave genre, the musical template for Trixies drew from the years 1971–1974, including David Bowie, Wings and Sparks, with touches of Stevie Wonder and the Beach Boys.

Difford and Tilbrook were awestruck when they saw Elton John perform his 1975 concept album *Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy* in its entirety, and they plan to do the same with *Trixies*. Squeeze will tour the United States in summer 2026, headlining the Hollywood Bowl for the first time in the band’s career. The tour will also feature new Squeeze material beyond *Trixies*. Future plans include adapting *Trixies* as a musical for the West End and Broadway.

More than five decades after Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook connected through an advert in a London candy-store window, the highly successful songwriting partners are still writing songs and performing together as Squeeze. The stuttering community can be proud of Difford’s accomplishments, both as a recording artist and as someone who has met personal challenges with perseverance. His example of determination and achievement continues as Squeeze’s success endures.



Getty Images: Fin Costello/Redferns

THE LATEST CONTINUING EDUCATION OFFERINGS FROM THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION



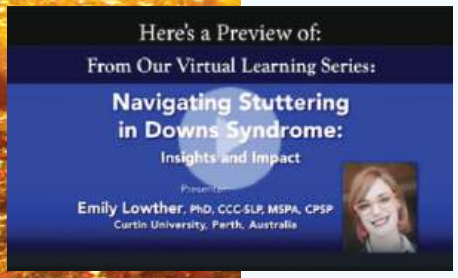
SUPPORTING CLINICAL PRACTICE IN THE SCHOOL SETTING WITH CASE STUDY EXPLORATION

In this two-hour presentation, Mary Tesh, M.A., CCC-SLP, provides school-based speech-language pathologists with a practical framework for supporting children who stutter in educational settings. Participants will explore the benefits and challenges of various service-delivery models—including mixed therapy groups, consultative approaches, and RTI/MTSS—and learn how to select the most appropriate model for differing student needs. The course offers clear guidance on collecting meaningful assessment data tailored to school-based stuttering evaluation, as well as approaches for writing effective, functional IEP goals for students who stutter. Participants will examine a range of therapeutic components and activities, analyzing their respective strengths and limitations in everyday school practice. In addition, the course highlights effective methods for engaging parents, caregivers, teachers, and other school professionals as collaborative partners in supporting student progress.



SUPPORTING CLIENTS WHO WANT TO USE DISCLOSURE: THE ROLE OF COUNSELING

Disclosure is a current hot topic for clinicians working with individuals who stutter. But how do we approach this topic with clients, especially if they are hesitant? Is it as simple as just "disclosing," or is there more to it than that? What support do clients need as we explore disclosure with them? In this session, Anthony DiLollo, Ph.D., CCC-SLP examines disclosure as a client-centered process and discusses the role of counseling – both as a therapeutic approach and a skill set – in helping clients explore the potential benefits of disclosure.



NAVIGATING STUTTERING IN DOWNS SYNDROME: INSIGHTS AND IMPACT

Emily Lowther, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, of Curtin University in Australia discusses the unique speech behaviors and linguistic factors associated with stuttering in individuals with Downs syndrome. Drawing from current research, participant insights and clinical experiences, she explores the potential causes, behavioral characteristics, daily impact, and discuss strategies for managing stuttering in this population.

THE LATEST CONTINUING EDUCATION OFFERINGS FROM THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION

(CONTINUED)



TEMPERAMENT: RELEVANCE & IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN WHO STUTTER

Kurt Eggers, Ph.D., examines temperament as a critical factor in understanding and supporting children who stutter. Temperament, defined as biologically based differences in emotional reactivity and self-regulation, influences stress responses, learning, and social-emotional development. Research shows children who stutter often exhibit higher negative reactivity and lower self-regulation, which may affect stuttering severity, impact, and persistence, as well as co-occurring anxiety and depression. He discusses how temperament interacts with stuttering and explores assessment tools and intervention strategies that incorporate emotional regulation and goodness-of-fit principles. Practical implications for individualized therapy and links to established approaches are highlighted.



CLIENT, FAMILY, AND THERAPIST: A CONVERGENCE OF TEMPERAMENTS

In this presentation, Katerina Ntourou, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, discusses the role of temperament of the client, the parents, and the clinician in stuttering clinical practice. She reviews key research findings on the role of temperament in stuttering and the impact of the temperament and personality traits of all key team members (child who stutters, parents, clinician) on the therapeutic relationship, choice of treatment methods, management of therapy expectations, and overall treatment effectiveness.



BUILDING PARENTS' CONFIDENCE AND RESILIENCE IN STUTTERING THERAPY

In this session, Sarah Caughter, MSc, RegMRCSLT, RegHCPC, European Fluency Specialist, of the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children in London, discusses working with parents of children who stutter, developing their understanding of stuttering and boosting their own confidence and resilience in supporting their child with stuttering. The presenter explores how this helps parents to nurture their child's emotional wellbeing and coping skills. This session outlines working with parents in a group context, helping parents to feel more at ease with stuttering and empowering them to manage stuttering within the family context.



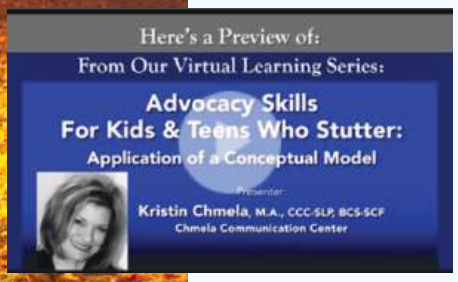
CLUTTERING ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT

In this podcast episode, Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP provides speech-language pathologists with an introductory, practical framework for identifying, assessing, and treating cluttering. Using the "Lowest Common Denominator" (LCD) framework, clinicians will learn to identify the core features of cluttering. Dr. Scaler Scott also addresses how to assess cluttering within the context of other related conditions or co-occurring diagnoses. In addition to assessment, Dr. Scaler Scott explores the real-life impact of cluttering on communication, participation, and self-perception. Participants will gain practical strategies for treatment, including techniques for rate regulation, improving naturalness, navigating listener interactions, and promoting self-advocacy



DELVING INTO THERAPY: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR TREATING ATYPICAL DISFLUENCIES

Word-final repetitions and other behaviors that are commonly labeled "atypical" disfluencies provide a unique challenge for speech-language pathologists. There is limited research and few resources to guide evaluation and therapy. In this session, Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF, and Elyse Lambeth, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF, provide a holistic framework to dive below the surface and identify factors that may be contributing to atypical disfluencies and use that information to implement holistic therapy to increase communicative efficiency and effectiveness. They discuss approaches to determine and reduce life impact and strategies for collaborating with clients and their families in assessment and treatment that is holistic and enhances communication efficiency. Case studies that highlight the process are shared.



ADVOCACY SKILLS FOR SCHOOL-AGE KIDS AND TEENS WHO STUTTER: APPLICATION OF A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

In this one-hour video, Kristin Chmela, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF, presents a conceptual model for teaching advocacy that is adapted for school-age children and teens who stutter. She provides concrete strategies for each step of the model and reviews and discusses several case examples.

ASHA CE
APPROVED PROVIDER

Connecting the Global Stuttering Community

The Stuttering Foundation is expanding its social media outreach to better serve people who stutter, families, educators, and speech-language pathologists around the world. Our Facebook pages now offer frequent updates, helpful information, news, and free resources in English, Spanish, and Brazilian Portuguese. We invite you to visit, "Like," and follow the page that best meets your needs—and to share it with others in the global stuttering community.

English: facebook.com/stutteringhelp
Spanish: facebook.com/tartamudez
Portuguese: facebook.com/Gagueira



CELEBRATING NSAW 2026



In celebration of this year's National Stuttering Awareness Week, May 9–15, speech-language pathologist Michelle Danko and her students at Stanford Elementary School created a colorful hallway display showing that stuttering is just one part of who they are. Through personalized poster boards, the students shared their interests, dreams and messages of encouragement: Ricardo hopes to sing in a mariachi band, Josiah loves axolotls and London is passionate about the musical Hamilton. The project even inspired fifth grader London to present it to her class. We thank Michelle and her students for sharing these wonderful photos—and for reminding their school that every child who stutters has a unique story, voice and light to share.

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 one-sided, plain, unlined paper. Photocopies, scans, and faxes of artwork cannot be used for print. Colorful drawings with markers, pens and/or crayons (no pencils) are encouraged. We cannot accept unlicensed, trademarked clip art images. Original artwork and/or photographs ONLY.



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



Hi, my name is Adriana and I'm 11 years old. I love playing soccer and dancing. I have a stutter, it's annoying but it's okay. People make fun of me sometimes; I try my best to ignore them. I go to speech therapy three times a week. My speech therapist is patient with me and makes me feel confident when I talk. Some strategies I find helpful are stretchy speech, here is an example: sssssong. I am grateful to my family and friends for always supporting me. My best advice to people who stutter is to take your time and to slow down. Sometimes, I get upset with myself, but it's a unique thing about me. Thanks for reading this! Remember to be confident and to ignore all the haters!

Adriana, 11, Redwood City, CA

Hey there! My name is Ayden (or AJ). I am 11 years old and I live in Naperville, IL. Some of my hobbies are playing video games, going outside, editing, and making videos on YouTube. As you know, I struggle with a speech dysfluency called stuttering. Although it bothers me sometimes, I never let it bring me down. In fact, it lifts my spirits because stuttering is not a disorder – it's a difference. If there's anyone reading this who is just like me, it's okay to stutter!
It makes you unique in your own beautiful way, and it should never make you feel bad about yourself. Instead, it should make you feel good that you're not just an ordinary kid. Even though you might not be the textbook definition of perfect, you can still be perfect – in your own way, and in the Lord's way.

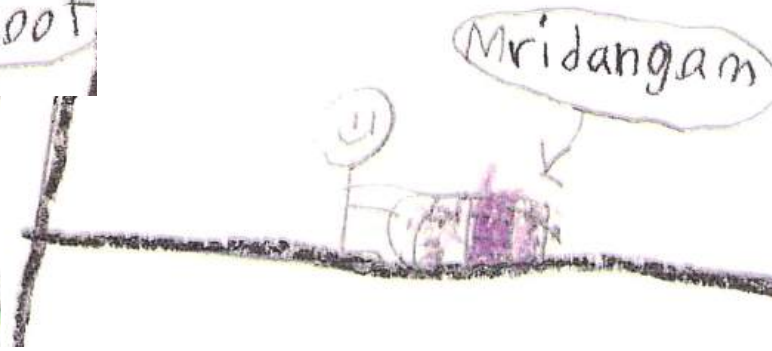
With great enthusiasm,

AJW, 11
Naperville, IL

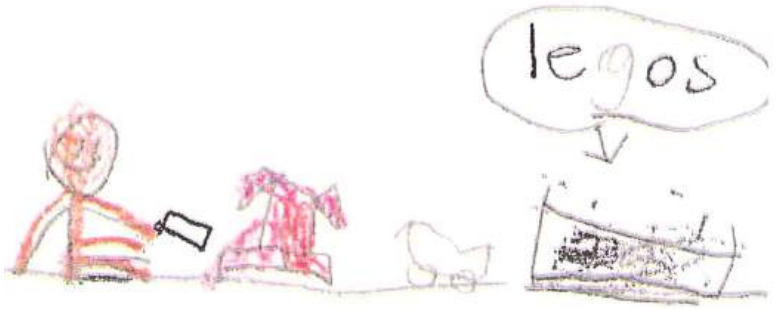
Please note: The following letters and drawings are from children. Their comments are not intended to be construed as treatment or therapy advice. Please see a medical professional such as a licensed speech-language pathologist for diagnosis and treatment.

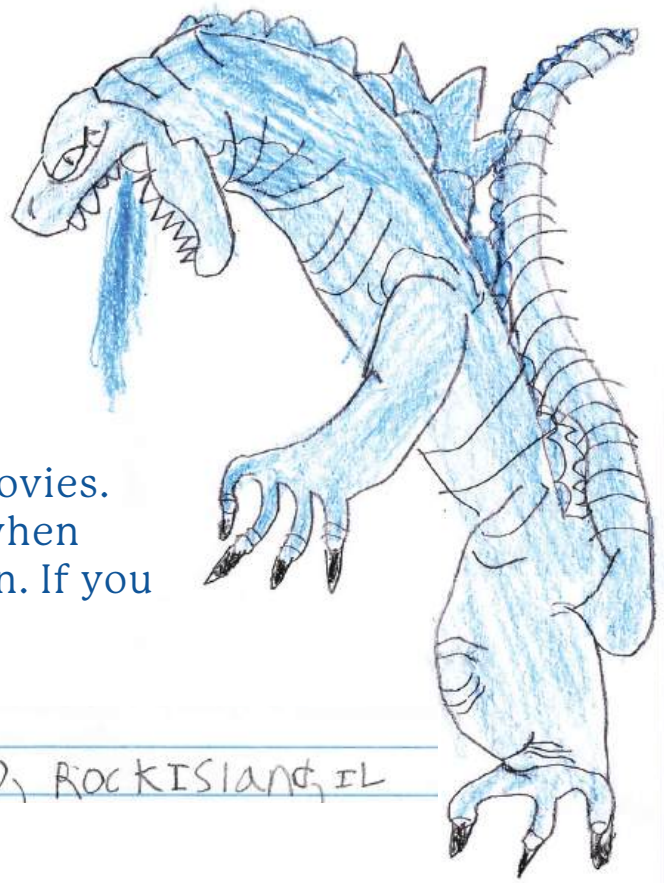


Lalitmohan, 7,
Sammamish, WA



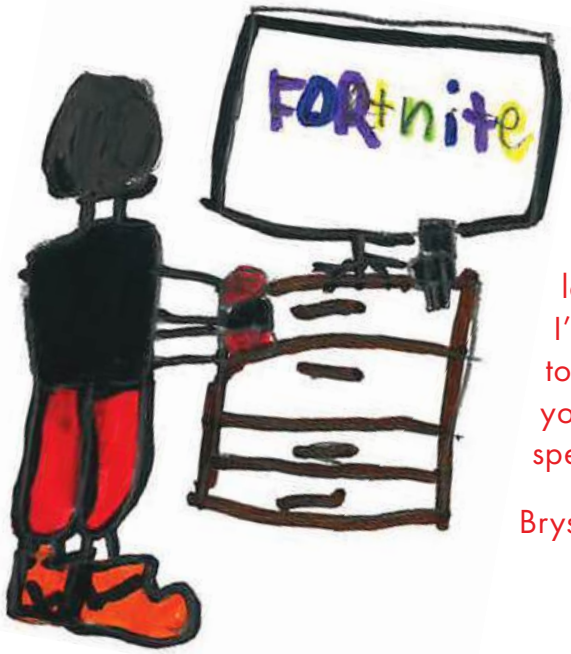
Hi, my name is Lalitmohan and I live in Sammamish, Washington. I am 7 years old. My favorite movie is Avatar: The Last Airbender. I play Mridangam, which is a drum from India. I also like to bike and scooter. I like to play with Legos. When I stutter, I usually stop and then redo the sentence. Stuttering is okay because it's part of my speech. Some people around the world also have stuttering.





Hi my name is Alijah. I am 10 years old. I live in Rock Island, IL. I like to watch movies. My favorite movie is Godzilla. I stutter when I am excited. My strategy is to slow down. If you stutter, it is okay.

Alijah, 10, Rock Island, IL



My name is Bryson. I live in Nebraska and I'm 10 years old. My favorite games are Roblox and Fortnite. I have a dog named Cookies. He is a red heeler mix. I go to speech and we work on pausing and relaxing my muscles. We also do presentations for the school about stuttering. I love reading the letters in this magazine because they help me remember that I'm not the only one that stutters. When I stutter, I want others to try to be patient with me and not finish my sentence. When you stutter, don't be ashamed. Your stuttering is what makes you special. So don't let bullies get to you.

Bryson, 10, Ashland, NE

Hi, my name is Kaylie. I am ten years old and live in Wichita, KS. In my free time I like to play with my dog Lilo and play soccer. I started speech therapy in 2nd grade. The type of stuttering I do the most are blocks. The strategy that helps me the most is "stop, rewind, go." I have been going to stuttering camp for the past 2 summers. I am shy and I get nervous when I get in front of a lot of people, but I did something brave. I presented about stuttering in front of my 3rd and 4th grade class. Never be shy, nervous or scared about your stuttering.

Kaylie, 10, Wichita, KS





Hi, my name is Lucky and I stutter.

I am 10 years old. I like hanging out with my friends and going on vacation. I also like spending time with my family at the lake. I help my gramma and grampa breed Portuguese Water Dogs. My hardest sounds are S & R in a word, but I can say the letters S & R easily. When I stutter, I mostly do the blocking. Blocking is when the word can't come out, and people are like "what?" I don't like when people stop me when I am trying to talk and say things like "Lucky, slow down." I studied FAMOUS people who stuttered like Ed Sheeran, James Earl Jones, King George VI, Tiger Woods, and Elvis Presley. I did a YouTube channel on strategies like pausing, stop-restarting, easy onset, etc. My advice to other kids is that it is okay to stutter.

Lucky, 10, Gray, GA





My name is Carter. I will soon be a ten-year-old and I've been working on my stuttering for years. But even though it's been taking a while, I've been making good progress. So, I'm not giving up and the progress will keep getting better. Everybody stutters and makes those mistakes so I will never give up even if I'm 50 and still stuttering.

Carter, 9, Adams, MA

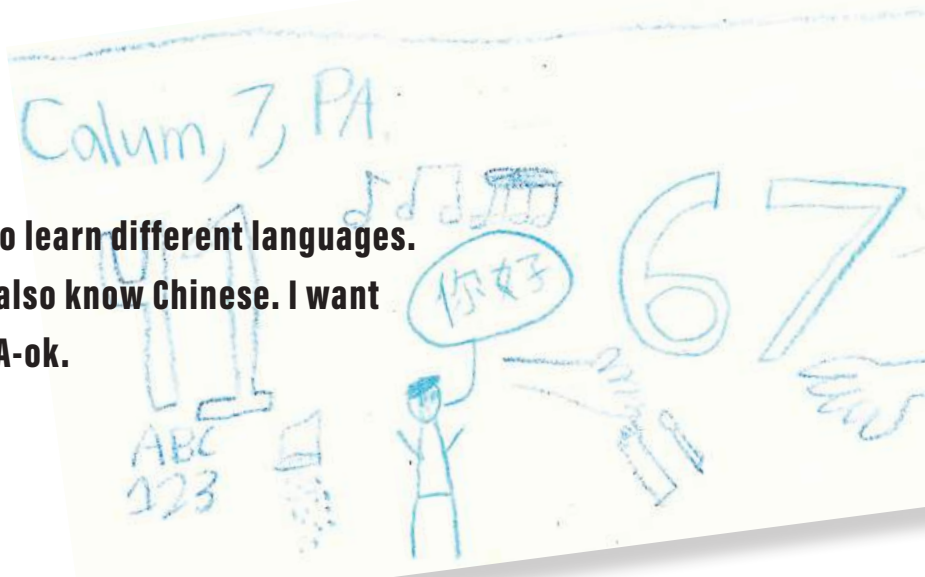
Getty Images/ Mitchell Leff / Stringer



Hi, my name is Dillan and I live in Elkton, Maryland. I am in 2nd grade and I'm 7 years old. I like Jujutsu Kaizen (aka JJK), FNAF 2, Minecraft and the Philadelphia Eagles.

I stutter; I like slow speech because it helps me stutter less. It is okay to stutter. It doesn't stop me from making friends or having fun. Sometimes my stutter is nice because my friends think I'm cool because it makes me different. I love my family because they take care of me and make me feel good about my stutter. Also, my speech therapist is the best for helping me and playing fun speech games.

Dillan, 7, Elkton, MD



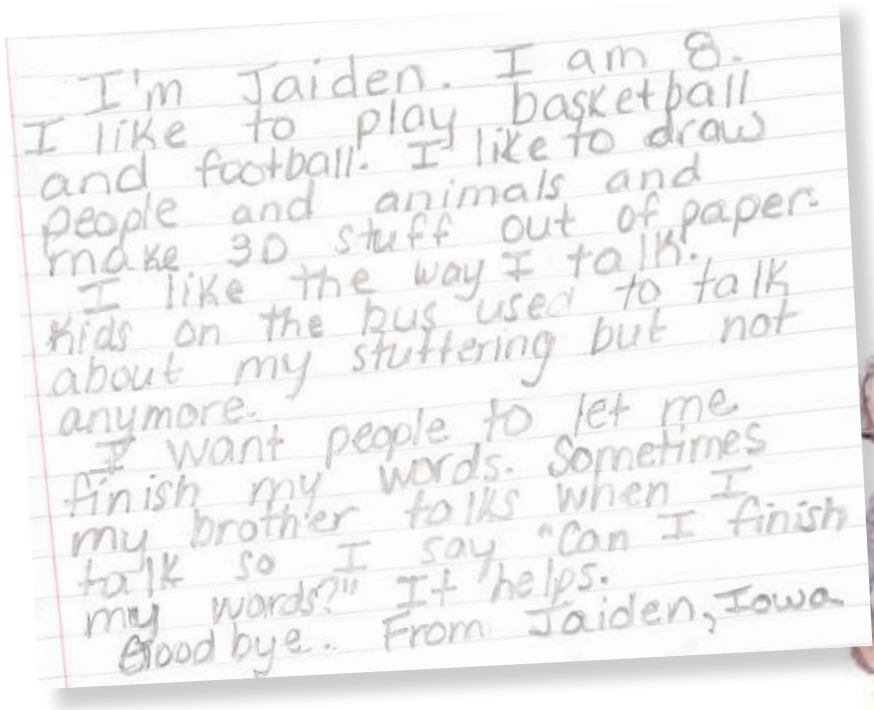
Hi, my name is Calum. I love 67. I like to learn different languages. I also like chatting with my friends. I also know Chinese. I want everybody to know that stuttering is A-ok.

Calum, 7, Hellertown, PA



My name is Cinque. I am 7 years old and I am in 2nd grade. I was born on April 5th. I live in Gainesville, Florida. I like video games, football, racing, and Stranger Things season 5. My favorite stuttering strategy is smooth speech. It helps me when I am talking and stuttering. I feel good about my stuttering because when I use smooth speech I don't stutter as much as I used to. I've learned about famous people who stutter like I do. Did you know that Michael Kidd-Gilchrist stutters? He is an NBA basketball player. I think you should try smooth speech. I think it might help you.

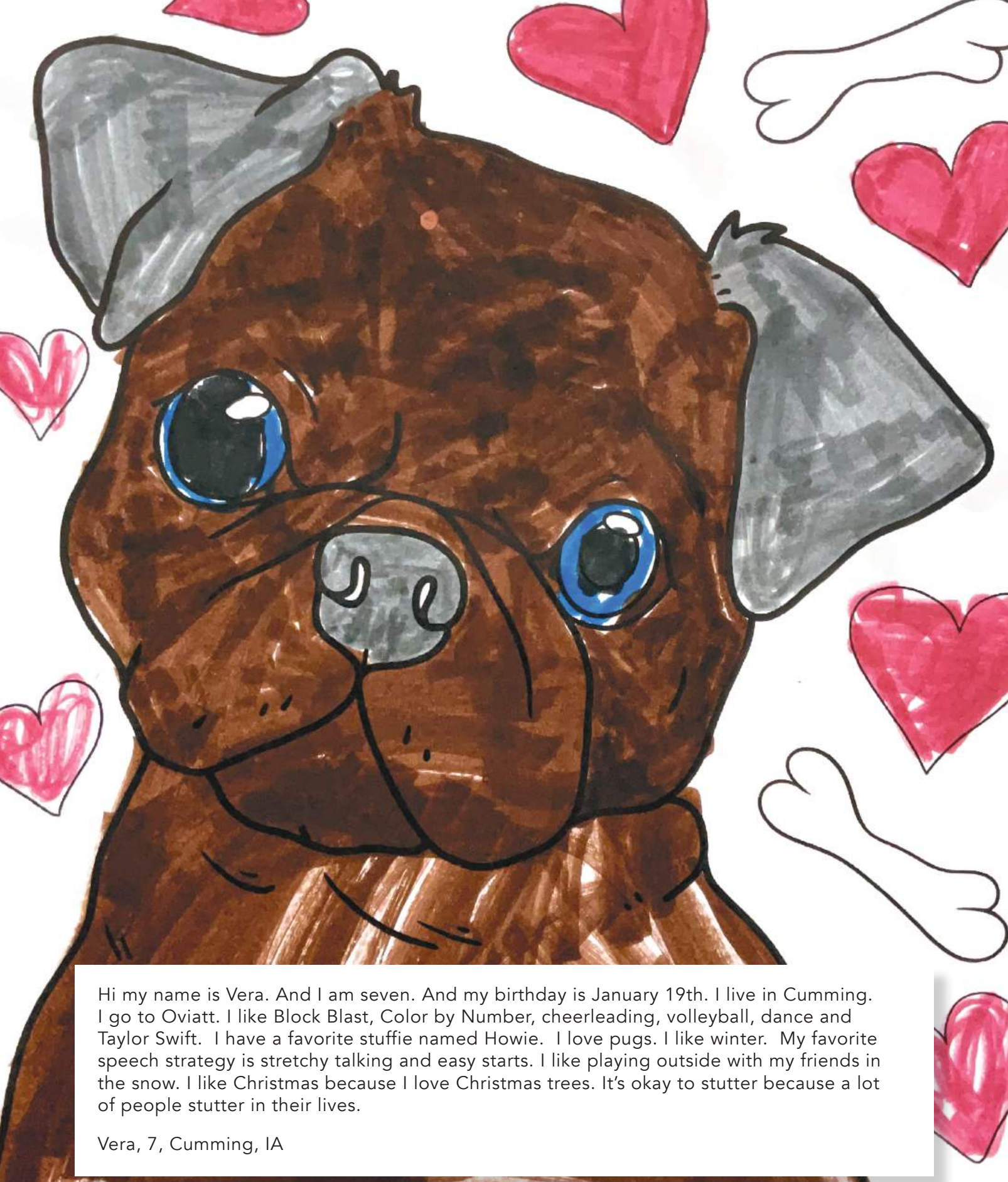
Cinque, 7, Gainesville, FL



I'm Jaiden. I am 8. I like to play basketball and football. I like to draw people and animals and make 3D stuff out of paper. I like the way I talk. Kids on the bus used to talk about my stuttering but not anymore. I want people to let me finish my words. Sometimes my brother talks when I talk so I say "Can I finish my words?" It helps. Good bye.. From Jaiden, Iowa

Jaiden, 8, Des Moines, IA





Hi my name is Vera. And I am seven. And my birthday is January 19th. I live in Cumming. I go to Oviatt. I like Block Blast, Color by Number, cheerleading, volleyball, dance and Taylor Swift. I have a favorite stuffie named Howie. I love pugs. I like winter. My favorite speech strategy is stretchy talking and easy starts. I like playing outside with my friends in the snow. I like Christmas because I love Christmas trees. It's okay to stutter because a lot of people stutter in their lives.

Vera, 7, Cumming, IA

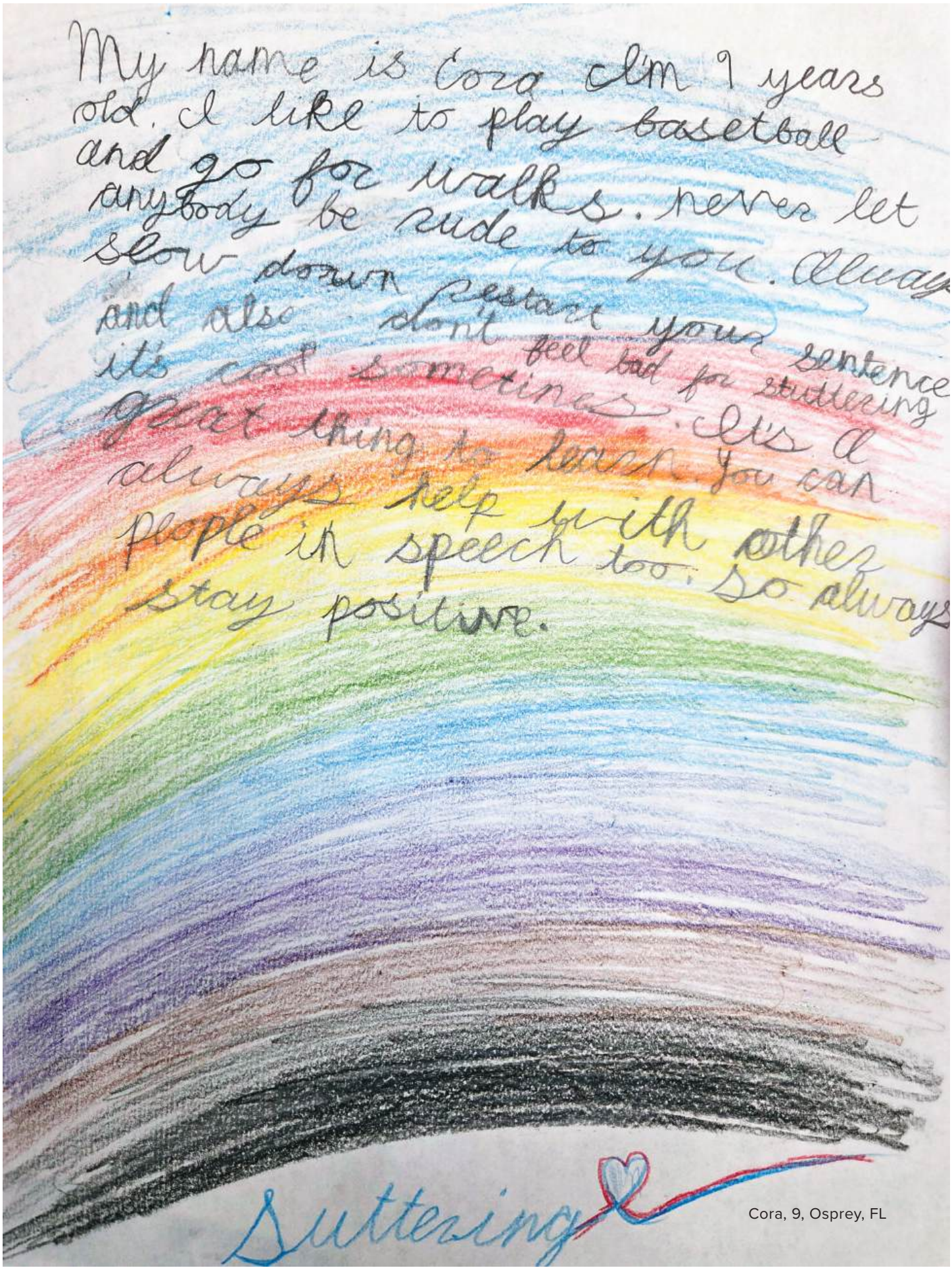
Hi my name is Lola. I am 10 years old. I am in 5th grade. I live in Illinois. In my family, I have a mom and dad. My favorite thing to do is climb trees and look for foxes at night. One strategy to help my speech is to repeat my sentences if they don't come out fluently. My advice for someone who stutters is to try your best and don't compare yourself to others.

Lola, 10, Gurnee, IL



My name is Lilly. I am 10 years old and I live in Iowa. I like to swim. I stutter sometimes. Speech therapy helps me because the speech machine tells me when and where I stutter. Being a speech detective is fun. I can feel where my tension is. I go to the National Stuttering Association group. We have cheese pizza and decorate cookies. I meet new people who stutter like me.

Lilly, 10, Altoona, IA



Cora, 9, Osprey, FL







My name is Maeve. I am 8 years old and I am in 2nd grade. I live in Gainesville, Florida. I like basketball, Pokémon, football, soccer, video games, and NBA 2K26. My favorite basketball players are Walter Clayton Jr., Will Richard, and Alijah Martin. They used to play for the Florida Gators who won the National Championship. It's ok to stutter. If I am about to stutter, using smooth speech helps me. Pausing also helps me sometimes. The strategies help me talk smoother. If someone makes fun of your stutter, you can ignore them or tell an adult. Going to speech is fun! We get to do activities and games.



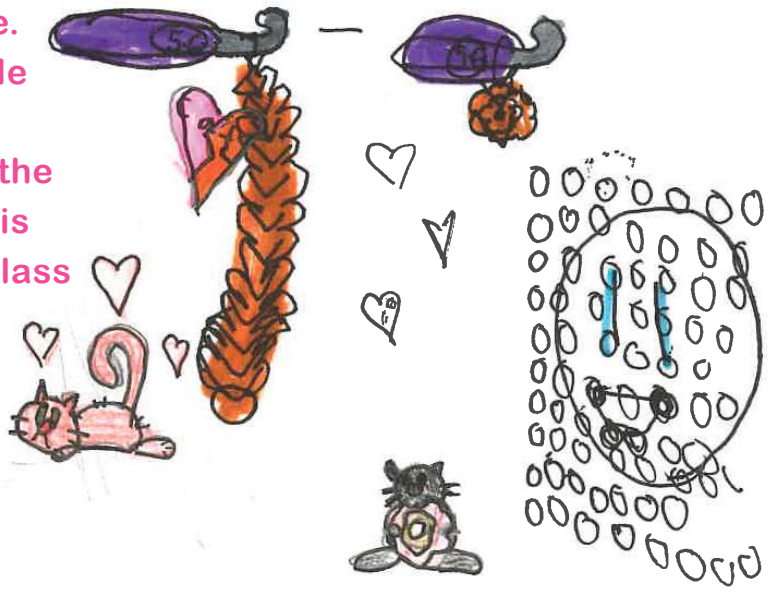
Maeve, 8, Gainesville, FL

Hi my name is Dom. I am 11 years old. I like doing karate. I like to do Legos. I like Hot Wheels. My favorite Hot Wheels car is a Nissan Silvia (S15). I think my stuttering is like doing karate. Because in karate you have to practice the forms just like you practice your speech techniques. My favorite color is orange. When people stutter, don't feel bad if people make fun of you. Because stuttering is not bad. Because everybody is different.

Dom, 11, Dubuque, IA

My name is Eily. I live in Gainesville, FL. I am 8 years old and I am in 2nd grade. I like cats, softball, kittens, and ukulele club. It is ok to stutter. If you stutter, don't let it hold you back. I like using the pausing strategy. My speech teacher is the best in the world!! In my speech class we practice using strategies to help us. We play games, shoot baskets, and we read letters like this from kids who stutter like me.

Eily, 8, Gainesville, FL



speech, like when starts to screech, almost, Or you're in the middle of a sentence and you have a block. You glance ~~at~~ at the clock, or ~~read~~ maybe not, decide to use a tool to cure, instead of filler. Once ~~you~~ you are done have some fun!

MAYA T.

Maya, 10, Lincolnshire, IL

Hello, my name is Marshane Adams, II. I am a 4th grade student at Crocker Highlands Elementary school. I am 9 years old and I have some friends in my school. I have a x-box and I play Roblox my 2 favorite games on roblox are outcome memories and Forsaken. And both of the games have great music. I feel like I stutter all the time, but I feel like it's a good thing because some people don't stutter and it makes me feel special. The strategies I like to use to get the stuttering in control are stretchy speech and slow rate. I love cats!

Marshane, 9, Oakland Ca







Marshane, 9, Oakland, CA



Stuttering frustrates me. It feels like someone put something in my throat to block my speech. It feels like my face gets hot, tense and sweaty. When that happens, I take a deep breath and try to relax, but sometimes it's challenging for me to do that. There are times when my speech is really fluent when I am either reading to myself or to a teacher. There are also some other times when my speech is really bumpy because I talk fast. I feel best about my speech when I am talking to my parents because they won't laugh at my stutter and they know how I feel. I feel worse about my speech when people make fun of me about it because it makes me feel less confident about how I talk. When I use full breath, it helps me loosen the tension in my throat and it helps me slow down my speech. If I ever talked to someone who stutters I would ask them what strategies they use when they are stuttering. If I were to give advice to someone else who stutters I would tell them If you are ever not confident about your speech just think no one should care how you talk and it is ok that you talk different from other people.

Emma, 11, Brookfield, WI

"Don't doubt yourself just because you aren't perfect."



Hi, my name is Nolan and I stutter. I'm 10 years old and I have some strategies. My strategies are speaking slower and a pull-out. My last strategy is light contact. I like to play baseball and basketball. The last sport I like to play is football. One game I like to play is Roblox. One more game I like to play is Smash Karts, and here's a picture.

Nolan, 10. Nineveh, IN



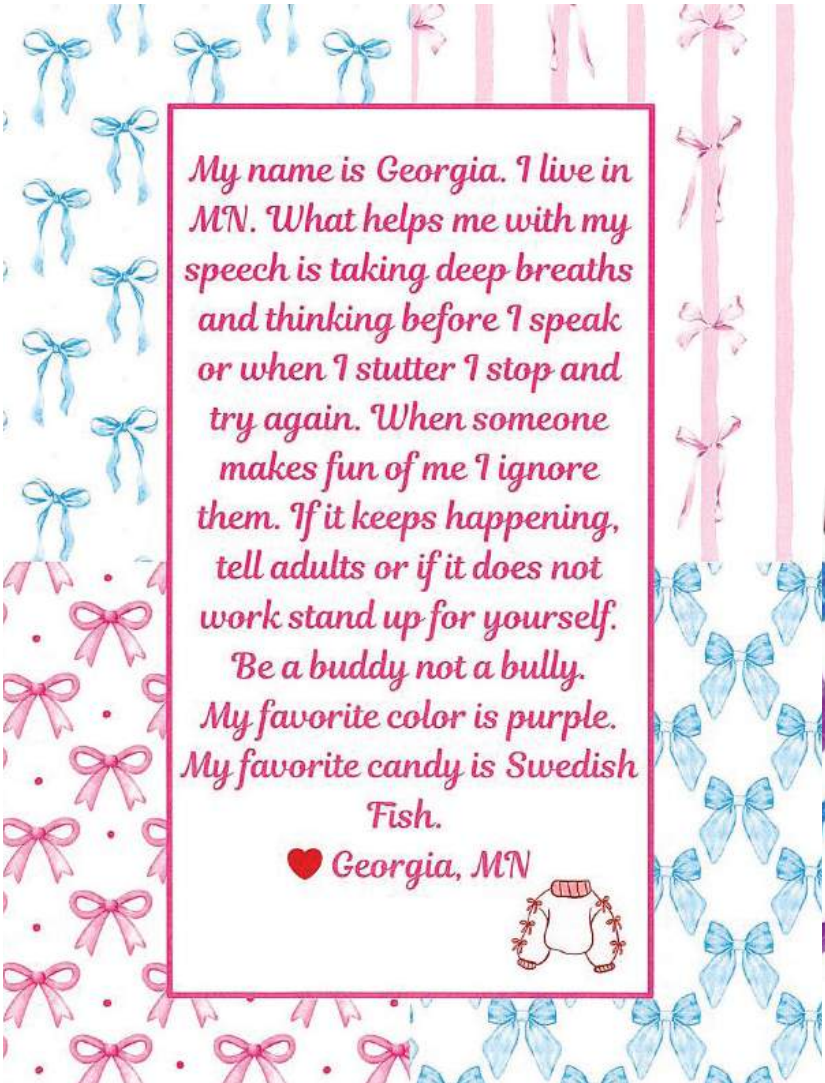
Hi, my name is Memphis and I am 9 years old and I'm in 3rd grade. I love Fortnite, Roblox, and Minecraft. I think stuttering is great because it's unique and a part of me. My tools that help me are light contact and smooth and easy speech. My favorite shows are Amazing Digital Circus, and my favorite character is Pomni. I also like SpongeBob and Patrick. My favorite books are *Dogman* and *Avatar Aang*. I live in Germany, but I used to live in Alaska, and I have ADHD and asthma. For a shoutout I would like to support Ed Sheeran and Aiden from Georgia (Fall 2025). My favorite song by Ed Sheeran is Shivers.







Memphis, 9, Germany



Georgia, 10, Cottage Grove, MN



My name is Filip.
am 6 years old.
I live in Elmhurst, IL.
I am in first grade.
My favorite sport
is soccer, and I like
to play soccer like
Messi. I have 4 family
members. My favorite
music song is Bye Bye
Bye by NSYNC. My
favorite video game
is Roblox, and I like
to play Rivals. I can
speak 3 languages.
I like to use stretchy
speech and tapping
strategies.

Filip, 6
Elmhurst, IL



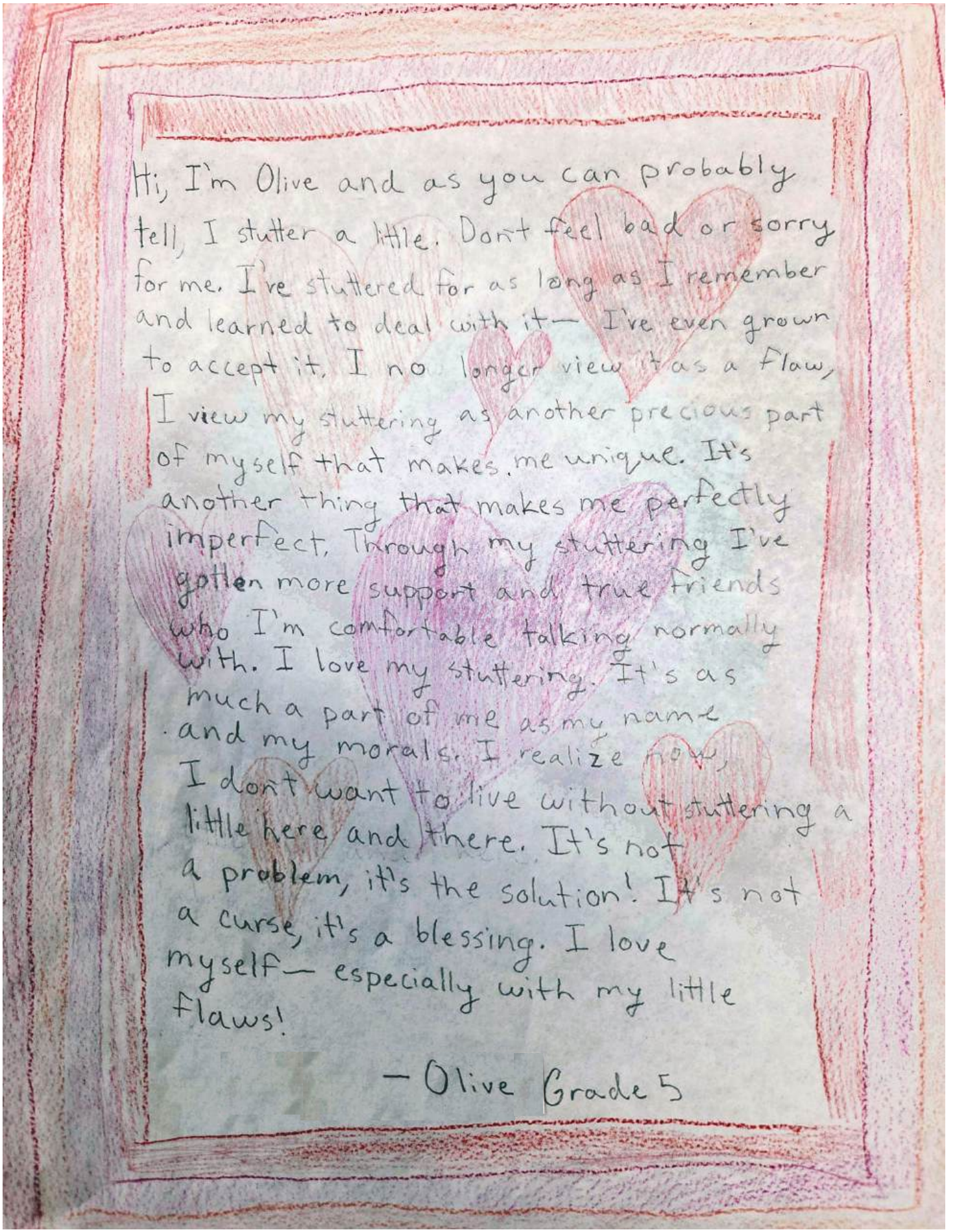
Hi my name is Gozi and I am 11 years old. My favorite games are Roblox and Minecraft and I want to tell you a few things about me: I like to play football, I like to paint, and I like to play with my friends. Something unique about me is that I stutter.

When I stutter, I don't feel any shame like I don't belong, that's just me.

When I stutter, I remember the 3 strategies my speech teacher talks about: easy start, slow talking, and speech breathing. The one that helps me the most is easy start. And what I like about this strategy is it smoothly helps you get the long and complicated words smoothly. For those out there who stutter, don't feel like you don't belong and PLEASE do not let anyone bother you or bully you about your stuttering. I was never bullied about my stuttering but any time someone bullies you, just don't talk to them and if they still bully you, go tell an adult. I want to make this a lesson for kids out there to never let other people discriminate against your stuttering. You are your own person. Don't think you are different like the others.

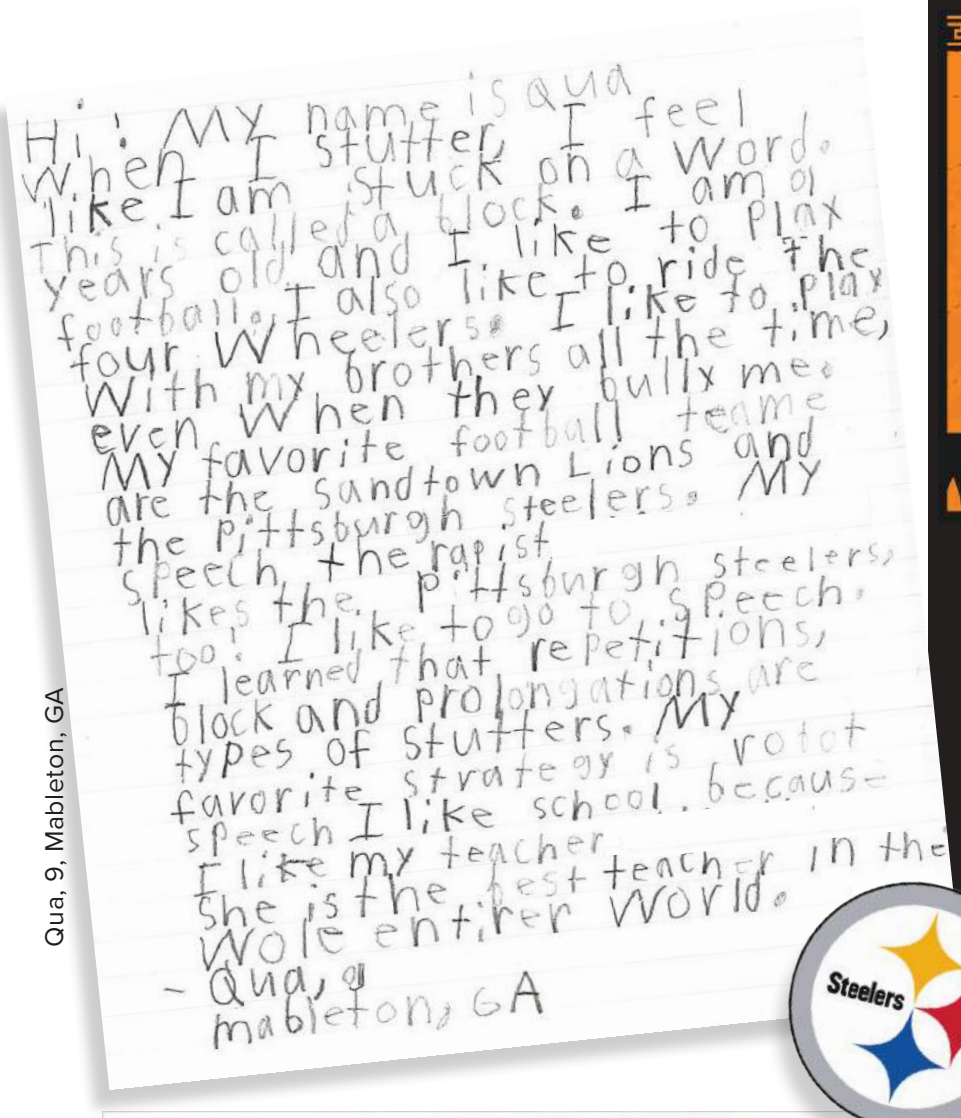
In conclusion, stuttering is not a disorder. It is an effect that happens in your brain. Sometimes, you won't even stutter and your strategies won't work all the time. I hope to send this message out to those who stutter. Good luck!

Gozi, 11, Naperville, IL


Hi, I'm Olive and as you can probably tell, I stutter a little. Dont feel bad or sorry for me. I've stuttered for as long as I remember and learned to deal with it— I've even grown to accept it. I no longer view it as a flaw, I view my stuttering as another precious part of myself that makes me unique. It's another thing that makes me perfectly imperfect. Through my stuttering I've gotten more support and true friends who I'm comfortable talking normally with. I love my stuttering. It's as much a part of me as my name and my morals. I realize now, I dont want to live without stuttering a little here and there. It's not a problem, it's the solution! It's not a curse, it's a blessing. I love myself— especially with my little flaws!

— Olive Grade 5

Olive, 12, Sarasota, FL

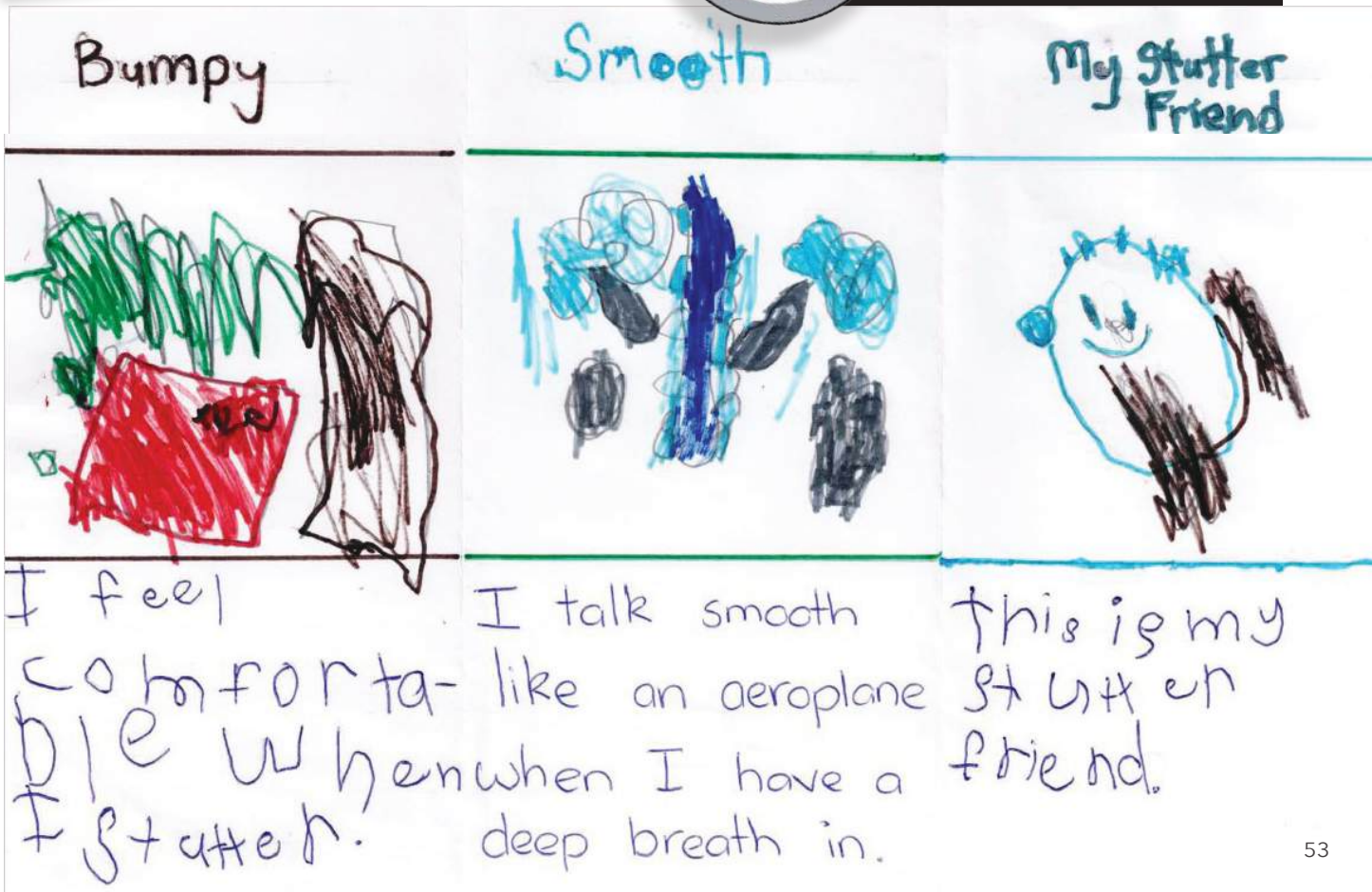

Hi! My name is Qua
When I stutter I feel
like I am stuck on a word.
This is called a block. I am a
years old and I like to play
football. I also like to ride the
four Wheelers. I like to play
With my brothers all the time,
even When they bullx me.
My favorite football teame
are the Sandtown Lions and
the Pittsburgh Steelers. My
speech therapist
likes the Pittsburgh Steelers,
too. I like to go to speech.
I learned that repetitions,
block and prolongations are
types of stutters. My
favorite strategy is rotat
speech I like school. becaus-
I like my teacher
She is the best teacher in the
Wole entire World.
- Qua, 9
Mableton, GA

Qua, 9, Mableton, GA



My name is Porter. I love Greek mythology! Even if you stutter, it doesn't mean that you are not smart. I'm good at math and soccer. My favorite stuttering strategy is easy start. My stutter never stops me from saying what I want to say. I want to be a musician when I grow up.

Porter, 9
Ventura, CA



Henry, 6, Waikato, New Zealand



Karter, 8, Church Point, LA



My name is Drake and I'm in 1st grade. I like sports. When I talk like a rapper, it helps me not stutter. I love to eat lasagna. I am really good at drawing. Stuttering will not make you look bad; it makes you be you.

Drake, 7
Lake Geneva, WI

Hi, my name is Addie. I think it's cool having speech because most people don't have it. In my opinion, I'm lucky to go to speech.

My two favorite hobbies are playing baseball and softball, and cheer. I love playing with my little brother and making him laugh because his laugh is so cute!

I love to learn about fractions and writing essays. I hope when I'm older that I write an essay about fractions.

One of my favorite strategies when I stutter is take a deep breath, take a few seconds, and then say it.

One thing that I always keep in my mind is that stuttering and speech won't take over your life. When I was younger I thought that speech and stuttering would take over my life, but now that I'm older I know that it won't take over my life!

Addie, 9, Warsaw, IN





Issa, 14, Lagrangeville, NY

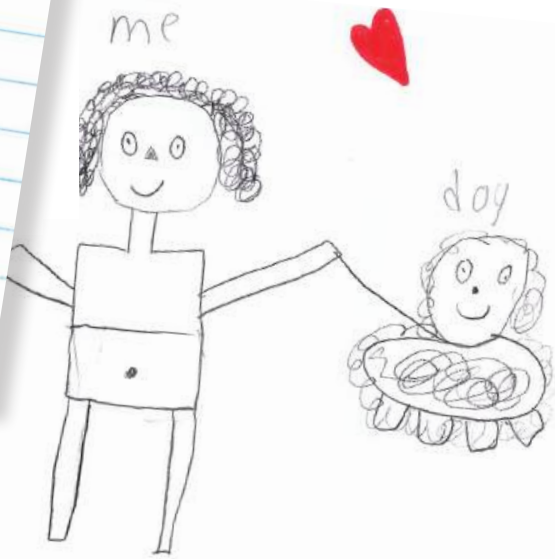


Hello, my name is Evan. I'm in 6th grade, I go to middle school in Michigan, and I've been stuttering for as long as I can remember. Stuttering has always been somewhat of an issue to me; it makes it harder to communicate with people. I'm twelve years old and still struggle with stuttering a bit. But I like to use some strategies to prevent or stop stuttering. Some things I like are boxing, hockey, and reading. A lot of people believe that if you stutter, it's inevitable that you'll stutter with no control whatsoever, but that's not true. There are lots of techniques to not stutter, like easy onset, pausing, and slowing down. Even if you stutter, that's fine. All you need to do is research some nonstuttering tactics, and eventually you'll be able to control your stuttering.

Evan, 12, Mason, MI

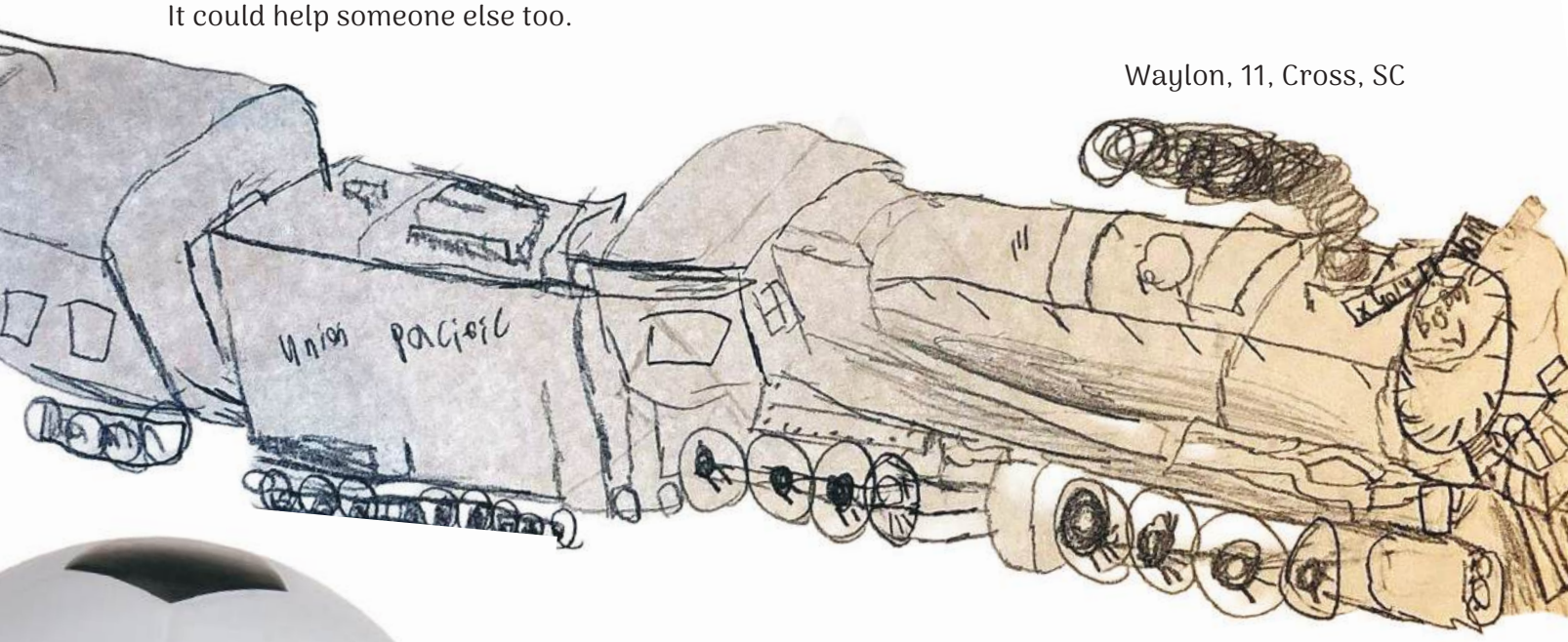
My name is Taliah. I am in third grade. My favorite color is teal. I like to read chapter books. it's okay to do hard thing. My favorite food is steak with Al sauce. I can do a back handspring. I have a pet dog. I like to play on the Swings at recess. I Stutter Just like you guys. it's OK to Stutter. My speech teacher is mrs. Tolliver. She teaches me a lot of new thing in Speech. Be brave and be kind to others. Have a good day!

Taliah 9, Fort dodge, IA.



Hi my name is Waylon and I am 11 years old and I like trains a lot and scootering. My favorite scooter combo thing, or whatever, is a buttercup finger whip. They are soooo cool. That is where the scooter deck goes over your head while spinning, then you smack the deck with your fingers, and it spins and you land on it. Trains are also really cool. My favorite paint scheme is the Canadian National design. Stuttering is and isn't cool. It makes me out of breath, but I still don't want to stop stuttering. Stretchy speech helps a lot when stuttering so that's what I use. It could help someone else too.

Waylon, 11, Cross, SC





Hello, my name is Jasper. I live in Ventura, California. I'm really into soccer. I want to start playing baseball this month. My favorite baseball players are Jackie Robinson, Babe Ruth, and Shohei Otani. My favorite stuttering strategy is pausing and phrasing. It's ok to stutter, and it never stops me from saying what I want to say. I'm really into Pokémon! When I grow up, I want to be a rapper.

Jasper, 9, Ventura, CA

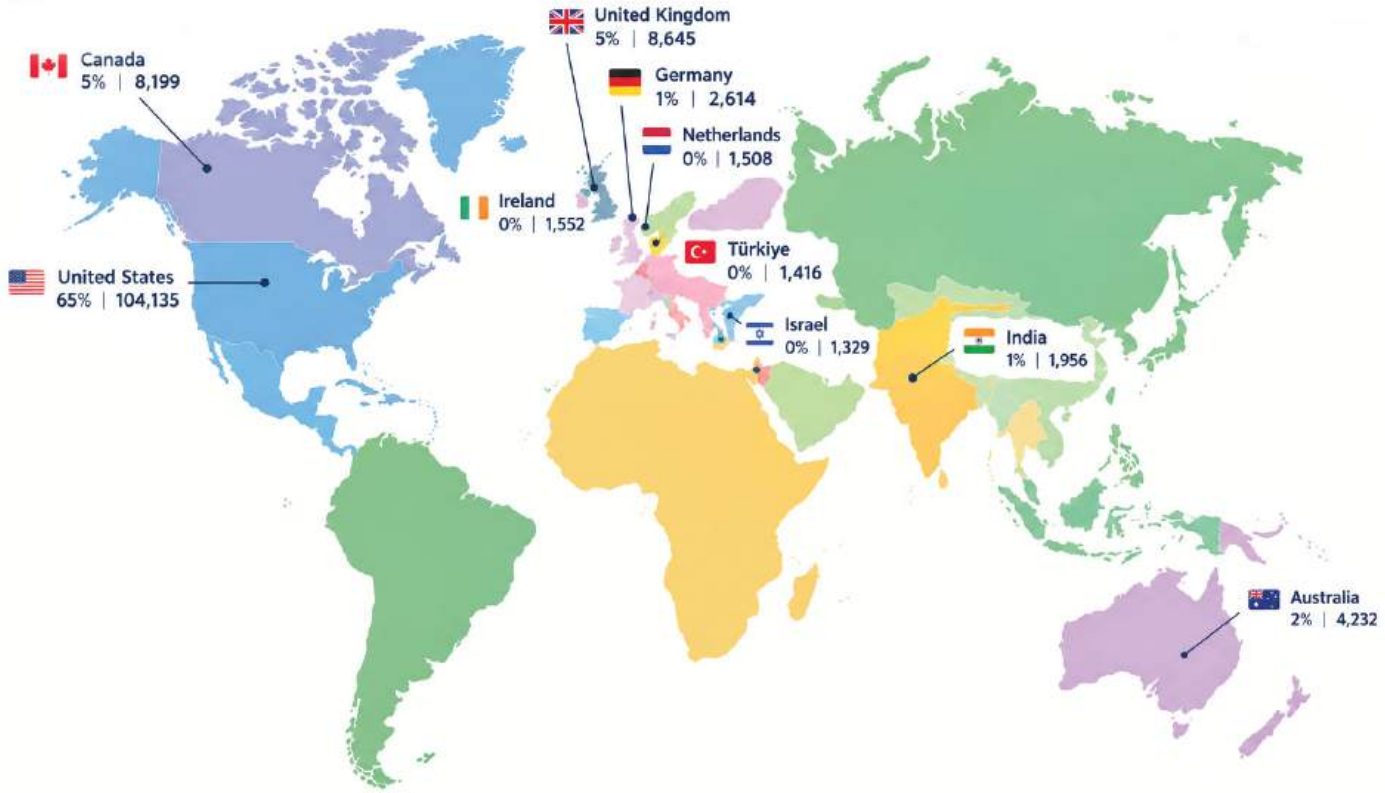
Hi my name is Yovani. I like soccer and my favorite soccer player is Messi. I stutter but that is okay, it makes me different. My favorite books are A Series of Unfortunate Events. I am 8 years old.

Yovani, 8, Morrill, NE



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2026 Stuttering Foundation Podcast Statistics



Countries / Territories (184 Total)

United States	65 %	**104,135**
United Kingdom	5 %	**8,645**
Canada	5 %	**8,199**
Australia	2 %	**4,232**
Germany	1 %	**2,614**
India	1 %	**1,956**
Ireland	0 %	**1,552**
Netherlands	0 %	**1,508**
Türkiye	0 %	**1,416**
Israel	0 %	**1,329**

Cities (9320 Total)

Los Angeles, California	1 %	**1,792**
Chicago, Illinois	1 %	**1,715**
New York, New York	1 %	**1,647**
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	0 %	**1,451**
Austin, Texas	0 %	**1,376**
Houston, Texas	0 %	**1,210**
Toronto, Ontario	0 %	**1,191**
Dublin, Leinster	0 %	**1,184**
Dallas, Texas	0 %	**1,167**
Storrs, Connecticut	0 %	**1,117**

Ehud Yairi article references continued from page 9

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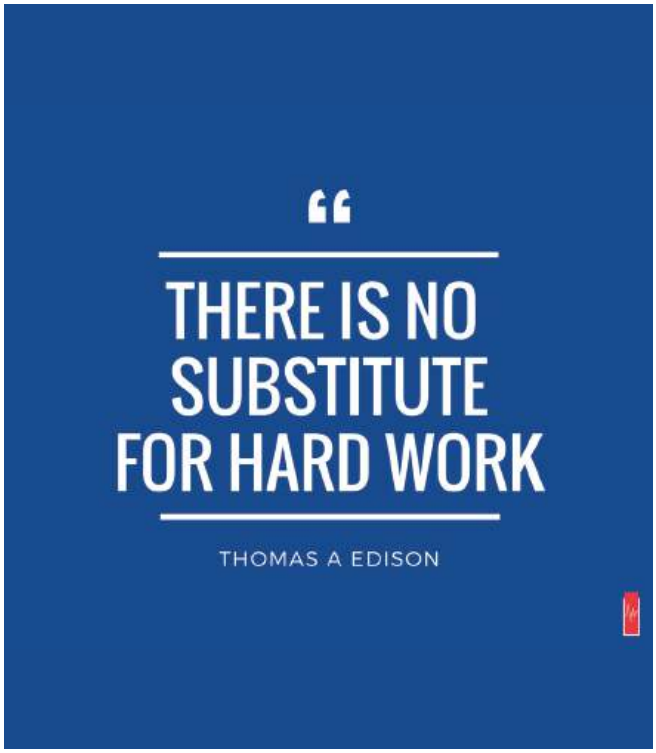
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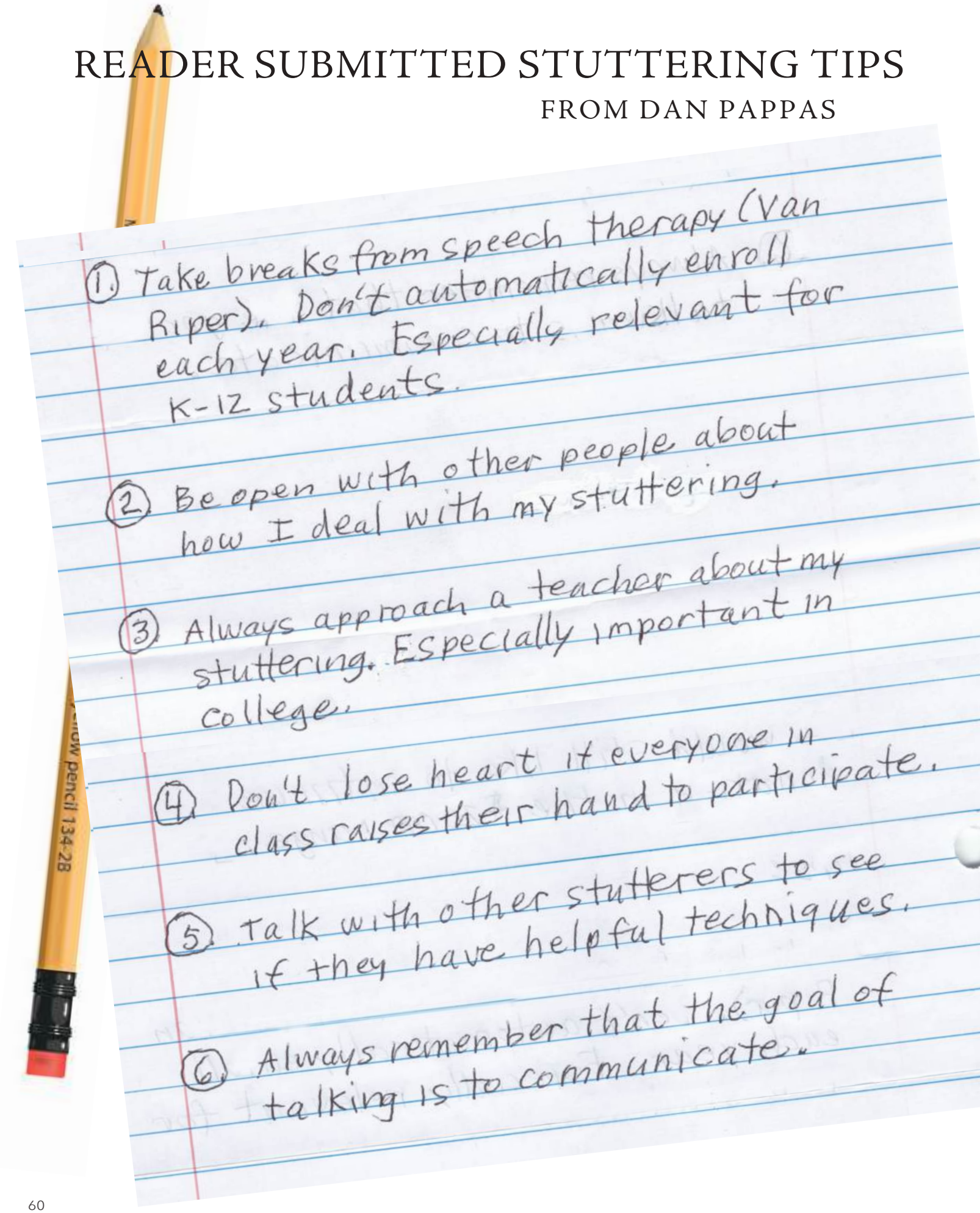
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READER SUBMITTED STUTTERING TIPS

FROM DAN PAPPAS



A VERY BREATHY

Happy Birthday to MARILYN MONROE



Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

June 1, 2026, marked the 100th birthday of the late great, Norma Jeane Mortenson—more commonly known as Marilyn Monroe.

Born June 1, 1926, in Los Angeles, Monroe spent most of her childhood in foster homes and an orphanage before marrying at the age of 16, according to Wikipedia. She was working in a factory during World War II when she met a photographer and began a successful pin-up modeling career, which led to short-lived film contracts with 20th Century Fox and Columbia Pictures.

After roles as a freelancer, she began a longer contract with Fox in 1951, becoming a popular actress with roles in several comedies, including As Young as You Feel and Monkey Business, and in the dramas Clash by Night and Don't Bother to Knock.

Monroe became one of the most marketable Hollywood stars in 1953. She had leading roles in the film noir Niagara and the comedies Gentlemen Prefer Blondes and How to Marry a Millionaire, which established her star image.

She was a top-billed actress for a decade, and her films grossed $200 million (equivalent to $2 billion in 2025) by her death in 1962.

What is less known, however, is that her famous breathy voice came as a result of her childhood stuttering. The actress stuttered as a young child and at times during high school. A speech therapist taught her how deliberate breathing prior to speaking could guide her to fluency, and the rest is history.

According to a biography of Monroe by Donald Spoto, in an early student production at the Bliss-Hayden Miniature Theater, "she knew the dialogue perfectly, but she stuttered and paused so much that she threw the other student players into total confusion." As she went on to win roles in movies, she tended to stutter on the first takes on the set.

But sometimes it was later takes as well, according to Spoto. Her most famous line in the movie Some Like It Hot—"It's me, Sugar"—took forty-seven takes before she got it right. Apparently, Marilyn had the hardest time getting out the word "Sugar."

Monroe spoke frankly about her stutter during a rare 1960 interview:

> *"Sometimes when I'm very nervous or excited or something, I stutter. One time, they were doing a, I had a small part in a movie, and the assistant director came in and yelled at me. Oh, he talked awful. So, when I got into the scene, instead of my line, I said 'Woo-wo-wo.' And the director came up and he was furious, and he said 'You don't stutter!' And I said* 'That's what you think!' *Oh, it's painful, oh God!"*

Believe it or not, Monroe's stuttering would affect her life in her final days. During the filming of her last movie, the unfinished Something's Got to Give from which she was fired, the troubled actress was under so much stress from her personal life, not to mention the abuse of prescription drugs, that her stuttering returned, sometimes forcing her to not be able to deliver her lines at all.

Despite her death more than 60 years ago, Marilyn Monroe remains one of the world's most recognizable celebrities who stuttered.



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SEASON 8: 2026

Season Eight of the Stuttering Foundation Podcast returned on Tuesdays in 2026. The Stuttering Foundation is continuing efforts to deliver relevant and accessible learning opportunities. You can expect the same great mix of clinical discussions, research updates, and special segments (with a few surprises to come as well!)

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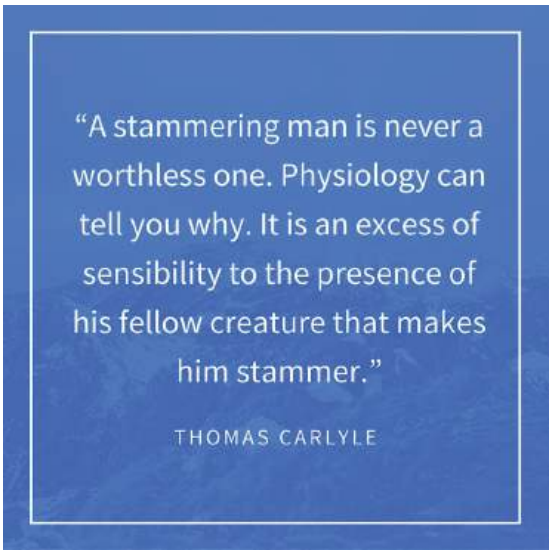
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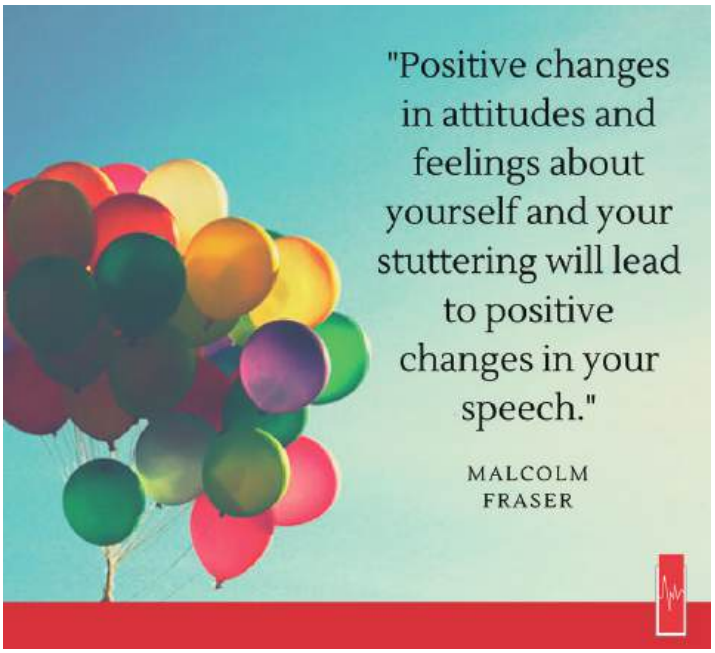


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