



THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION

A Nonprofit Organization

SPRING 2022

Since 1947... Helping Those Who Stutter



PROJECT EUPHONIA

SMART TECHNOLOGY GETS SMARTER FOR
PEOPLE WHO STUTTER

"GO AHEAD, I'M LISTENING"

NEW GOOGLE VOICE TECHNOLOGY LEARNS TO RECOGNIZE ALTERNATE SPEECH PATTERNS

For people who stutter, using a digital voice assistant on your smart phone or smart speaker can be a trying experience. The same is true for using automated voice prompts on customer support hotlines. But recent developments in the tech community, led by Google, are evolving rapidly to meet the differing voice pattern needs of users across the world.

According to Bob MacDonald, Technical Program Manager at Google, significant progress is being made that can make it much easier for people with atypical speech patterns to be heard and understood by the artificial intelligence programs being integrated into more of the devices we use every day.

"Our goal is to help devices understand people who stutter as well as their own family members do," said MacDonald. "It all started with Project Euphonia."

PROJECT EUPHONIA

Project Euphonia is a Google Research initiative focused on helping people with atypical speech be better understood. The approach is centered on analyzing speech recordings to better train speech recognition models.

For millions of people around the world whose speech is difficult for others to understand, face-to-face communication can be very challenging. Using voice-activated technologies can be frustrating, too. While tools like Google Home or the Google Assistant can help people call

someone, adjust lighting, or play a favorite song, they may not work as well for those with impaired speech.

According to MacDonald, Project Euphonia was originally started to help identify the progress of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, but research at Google has continued to broaden as efforts are showing great progress for recognizing commands from people with atypical speech patterns resulting from stroke, traumatic brain injury, deafness, Down syndrome, deafness, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and stuttering.

If you're 18-years-of-age or older and have a voice that may be considered difficult to understand (but not because of an accent), you can assist Google in its research by recording a set of phrases.



YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

Google research continues to need voice samples to expand its tasking efficacy for all types of speech patterns. According to MacDonald, the more patterns we can record from people who stutter, the better Google's overall model can become at understanding differences in speech patterns and successfully understanding verbal commands from different users.

Though speech recognition algorithms have heard millions of examples of words and phrases from people whose voices sound "typical," the algorithms have not heard nearly as many examples from people with atypical speech.

Stuttering speech patterns currently make up just 5% of total voice recordings, and Google researchers would welcome the opportunity to add more stuttering speech patterns to its model.

If you're 18-years-of-age or older and have a voice that may be considered difficult to understand (but not because of an accent), you can assist Google in its research by recording a set of phrases. Visit <https://sites.research.google/euphonia/about/> and click the blue 'RECORD PHRASES' button in the upper right corner of the landing page to fill out an interest form.

According to MacDonald, "Each user's voice we gather into the Cloud makes the entire model better for all users."

PROJECT RELATE

In addition to Project Euphonia, Google is also beta testing a free, new app for Android phone users called Project Relate.

Project Relate is a continuation of years of research from both Google's Speech and Research teams, made possible by over a million speech samples recorded by participants of its research effort. They are now looking for English-speaking testers in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States to try out the app and provide feedback to help improve it.

As an early tester, you will be asked to record a set of phrases. The app will use these phrases to automatically learn how to better understand your unique speech patterns, and give you access to the app's three main features: Listen, Repeat and Assistant.

Listen: Through the Listen feature, the Relate app transcribes your speech to text in real time, so you can copy-paste text into other apps, or let people read what you want to tell them.

Repeat: You can use the Repeat feature to restate what you've said using a clear, synthesized voice. We hope this can be especially helpful in face-to-face conversation or even when you want to speak a command to your home assistant device.

Assistant: Speak directly to your Google Assistant from within the Relate app, so you can take care of different tasks, such as turning on the lights or playing a song, with ease.

Editor's Note: Special thanks to our good friend, Andy Fitzenrider, who is a person who stutters, for reaching out to the Stuttering Foundation to connect us with Bob MacDonald and his colleagues at Google to make this interview possible.



For more information, or to be considered as a beta tester, visit g.co/ProjectRelate.



FRIENDS OF SFA:

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Mac Wilson and Nick Weaver



In 2015, we met Mac Wilson and Nick Weaver at our National Stuttering Awareness Week Gala at the Lotos Club in New York City. Our event focused on entrepreneurialism, where both spoke with guests about the career paths each have pursued, along with the obstacles they each faced to gain employment. We caught up with each to see how their careers have progressed since we first spoke seven years ago.

MAC WILSON

After we met Mac, he moved to Charlotte, NC, got married in 2017 to his wife Lindsay, and got started in the home-building business as a project manager. “I wanted to learn the ins and outs of the business and learning how to build a house from the ground up, with the hope of branching out on my own in the future,” he added. His first project was his own house, which involved tearing down an existing home to build from scratch.

After a couple of years as a project manager learning the trade, Mac founded Commonwealth Custom Homes earlier this year, buying land in Lancaster, South Carolina, where he plans to build “spec houses” in the near future.

But his attention these days is on building his family. As we go to print with this article, he and Lindsay are expecting the arrival of their first child in the next few weeks. “I’m terrified but excited,” he said. And we’re very excited for you, Mac!



NICK WEAVER

Prior to the 2015 gala, we featured Nick’s work as Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of Blue Delta Jeans (bluedeltajeans.com) – which specializes in custom-made jeans made in Tupelo, Mississippi. Nick was proud to announce that BDJ is celebrating 10 successful years in business and has grown to more than 70 employees. Recent developments include new technology that allows customers to be measured digitally online for the perfect fit. They’ve also partnered with the U.S. Ryder Cup golf team as an official sponsor.

In addition to golf, Nick has helped lead BDJ to rapidly becoming a favorite of myriad celebrities, professional athletes and coaches, as can be seen on the company’s Instagram channel ([instagram.com/bluedeltajeans](https://www.instagram.com/bluedeltajeans)).

Beyond making jeans, Nick also announced he is also jumping into the mattress business, once again using the talented workforce in Tupelo. His new venture is called Nest & Wild (nestandwild.com), and production began in January of 2022.

Always one to support his community, Nick has taken on a few ventures to help those in need. At the onset of Covid-19, Nick and his team were contracted by the state of Mississippi to help make masks when supplies were limited. His team helped the state source N95 cloth material and elastic and delivered more than three million masks and a half a million gowns to health care providers when materials were in short supply.

He also completed three contracts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to deliver more than five million pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables to schools and families as part of disaster and Covid relief efforts using his warehouse space and shipping expertise.

When we asked Nick what made him so successful, he credits “surrounding myself with talented people who care” and using his “best skill set—communicating” which he says is quite ironic given his stutter. “Man, I just like to make things happen,” he added. You sure do, Nick!



EASTERN WORKSHOP 2013 PLAYS CUPID



In an all-time Workshop first, we were thrilled to learn that therapists Srinakorn Prohmtong from Bangkok and Mitchell Trichon from New York have gotten married. They first met at our 2013 Eastern Workshop held in Boston and fell in love, traveling back and forth to each other's countries to meet ever since.

Please join us in congratulating Srinakorn and Mitch Trichon.



@stutteringfdn
SFA on INSTAGRAM
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Pennsylvania, US

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fureverfontdesign This painting lists names of well known people who have struggled with a stutter. I have had a stutter for as long as I can remember. Stuttering isn't the same for everyone. For me, I speak relatively normally when talking off the top of my head. It's when I am asked questions that I often stutter. I know the answer and for some reason my brain betrays me and I stumble on basic information like my name, my family's names, where I'm from, where I work, etc. I can not tell you how frustrating it is to be trapped inside your own mind. I am screaming the answer, but it won't come out. Stuttering often leads to anxiety. The anxiety surrounding stuttering can lead to stutters trying to avoid saying words they can't say altogether.

As I get older, I accept that this is who I am more and more. I am more forgiving and patient with myself and I know that people who truly care about me don't see my stuttering as a flaw. It's just who I am. I've learned to find the joy in little victories each day. #stutteringfoundation

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





RECENT STUDIES ADD KNOWLEDGE ABOUT **GENETIC FACTORS IN STUTTERING**

Two recent studies have once again focused attention on the role of genetic factors in stuttering. These studies used approaches not previously applied to stuttering, and identified new genetic variants correlated with this disorder. The first study was led by Jennifer Below at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, who studied their health database, which contains over 92,000 individuals. The second, led by Shelly Jo Kraft at Wayne State University, studied an additional 16,000 individuals. The researchers on both papers collaborated extensively with each other and with researchers at the University of North Carolina, the Irish Stammering Association, and Curtin University in Perth, Australia.

A problem they faced at the outset was that very few of the individuals in the Vanderbilt database (less than 2 tenths of one percent) had a clear diagnosis of stuttering based on standard criteria. Because stuttering is much more common than this, thought to exist in roughly 5 percent of all

individuals, the investigators sought to identify others in their database who likely stuttered. This estimate identified over 9,000 individuals, or about 10 percent of everyone in their database, who were classified as likely affected with stuttering. The researchers then used an approach known as a genome-wide association study (GWAS) to study genetic variants, taking advantage of pre-existing genetic typing that had been done at hundreds of thousands of specific locations in the DNA of each of these individuals. Then, they compared the genetic variants present in those with predicted stuttering with the variants in those who were not predicted to stutter. This comparison identified one variant near the *CYR1A* gene on chromosome 2 as significantly associated in European ancestry populations, while a second variant in the *ZMAT4* gene on chromosome 8 showed a very suggestive association in African ancestry populations. How these variants might act to affect the products of these genes or cause the clinical features of stuttering remains a fascinating challenge for the future.

SFA RESEARCH

SPRING 2022



Dr. Drayna received his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1976, and his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1981, followed by postdoctoral training at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute at the University of Utah. He joined the NIDCD in 1997, focusing on disorders of auditory pitch perception, variation in human taste perception, and disorders of voice and speech. Dr. Drayna's work has had a major focus on the genetics and neuroscience of stuttering.

The second study was done by the same Vanderbilt, Curtin University, and Wayne State investigators, with additional collaborating investigators from the Irish Stammering Association and the University of North Carolina. It used stuttering cases and controls from multiple sources for a total of more than 2,000 well-studied, independently enrolled stuttering cases and 7,500 normally fluent control subjects. The same GWAS approach was used here, which found one significant association with a variant site near the SSUH2 gene. This variant appears to affect the degree to which the SSUH2 gene is turned on in muscle tissues of the esophagus. Thus, while much remains to be learned about this gene, the findings thus far point to a potentially promising connection to muscle control, a known issue in stuttering.

Jane Fraser, President of the Stuttering Foundation, commended the work saying, "The Stuttering Foundation has long been excited about genetic studies as a way to better understand the underlying causes of stuttering. We are glad to see this additional new work in the area of genetics, which will hopefully lead us to further progress."



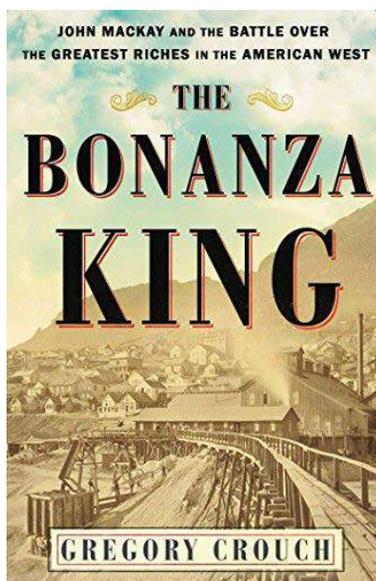


A STUTTERING FOUNDATION TRIBUTE

JOHN MACKAY

THE IRISH-AMERICAN BONANZA KING

John Mackay ranks as the richest Irishman ever in history, as the \$1 billion he possessed at the time of his death in 1902 is the equivalent of \$80 billion today. In a December 7, 2021 article in Irish Central, Niall O'Dowd wrote, "What are the odds that the richest ever Irishman would be born in a Dublin one-room hovel with a pig, his parents, and a sister for company?" Well, what are the odds that the richest Irish person ever and one of the richest persons in the world during his time was a person who stuttered?



Born in Dublin in 1831 into a working-class poor family, a young John Mackay immigrated to New York with his family in 1840, settling in the infamous Five Points slum in Manhattan. The better fortune the family sought in America was quickly dashed as Mackay's father died, forcing the youngster to quit school at age eleven to go to work to support his mother and sister. He hawked newspapers such as the *New York Herald* in Manhattan, and later was an apprentice in a shipyard. Those years presented a struggle to maintain housing and food for his mother, his sister and himself.

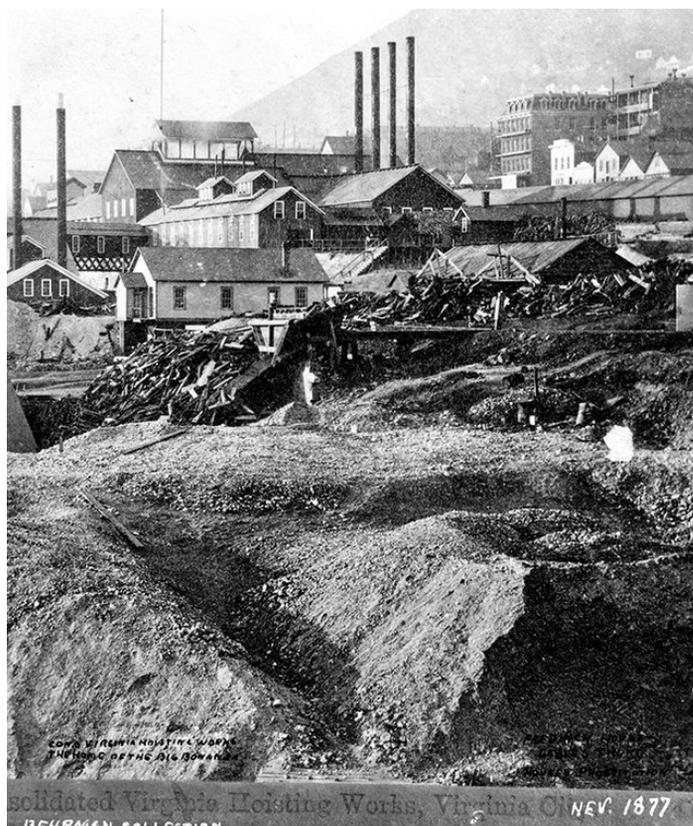
Intrigued and enticed by the news of the 1848 California gold rush, he waited until his sister was old enough to work and then in 1851 the 19 year-old made his way across the country to California. He mined for seven years without any success at all, but did not let the often grueling physical labor discourage him. The article, "The Mining Millionaire Americans Couldn't Help But Love" in the June 2018 issue of *Smithsonian* magazine put forth, "He didn't have a nickel to his name when he arrived on what soon became known as the Comstock Lode in what was then the west Utah Territory (present day Nevada) so he did what he'd always done – he pushed up his sleeves and went to work. He started as a common hand in somebody else's mine at \$4 per day."

Mackay's first great success occurred when he and three partners purchased the majority stake in an obscure mine called the Kentuck. He invested every penny of his meticulous savings from the previous seven years of hard labor. After six months of mining the Kentuck with no luck and teetering on the brink of bankruptcy, he and his workforce on New Year's Day 1866, "hacked into a ten-foot wide mass of sugary, gold-and-silver-infused quartz at the bottom of the Kentuck's mineshaft, 250 feet below the surface. Over the next two years, Mackay mined more than \$1.6 million worth of gold and silver from the tiny Kentuck (a sum that in those days had an emotional impact roughly equivalent to \$375 million modern dollars). During that time the Kentuck paid \$592 to its stockholders, a 37% yield – a substantial portion of which went straight into Mackay's pocket."

With continued financial success from the Kentuck, Mackay's appetite for mining did not wane. His most massive mining successes happened in 1874 and 1875 when he and his three partners scored what became known as, "the Big Bonanza," a strike more than 1,500 feet below the surface in two mines in the Comstock's neighboring Consolidated Virginia and California mines. According to the article in Smithsonian, "That ore body still holds the record as the most concentrated in history and it made John Mackay one of the wealthiest men in the world. His share of profits ran between \$20 and \$25 million, around \$50 billion when measured as a share of the GDP of the modern United States."

The only people in the world at that time with a monthly income anywhere near that of Mackay were his three junior partners in the company they appropriately named The Bonanza Firm. Their company had a cash income of between \$1.2 and \$1.5 million per month. At the time, the Spirit of the Times declared that The Bonanza Firm was, "the wealthiest firm in America and prospectively the richest in the world."

Throughout his hard work as a youngster to his seven unsuccessful years of hard labor in the mines and then in his immense success in his adulthood, John Mackay refused to let his



stuttering define him. It was obvious to all who knew him at the various stages in his life that he was most definitely not going to let stuttering stand in the way of his ambitions.

In his 2018 biography *The Bonanza King: John Mackay and the Battle over the Greatest Riches in the American West*, author Gregory Crouch addresses Mackay's stuttering several times. He wrote, "Mackay found the pleasure in hardship. He didn't say much, and when he did, he spoke slowly fighting a childhood stutter. Mackay was proud, touchy and quick with his fists. He would share his last morsel of food with a friend, but nobody ever took anything from John Mackay without a fight."

When discussing how Mackay rose from day laborer to one of the world's richest men, Crouch wrote, "A taciturn lad who spoke slowly and awkwardly, fighting a stutter, he'd regret his lack of formal education for the rest of his life."

"Although a socially reticent man embarrassed by his struggles to overcome his stutter, Mackay showed no reluctance to push himself forward through sustained physical effort.... Mackay didn't talk much, and when he did, he spoke in methodical measured tones, still fighting his embarrassing stutter, his uniquely American argot a mix of New York, California mining slang, and 'rich Irish burr'."

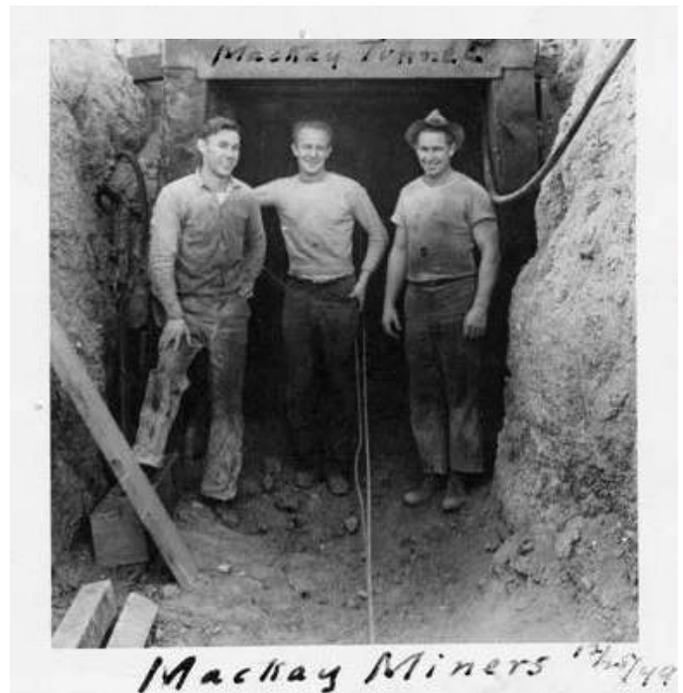
John Mackay's immense wealth put him in the same league as his industrial rivals like Andrew Carnegie and Jay Gould. Mackay never gave up in life and persevered at every impasse, achieving his success while constantly dealing with his stuttering. Niall O'Dowd wrote in Irish Central, "Ironically, the fact that we know so little about him stems from the fact that Mackay was deeply beloved by everyone who met him when the robber barons like Jay Gould and Charles Crocker and their nefarious deeds were much more in the headlines." O'Dowd continued by addressing Mackay's work ethic, "Mackay always felt there was great benefit and status in holding down a job. He had a bad stutter his whole life which left him shy and reserved."

Besides mining, Mackay's financial empire saw exponential growth with successful forays into banking and communications companies. He was livid that the universally disliked robber baron Jay Gould charged extortionate rates to use his underwater cable to Ireland from the U.S. Mackay set out to break Gould's monopoly on underwater cables and to charge rates that were not exorbitant. Forming the Commercial Cable Company, it laid two transatlantic cables, which forced the toll-rate for transatlantic messages way down to 25 cents per word, thus breaking the despotic hold over such cables by Gould. Also, the Commercial Cable Company formed an affiliate company in 1886 called the Postal Telegraph Company, a domestic wire company that would not force the Commercial Cable Company to be held hostage by Western Union to collect and distribute telegraphic messages. Before Mackay formed the Commercial Cable Company, every single transatlantic cable between the U.S. and Europe went over wires owned by Jay Gould. What ensued was a rate war that lasted two years with Gould finally giving up on trying to run Mackay out of business. At the time, Gould made the famous quote about Mackay, "If he needs another million, he will go into his silver mines and dig it out."

John Mackay died in 1902. A couple of years after his death, his son Clarence fulfilled his father's dream by completing the project his father started of laying the first cable across the Pacific, which went from San Francisco to Manila, Philippines and then onto Shanghai, China.

Unlike his high-profile financial competitors, John Mackay kept his vast philanthropic endeavors quiet and treated his employees well. More than one source cites his humble origins and his lifelong struggle with stuttering as the catalyst for his reputation for paying his many workers good wages and fostering a positive work environment.

In a life that started in working-class Dublin and then was continued under difficult family circumstances in New York City, John Mackay's struggles and successes were once the most beloved rags-to-riches story in America. At the time of his 1902 death, he was praised in newspapers in both the U.S. and Europe. The Salt Lake City Tribune wrote in an obituary, "of all the millionaires of this country, no one was more thoroughly American than Mr. Mackay, and no one among them derived his fortune more legitimately." The fact that John Mackay was a person who stuttered and became the wealthiest man in the world is a most compelling example of someone who refused to let his stuttering hold him back.



To Someone Who Stutters, It's Easier Done Than Said.

The fear of speaking keeps many people from being heard.

If you stutter or know someone who does, visit us online or call toll-free for more information.

800-992-9392



www.StutteringHelp.org www.tartamudez.org

UNDERSTANDING STUTTERING

by Per A. Alm, Ph.D.

What causes stuttering?

Presumably, anyone who stutters has reflected on the reasons why he or she is a person who stutters. A common experience is that the ability to speak fluently varies a lot between situations, or between days. I have often met with the reasoning that because the speech is fluent at times, there cannot be anything physically wrong, it must be psychological. It is easy to see that the assumptions we make about the causes of stuttering will have a fundamental influence on how we approach therapy, but also for the identity and self-understanding of the persons who stutter. Likewise, it will affect how stuttering is viewed and portrayed by society in general.

One perspective that has come and gone, and come back again, is that stuttering should be viewed as variation within the normal range of diversity. This was a widespread view in the early 1980s in Scandinavia, based on influences from North America. More recently similar views have been put forward, linked to the neurodiversity movement. In this movement a 'medical model' is contrasted with a 'social and relational model' (Constantino, 2018). My personal view is that these two perspectives should not be incompatible. On the one hand, if progress in research makes it possible to improve actual speech fluency, it would be unethical to withhold such options, in particular from children. Stuttering can definitely imply a real difficulty with communication. On the other hand, a society accepting of diversity can be a good place to live for everyone.

As a person who stutters, my wondering about the nature of stuttering gradually turned into my work. It started with the assumption that any explanation of stuttering must include the functions of the brain, leading to the combination of psychology, medicine, and speech science. It is clear that the complexity of stuttering is such that no single method in itself will be able to capture its nature. For that reason, I have devoted a large part of my time to the detailed

study of the results from other researchers, in order to analyze and integrate their results into a, hopefully, coherent picture. Also, to integrate the results with the current general understanding of the brain and of physiology. The starting point for this type of work was in 2004, with an analysis of the possible role of the basal ganglia in stuttering (Alm, 2004). The pandemic resulted in more time for writing and publishing, generating three theory papers (freely available). I will briefly summarize them here.

In the first paper (Alm, 2020), it is argued that infections caused by Group A Streptococci (GAS) were a major, possibly the dominating, cause of stuttering, until the 1950s. This conclusion was based on (a) a large study of the medical history of stuttering children in the 1930s, showing a very high frequency of GAS infections before the onset of stuttering, compared with a control group; (b) a known mechanism, by which GAS can trigger an autoimmune reaction against the basal ganglia; and (c) a remarkable reduction in the number of stuttering children in US schools, in parallel with the reduction of rheumatic fever, an autoimmune reaction caused by GAS (correlation $r = 0.95$). The decline was particularly marked during the decade after the introduction of penicillin in 1943. There are a few current case reports (e.g., Maguire et al., 2010), suggesting that the development of stuttering may be interrupted if the infection is detected and treated early. The current incidence of stuttering related to GAS is unknown; it is likely to be low, but existing. There are indications that some of these children show signs of 'PANDAS,' i.e., Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal Infections. This is a condition caused by GAS, likely affecting the basal ganglia, see the link to information from NIH

below. Typical signs are sudden onset of obsessive-compulsive symptoms, such as excessive fear of germs, problems of eating, excessive anxiety, tics, and unusual movements. Treatment guidelines for PANDAS have been published, regarding treatment of infection (Cooperstock et al., 2017) and inflammation (Frankovich et al., 2017).

In the second paper (Alm, 2021a), it is proposed that stuttering may be related to a reduction of the peak rate of energy supply to neurons, which could affect specific signaling in the brain. The article is a review of a number of disparate observations of stuttering, which are discussed in relation to the hypothesis of limited energy supply. This includes brain imaging data, EEG data, genetic differences related to the lysosomes and a gene called ARNT2, the risk for effects of early hypoxia, the blood level of nitric oxide, and the role of thiamine. It can here be mentioned that Dr. Shahriar SheikhBahaei, at the NIH, independently also has come to focus on the possible role of energy supply in stuttering, investigating the functions of the astrocytes in animal models.

“It is clear that the complexity of stuttering is such that no single method in itself will be able to capture its nature.”

-Dr. Per A. Alm, Ph.D.

The third paper (Alm, 2021b), is a general review of the functions of the dopamine system and the mechanisms for automatization of movement sequences. Speech and stuttering are discussed briefly in this context. Speech is probably the most strongly automatized motor behavior in humans, and its mechanisms appears to follow the mechanisms for movements in general. Dopamine is the key substance for the initiation of voluntary movement, within the basal ganglia. It also has

central roles both for the learning and execution of automatized sequences of movements. Furthermore, the release of dopamine is strongly influenced by motivation, emotions, and the mental activity. Possible mechanisms of stuttering are discussed briefly, and it is proposed that variations of dopamine release constitute the main neural mechanism underlying the variations of stuttering between situations. In other words, the normal dopamine system appears to have the properties required to result in the psychological effects that can be observed in stuttering, even though psychology does not seem to be the basic cause of stuttering.

The series of theory articles is planned to continue, including an article attempting to link and integrate the disparate aspects discussed.

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Alm (2020). Streptococcal Infection as a Major Historical Cause of Stuttering. *Front.Hum. Neurosci.* 14, 569519.

Alm (2021a). Stuttering: A Disorder of Energy Supply to Neurons? *Front.Hum.Neurosci.* 15, 662204.

Alm (2021b). The Dopamine System and Automatization of Movement Sequences. *Front.Hum.Neurosci.* 15, 661880.

Cooperstock (2017). Clinical Management of [PANS]: Infections. *J.ChildAdolesc.Psychopharmacol.* 27, 594–606.

Frankovich (2017). Clinical Management of [PANS]: Immunomodulatory Therapies. *J.ChildAdolesc.Psychopharmacol.* 27, 574–593.

Constantino (2018). What Can Stutterers Learn from the Neurodiversity Movement? *Semin. Speech Lang.* 39, 382–396.

Maguire (2010). Stuttering onset associated with streptococcal infection: a case suggesting stuttering as PANDAS. *Ann.Clin. Psychiatry* 22, 283–284.

NIH. PANDAS—Questions and Answers. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/pandas>



Dr. Per A. Alm currently works at the Department of Neuroscience, Uppsala University, Sweden, and is affiliated with the School of Medicine at the University of California Riverside.

STUTTERING FOUNDATION Q & A: BRIAN FRAGA



Location:

I am from New Bedford, Massachusetts. I currently live in Fall River, Massachusetts.

Profession:

I am a journalist, a staff writer covering news in the Catholic Church for The National Catholic Reporter.

Family:

I have been married to my wife Catherine for almost 14 years. We have a daughter, Hope (5).

Hobbies, Interests, Passions:

My family and its history, my friendships, my community, reading, watching sports, genealogy, cooking, video games.

Successes:

I have been an award-winning local newspaper reporter, garnering awards from the New England Newspaper and Press Association and the Society of Professional Journalists. I have also won several awards as a Catholic journalist from the Catholic Media Association.

Brian Fraga is an award-winning journalist and reporter from Massachusetts. He sat down with the Stuttering Foundation to discuss his many life and career successes along his lifelong journey with stuttering.

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

BRIAN: I remember having a stutter when I was a little kid, before kindergarten.

Does it run in your family? Who else stutters?

Yes. I am told my late mother had a stutter. I have a brother who also stutters, and my daughter at times stutters also.

Did you seek treatment? Did it help?

I received in-school speech therapy through middle school. Before I began high school, I attended an intensive month-long speech program where I learned “strategies” related to breath control, first sounds, pace and how to back out of a block. That helped me considerably.

Tell us about your experience with stuttering as a child.

I had my share of difficulties. Every school year, the first day of class was terrifying when the teacher would ask the class to go around the room to introduce themselves. I dreaded oral presentations and being called upon in class. Some kids would make mean-spirited comments and mimic me. It made me very self-conscious and I internalized a sense of shame. I lacked self-confidence and was not as outgoing as I could have been because I didn’t want to speak up in class or take leadership positions that would require me to speak in public.

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

It’s gotten a lot better. As I got older, I became better at controlling my speech and using the strategies I had first learned as a teenager to maintain fluency, even in higher stress situations like public speaking. My career requires numerous interviews over the phone, occasional interviews on radio and television, and I think that has helped me to learn and maintain control, as well as not to avoid speaking situations.

How does stuttering affect you in your career?

I would say it doesn't affect me at all.

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

Most people tell me that my stutter is barely noticeable and only occasionally surfaces. Breathing, resisting time pressure, concentrating on first sounds, and just having a higher sense of self-confidence work pretty well for me.

What is your greatest accomplishment with regard to stuttering?

Besides figuring out how to control it, I would say overcoming my fear and self-doubt about speaking up in situations, especially in professional settings.

What are the biggest challenges stuttering has presented to you?

I did well in school, but stuttering often made me hesitant to raise my hand and make my voice heard. It contributed to insecurities, low self-esteem and a lack of confidence in myself. I found that it still makes me think twice before raising my hand to be called on in a press conference or to agree to a radio interview, though I still do all of that. It's a constant battle to not let it run my life.

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

I would tell them to not let anyone make them feel bad about who they are. Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself and know there is no shame in having a stutter. None. I'd also tell them that there is hope in learning to control their speech and that they can accomplish anything they want to do in life. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

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

Support your child, offer them whatever speech therapy they need, and always reinforce the truth that there is nothing shameful about stuttering.

I am very grateful to the speech language pathologists over the years who worked with me and helped me at my low points. You all do such important work. Thank you.



AN ANCHOR IN TURBULENT WATERS: THE 2021 ONLINE EASTERN WORKSHOP



The world has experienced unprecedented change and challenges in the last couple of years. Something that has thankfully stayed the same, however, is the Stuttering Foundation's tradition since 1985 of conducting intensive summer workshops that train speech-language pathologists in the most up-to-date stuttering treatment techniques. The 2021 conference was cosponsored by the Stuttering Foundation, the Michael Palin Center, and Boston University. It was conducted entirely via Zoom.

“THE DEEP DIVE INTO IMPLEMENTATION WAS LIFE-CHANGING. THE BEAUTIFUL FLOW OF THERAPY WE OBSERVED IN VIDEOS WAS SUCH AN AMAZING MODEL.”

In this comprehensive digital course, Elaine Kelman, MSc, Cert CT, Cert MRCSLT, and Ali Berquez, MSc, BA (Hons), CertMRCSLT of the Michael Palin Center for Stammering Children masterfully introduced speech-language pathologists to Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) in relation to the assessment and treatment of stuttering. Therapists were also equipped to deliver Palin PCIT (Parent-Child Interaction Therapy), an evidence-based therapy program for young children who stutter. The follow-up responses below from our 2021 Online Eastern Workshop attendees recount how the Stuttering Foundation's time-tested programing has met the trials of the current global situation through a new, convenient and accessible format to once again inspire and facilitate the treatment of stuttering in the most substantial and effective ways.

“IF I HADN'T HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND THE EASTERN WORKSHOP, I'M NOT SURE I WOULD HAVE HAD THE COURAGE TO TAKE ADULT CLIENTS.”

We are happy to announce that an in-person version of the workshop will be held at Boston University on June 13-18, 2022, coordinated by Diane Parris Constantino, M.S., CCC-SLP. For more information and to download an application, go to our homepage at [stutteringhelp.org](https://www.stutteringhelp.org), click on the SLPs bubble, and then select the “Workshops for SLPs” slide. You can also visit Workshop Applications | <https://www.stutteringhelp.org/workshop-applications>.

2021 WORKSHOP FEEDBACK:

“I had a family evaluation shortly after the workshop concluded...Having the complete workshop book and handouts for reference was critical!”

“The appendices and the evaluation form templates are SO helpful for creating clear paths for therapy. THANK YOU for including them. The formulation handout is excellent for explaining to families about stuttering and the factors that surround it. In addition, I have used some of the principles with older children and the behavioral experiments have been transformative for them as they confront their beliefs regarding situations at school or in their social life that I can't replicate in therapy. I know I still have a lot to learn about working with people who stutter and their families, but this course has given me such an in-depth insight into an approach that gives hope to families and is evidence-based.”

“I am so grateful for the ways that participation in the Eastern Workshop enriched my clinical practice. The combination of Palin PCI and SFBT has been a welcome shift in my approach to supporting parents of preschoolers who stutter.”

“Perhaps most profoundly, I now make frequent use of SFBT in my work with children who stutter of all ages. New clients I started with using SFBT have flourished, quickly progressing toward confidently raising their hands in school, comfortably speaking in different social situations, and independently ordering in restaurants for the first time.”

“The continuing education hours I earned through the workshop helped me work up to the minimum required to apply to be a Board Certified Specialist in Fluency Disorders. I'm now an official candidate for the BCS-F, a professional goal I've held for several years. I truly cannot thank you all enough for this experience!”





DEAR SFA:

KIDS' LETTERS TO THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION

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

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

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

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

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



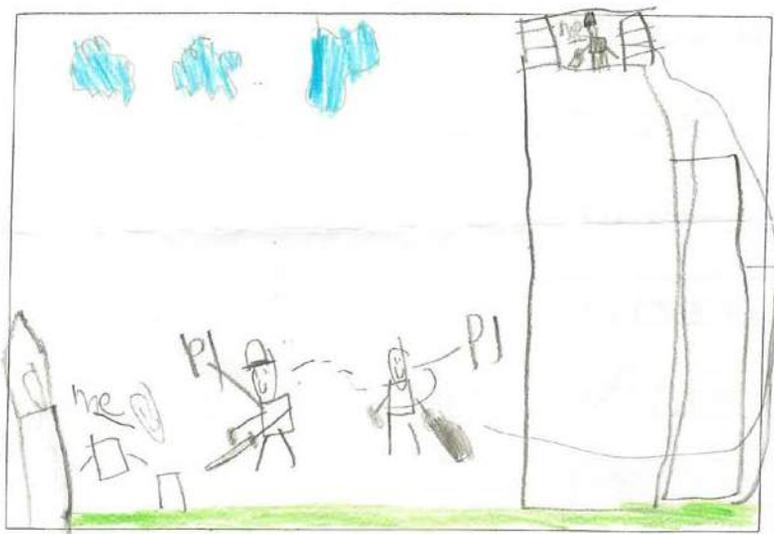


My name is Fatima. I'm 10 years old. I like to watch TV, play basketball, and swim. I've been stuttering since I was a toddler. **Whenever I feel a stutter, I just make sure to talk slowly and clearly.** I've always wanted to become an architect when I grow up, but they have to talk to people. I worry that some people will not understand me, so I'm going to try and work on my stuttering.

Fatima, 10, Bloomingdale, IL

Hi, my name is Slade and I live in Indianola, Iowa. I'm 12 years old and in 7th grade. I love the Iowa Hawkeyes and sports including, basketball, football, and track. I stutter, but I am going to speech therapy to learn to control and just to learn to live with my stuttering. **I just want everyone who stutters to know that even if you stutter, don't let that stop you from doing what you want to do!!**

Slade, 12, Indianola, IA



Hi my name is Evan and I live in Morley, Michigan. I am 8 years old in 2nd grade. I like to play Roblox and be a Parkour Ninja. I have a cat and a dog. Sometimes they get along and sometimes they don't. **Here are some strategies to help with smooth speech:**

1. Take deep breaths
2. Start all over
3. Slow down
4. Think about what you want to say in your head first.

Evan, 8, Morley, MI



My name is Tay and I like Culvers and McDonalds. I am 8 years old and I live in Madison, Wisconsin.

My family is super fun. We like to play video games, walk dogs, watch movies and go to food courts. My favorite food at the food court is Chinese food, especially egg rolls. **My family loves me and my Aunt Karen makes me dressing and she also makes some Halloween Oreos.**

Oh yeah, and I stutter. I started to stutter when I was three. My stuttering teacher is super cool. We practice chunking in speech class. Chunking is when you say some words then you stop and take a deep breath and then you continue. It helps me with my stutter. **Did you know that boys stutter more than girls?** Thank you for reading my letter.

Tay, 8, Madison, WI



My name is Alexia. I am 8 years old and I stutter. I have stuttered most of my life. I used to hate myself because I stuttered and sometimes I still do. But over the years I have learned that it is okay to stutter. My speech teacher helps me with it and she told me about this great thing called an easy start that really helps. Sadly you can't fully ever get rid of stuttering and it doesn't feel good when you stutter. For me it feels like something is holding in my words and will not let go. But I've learned that it's okay to stutter.

Now I am going to talk a little about me. **My favorite singer is Taylor Swift. My favorite food is pepperoni pizza, and I love animals, outdoors, and I care about the environment.** Me and my friends even started a club called C.L.E.A.N. Green. We pick up trash on Fridays and so far we have picked up 455 pieces of trash. The C stands for club, the L stands for life, the E stands for earth, A stands for adventure, and N stands for nature.

Alexia, 9, Kirkland, WA

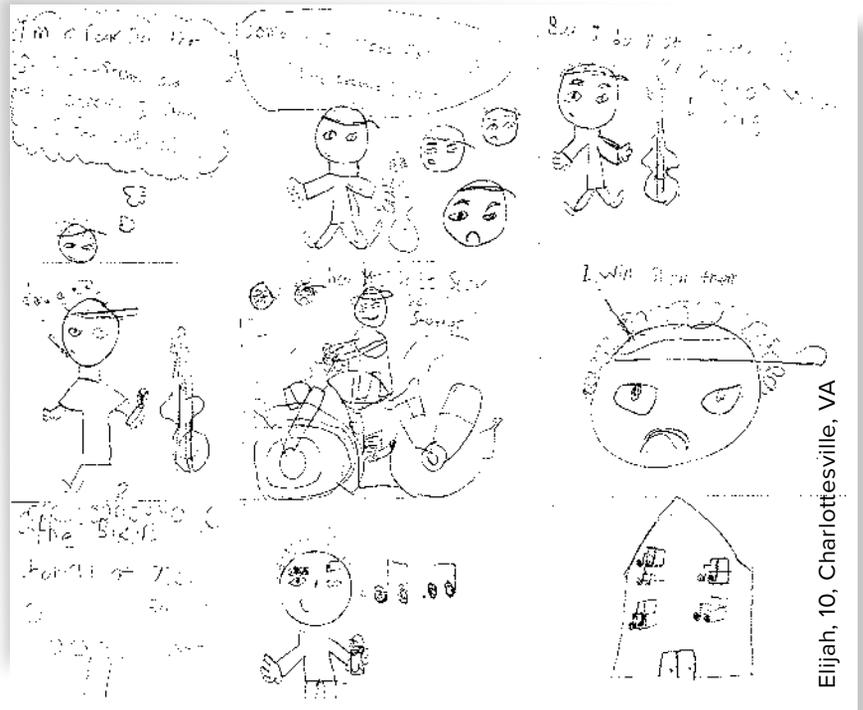
My name is Aiden I am 10 years old and I am in 5th grade. My favorite speech strategy is an easy start because it helps more than all my other strategies. My favorite thing to do is play fortnite with my brothers. I want to be a software engineer when I grow up. My advice to younger kids who stutter is to not get frustrated at your stuttering and do not be afraid to speak.

Aiden, 10, Houston, TX



Hi my name is Zack. I am 10 years old. I am in 5th grade at Junction Elementary in Roseville, California. I like playing on my Nintendo, baseball, gymnastics, and ninja. When I stutter, I like to stop and think of what I am going to say before I say it. I stutter the most when there are distractions around, interrupting me. Stuttering does not change who you are, so don't let it stop you. President Biden stutters too!

Zack, 10, Roseville, CA



Elijah, 10, Charlottesville, VA

Hi, my name is Grant and I am a stutterer and here are some tools that I use: I use the easy onset and I use the deep breath. That's all I use but it really helps me. It is ok to stutter because it is a part of life for some people.

My favorite holiday is Christmas. I like to make snowmen and I like to have snowball fights with my friends. I get a cup and put snow in it and then I pick my favorite drink and I make a slushy.

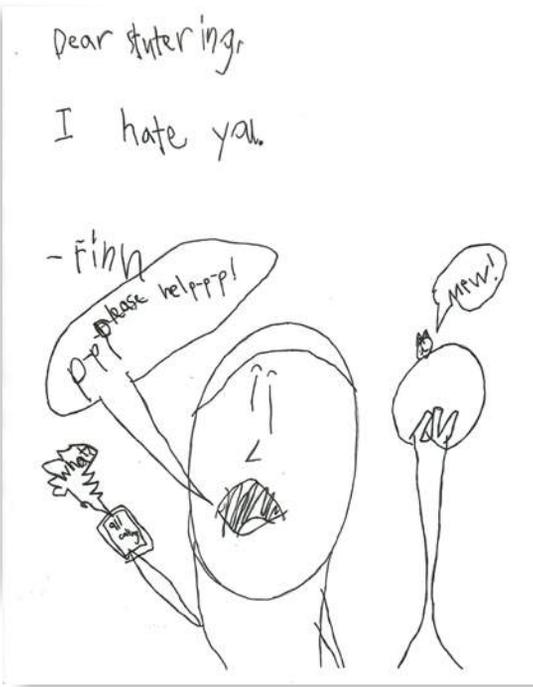
I like to play wiffle ball outside with my friends and I like to draw. I like to draw because my mom is an artist. And I like to make forts with my friends. I am a really good roller skater and I go every single Friday. I'm starting to learn how to roller skate backwards.

Grant, 11, Warsaw, IN



Hi. My name is Alexander and I used to stutter a lot. I am nine years old and I am in 4th grade. The pausing strategy worked really well for me and now I hardly ever stutter. I like Star Wars, sports, and throwing paper airplanes. If you stutter, you should try using the pausing strategy and talking slowly.

**Good luck,
Alexander, 9, Kensington, CA**



Finn, 8, West Lafayette, IN



Hello. My name is Caydens. I'm 9 years old. I like to play Roblox and play with my brother. I'm from Plantation, Florida. I am in Ms. Boggus' 3rd grade class. I love to play basketball with my friends, and I love doing reflex math. I am on level now in math!

In speech, I learned about "easy bees" that help me talk smoothly. Did you guys know that President Joe Biden stutters? Well, he does stutter. Some kids stutter like President Joe Biden, and like me, and some don't. Did you know that more boys than girls stutter? Well, they do. I think I started stuttering when I was 3 years old.

When I went to Mirror Lake Elementary, a speech teacher noticed my stuttering named Mrs. Ribbler. I was learning everything about stuttering, and I mastered my stuttering. So guys-- you might feel bad about stuttering. Someone might make fun of you, but some won't. I have friends that don't make fun of me about my stuttering, so everybody will not make fun of you. And you can say this so nobody can make fun of you: "Yeah I stutter... and your point is..."? And you can also say: "Yeah I stutter, and that's ok with me- so please stop bugging me about it." "Are you perfect? No one is perfect." I hope you guys can say these words so nobody can bully you about your speech. Always believe in yourself. There is only one you.

Caydens, 9, Plantation, FL



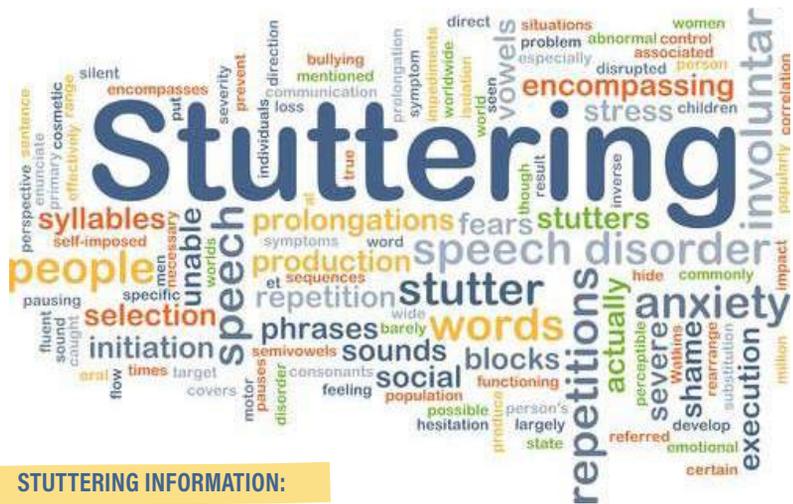
What helps me when I stutter is I think of the things that I love and that helps me relax my muscles. It's OK to stutter because other people stutter, even celebrities such as Joe Biden!

Yazan, 9, Rockaway, NJ

Hi. My name is Thane. I live in Oak Park, IL. I am almost 10 and I'm in the 4th grade. **Speech isn't only to help you with stuttering, it's to make you feel good about stuttering.** If you do stutter, I want you to know that's ok. If you practice enough, you can get really good and once you are good enough at speech, you won't have to go. I'm here to make sure you feel good about stuttering.

Thane, 9, Oak Park, IL





STUTTERING INFORMATION:

- Kids who stutter normally start between the ages of 2 and 5 years old.
- Stuttering is when people repeat sounds, can't get sounds out, or feel stuck on a sound. We call these moments disfluencies.
- Talking fast, talking when you are nervous, or when you feel like you have a lot to say can increase the amount you stutter.
- Stuttering is pretty common for adults and kids. There are over three million people who stutter in the United States and 70 million people worldwide.
- For every girl that stutters, four boys stutter.
- Most people, 60% of people who stutter, get their stuttering from family members.

WAYS TO TALK TO PEOPLE WHO STUTTER AND TIPS TO NOT MAKE IT WEIRD:

Some people think stuttering is weird or see you differently because you stutter. They shouldn't judge people who talk differently from themselves. Stuttering should not be seen as such a big deal: it's not contagious and it's not weird. When you talk to someone who stutters you should:

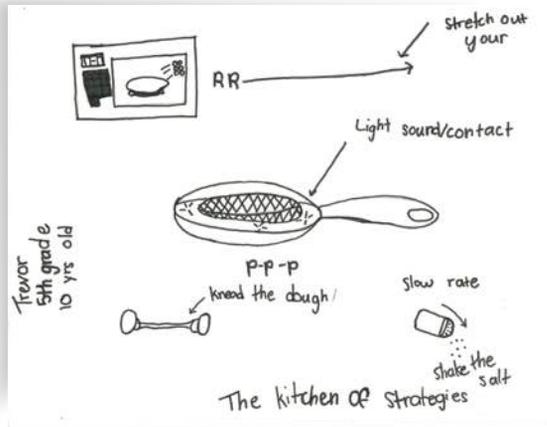
- Give them enough time to talk.
- Don't give advice or praise (e.g., saying slow down, take a breath, or relax). That can make a person who stutters feel worse.
- Don't finish their sentence for them.
- Ignore someone's stuttering and instead just focus on what they are actually saying.
- Make sure to give wait time on the phone when you don't hear anything. It might be someone who stutters who is trying to start the conversation.
- You don't need to ask people about their stutter.

Ann, 9, Superior, CO

Hi, my name is Jada. I am 12 years old. I have three pets one of them is a rabbit. His name is Speedy. He loves food and poops everywhere. My second pet is a cat, his name is Boots. He likes to eat and sleep all day. And my other pet is a dog, her name is Oreo. She is a Maltipoo.

I also stutter. The tools I use are easy speech, pull out, and cancellation. My speech teacher likes fake stuttering because you are not scared when you stutter. If you stutter and people make fun of you, don't listen to them. Everybody has something to work on and ours is stuttering.

Jada, 12, Laveen, AZ

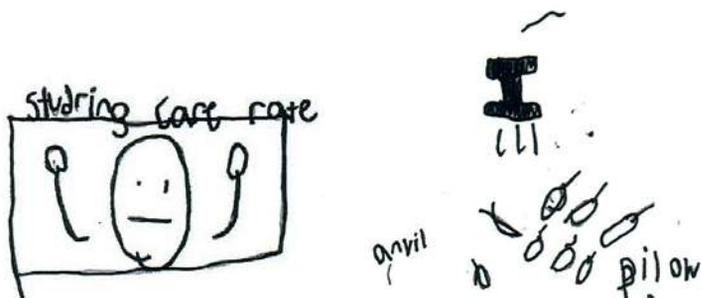


Trevor, Katy, TX



I am Blessed and am 13 years old and I stutter. Stuttering is when you usually get stuck on a word and you can't say it. In fact 1% of people in the WORLD stutter. I never really cared about my stutter and it's probably because I never got bullied for it. No one even cared about my stuttering and finally I don't stutter as bad as other people who stutter. My speech therapist also stutters and she gave me information about stuttering and strategies. The things I love to do are playing Minecraft, chess and finally drawing. **This drawing represents a knight. The knight is the focal point of this because it is special. It is the only piece that the queen can't copy. It's unique and different from the other pieces.**

Blessed, 13, Germantown, MD

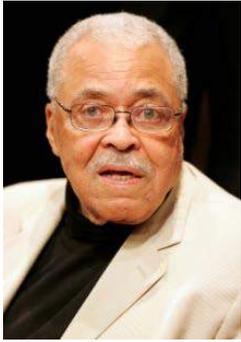


My stuttering is rough, like an anvil or a rock but regular speech feels soft like a feather or a pillow or a bunny and together the rough stuttering usually wins.

Dylan, 8, West Lafayette, IN

When I was younger, stuttering was something that I didn't really give much attention to. Sure, it affected how I communicated and interacted in school and with friends and family, but I didn't see it as a problem or something that bothered me at all. Furthermore, speech therapy back then to me was just free time for me to play Minecraft on my speech therapist's Ipad. But as I grew older and became more aware of my neurological condition, I believe that my stuttering became even more severe. I would start to avoid answering questions and sharing in most of my classes and try to avoid conversations with people I'm not close with, and I started to view stuttering as something I just want to get rid of. **Personally, I believe that my final year of middle school was the year that I was most able to grow as someone with language dysfluency.** During the entire school year, I would have a 45 minute speech theory session almost every Tuesday at school during one of my blocks, and I feel like these sessions not only helped me speak more fluently and hide my stuttering more, but also helped me accept it and move on. What I think was most impactful was how my friend, Harshiv, was also in these sessions with me, and how I was comfortable with stuttering during these 45 minute sessions. During these sessions, we would not only learn about stuttering in general and how we can hide our stutter, but we also learned about how stuttering isn't something to be ashamed of and how common it really is in our world today. Despite learning about many different types of strategies to hide my dysfluency, I think what helped me more than anything was accepting my stuttering and not feeling insecure or embarrassed about it. After doing that, I feel like using the strategies that I learned became much easier and smoother.

Yves Lu, 14, Singapore



I am 10 years old and I am in 5th grade at Junction Elementary School in Roseville, California and I stutter. I like Harry Potter, Marvel, and Star Wars. I also like music, food, sleep, basketball, and baseball. Strategies I use are slow rate, easy onset, and stretchy speech. My favorite strategy is slow rate because it helps me do sentences better. It also slows my speed and ends smoother. Even if you stutter, you're still cool. (James Earl Jones and Ed Sheeran) stutter too and they're cool!

Joseph, 10, Roseville, CA

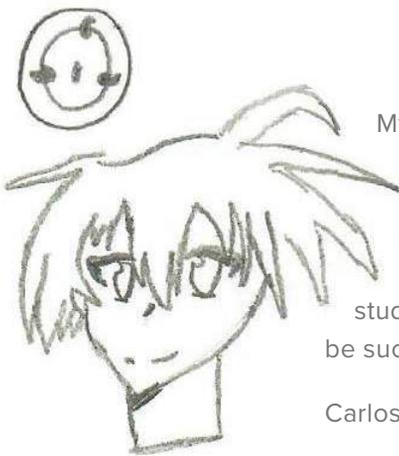
Hi my name is Aubrey and i'm 7 years old. I live in Nebraska. I love to draw. I in 2nd grade there are 16 kids in my class. I go to speech because I stutter some times. You don't want to have it but it's ok if you do stutter. If you get stuck on a word you can stretch it out. You should not be afraid of stuttering.

Aubrey, 7, Seward, NE



je m'appelle Aïlann, je suis très en colère quand
 égale et mes copins me coupe la parole alors je
 iste. Je suis stresser de tous ça car mes copins
 me de moi. J'ai eu une heure de colle à cause
 maudit bêgaiement car j'ai frappé un élève qui
 moquer de moi donc ne fait pas la même erreur

Aïlann, 11, Bagnères-de-Bigorre, France



My name is Carlos and I began to stutter in kindergarten and now I am in fifth grade. I started learning new strategies for smooth talking in kindergarten. My teachers have taught me to teach others about stuttering. When I get stuck, I can use a strategy like easy onset or cancellation-reset. One of my proudest moments is when I gave a presentation to my class in third, fourth, and fifth grade. All of the students applauded after I was done. This gave me the courage and confidence to always be successful. My dream when I grow up is to work for a company to make anime.

Carlos, 10, Buffalo Grove, IL

Hello, my name is Camren. I am 11 years old, and I have a stuttering problem. Every time I talk fast, I start to stutter. My mom and Mrs. Taylor say I need to slow down a little bit. My favorite speech targets are full breath and slow link. **Some of my words can come out nice and smooth like butter.** Every time my friends hear me stutter, they will let me talk. That makes me feel good about my speech. My cousins laugh but I am used to it. Sometimes I get mad. Every time they laugh their mom says, let him speak. That makes me feel good.

Camren, 11, Gulfport, MS



MY name is Easton
I like to play games
and watch TV. Stuttering
is okay to have because
I have a stutter too.
Pausing helps me
sometimes.

Easton, 9, Gainesville, GA

Happy International Stuttering Awareness Day!

Stuttering isn't a bad thing. If you stutter, you are special. President Biden stutters. When someone stutters, please wait for them to finish.

Love,

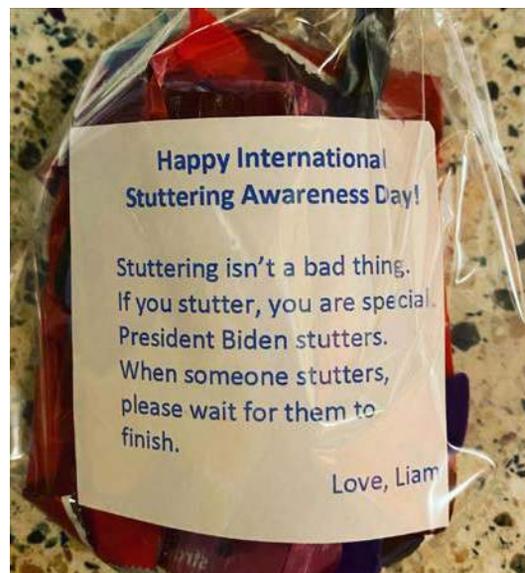
Liam, 9, Kailua, HI

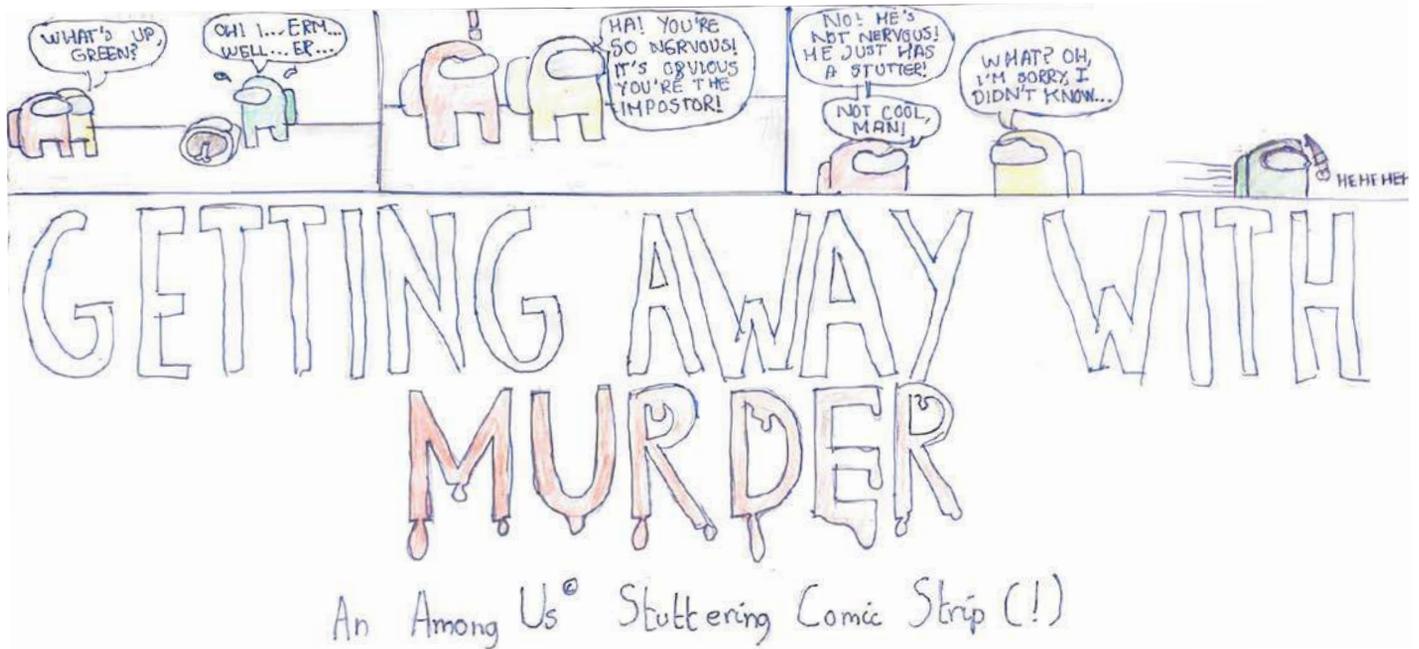


Hi! My name is Julia, and I am 10 years old. I am in fourth grade in Boulder, Colorado. My favorite colors are hot pink, lavender, and sky blue. Some of my favorite things to do are read, draw, paint, color, play with my younger sister, and hang out with my friends.

Like a lot of people, I stutter. There's nothing wrong with stuttering. In fact, President Joe Biden stutters. When I am in speech, I work on easy onsets. I use easy onsets when I think I am going to stutter at home, at school, or anyplace else. **My advice for people who stutter is say what you want to say and don't worry about whether you stutter or not.**

Julia, 10, Boulder, CO





Hello. My name is Harshiv, and I stutter.

I mainly enjoy sports and videogames. I enjoy just about any sport in which locomotion is not the only goal, which rules out track and field, but I am fine with swimming (I avoid sweating!). As for videogames, I generally like games in the action-packed genres of battle royale and RPG. I am incredibly competitive, and I guess that's why I like playing games so much in sports, and in real life. And now that I think about it, that could also be how I came this far with improving my stuttering.

I don't remember when exactly my stuttering started, but it got a lot better quite quickly. As of now, I am comfortable with speaking in groups of any size, especially when I know, at least roughly, what I am going to be talking about. This gives my mind a head-start on my speech. This means that sometimes, rather than actually blocking, I catch myself and try to let my mind catch up with my speech (I am a relatively fast talker).

For a long time, I was unaware of my drive, but I learnt a lot from my teacher. I tried out lots of stuttering modification/prevention strategies, such as easy start, robot voice, stop and slide, as well as simple things like speaking with lungs full of air. These helped a lot, but I think (immodesty) the reason I came this far was because of a different, rather strange reason: the need to compete with the other person to get more words out.

Luckily, I never really got bullied or patronized for stuttering, but I empathize with those who do. I am willing to meet people and talk to them, and this was a strong branch in my growing tree of fluency. At first, I was hesitant to have a prolonged conversation, but I got more and more comfortable with talking until my stutter was barely noticeable. This may mean I need to employ filler words and phrases to fill in the otherwise awkward.

Now, of course, all of this isn't to say stuttering is a bad thing. It's a part of my life that I can't control, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's harmful. In fact, many famous people had, and still have, a stutter. They are famous because they do great in jobs that involve lots of communication.

So, never let stuttering be the wall between you and your dreams. I know I wouldn't, and I know you shouldn't.

Harshiv, 14, Singapore/London



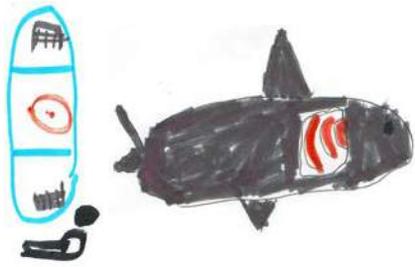
Dear Stuttering Foundation,

My name is Lily. I am 10 years old and I love singing, drawing, and running. I just ran a 5K for girls on the run in Milwaukee. I have 2 brothers, Brody and Finn. I also have a sister, her name is Briana. I stutter. I usually use the strategies slide out and speech turtle. I use these to help me talk and I love to talk. I have been in speech therapy for 2 years and I have learned that stuttering is not a bad thing. My stutter type is mid-syllable insertion. If you stutter don't let stuttering control your social life. Be yourself. Imagine your voice is a sun and if it sets you lose being social. But when it rises you talk whenever you want and don't let your stuttering control your life. **Don't let your sun set, let it rise.**

From Lily, 10, Greendale, WI

I have stuttered for the majority of my life and have dealt with the ups and downs of stuttering. However, throughout all of the mentally draining and embarrassing experiences I have endured, I can look back on those experiences and observe how they have helped me grow as a person. After getting through a stuttering block, I think to myself how I wish I could get rid of my speech impediment. The shame and embarrassment I feel can be so overwhelming that it severely tarnishes my confidence and pride. However, eliminating stuttering from my life is simply not an option. **I have two options for dealing with my stuttering: feel sorry for myself and lament about my impediment or continue to learn from and work through it. While sometimes hard, I choose to work through it.** One major lesson I have learned over past few years is that my speech does not define who I am. My stuttering is simply another part of me that I must accept and cope with. The most important lesson I have learned from stuttering is that I can't let it control my life. In retrospect, there have been many times when I have given into my fear of stuttering. Succumbing to fear can paralyze a person and prevent them from living their life to the fullest. Not only has my fear prevented me from speaking up and sharing good ideas with my peers, but it has also prevented me from being a leader. I have regretted the times when I have allowed my stuttering to control my life; I cannot let a part of who I am dictate how I live.

Dillon, 18, Esko, MN



Hi, my name is Logan. I am in 2nd grade. I am 7 years old. I like sharks. They go very fast. Also I like Roblox. There is a game called Shark Attack that is very fun. I work on bumpy speech at home and school. I use deep breaths to help me talk. I learned about body parts like brain and voice box and lungs. I get stuck in my mouth when I talk. **I like to talk. I play goalie in hockey, too.**

Logan, 7, Greendale, WI

Hi, my name is Colin. I am a sixth grader who stutters. I've been stuttering since 1st grade. At first, I thought I was the only one who stuttered in the world. But when I learned about stuttering, I recognized that even many famous people also stutter. You may not think they stutter because when they talk, it is so smooth and the words come out of their mouth with no problem. I've learned that stuttering doesn't make you dumb or anything like that, it makes you a special person. **I don't like stuttering either, but I treat it like it is not there. I don't let my stuttering stop me from speaking in class, talking to friends, or doing anything that I want to do.** I am proud of myself for how I work hard to control my stuttering.

Colin, 11, Hawthorne, NJ



My name is Eva and I am eight years old. I live in Madison, WI with my mom, dad, two sisters, two birds, two dogs and two fish. My favorite breed of dogs are Corgis. I want to have a Corgi when I grow up. My two dogs, Tequila and Luna, are very special to me. Tequila is a Dachshund-Chihuahua mix and Luna is a Border Collie mix. Luna is nine years old and Tequila is one. My two birds, Mango and Strawberry, are parakeets. I like to play baseball and we have baseball diamonds very close to our house. I also used to play tee ball. We also like to watch the Brewers on TV. I also like to play soccer with my dad and my two sisters and my friends. I go to a bilingual school where we speak and learn in both Spanish and English.

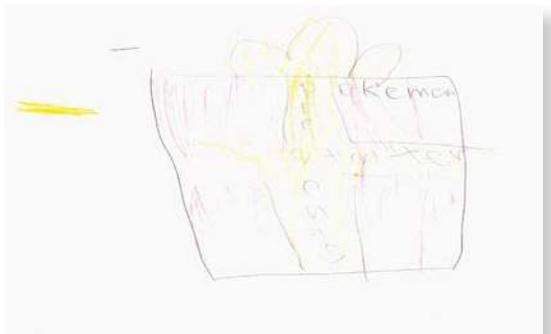
Another thing about me is that I stutter. I also have a great teacher helping me. Stuttering is not a big deal to me because I have been stuttering since I started talking. I used to stutter a lot but now I don't. I have learned a lot about stuttering. I use the strategy of easy beginnings because it helps me talk. Easy beginnings is when you start slowly and then you go faster. I have noticed that my sister stutters a little bit and my mom used to stutter when she was a kid. Also, did you know that boys stutter more than girls?

Eva, 8, Madison, WI



POKEMON PRESENTS STUTTER

by Max, 8, Vancouver, BC, Canada





My name is Layton, and I am 9 years old. I want to tell you a few things about me. I like to play soccer and baseball. I like watching movies with my family and playing with my little sister. When I play with my sister, I sometimes stutter. Sometimes when I stutter, I use bouncy talking and blocks. One strategy I use is running my finger across my leg to not stutter. **Another strategy I use is cancellation. Cancellation is when you get stuck on a word, and you go back and fix it with less stuttering.**

Layton, 9, Omro, WI

For as long as I can remember I have been a person who stutters. Some might see this as an obstacle. At first, that is how I felt too. As I have grown to accept my stutter, I realize that while this challenge has been difficult, it actually has helped me grow into a successful young man who accepts the way he is.

How did my journey with stuttering begin? My parents told me that it began when I was a little kid learning how to speak at the age of two. From that day on I have experienced obstacles in my day to day life with stuttering: speaking to my friends, instructors and family members. Many times I was told to "keep quiet" or "learn how to speak properly because you can't talk." Several people made fun of my stutter, laughing at me and calling me so many kinds of awful names like "Porky Pig" and "don't know how to speak" and many more. This created social anxiety and turned me into a quiet person due to the fact that I experienced fear when joining any conversations because people would then know I am a person who stutters.

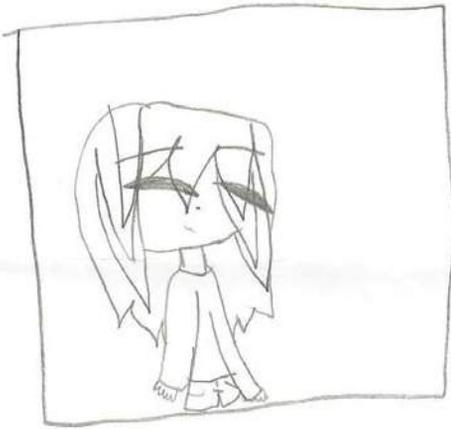
When I moved to the United States of America, at the age of fourteen, I felt like a failure. No one wanted to be friends with me. I felt like no one liked me or even said a single word to me just because I'm a person who stutters. Sometimes I didn't even like going to school or hanging out with other people just because I am a person who stutters. I got bullied a lot at school and was not able to stand up for myself because I couldn't say a single word leaving me standing like a flop, an underdog, an outcast. All these jokes made me wonder, what did I do to deserve to be a person who stuttered? To this day, I still don't have the answer.

When I started high school, I had the opportunity to work with a speech therapist on my stutter at Hockinson High School. My speech therapist was a nice and caring person, and always told me, "remember who you are, stuttering doesn't define who you are and don't ever let it stop you from achieving your goals." I have always wanted this opportunity to work with someone who knows a lot about stuttering. I work with my speech therapist every week to work on strategies and techniques; most importantly though, we worked on self-disclosure and self-acceptance. When I started meeting with my speech therapist I began to talk very slowly. At first it felt weird but as time went on I began to get used to it and slowing my speech down really helped my stutter a lot. Going to a speech therapist has helped me throughout my high school career. All my nightmares and challenges with my stuttering have turned into aspirations of becoming a person who is not afraid to share their stories with others and one who accepts their stuttering.

Although I never got the answer to what I did to deserve to be a person who stuttered, I do know the answer to one thing. No matter who you are, whether you are a person who stutters or has a disability, there will always be a person who will accept you just the way you are. I finally found good friends, friends who accepted me no matter how much I stuttered.

Muhammed, 17, Vancouver, WA

Elle, 9, Weimar, TX



Hi i'm Elle and i'm 9 years old,
I like to draw,color,and play roblox my
talents are dancing and singing. There's a
game on roblox that helps me be me
it's called Free Draw 2 I mostly draw
people but it's hard to color in the game.
So I don't color my pictures in the game.
I do two types stuttering repeting
and Block I mostly repete at home and at
school but I mostly block at home.

Elle, Weimar, TX

My name is Paislee and
I live in a m bridge
vermont. I'm 6 1/2 and
I remember when
I started stuttering
I was 3. I drew a
play ground
because I like
play grounds. I
love the swings.
Speech therapy helps me
not stutter.



Paislee, 6, Jeffersonville, VT



My name is Nolan. I'm in third grade
and I am 9 years old. I like to play video
games like Minecraft, and I stutter. **My
favorite tool is deep breaths.** I
started stuttering around 5 years old.
I like sports like soccer, baseball, and
bowling. I stutter when I am in school
and when I am talking to my friends.
I think you shouldn't worry about if
you stutter because a lot of people do
and a lot of famous people stutter too.
I hope you have friends who support
you and don't really care about your
stuttering. I have a brother, a sister, my
family, cousins, and my dog to support
me. I just don't think that people should
care about your stuttering. Some day
you might stop stuttering. Take deep
breaths and maybe stretch the word
out. I want to thank my mom and dad
and my teachers that helped me with
my speech.

Nolan, 9, LaGrange, IL

GIFTING MADE EASY

We are thankful for all of our generous donors! When you donate to the Stuttering Foundation, you can rest assured that your gift will go to support our program services, benefiting people who stutter (and those who seek to educate and serve them) all around the world.



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



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Stocks, Securities, Remainder Trusts, Employer Matching Gift Programs, Annuities, and Retirement Asset Donations are just a few other ways to make a lasting impact with your donation dollar. Please check with your financial advisor, employer, and or legal advisor for details.



TRIBUTE GIFTS

Memorialize a deceased family member or friend with gifts to the Stuttering Foundation. Honor a birth, an anniversary, graduation, wedding, or any important occasion in the name of a loved one.



LEGACY GIFTS

It's easy to include the Stuttering Foundation in your will, and it will do a world of good! Contact us and/or your legal advisor for assistance.

Charitable contributions, and bequests to the Foundation are tax-deductible, subject to limitations under the code. We welcome gifts of appreciated stock for which you may deduct full market value for income tax purposes. The Stuttering Foundation is a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please check with your financial advisor, employer, and or legal advisor for details.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (the CAA) signed into law on December 28, 2020, maintains and expands the charitable contribution incentives originally enacted by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the CARES Act).

The enhanced charitable contribution deduction benefits apply solely to qualified charitable contributions, which are contributions made in cash to a public charity or "50% charity." For these purposes, this includes a private operating foundation, such as the Stuttering Foundation.



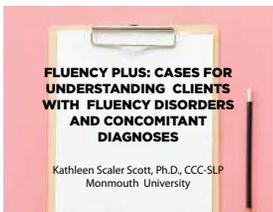
**DONATE FROM YOUR
SMARTPHONE**



Continuing Education:

A Domino Effect with a Good Ending

The Stuttering Foundation offers a breadth of informative and relevant online continuing education courses that help speech-language pathologists stay at the forefront of their field. With over 41 courses available, which are all conducted by recognized experts, they can study anything from traditional hands-on therapies to the most recent scientific studies on the origins of stuttering. In essence, these courses yield tangible results. For one, by completing a course, pathologists earn—through, in their own words, an “easy to follow” format with “good visuals”—continuing education credit, which is conferred by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and fulfills their continuing education requirements. More so, Stuttering Foundation courses enshrine a multilateral effort to address stuttering. One pathologist who completed and responded to the “Understanding New Genetic Findings in Stuttering” course exhibited this phenomenon in simple terms. They exclaimed that they would implement “all of” the information learned by first emailing “several colleagues to share a few high points” and then sharing with the “parents and teachers of children on [their] caseload who have severe problems with fluency.” The more information accessible, they stressed, the more those who stutter are “empowered to advocate for themselves.” In other words, this course reached an audience much larger than the individual who originally enrolled in it. By ensuring that accurate, up-to-date information on stuttering is at hand, the Stuttering Foundation encourages a more mindful, inclusive, and actively engaged world for those who stutter.



Fluency Plus: Cases for Understanding Clients with Fluency Disorders and Concomitant Diagnoses

Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, of Monmouth University Managing fluency disorders can be further complicated by concomitant diagnoses. In this one-hour presentation, Dr. Scott discusses a host of combinations and offers strategies for managing them. **This course is offered for 0.1 ASHA CEUs (Intermediate level, Professional area).**



Working With Parents of Children Who Stutter: Supporting Change Using SFBT

Ali Berquez, BRIEF Cert. SF Practice, RegRCSLT, RegHCPC, of the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering In this one-hour presentation, Ali Berquez begins with a short overview of the principles of Solution Focused Brief Therapy and then explores how SFBT may be used in therapy with parents of children who stutter. **This course is offered for 0.1 ASHA CEUs (Intermediate level, Professional area).**



Building Resiliency with Young Children Who Stutter

Julia Hollister, Ph.D., Loma Linda University In this one hour, twenty minute presentation, Julia Hollister discusses the importance of designing holistic stuttering interventions that include resiliency-building practices. Activities that build emotional regulation skills within the framework of stuttering will be discussed. **This course is offered for 0.1 ASHA CEUs (Intermediate level, Professional area).**



Armoring Children for the Slings and Arrows of Stuttering

Dr. Ellen Kelly, CCC-SLP, of Vanderbilt University In this presentation, Dr. Ellen Kelly, CCC-SLP, of Vanderbilt University explores resiliency theory and research to motivate a strengths-based model of resilience. She discusses assessment and treatment of stuttering in school-age children in familial, social, and academic contexts. **This course is offered for 0.1 ASHA CEUs (Intermediate level, Professional area).**



Emotional Regulation in Children Who Stutter

Kurt Eggers, Ph.D., Thomas More University College, University of Turku Research has demonstrated that many children who stutter are prone to react emotionally and have lower emotion/attention regulation skills than children who do not stutter. In this presentation, Kurt Eggers, Ph.D., discusses the relevant literature and provides several tools and strategies to use to help improve children's emotional regulation. **This course is offered for 0.15 ASHA CEUs (Intermediate level, Professional area).**

Congratulations to our friends in Mali!



Association Vaincre Le Bégaïement Mali



“Many people who stutter have mistakenly believed that if only the ‘cause’ could be found, a fast cure would result.”

-Dr. Frederick Murray

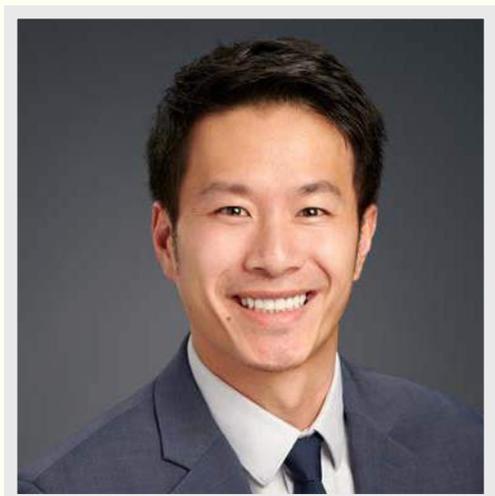
"I felt so strangulated talking that I did the natural thing, which is to write songs, because I could sing without stammering."

- Carly Simon



STUTTERING FOUNDATION Q & A:

DAVID WONG



David Wong is a Dentist who specializes in Periodontology and Dental Implant Surgery. He sat down with the Stuttering Foundation to discuss his many life and career successes and a lifelong journey with stuttering.

Location:

I grew up in Lewisville, Texas. I now live in North Dallas.

Profession:

I am a Dentist specializing in Periodontology and Dental Implant Surgery.

Family:

My family lived in New York City in my early years then moved to Texas. We've resided in Texas for over 20 years. My father passed a few years back. I have a younger sister and she now lives in California.

Hobbies, Interests, Passions:

Hiking, Sports including Tennis and Basketball, Traveling.

Successes:

My aspiration to be a dentist and ultimately a periodontist began in high school. A dental accident at a young age was followed by many dental visits. Having gone through multiple dental procedures at a young age was frustrating. My frequent visits to the dental office inspired my interest in dentistry and ultimately specializing in periodontics. My passion took me through Undergraduate Education, Dental School, then Residency Training before becoming a Periodontist and Dental Implant Surgeon. I am board certified by the American Board of Periodontology.

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

DAVID: My parents remembered I did not start speaking until the age of 4. When I did speak, my parents recalled my words weren't coherent and consisted of many repetitions. Sometimes my words just never came out. I have always remembered stuttering throughout my life.

Does it run in your family? Who else stutters?

Nobody in my immediate family stutters. However, my mother's cousin stutters.

Did you seek treatment? Did it help?

During 1st grade, a speech pathologist informed my parents I would grow out of my stuttering. However, that was not the case. During dental school, we started seeing patients and it wasn't a small task for a stutterer. I went to see a speech pathologist to seek help. The therapy helped me communicate effectively with confidence. No one therapy was a magic pill; it was a realized foundation to build on. Building towards fluency was essential. However, it was working through the psychological blocks that allowed me to be free and myself.

Tell us about your experience with stuttering as a child.

No words can describe the amount of frustration and anxiety every day, especially during school. My biggest fear was speaking in front of the class, not knowing how my classmates would react. The bigger the audience, the more severe my speech impediments became. As a child, I would succumb to talking as little as I can. This way no one would realize my speech issues, and I always find creative ways to avoid speaking. Now looking back, I should have used my creativity and effort in confronting my fears of speaking in public, because I had plenty to say!

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

My stuttering has gotten better as I got older. It took many years of practice overcoming speech blocks, and psychological blocks as well. During college and dental school, I would have sleepless nights sweating, preparing not only for the work itself but also mentally preparing to talk and strategize. Now I frequently give lectures, talk in meetings, and most people can't tell I stutter. I've learned over the years building stamina and confidence are important.

How did it affect you growing up?

Growing up, I always wondered why I wasn't as fluent as the rest of the kids. There was a strong feeling of desire to be normal. That led me to negative feelings like being envious. I would admire the people around me that had impeccable articulation, which led to an inner feeling of being envious. Often during arguments and heated debates my stuttering would get worse. People would hang up the phone when they don't realize I'm still on the line trying to fight through a stammering block. Another common reaction was a giggle when they thought I forgot what my name was. Common routines we take for granted were challenging. In those moments I felt inferior and lonely. My self-esteem has never been any lower.

How does stuttering affect you in your career?

Being a dentist requires effective communication to inform patients of their oral health status and needs. As a stutterer, this can be challenging and difficult. However, I became more comfortable with my speech impediment with patients. Slowly it became who I am. Surprisingly it became a way to connect with my patients to share my side of the story. Being open and acknowledging my speech impediments helped me build trust and genuineness.

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

I slowly adapted to avoid certain words and find a replacement word quicker. I use hand motions to express my meanings which helps with articulation. Another technique my therapist taught me was to connect multiple words in one phrase, similar to singing a song. Singing comes from the diaphragm with constant flow of air. Funny how we would rather sing a song than talk in public!

People say repetition is success. For me my hardest word to articulate is my name David! Imagine the number of times we've had to introduce ourselves. If I practice articulating my name for one day nothing may change. Practicing for two days, nothing will change either. After three, four, or five days I will still stutter. However, I have my entire life to improve, and there's no timeline!

What are the biggest challenges stuttering has presented to you?

Fear, anxiety and emotional defeat. Now looking back, my biggest challenge wasn't my stutter but the anticipation of the unknown and overcoming that emotion of embarrassment and anxiety.

What is your greatest accomplishment with regard to stuttering?

Not only being heard but people wanting to hear me speak despite my stuttering. Now being a dental surgeon, it's much easier to voice my opinion but it wasn't that way before.





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

Be loud and it's also ok to be shy! Embrace who you are and share it with the world. You can accomplish anything you want. It has been shown that people who stutter are generally overachievers. Never be afraid to reset and get rid of all the negativity in your life. Always, always seek help: speech therapy, counseling, mental health, and/or mentorship.

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

Give them as much love and support as you can. Give the children time, be patient with them. Take them to therapy early and be in there with them. Help your children embrace the challenge and become the solution and role models for others. Although there is no cure, it does not hinder their success and choices in life.

What else should we know?

During my dental training, I had the opportunity to intern in Dr. Dennis Drayna's research at the National Institutes of Health. Through genetic sequencing and mapping techniques, we are able to identify genetic variation / mutation at the molecular components. The disruption of intracellular trafficking can lead to mistranslated protein necessary for the human communication system. Though we made progress, further research and funding are important for better understanding and future treatments.

I want to thank my family and friends/mentors that have been on this journey with me. I owe my success to their commitment, encouragement, and belief in me.



2022: IN MEMORIAM

- Akinola Abolade
Joseph G. Agnello
Lois Arenson
Robert Austin
David R. Berry, Sr.
Curt Betebenner
Marion A. Bishop
Dr. Oliver Bloodstein
Sister Charleen Bloom
London Bradley
Joseph Goodwin Brown
Muriel Brown
Mary Campagna
James M. Campbell
Michael Carlberg
Helen Z. Carr
Lawrence Chen
Cody
Dr. Eugene B. Cooper
Michael and Mary Cristiano
Sherman N. Crocket, Sr.
Joan Wichter Crockett
Richard Curlee
Ed D.
Katharyn Elizabeth Fell Demaree
Glenn DeWick
Dr. William Dopheide
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Marshall Bryan Dunaway
Major James Duricy
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GUMMO MARX

STUTTERING COMEDY LEGEND & HOLLYWOOD ICON

The story of the Marx Brothers needs no introduction. Five brothers, the sons of Jewish immigrants Sam and Minnie (Schoenberg) Marx, started their careers as young vaudeville performers. After graduating to Broadway success, they became international movie stars with the release of their first movie in 1929, *The Cocoanuts*. In total, the Marx Brothers would star in 13 movies, many of which were wildly successful commercially. Five of their films appeared on the American Film Institute's list of the top 100 comedy films; two of the five, *Duck Soup* (1935) and *A Night at the Opera* (1935), were placed in the top fifteen.

The Marx Brothers, who went by their stage names, were Chico (Leonard), Harpo (Adolph), Groucho (Julius), Gummo (Milton) and Zeppo (Herbert). Chico, Harpo, Groucho and Gummo performed together on vaudeville for 13 years as "The Four Marx Brothers." Only on one occasion did all five brothers appear on stage together: a 14-year-old Zeppo joined his brothers for a single performance in Flint, Michigan. Gummo, disenchanted with acting, left the act to join the U.S. Army to serve in World War I. In order to continue as "The Four Marx Brothers," Zeppo was recruited to the vaudeville act to take Gummo's place.

Zeppo appeared with Chico, Harpo and Groucho in the first five movies, playing the straight man or romantic lead to the zany comedy of his brothers. He would be the first to leave the fold to pursue a career as an engineer and inventor. He later became a theatrical agent.

Gummo left acting primarily because, unlike other people who stutter who found fluency while acting, his stuttering impeded him in delivering his lines. While he performed with his brothers for 13 years, it became extremely difficult for him as the brothers' act shifted from song and dance to verbal comedy. After leaving, Milton "Gummo" Marx became a highly successful agent for not only his brothers but also many other notable Hollywood actors. He also helped develop TV sitcoms, such as *The Life of Riley*.



Top: Gummo Marx

Bottom from left: Harpo, Zeppo, Chico, Groucho, and Gummo Marx, 1957.

While most books on the Marx Brothers only briefly mention Gummo's stuttering, *Monkey Business: The Lives and Legends of The Marx Brothers* by Simon Louvish goes into detail on the subject.

Louvish wrote, "Milton had developed a stutter, which was to plague him throughout his years on the stage. But, as a teenager, he became a skilled dancer, a talent he maintained all his life." Louvish quoted Gummo's son: "Milton, of course, remains the elusive one, the one who never made it to the screen. His son Robert told me that 'Gummo... did not like the stage, and stammered, to the point that he made himself a student of the dictionary as a result of that.' In order to force himself to speak his lines without failing, Milton built up a mental list of synonyms: 'He had every innuendo of every word that he could possibly do, he needed other words to get out, to get that line out, so the show would go on, in normal timing.'"

"Milton, in fact, had been growing weary with his role, as his son Robert explains: 'Gummo felt that he was the most dispensable of the group... the act was changing...becoming less of a song and dance act, and more of a comedy act and he became the straight man. So when the opportunity came for him to go in the service he did that and left the act and that was his way of breaking out.'" Louvish also added, "Becoming the straight man had involved Milton in more dialogue than his continuing stutter allowed him to handle with any degree of comfort. He had been on stage for 13 years, a long time for a man with a speech impediment."

What is ironic is that Milton's older brother Arthur, at a time he had no difficulty speaking, cultivated the character of Harpo, who was a non-speaking character. Although Gummo never made it to the screen with his brothers, he almost did. In 1947, it was reported in the media that the four brothers had agreed to appear as themselves in a biopic about the Marx Brothers, which would have included them recreating a lot of their previously unrecorded material from their Broadway and vaudeville days. However, the film was never made. It would have been the first performance by the four Marx Brothers since 1933. While Gummo did not sign on this project



that never came to fruition, there was hope among some of his brothers that he would make an appearance in a sketch from the vaudeville days, which would have marked the first and only time that the five Marx Brothers appeared together on the screen.

There have been many Celebrity Corner articles about actors who have struggled with stuttering only to find fluency through acting, such as Bruce Willis, Sam Neill, Betsy Drake, Eric Roberts, Emily Blunt, Marilyn Monroe and Rowan Atkinson. Unfortunately, stuttering prevented Milton "Gummo" Marx from continuing to perform with his brothers who dominated the stage, screen and radio with their trademark brand of comedy. However, his work as the exclusive manager of his brothers was instrumental to their great success in the film industry. He was married to the former Helen von Tilzer from 1926 until her death in 1976. They had one son, Robert. Two of Milton's grandsons, Gregg Marx and Chris Marx, are actors. Milton died at the age of 83 in 1977.

While stuttering was a factor in his decision to leave the dynamic act with his brothers, Milton "Gummo" Marx was extremely successful as a Hollywood agent and highly respected in the entertainment industry. Over the years, "Gummo Marx" has become the subject of a question in trivia games. Gummo Marx is much more than an answer to a trivia question as he did not let his stuttering get in the way of a successful career after he retired as an actor. To the stuttering community, Gummo is just as much a celebrity as Chico, Harpo, Groucho and Zeppo.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON STUTTERING

October 14-16, 2021 . Rome, Italy

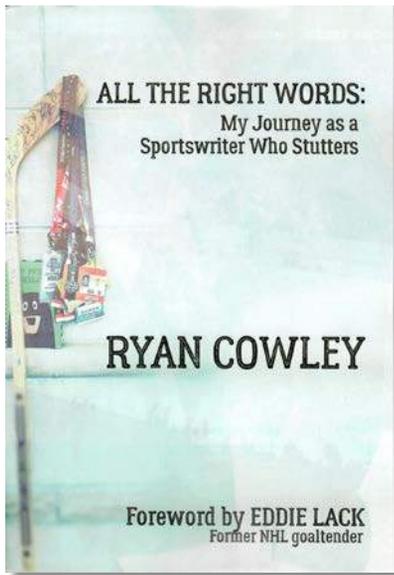
International Conference on Stuttering took place in Rome, Italy in October of 2021 . The Stuttering Foundation was a co-sponsor of this excellent conference and this was its fifth year!



2022 GIFTS IN HONOR

俊哲	Dorothy D. Craven	Logan J. Hays	Dr. Walter Manning	Tony Shaffer
Jameson Acuff	James Crennan	Derick Helton	Kenyon Martin, Jr.	Andrew Sharpe
William T. Adkins	Jeffrey Crennan	Alex Hernandez	Dr. Jonathan Meadows	Shannon Sharpe
Ahmed	Jim Curran	Michael Herrington	Yeshua El Messiah	Hayden Short
All my students who stutter	Holly DiClemente	Allene Higgins	Tommy Milot	Brandon Sibilia
All SLPs—my heroes	Danielle Diekevers	Linda Hinderscheit	Eric James Minar	Lisa M. Smith
All Those Who Stutter	Eileen G. Drury	Isabelle	Llogan Morris	Sachin Srinivasan
Edgar Arroyave	Jason Dulik	Connor Jackson	Mick Mulder	John G. Stebbins
John Banister	Mark E.	Diane James	Dawn Murray	Laurent Michael Stebbins
Charles Beck	Andrew Engelbart	James Earl Jones	Dr. Lois Nelson	Lauren Strada
Dominque Bell	Joan Good Erickson	'Junzhe'	Noble	The Stuttering Foundation
Julia Bencko	Family	Saravanan Kaliyaperumal	Eric Notkin	Employees
President Joe Biden	Florence Filley	Anthony Katz	Cassie Overlin	Maureen M. Tardelli
Holly Bishop	Former speech students	Dr. Ellen Kelly	Susannah Parkin	John Tarver
Dr. Robert Blacklow	Lily Fox	Jacob Kerwin	Gloria Paster	Kirk Tarver
Sr. Charleen Bloom	Jane Fraser	Kids who stutter	Carter Peterson	Thomas Terpstra
David Briggs	Friends who have shown me empathy	Ranger Knight	John S. Phillips	"They know who they are; Superman"
Brilliant, brave kids and parents	Will Fuentes	Dr. Craig Kramer	Penelope Phillips	Tim, Allison, Leigh, Whitney, Lindsay
Barbara M. Brown	Judith C. Gelderman	Ben Lee, Coastal CPAs	Sadie Pierson	Dr. Julia Unger
Little Miss Shirah Bryant	Brett Gibbs	Sharon Lee-Sheridan	Mr. and Mrs. Trey Prescott	Sam Wantock
Bert Burd	Danielle Godden	Paul LeMay	Ben and Anthy Price	Horatio Webster II
Mara Calvello	Thomas Ralph Griffith	Jena Lindstrand	Tanner Raines	Ryan Wisch
Capistrano USD SLPs and SLPAs	Stephen Hamer	Conor and Amanda Lofton	Emily Root	Kristin, Robin, Arlo, Bodhi, and Lennie Wren
Kristin Chmela	Charles Hamilton	Cohen B. Lott	Reuven Roslyn	Tony Z.
Carroll J. Clifford	Charles Hamilton	Kaiser Lucas	Dr. Arlyne E. Russo	Dr. Patricia Zebrowski
William Courtney, Jr.	Susan Hamilton	Brendan Mahoney	Luke Rutkowski	
	Brayden Harrington	Betty Malinak	Bob Schimmel	

All The Right Words: My Journey as a Sportswriter Who Stutters



Ryan Cowley's *All The Right Words: My Journey as a Sportswriter Who Stutters* showcases the message the Stuttering Foundation wants to diffuse to all people who stutter—your stuttering does not have to stand in the way of your dreams. Cowley describes the times when the hardships that accompanied his stuttering led him to “doubt” and “limit” himself “as a successful person.” However, after deciding things “needed to change,” working hard, and reaching out for help along the way, he became a successful sportswriter. It was the very “sadness” and “frustration” that overtook moments in Cowley’s life that made it possible for him to enjoy “perseverance” and “vindication” later on.

To be sure, Cowley endured tribulations beyond his control because of his stuttering, but it was the damage done to his mindset that was most severe in its implications. Cowley laments that he was “bullied, mocked, doubted, and even dismissed because” of his stuttering. He recounts how laughs and smears emanated from the school yard and college classroom alike. Although “tempting at times,” Cowley “never resorted to violence” (27). His anger was regulated to the backstage. What Cowley termed was his “never-ending internal battle,” saw him ceaselessly convince himself, “I can’t talk to those kids,” “I can’t apply for that job,” etc (74). Cowley experienced other trials—such as also living with Cerebral palsy—and yet stuttering is the focus of his book. Like many, albeit in often very different ways, Cowley went through the throes of life, and it was only when he started to treat stuttering as just one part of his journey instead of a defining power that he was able to realize his full potential.

Cowley demonstrates that you can show the world your talent when you do not allow stuttering to undermine the self-esteem needed to do so and that you do not have to “fight this battle alone” (162). As a teenager, he got his “first taste of fame,” even if he admits it was “very local fame,” when his English teacher (Mr. Bean) and classmates enthralled themselves in conversation about a 30-part series he wrote. People appreciated him and, more so, stood by him. When one student (Dave) mocked Cowley by “repeating ‘uh-uh-uh,’” the French teacher Madame Giroux and the entire class reprimanded Dave for his insensitive behavior. There will always be bullies, however, as Cowley states, “there are plenty more people who know how to be respectful, even if they have to wait a bit longer to hear what I have to say” (118). It was support from others—his dad, his wife Shannon, his supervisor Yvonne—coupled to reconnecting with his internal strength that allowed him to, as a synopsis of the Churchill quote Cowley references and the message behind it, ‘go through hell’ and defeat depression during his young adult years (162). In other words, stuttering does not make the person.

Stuttering can either be endured as the worst curse or utilized as a springboard for a better life. After all, it was stuttering that encouraged Cowley to write in the first place. Writing was an escape from stuttering, but many great things start as an escape. What seems like a disadvantage and setback at first may engender the very impetus and determination without which change is impossible. Cowley details in the chapter “No Longer a Curse” how in the end he grew personally and professionally from his past trials. His story exhibits strength through adversity and that the person is the deciding factor in their relation with stuttering, not the other way around. The Stuttering Foundation hopes that this book inspires those who stutter to not allow stuttering to encumber their life, to utilize support wherever available—including all the Stuttering Foundation resources—and to discover how stuttering can be turned to their growth.

Reviewed by Edward Shvets



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@mguerski
 Texas, US

Follow

mguerski I'm excited to share with y'all that AFTER 10 years off, I will be taking SPEECH THERAPY at Baylor again this spring with my clinician Erin. The last two years have been tough in regards to my speech journey. Going through job interviews and not being successful really began to weigh heavy on my confidence in my speech and my hopes of being successful as a person who stutters. I'm excited to get back to the basics and continue to learn and grow as a person who stutters. I share this in hopes that it is a reminder that it is never too old to try and improve in an ANY area in your life. I also hope you ask me how my journey is going and seek to know and understand what it daily looks like to be a person who stutters and how the Lord has used and is using this opportunity in my life!
 Esther 4:14: "For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" #stutteringfoundation

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

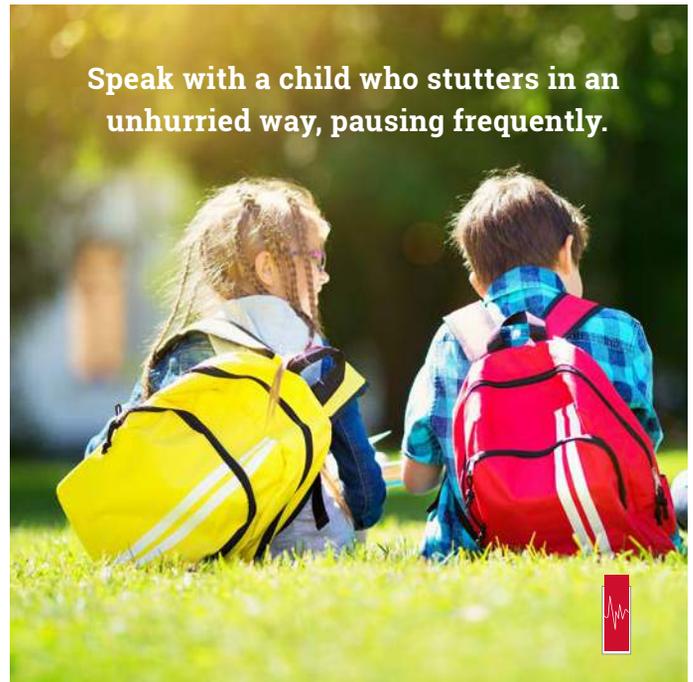


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"One of the hardest things in life is having words in your heart that you can't utter."

- James Earl Jones



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"I was desperate to speak.
I wanted everything,
I didn't want to miss
anything, and I felt
like I was missing out."

- Emily Blunt





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



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