



THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION

A Nonprofit Organization

SPRING 2026

Since 1947... Helping Those Who Stutter


STUTTERING FOUNDATION LAUNCHES 2026 WITH A FRESH

NEW WEBSITE



SPRING 2026: **NEW LOOK AND EASIER ACCESS COMING TO**

StutteringHelp.org



Changes are coming to the StutteringHelp.org website -- which has been a valuable resource since its launch in August 2000. The website contains more than 1800 individual published pages, carefully curated over the past two decades.

Work is currently underway and significant improvements, enhanced features and greater accessibility are schedule for our relaunch later this Spring.

Here's what's new and coming soon:

- Homepage Modernization: We have refreshed the homepage with a cleaner, more contemporary design for smoother navigation and better overall user experience.
- Improved Header Design: The header now uses a modern dark blue color scheme, boosting menu readability and giving the site a fresh, professional look.
- Refocused "Hero" Image: The main homepage image has been updated to spotlight key topics upfront, providing quicker access to the most helpful content.
- Enhanced Image Features: Content editors can now easily add photo credits and captions to images site-wide. These are fully optimized for mobile, eliminating previous display glitches.
- Scheduled Content Publishing: New functionality lets us prepare and release content on a specific future date, ensuring timely information delivery.
- Prominent Donate Buttons: We've added a "sticky" donate button that stays visible on mobile screens and a highlighted hero donate button on desktop for effortless contributions.

These changes are designed to make your visits more intuitive and engaging, helping you connect faster with the trusted resources from the Stuttering Foundation.



In addition to user-friendly updates, several back-end technical changes are underway to improve performance and stability of the site. A significant part of this project involved upgrading from Drupal 7 to Drupal 11, offering numerous benefits such as enhanced security—since Drupal 7 is no longer supported—faster website performance, and a modern architecture.

This upgrade ensures better device support, responsiveness, and smoother future integrations. Administrators will enjoy a more intuitive content management experience, making it easier to deliver the best resources.

We will also introduce the ability to easily rearrange content within Topics to highlight the most relevant information for site visitors. Additionally, research articles are now integrated into the homepage news and blog feed, featuring an improved archive list layout for easier access. "The redesigned website will not only feature a fresh look and improved navigation to help users find resources more easily, but it will also give us greater flexibility when adding and updating content," said Scot Squires, who manages the site's daily updates. "I believe our online visitors will be impressed with the improvements."

STAY TUNED for the official relaunch later this spring, and please bookmark our page—StutteringHelp.org!





by Ehud Yairi, Ph.D.
University of Illinois

THE AGE FACTOR IN STUTTERING

Exploring Risk Factors and Implications of Age

Age is among the strongest risk factors for stuttering with several important implications. Although the disorder begins within a wide age-range, current robust evidence indicates that, for a very large proportion of cases, it erupts during the preschool period. Data obtained at the University of Illinois Stuttering Research Program revealed that for 65% of the child participants, stuttering onset occurred prior to age 3; the figure rose to 85% by 3 1/2 years of age (Yairi & Ambrose, 2005). Leaving room for some sampling errors, children past age 4 face a relatively low risk for stuttering. From clinical considerations, these statistics call for greater emphasis on preparing clinicians for working with early childhood stuttering.

Age brings out other factors. The fact that the critical age for stuttering onset parallels the age span when significant rapid developments occur in the anatomy of the speech system, as well as in complex language and articulatory skills, invites speculations that interferences in these maturational processes contribute to stuttering; hence the possibility of relations among stuttering, language, and articulation. Although our own data (Watkins, Yairi, & Ambrose, 1999), and those of our colleagues from Germany (Rommel et. al., 1999), show that the language skills of children who stutter, as a group, meet or exceed norms, we suspect that there are differences in the ways in which they process language. One research

priority about consequent to information age at onset is experimental manipulation of similarities and/or differences in language processing and production between children who stutter near the onset of the disorder and normally fluent children, particularly in terms of the nature of linguistic knowledge and the time course of knowledge activation. Varied responses to semantic and phonological distracters, slower reaction time, and/or alternative activation paths may reveal differences in language processing. One of the intriguing questions is: does age at stuttering onset — prior to, or after, a certain point in language development — underlie distinct subtypes of the disorder? Unfortunately, only a few scientists have been interested in the subtypes issue, e.g., Seery, et al. (2007) and SheikhBahaei, et al. (2023).

Brain imaging studies of young children should also continue to enhance understanding of the age factor. Years ago, our team members, Chang, Erickson, and Ambrose (2005) successfully obtained high resolution structural MRI data from stuttering and control children ages 8-13. Their initial results indicated significant group differences in white and grey matter volume in brain areas involved in integrating sensory and motor aspects of



speech. Certainly, the younger the children, and the closer to onset they are, will advance our knowledge about the etiology of the disorder.

There is some evidence that age at onset may bear a relation to genetic factors, in particular there seems to be a trend for persistent stuttering to have a slightly later onset than recovered stuttering (Yairi & Ambrose, 2005). This, however, appears to be complicated-and as a large recent study found 57 genomic regions that mapped to 48 genes associated with stuttering (Polikowski et al., 2025).

Age is also a risk factor in regard to children's awareness of disfluent speech. The belief that preschoolers who stutter lack in such awareness played a major role in theories and developmental models of the disorder. For many years, clinicians' assumption that awareness would trigger strong emotions (e.g., anxiety) in children was the main reason for shunning direct speech therapy for preschoolers. Whereas some three-year olds are either clearly, or appear to be, aware of stuttering, available experimental data show a very large increase in awareness between ages 4 and 5, including normally fluent children (Ambrose & Yairi, 1994; Ezrati, Platzky, & Yairi, 2001). This information would seem to justify direct intervention techniques as well as

provide clues for the timing of intervention and should be considered in counseling of parents and teachers about reactions of normally fluent children to their stuttering peers.

“One of the intriguing questions is: does age at stuttering onset — prior to, or after, a certain point in language development — underlie distinct subtypes of the disorder?”

From early on, age is also critical regarding accuracy as well as interpretation of various childhood stuttering research outcomes. For example, studies of natural recovery initiated with children aged 4 and 5 years (e.g., Spencer & Weber-Fox, et al, 2014; Leech et.al, 2017; Gerwin et al., 2019; Walsh, et al., 2021) can be expected to yield lower, less accurate, recovery rates than those reported by studies initiated when the participating children were of younger age (e.g., Reilly et al., 2009, 2013; Yairi & Ambrose, 1999; 2005). This is so because the considerable number of natural recovery cases that typically occur in 2-3-year-olds will remain unknown, therefore not counted, as well as not addressed, in studies employing older preschoolers; even if only one or two years older.



Furthermore, the sex distribution of the older preschooler is already different. Hence, several clinical predictors for recovery/persistence, such as stuttering severity or using nonwords to form rhymes – two means suggested by Walsh et.al (2021) based on studies of 4-5-year olds, are, most likely, not applicable to 2- year-olds who are just a few weeks or months into stuttering.

Pertaining to the above is another important age-related phenomenon: the well-known high male-to-female ratio in the stuttering population. Whereas the initial ratio of 2 males to 1 female among 2 to 3-year-old children who stutter (Yairi & Ambrose 1999; 2005), it widens during the sequential preschool years and beyond, eventually reaching to 4/1 or 5/1 (Bloodstein, Bernstein, & Brundage, 2021). Among other consequences, the increased male-to-female ratio as a function of age in experimental child samples consisting of older preschoolers (4 and 5 years of age) lower the real percent of natural recovery as well as affecting other data. Specifically, the older the initial sample of preschoolers, their percent of females is smaller and, therefore, so is the level of their natural recovery. This, in turn, could lead to inadequate predicting factors if/ when applied to the younger preschool population as mentioned above.

Yairi and Ambrose (2005) also called attention to the age-related brain phenomenon known as pruning that begins prior to birth and continues during the early years of life. It pertains to nonconductive,

(From StutteringHelp.org IR Requests)

PSAge	PSSex	PSCount	Age Ratio	Total Ratio
2	F	1,294	40.34 %	6.80 %
	M	1,914	59.66 %	10.06 %
		3,208		
3	F	2,217	33.26 %	11.65 %
	M	4,449	66.74 %	23.38 %
		6,666		
4	F	1,413	26.71 %	7.42 %
	M	3,878	73.29 %	20.38 %
		5,291		
5	F	1,010	26.13 %	5.31 %
	M	2,856	73.87 %	15.01 %
		3,866		
Overall Male Ratio:		68.82%		
Overall Female Ratio:		31.18%		
Total Count:		19,031		

This chart is longitudinal data from preschool parents collected by the Stuttering Foundation over a period of more than 20 years.



or poorly conductive brain neural pathways presenting interferences in the young child's efficient brain functioning that may be reflected in observable difficulties. Could this also pertain to stuttering? These faulty neurons, however, are gradually eliminated, a biological process known as neural pruning. More than 20 years ago, neural pruning was offered by Yairi and Ambrose (2005) as a possible explanation of a biologically-based natural recovery from stuttering.

Finally, important information about persistent stuttering may be uncovered by studying upper age groups — people who have stuttered for many years into advanced ages. Perhaps they exhibit more pronounced characteristics that reveal differences not easily identifiable in the typical child or young adult who stutters. All-in-all, the above notes serve to highlight the role of age in the onset and development of stuttering research, gender distribution, awareness and emotional components, natural recovery data, clinical evaluation and prognosis, and more. Although knowledge is accumulating, much remains to be learned.



by EHUD YAIRI, Ph.D., University of Illinois

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When did you start rooting for George Springer?

I started rooting for George Springer when I was 6 years old. I was already a huge baseball fan and the Astros were my favorite team then. I knew who George Springer was, but once I found out that he stuttered like me it made him my favorite player forever!

Once he got traded, did you still root for him?

Yes! I was excited when he signed with the Blue Jays. I'll always cheer for George Springer wherever he plays! The Blue Jays are my favorite team now, they have an awesome team.

How many times have you met him?

I have been so lucky to officially meet George Springer three times now. I got to talk to him twice in Anaheim at Angel Stadium and once when I went to a Blue Jays game at Rogers Centre in Toronto. I also got to do an interview with him on the MLB Network one time to talk about stuttering, which was a really awesome experience. Ever since I first met George in 2019, I go to see him play every time the Blue Jays come to Angel Stadium. I bring my same "Springer, I Stutter Too" sign and I sit by where he plays in right field. He always waves at me, runs over to quickly ask me how I am, or give me a high five. He is always so nice to me!

What did he say to you about stuttering?

George always tells me to embrace it and that it is okay to stutter. He says I should embrace my stuttering, enjoy life, and not let something that I can't control stop me from being who I want to be or from saying what I want to say. I got "Embrace It" embroidered onto my own baseball glove to always remind me of the advice he gave me.

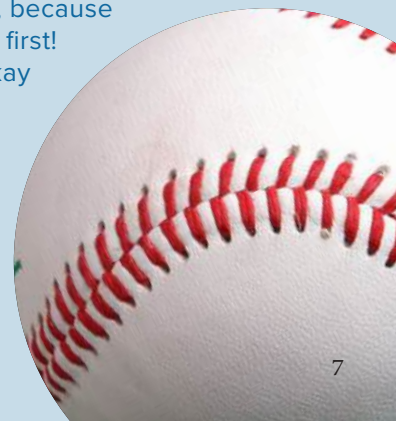
How do you feel knowing an All-Star like him also stutters?

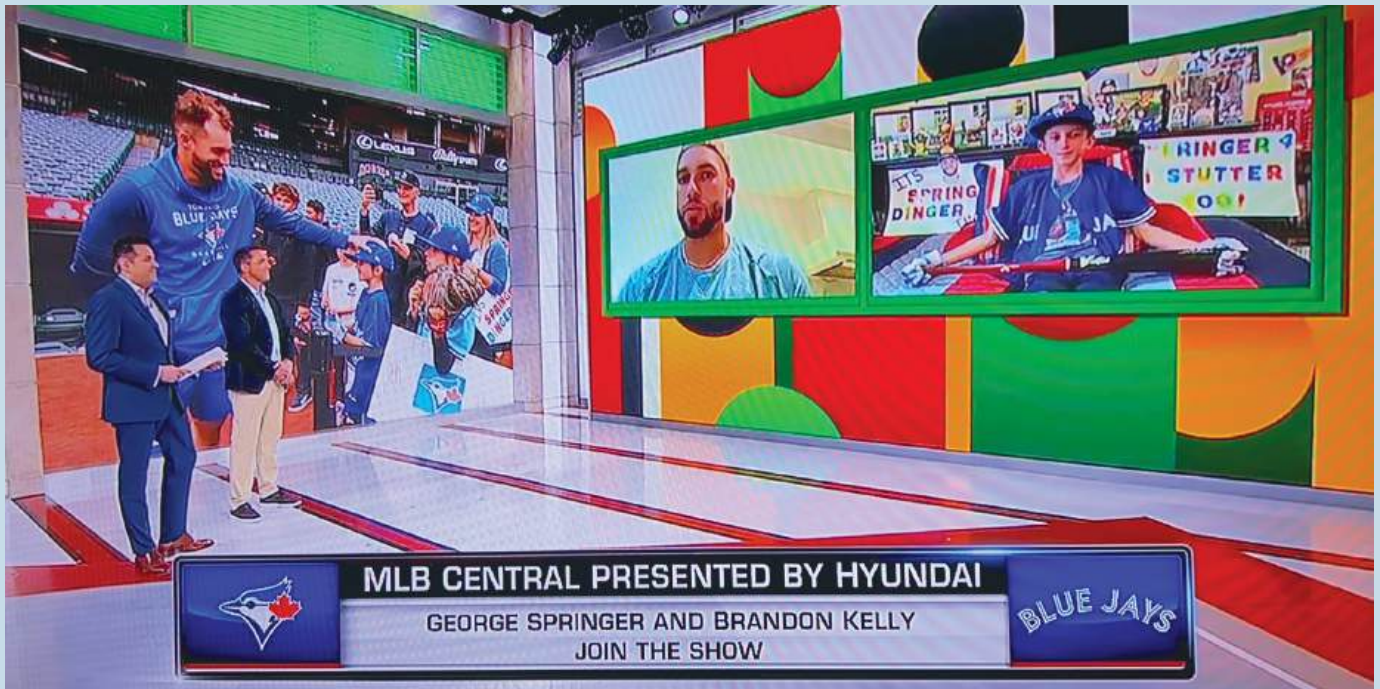
Knowing that an MLB star like George Springer stutters like me is so inspiring to me. Before I first met George, I felt really alone with my stuttering because I had never met someone else who stutters. For him to take the time to talk to me about stuttering and encourage me has really changed how I feel about my stuttering. Plus, I love to play baseball and I wear #4 just like George. It is so cool that right now in the playoffs and World Series I get to watch my favorite player make baseball history, and then get to watch him go and talk to all the reporters on television all over the world. It is so cool and inspiring to watch him embrace his own stuttering – just like he tells me to do -- as he talks to the reporters. George Springer really is my hero on the field and off for all the support he gives to kids who stutter.



How do you feel about working on stuttering with Loryn McGill?

Miss Loryn is also awesome. She is the one speech therapist who has always taught me it is okay to stutter. She teaches me to always speak up for myself and disclose my stuttering to others. Like, it was her idea that I should make a sign to tell George Springer that I stutter like him. She helped me have the courage to make that sign tell everyone in the stadium that I stutter, because I was nervous about it at first! Sometimes I am more okay with my stuttering and sometimes I really don't like it, but Miss Loryn is always supportive and encourages me that I can do anything.





Can you name something about your stutter that you are proud to have worked on?

I am proud that I have worked on embracing my stuttering and not being afraid to disclose my stuttering to other people. Last year I ran for student council at school and had to give a speech. I started my speech by telling everyone that I stutter and that they may hear me stutter, but that it was okay and the important thing was what I had to say about why they should vote for me. I did stutter in my speech, but it made me feel less nervous that I had already told everyone about it. I won the election! Then later that year all my classmates and teachers voted me the “Most Inspirational Student” which was really amazing.

What advice would you give to a 6-year-old who has a stutter to help them?

I would tell a 6-year-old that it is okay to stutter and to embrace their stutter. I'd tell them not to be afraid to talk in public or at school in front of other people. If someone makes fun of you, just advocate for yourself because they may not know what stuttering is.

Do you think George Springer will win another World Series?

Yes!!!! I know George will hit even more “Springer Dingers” and help the Blue Jays win the World Series! Let's go #4 and Blue Jays!!



MEET THE SLP

SFA Interview with Loryn McGill, M.S.CCC-SLP; Speech and Language Pathologist; Owner, OC Stuttering Center; Faculty, University of Southern California



How long have you worked with Brandon?

I have worked with Brandon for 6 years.

How did you integrate his love of baseball and George Springer into your work with him?

I strive to connect with every person I work with on a genuine and personal level. Building trust and rapport is an integral part of the therapeutic process; making each client feel truly seen and valued for who they are. From the moment I met Brandon and he was proudly wearing his Astros gear, I knew we had to connect in this way. To this day he provides me with a weekly sports update keeping me informed about who is playing who and player statistics. Let's just say that I know a lot about baseball thanks to him! It is great that we have continued to learn from each other and finding that shared connection has been such a special and rewarding part of our work together.

The SFA maintains a list of famous people who stutter, including athletes and other celebrities—how helpful is it for students to have a “role model” they can look up to and/or identify with?

Having role models who stutter openly and speak confidently about their experiences can be truly life changing. Many young people who stutter may not have the chance to meet others who sound like them, so seeing someone embrace their stutter offers a powerful glimpse into what's possible for the future. It shows that stuttering doesn't define or limit who you can become, it's simply one part of who you are. When someone shares their stuttering journey with openness and authenticity, they send a message that resonates deeply; you can chase your dreams, lead with confidence, and still stutter. They remind us that real strength isn't about hiding our stutter; it's about owning it. They show us that our voices, exactly as they are, deserve to be heard.

How has Brandon progressed through your work with him?

I have watched Brandon gain immense confidence in who he is as a young person who stutters. Although his journey has not been without challenges, he has shown incredible resilience in navigating the variability that comes with stuttering. What was once his biggest secret has now become a source of inspiration for others, and for himself and I am deeply proud of him for that. Connecting with George has been a special part of his stuttering journey, and I am grateful for the positive influence he has had in Brandon's life. When faced with difficult moments, we often ask, “What would George do?”, and sometimes that simple question is all it takes for Brandon to find courage and move forward.





OUR GREAT AMERICAN STUTTERING^G PRESIDENTS



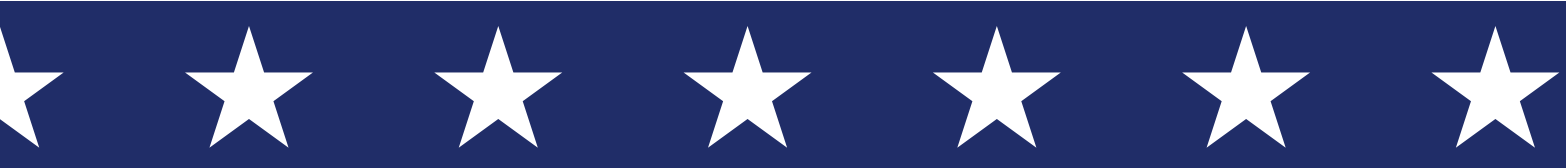
JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.
46TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
JANUARY 20, 2021 – JANUARY 20, 2025

Former U.S. President Joe Biden is widely known to have struggled with stuttering early in his life. However, he is not the only president who faced this challenge. Gerald R. Ford, the 38th president, also stuttered, and there is significant evidence suggesting that Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd president, did as well.

Joe Biden’s public statements about his past stuttering have been numerous and are well known. While serving in the U.S. Senate in the mid-1980’s, he first began to publicly talk about childhood experiences with stuttering. In fact, a 1986 editorial in the Washington Post noted that Biden had publicly discussed his childhood stutter and the hardships he endured speaking publicly in school.

During his 1988 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, he frequently discussed his past struggles with stuttering. This topic would become a recurring theme in his subsequent national campaigns. He told how he practiced his speech by reading poetry alone in front of a mirror, as well as practicing cadences.

During his successful 2020 run for president, he invoked the topic of stuttering countless times, of which one of the most memorable was meeting 13-year-old Brayden Harrington on the campaign trail in New Hampshire. He gave Brayden a hug and said, “Don’t let this define you, you’re smart as hell.” Later, Brayden Harrington was invited to address the Democratic National Convention that summer.



Gerald R. Ford, the 38th President of the United States, was born Leslie Lynch King, Jr., on July 14, 1913, in Omaha, Nebraska, he was raised exclusively in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He would take the name of his mother's second husband, Gerald R. Ford. He attended the University of Michigan where he played for the school's football team and afterwards went on to graduate from Yale Law School.

After service in the U.S. Naval Reserve from 1942-1946, Ford began a political career in 1949 as the U.S. representative from Michigan's 5th congressional district, a seat he held for nearly 25 years, the final nine of them as House minority leader. In December 1973, two months after Spiro Agnew's resignation, Ford became the first person appointed to the vice presidency under the terms of the 25th Amendment. After the subsequent resignation of President Nixon on August 9, 1974, Ford assumed the presidency.

Gerald Rudolph Ford Jr. served as president from 1974-1977. He was defeated for election to a full term by Jimmy Carter in 1976 in a close election. Ford is the only person to become U.S. president without winning an election for president or vice president. He died in 2006 at age 93.

President Ford's stuttering is not as well documented as that of President Biden, as he did not refer to it in public or on the campaign trail. An April 20, 2023, Wall Street Journal book review "An Ordinary Man Review: Underestimating Gerald Ford" brought to light that President Gerald Ford struggled with stuttering in elementary school and junior high.

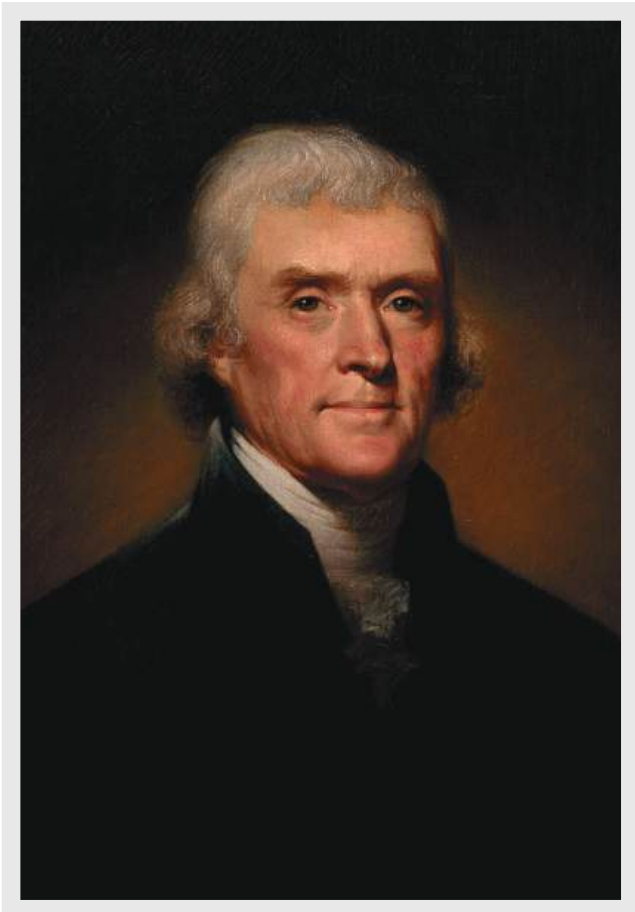
The 2023 biography *An Ordinary Man: The Surprising Life and Historic Presidency of Gerald R. Ford* by Richard Norton Smith discussed how President Ford's childhood was affected by stuttering. Smith summarized Ford's issues with stuttering and when describing his childhood, wrote that it was "compounded by a severe case of stuttering that plagued the boy for years."



GERALD R. FORD
38TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
AUGUST 9, 1974 – JANUARY 20, 1977

Some years prior to the publication of Smith's book, the topic received coverage in a December 28, 2006, article in The Washington Post, "The Homegrown Decency of Gerald Ford," which gave an interesting synopsis of how he dealt with his debilitating stutter, "Young Jerry also had a stuttering problem. By the time he reached high school, however, the stutter was gone, as if he had miraculously laid it in his hand and flung it across a nearby lake."

Sources cite that the young Ford practiced speech exercises and forced himself to participate in school debates where he gained confidence speaking in front of people, which would set the foundation for his future political career and subsequent presidency.



THOMAS JEFFERSON
3RD PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
MARCH 4, 1801 – MARCH 4, 1809

The internet abounds with articles that cite Jefferson's speech impediments of a partial stutter and a slight lisp, as well as his name on lists of famous people who stutter. In addition, he was known to have a high-pitched, weak voice. All of these factors created a lifelong aversion to public speaking. The third president of the United States, who served from 1801-1809, broke tradition by submitting his annual messages to Congress in writing rather than delivering them in person.

The 2010 biography *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* by Fawn M. Brodie addressed Jefferson's poor communication skills and how he stumbled over his words, "Jefferson himself was never eloquent in speechmaking, only in writing, in committees, and in quiet conversation. For some reason, perhaps having to do with a fear and tension that began in his childhood, when he began to speak in public his voice 'sank into his throat' and became 'guttural and inarticulate'. Surprisingly, in view of his great popularity as president, he gave almost no public speeches, save for his inaugural addresses, which he read in a low mumble that the audience barely heard."

Thomas Jefferson: A Life by Thomas S. Randall, a 2014, further expounds on his speaking difficulties, "He loved conversation, but he couldn't make a speech; mumbling, he became tongue-tied when he made extemporaneous remarks. Perhaps as one result, Jefferson lionized Indians, 'a people with whom, in the early part of my life, I was very familiar,' who naturally excelled at both conversation and public speaking. In *Notes on the State of Virginia*, he praised and quoted the rhetoric of Indians."

Thomas Jefferson's stutter was apparently not severe and could not be documented considering the lack of media during the years of his presidency, but it was a factor in both his life and his presidency.

While to some degree the stuttering remains the only disability that is mocked and ridiculed, it is important that the public knows that there have been three presidents of the United States who have struggled with stuttering, especially as this fact can give inspiration to young people who are dealing with the trials and tribulations of stuttering on a daily basis.



STUTTERING FOUNDATION CELEBRITY CORNER

HARVEY KEITEL

Harvey Keitel isn't among the most well-known actors who have had issues with stuttering, yet he has never shied away from revealing what a factor stuttering has been throughout his life.

Harvey Keitel was born in Brooklyn on May 13, 1939, and spent his formative years in that borough's Brighton Beach neighborhood. His parents were Jewish immigrants, his mother from Romania and his father from Poland. He was the youngest in his family, having an older sister Renee and an older brother Jerry. His parents owned and operated a neighborhood luncheonette, while his father also worked in a hat factory.

Growing up in a strict Orthodox Jewish household, his teenage years presented a problem for him as it was the era of Marlon Brando, James Dean and Elvis Presley. Following his bar mitzvah, he began to reject his Jewish faith and dress like kids who would be perceived as "juvenile delinquents" with the "duck's ass" hairstyle, the leather jacket, and the peg pants set off by pointy shoes with metal cleats that could announce his arrival from a block away.

Keitel knew that he was not the only kid from Brooklyn who argued with his parents about dressing like a hood. However, his masquerade as a would-be hoodlum came to an abrupt end when he left high school without graduating and at age 17 joined the U.S. Marines where he served as an infantry rifleman from 1956-1959. He was deployed to Lebanon in 1958 during the U.S. intervention known as Operation Blue Bat, which aimed to stabilize the country during political unrest.

Upon his discharge from the Marines, Keitel began a ten-year career as a court stenographer in New York City. It was during this time that he began acting classes on a whim in 1964. The rest is history.

He would study under both Stella Adler and Lee Strasberg, as well as at the HB Studio. Around this time, he was cast in his first movie role, as the star of Martin Scorsese's first feature film *Who's That Knocking on My Door* in 1967, beginning the first of many collaborations with Scorsese. In 1973, he starred in Scorsese's highly acclaimed film *Mean Streets*. In 1974 and 1976 he would team up with Scorsese again in *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* and *Taxi Driver*, respectively.

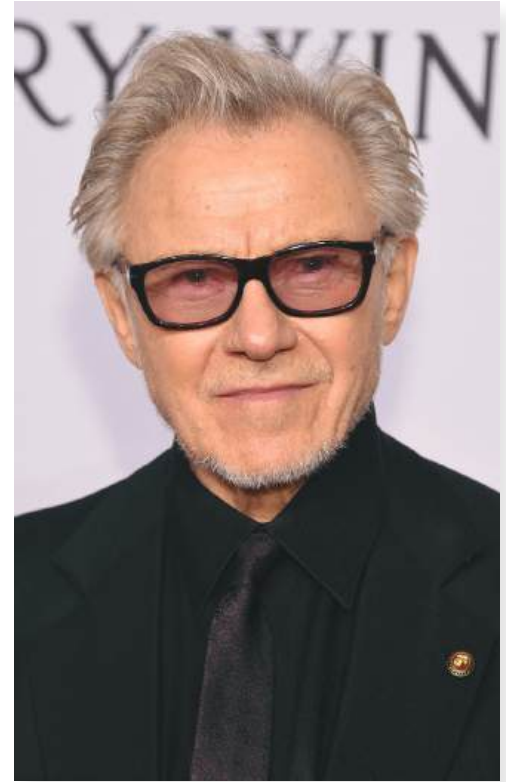


PHOTO CREDIT: Photo by Michael/Loccisano/Getty Images

*Harvey Keitel is an American actor known for his intense performances and major influence on both independent and mainstream films. He gained recognition through collaborations with Martin Scorsese in *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver*, and later starred in acclaimed movies like *Pulp Fiction* and *Reservoir Dogs*. Over his long career, he has built a reputation for playing complex, gritty characters and helping shape modern cinema.*



Cybill Shepherd, Martin Scorsese, Robert De Niro, Jodie Foster and Harvey Keitel pose at the "Taxi Driver" 40th anniversary screening during the 2016 Tribeca Film Festival at Beacon Theatre on April 21, 2016 in New York City. (Photo by Larry Busacca/Getty Images for Tribeca Film Festival)

Keitel was originally hired to play Captain Willard in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, but a few weeks into the shooting, Coppola did not like Keitel's portrayal and replaced him with Martin Sheen.

A comprehensive look at Keitel's career would be a volume in itself, but he has appeared in countless major movies. From 1985-1988, he was one of the busiest actors in Hollywood, appearing in 16 films and television movies. In 1991 he was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role as Mickey Cohen in *Bugsy*. His high-profile roles over the years are numerous: *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), *The Two Jakes* (1990), *Thelma & Louise* (1991), *Sister Act* (1992), *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), *Bad Lieutenant* (1992), *The Piano* (1993), *Clockers* (1995), *Little Nicky* (2000), *U-571* (2000), *National Treasure* (2004), *National Treasure: Book of Secrets* (2007), *Three Seasons* (1999), *Holy Smoke!* (1999), *Taking Sides* (2001), *The Grey Zone* (2001), and *The Irishman* (2019).

Over the many years of his career, Keitel has not been shy about disclosing his history of stuttering. The biography *Harvey Keitel: The Art of Darkness* contains a major passage about his speech odyssey:

Home life was something else: 'I've had many problems in my life that I've had to get through, beginning with being a little boy,' Keitel observed.

Such as the fact that he began stuttering at the age of six or seven, a problem that carried on into his teens. What is a painful and emotionally challenging period in anyone's life became excruciating for a young man who stuttered:

'It was a huge, huge, deep, deep, embarrassment, the object of humiliation by other children.

It took years to go away. I still stutter at times. The stutter is the result of something else. It's sort of a road to your identity. It's a clue about something, it's a clue about disturbance.'

'It was very painful because I was shy to begin with. Confrontation means asserting yourself. Stuttering is an attempt to stop the assertion of the self. I can't think of anything more frustrating or more detrimental to evolving than not allowing yourself whatever thought comes to mind.'

In an October 18, 1992, article in the Los Angeles Times, "Leaps of Faith: Harvey Keitel's Search for God Often Involves Confronting His Darker Self," Keitel's stuttering is addressed when the article describes how in 1964, in the fifth year of his ten year career as a court stenographer, he agreed to a friend's suggestion that they go for acting lessons. The article stated, "Though Keitel had struggled with a stuttering problem since childhood, he agreed to give it a shot."

In "Harvey Keitel: What I've Learned", a January 24, 2016, profile in *Esquire*, the proud native of Brooklyn addressed his stuttering by saying, "When I was a little boy I had a stutter. I still stutter, but much less. Back then it was a real champion stutter. In time it faded away, for the most part. Now it seems to be returning a little bit. Maybe because I'm so fatigued. I don't mean just now, but in these years."

Harvey Keitel spoke about his stuttering on national television in an interview on *CBS Sunday Morning* with co-host Anthony Mason on December 15, 2019. When asked about his "pretty nasty" childhood stutter, Keitel responded, "You can hear it now." When Anthony Mason said that he could not, he said matter-of-factly, "Then I'm doing a good job of hiding it."

He began, "It was terrible. It was awful. Kids make fun of you; your friends make fun of you – we're all kids. But it was terrible."

He continued, "I always wished there was something I could come up with that could help heal young people that do have a bad stutter. I think about it constantly... and the only thing I've ever been able to come up with is awareness – trying to become aware – in the literature, in the arts – awareness might help them."

"Stuttering is an attempt to stop the assertion of the self. I can't think of anything more frustrating or more detrimental to evolving than not allowing yourself whatever thought comes to mind."

When Anthony Mason asked the actor how he conquered it, he responded, "I stuttered. I stuttered in the Marine Corps – not as badly as I did as a child... I just stuttered at times. As a child, I stuttered all the time.... in the Marines just rarely. There was no one way I conquered it. It was just ... what I am saying now, the best advice I could give as the result of my experience is awareness of yourself."

He continued with, "Mine slowly went away... if 20, 25 years, slowing going away, and painfully so." He also contended that stuttering never entered into his acting, "I never stuttered acting, sort of like you hear me now. It never interfered with acting. No, no, no."

In a September 12, 1995, interview with the Washington Post, Keitel was quoted as saying, "The only true recognition is the work itself. You don't need to be nominated for an Oscar to be recognized for your work." This statement by the actor can be viewed as a universal theme as people who stutter navigate the minefields of speech every day in their chosen professions.

Harvey Keitel's fascinating life from high school rebel to U.S. Marine to court stenographer to famous actor is nothing short of fascinating in light of the fact that he had to manage his speech all along the way. His story is an inspiration to people who stutter to persevere and not to let stuttering hold them back from their aspirations in terms of a profession.

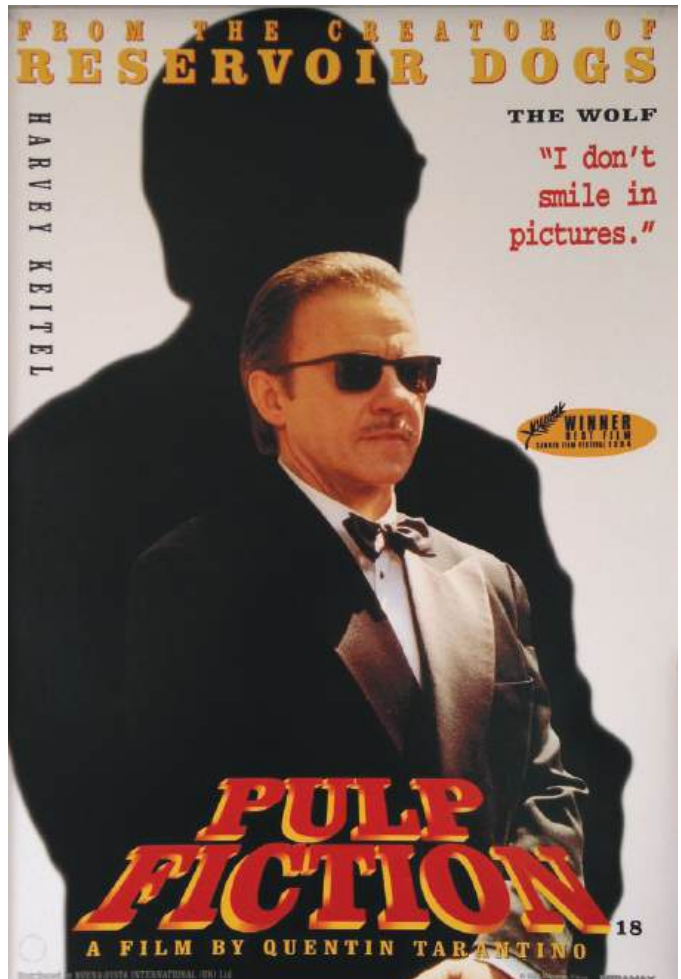


Photo by Mike Coppola/Getty Images

THE STUTTERING STOIC:

How an Ancient Philosophy Helped Me Find My Voice

a new novel by Vince Vawter

Vince Vawter, renowned for his Newbery Honor-winning work, has captured the essence of personal struggle and philosophical exploration in his latest book, "The Stuttering Stoic: How an Ancient Philosophy Helped Me Find My Voice."

This new release invites readers on a journey that intertwines the timeless teachings of Stoicism with the realities of stuttering.

Vawter's literary contributions, including his autobiographical trilogy—"Paperboy," "Copyboy," and "Manboy"—delve deep into themes of identity, acceptance, and resilience, anchored in his lifetime of experiences in the newspaper industry and beyond.

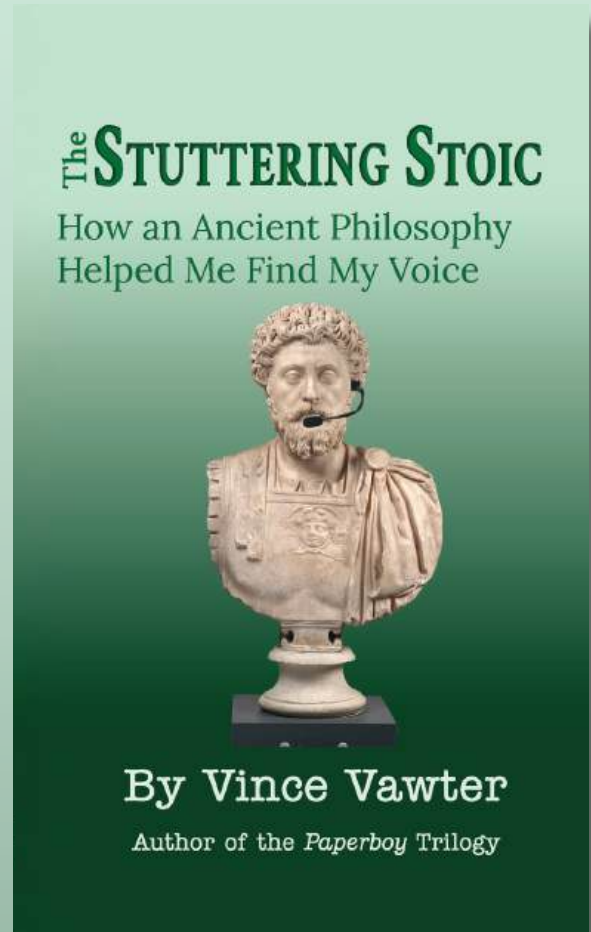
A TRILOGY ROOTED IN REALITY: UNDERSTANDING STUTTERING THROUGH FICTION

Those who follow the Stuttering Foundation's social channels and magazine are no stranger to the literary works of Vince Vawter—we've written about his achievements many times.

Vawter's trilogy offered an insightful narrative arc that mirrors his own life. "Paperboy" introduces Victor Vollmer, an 11-year-old navigating the mysteries of stuttering. Vawter vividly recounts his own childhood experiences, like the time he passed out while trying to say his name or the thumbtack he pressed into his palm to counteract his stutter during public speaking. These anecdotes highlight the authenticity that permeates his storytelling.

In "Copyboy," Victor is 17, stepping toward independence as his stutter recedes slightly.

By the time readers reach "Manboy," Victor is 21, grappling with acceptance and identity. Set against the historical backdrop of April 1968, "Manboy" reflects the tumult of its era, paralleling Victor's internal struggles with external chaos. Through Victor, Vawter paints a portrait of growth, illustrating that finding one's voice is an ongoing journey, not a destination.



THE STUTTERING STOIC: EMBRACING ANCIENT WISDOM

In "The Stuttering Stoic," Vawter ventures into nonfiction and explores how Stoic philosophy provided him with tools to navigate life's challenges.

He explains, "When I read the Stoics, they were talking about my stutter." The teachings of Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and Seneca serve as a guide for understanding how to live well even when faced with persistent obstacles. Vawter emphasizes that the book isn't about a cure but about learning to live with stuttering and valuing the journey.

Vawter offers gratitude to the speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who have played crucial roles in his life and in the lives of many others. He recalls the early days of therapy, noting the significant advancements in the field.

His deep appreciation for Malcolm Fraser and the Stuttering Foundation is also evident. Vawter describes Fraser's seminal book "Self-Therapy for the Stutterer" as a pivotal influence, revealing, "Malcolm is my hero."

This book marked the beginning of Vawter's path to becoming more comfortable with his stutter, allowing light to shine on what was once hidden in darkness.

BEYOND THE BOOKS: ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

In retirement, Vawter dedicates his time to advocacy, engaging with schools, reading groups, and stuttering organizations. His commitment to sharing his experiences and raising awareness about stuttering remains steadfast. He emphasizes that knowing "you are not alone" can be transformative for those who stutter and those who support them.

CONCLUSION: FINDING STRENGTH IN VULNERABILITY

Vince Vawter's literary works and life's philosophy offer a profound look into the complexities of identity, communication, and personal growth. By weaving his experiences with the wisdom of Stoicism, Vawter redefines what it means to find one's voice. His stories inspire readers to embrace their unique journeys with dignity and resilience, proving that our greatest struggles can indeed be our most powerful teachers.



The Stuttering Stoic: How an Ancient Philosophy Helped Me Find My Voice is available in paperback and for Kindle on Amazon. For more information about Vince Vawter, visit <https://www.vincevawter.com/>



STUTTERING FOUNDATION CELEBRITY CORNER

CHARLIE SHEEN

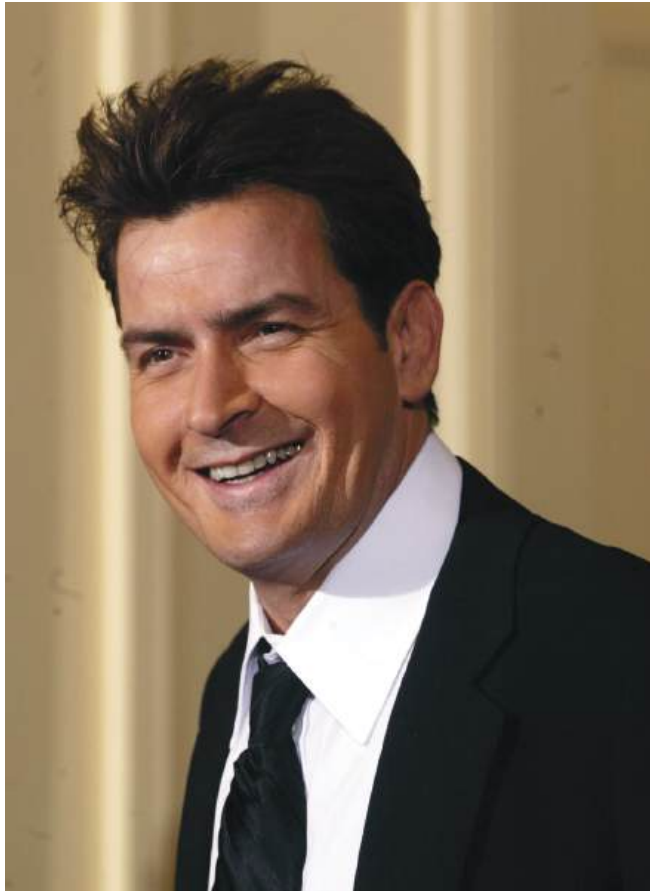


Photo by Carlo Allegri/Getty Images

*Charlie Sheen is an American actor best known for his roles in TV and film, especially the hit sitcom *Two and a Half Men*. He rose to fame in the 1980s with movies like *Platoon* and *Wall Street*, showcasing a mix of charm and intensity. Despite his professional success, his career has often been overshadowed by highly publicized personal struggles, including substance abuse and legal issues.*

Very few famous actors in history have created as much controversy in both their careers and private lives as Charlie Sheen. While his controversial lifestyle and battles with addiction are well-known, what has not been part of his public history is his lifelong struggle with stuttering. In an interview with Michael Strahan on ABC's *Good Morning America* on September 8, 2025, on the occasion of the publication of his book *The Book of Sheen: A Memoir*, the actor made headlines by saying that his addiction to alcohol started because he began drinking because alcohol gave him freedom of speech by smoothing the rough edges of his stuttering. He also said that when he began starring in the hit sitcom *Spin City*, for the first time in his life he stopped hiding his stuttering. With Sheen's history with alcohol abuse well-known in the media, his statement about his stuttering beginning his downward cycle into drinking generated high-profile news articles both in print and on the internet all throughout the world.

Charlie Sheen was born Carlos Irwin Estevez on September 3, 1965, in New York City, the youngest son of actor Martin Sheen and artist Janet Templeton. His three siblings, brothers Emilio and Ramon and sister Renee, are also actors. When embarking on an acting career in 1983, he chose the screen name of Charlie Sheen.

After growing up in Malibu and attending Santa Monica High School, where he was a star pitcher and shortstop on the varsity baseball team, he made the decision to follow his father and older brother Emilio Estevez into acting. He had spent a good part of his childhood in foreign locations where his father was acting in films, including a year in the Philippines when his father was filming *Apocalypse Now*, which was released in August 1979.

The young Sheen first came on the radar screen in the teen drama *Red Dawn* in 1984, but his major breakthrough was in a small scene in the 1986 John Hughes classic *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* in which he had a memorable role as a

juvenile delinquent in a police station. Also in 1986, he had his breakthrough role in Oliver Stone's Vietnam War drama *Platoon*, for which the actor received widespread critical acclaim, as the film itself won four Oscars including the Academy Award for Best Picture. The next year he teamed up with Oliver Stone again to star in the box-office smash *Wall Street* with both Michael Douglas and his father.

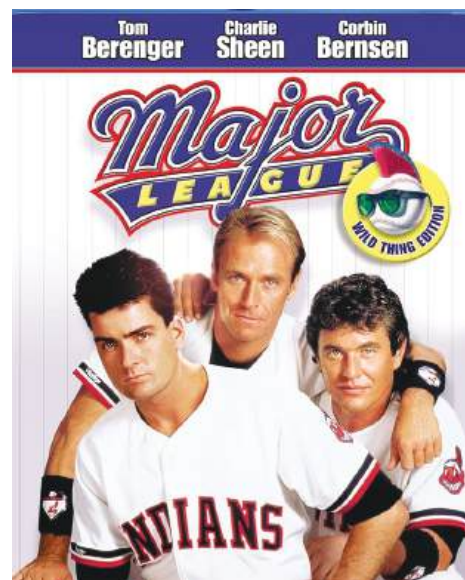
Many high-profile movies followed such as *No Man's Land*, *Eight Men Out*, *Young Guns*, *Major League*, and *The Three Musketeers*. Charlie Sheen's high-profile career, as well as his controversial private life, cannot be covered in full in this article as the focus is to address his life as a person who stutters.

Charlie Sheen's career took a major pivot in 2000 when he shifted to television taking over the starring role in the show *Spin City* for that show's fifth and sixth seasons when star Michael J. Fox had to leave the show due to failing health. In his starring role as New York City Deputy Mayor Charlie Crawford, he won a Golden Globe Award for Best Lead Actor in a Television Series – Comedy or Musical in 2002. Following *Spin City*, Sheen signed on to the cast of the CBS sitcom *Two and a Half Men*, on which he played Charlie Harper from 2003-2011. In his final years on the show, Sheen was the highest paid actor on television, pulling in \$2 million per episode.

Sheen's stuttering was brought to the forefront in a June 21, 2012, *Rolling Stone* in-depth article titled "Still Crazy After All These Years", in which the actor described how his stuttering began around the same time as a run-in with a couple of schoolyard bullies. "I was in second or third grade and Emilio was in sixth grade and we were waiting to be picked up. And these two kids were just awful, awful kids, so mean and violent. They didn't do anything to us. But the stuff they described they were going to do to was even worse. 'We're going to toss you over the fence and watch your brains splatter. We're going to poke your eyes out.' Just horrible stuff to say to a seven-year-old. I remember thinking, "We're going to die. These guys are going to kill us."

Sheen claims that as a result he started having panic attacks, and then one day found himself stuttering. "It was awful. Picture this: In school, they call on you, and out of nowhere – I just stopped answering. I knew all the answers, but I stopped raising my hand. I got real quiet for the longest time."

Furthermore, an April 9, 2015, article "Charlie Sheen's Grammar Anxiety" in the *Daily Telegraph* stated that *Two and a Half Men* co-star Jon Cryer's memoir cited that Sheen became the most nervous when they had to do table-reads of a script because of his stutter.





"Two and a Half Men" cast members, Melanie Lynskey, Jon Cryer, Angus T. Jones, Charlie Sheen, Marin Hinkle, Holland Taylor and Conchata Ferrell, winners of the "Favorite TV Comedy" award pose in the press room during the 33rd Annual People's Choice Awards held at the Shrine Auditorium on January 9, 2007 in Los Angeles, California. (Photo by Stephen Shugerman/Getty Images)

His memoir *The Book of Sheen* describes an incident when his speech difficulties were first noticeable in class. The teacher asked a question and he raised his hand to answer and tried three times in earnest to say something but nothing came out. He wrote, "How could this be? During kickball, I could speak, yell, and laugh. Why now can't I wrap speech around a basic word, a simple sound? Was I dying? Is this the first sign? When the laughter and catcalls erupted, I wished I was dying."

In the memoir, Sheen refers to his stuttering as "Stutter-Ghoul". When assessing the prospects of his new starring role in *Spin City*, he stated, "If *Spin* was gonna be my vehicle to a glorious comeback, Stutter-Ghoul was the bomb wired to the chassis."

The actor described how he was sold a fluency device for two thousand dollars that he was to wear on his right ear, which he described as looking like a hearing aid from the 1960's, "riding the temple like a small plastic banana." He described how the "speech gizmo" utilized specific vibrations to interrupt a stutter, with any sound in the throat activating an inner-ear buzzing to give the "fear-word" a nudge. "I was told after I made the purchase that most people used the contraption at home for a couple of weeks before they felt confident with it out in the world. I had it about forty hours, and there I was, trying to act normal with a giant invisible bumblebee in my skull. I was a goner for sure."

"The first episode involved a dental theme with the mayor and had no less than six or seven trouble spots in the dialogue. To clarify, a trouble spot is a

fear-word I'd gotten stuck on in the past. My specific type of stuttering wasn't (isn't) the classic style we've all witnessed at some point, where the same letter is buh, buh, buh like an engine that won't turn over. The card that I drew is a lot more subtle – halting that fear-word into locked silence before any sound makes it to the ignition. When that happens in a film setting, it's a thousand times worse. Everyone on the set knows the word because they're reading it – waiting for what feels like forever.... Speech prison is a nightmare. There is no time off for good behavior, there is no clemency. I wish it upon no one – myself most of all."

Sheen goes on to describe how he debated for two days to tell the director and producer of *Spin City* about his speech limitations and ask for special considerations in terms of some word changes but feared the stigma and judgement that comes with stuttering. Finally, he ditched the fluency device and called a meeting with the director and producer, who were sympathetic to his situation and gladly adhered to his request to allow some word substitutions in the scripts. "They came to my dressing room – I spilled the beh, beh, beans. As uncomfortable as it felt to expose part of myself, it was equally as liberating."

The openness that the actor courageously displayed during his time with *Spin City* proved to be successful and motivated him



2026: IN MEMORIAM

to do the same when he signed on to do *Two and a Half Men* in 2003. He informed Chuck Lorre, the show's co-creator and producer/writer, right away about his stuttering. In the memoir, Sheen wrote, "Before we shot the pilot, I gave my "stutter speech" (my least favorite oxymoron) to Chuck and his writing partner, Lee. Spin had empowered me to stop shying away from it, and they both seemed willing to have my back. There were a few moments early on when the ghoul got me, but we were able to sneak past it with a couple of word-trades. Jon (Cryer) was a champ with that stuff and even volunteered once or thrice to alleviate my struggle and take the whole damn line. It's worth pointing out: My stand in on the show, Jimmy M, is also a stutterer. We'd compare notes and most of the time have the same fear-words underlined in the script. It didn't solve things for either of us, but it was pretty kool to have a fellow ghoul-mate close by."

Sheen elaborated, "I'd be thrilled if this book wound up serving as type of a clarion call, announcing my brain glitch to the world. To walk into a high-stakes job in the future and have my new workplace already aware of this awful curse would be like a gift to no other."

While the then highest paid actor in tv history has been open about how alcohol use helped him in terms of curbing his stuttering, in the memoir he makes clear that when he was abusing Norco (Vicodin 2.0) during the years on *Two and a Half Men*, these pills made his stuttering a lot worse.

While Charlie Sheen's career has had some ups and downs, he always seems to make a comeback, and the stuttering community can only wish that he makes another striking comeback. The fact that he has been so open about his lifelong struggles with stuttering put a human face on the speech problem and foster a greater public understanding. Having such a high-profile celebrity as Charlie Sheen identify as a person who stutters helps young people who are struggling with the speech issue. His personal statements about his past and ongoing experiences with stuttering are ones that will resonate with many people in the stuttering community.

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

MEET A FUTURE SUPERSTAR: JESSE FINDLING

SEASON 24 CONTESTANT ON AMERICAN IDOL

See p. 25 for an update and advice from season 12 *Idol* contestant, Lazaro Arbos!



DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU FIRST BEGAN TO STUTTER?

I have always had a stutter. I remember having one ever since elementary school. It made me super shy, and I would never raise my hand in class. It was in elementary school when I first started speech therapy. Two times a week, I would go to the school speech therapist, and that was my favorite time of the day because I could speak freely. It was something I struggled with because I was scared of being perceived, and at such a young age I didn't understand what it was or why I had it.

DOES IT RUN IN YOUR FAMILY?

My brother also has a stutter. It's something he has struggled with as well, and he also tried speech therapy. I would say his is less severe, but it's been great being able to talk to him about stuttering. We both understand what it's like living with a stutter and having each other to talk about it is really special.

HAVE YOU HAD ANY SPEECH THERAPY OR COUNSELING AND HAS IT HELPED?

I have had speech therapy! I started going to speech therapy in elementary school. It was during school, and it really helped me. My speech therapist's name was Judy, and she taught me a lot of techniques and showed me breathing exercises to calm myself down. Knowing I could speak freely when I was talking to her made me feel safe. As I got older, I still went to speech therapy, but not as often. There were times when my stutter was worse than normal, and when I felt like I needed help, I would tell my parents I wanted to see a speech therapist. I worked with Lee Caggiano, who was very well known in the stuttering community. She was the cofounder and director of Friends: The National Association of Young People Who

Stutter. She unfortunately passed away a few years ago, but she was the most kind and accepting human. She was so helpful and would urge me to disclose my stutter in everyday activities. She really helped me with the confidence side of stuttering and helped me accept my stutter and embrace it. I worked with her for about a year or so. Now, if I find myself struggling with my stutter, I'm never scared to look for another speech therapist. Asking for help is not a weakness—it is a strength.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH STUTTERING AS A CHILD.

There were a lot of ups and downs with my experience having a stutter when I was little. Even with my friends who knew I stuttered, it was still embarrassing for me to stutter in front of them. I would know the answer to questions in class, and I would want to share my thoughts, but I decided to stay quiet. I had been laughed at a few times in class and even had a teacher say something mean. It only took small things like that to keep me from participating. I didn't know many other people who stuttered, so I felt alone. Looking back, especially knowing now how many amazing foundations and organizations there are for stuttering, I wish I would have been a part of them and been more involved in the stuttering community.

HAS YOUR STUTTERING GOTTEN WORSE OR BETTER SINCE YOU WERE YOUNGER?

Stuttering is different for everyone, which is so fascinating to me. There have been times in my life when my stutter has been more severe than others. I've also learned that my stutter is connected to stress. When I am more nervous, I tend to stutter more frequently. I think at times in my life when I was more stressed—whether that was because I was taking hard classes in school or for other reasons—I had a harder time with stuttering.

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

I would say three things: 1. take a breath when you feel it coming or even if you are stuck, 2. people can wait for you to speak, and 3. don't give up.

HOW DOES STUTTERING AFFECT YOU IN YOUR PURSUIT OF SINGING?

It really doesn't. Singing has always been an outlet for me because I don't stutter when I sing. So, singing has always felt like an escape—a way for me to express myself and feel free without fear of judgment or perception.

HOW IS YOUR STUTTERING TODAY?

I still have a stutter today, but I can confidently say that I am in control of it and it doesn't control me. For so many years, it was something I wished would disappear, but now I realize it is something that makes me who I am. It is the least important thing about me, and once I came to that realization, it stopped affecting me in a negative way. I still use the techniques I've been taught to help with my fluency. I make sure to speak at a good pace and breathe. I've used these techniques in all the interviews I've done for American Idol. While I still stutter during these interviews, I am much more fluent.



WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES STUTTERING HAS PRESENTED TO YOU?

Just the ways in which it has affected my confidence. There were so many things I didn't do when I was younger because of my stutter. I wish I had been more confident about my stutter at a younger age so I could have done more of the things I wanted to do but didn't because I was scared of judgment. Now I know I can do anything I put my mind to, and my stutter should never be a reason why I don't do something I want to do.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT WITH REGARD TO STUTTERING?

Being able to share my story on American Idol has been a big accomplishment. I'm so happy that I get to be a role model to so many people who also stutter and feel like their dreams can't come true. Being able to show these people that you can achieve your dreams makes me feel so proud and lucky.

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

I would tell children who stutter that any feelings they have about their stutter are valid. I think it's important to realize that living with a stutter is not easy, and everyone has a different journey when it comes to accepting their stutter. So, I would love to tell all kids who stutter that their feelings are valid, and that stuttering is the least important thing about you. There are so many amazing things about you that make you special, and you should not let your stutter dim those amazing things.

BASED UPON YOUR OWN EXPERIENCES, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO STUTTER?

I would tell parents of kids who stutter to always be there to listen. It's so important for kids who stutter to have a strong support system and to feel comfortable when they speak. Knowing they have parents who will listen without judgment means so much. I would also advise them to introduce their children to the stuttering community. There are so many support groups for kids who stutter and being able to have friends who also stutter is so special. Never dismiss your child's feelings either. Any experience or feeling related to stuttering can be hard to open up about, so make sure to acknowledge your child's feelings and always remind them how special and important they are.



Photos courtesy of ABC Entertainment, American Idol and Jesse Findling



STUTTERING FOUNDATION ASKS...

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

We first met Lazaro Arbos in January 2013, when he competed on Season 12 of American Idol. He made it to the top 10, and remembered his vibrant smile, and his bowties! We caught up with Lazaro to discuss where life has taken him since his time on Idol and his advice for Jesse Findling, a contestant who stutters on the current season of American Idol.

TELL US WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING SINCE AMERICAN IDOL IN 2013?

After living in Los Angeles for a while, I moved back to my hometown of Naples, Florida. I have been performing with a corporate band, traveling across the country and internationally for concerts, gigs, and various events.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES STUTTERING HAS PRESENTED TO YOU?

The biggest challenge has been the struggle to be taken seriously and valued as I deserve. While I see myself as a normal person, society often has a lot of catching up to do. There is a subconscious tendency to equate fluency with intelligence; when someone stutters, they are often unfairly categorized as less capable or intelligent because they don't communicate in the way people expect.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST SUCCESS WITH REGARD TO STUTTERING?

It remains a difficult journey. Stuttering is unpredictable. I can have a very fluent morning and feel I've overcome it, only to have it return more heavily the next day. I believe the greatest accomplishment anyone can achieve is learning to accept and love themselves unconditionally. Stuttering may always be there, but you have to learn to love yourself more than the struggle.

WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO SEEING OTHER PEOPLE WHO STUTTER PERFORM/ COMPETE ON REALITY TV?

I think it's wonderful. It brings much-needed visibility and puts stuttering at the forefront. Since stuttering isn't widely understood, every person who appears on screen gives hope to others. It helps the world see that we are, in fact, very normal people.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR JESSE FINDLING AS HE ADVANCES ON IDOL?

My advice to Jesse is to fully be himself. It is challenging, but when you embrace who you are, the stuttering doesn't "fight back" as much.

ANYTHING YOU WISH YOU COULD HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

I wish I had been more authentically myself and fought harder for what I believed in during my time on the show. While American Idol was an amazing platform, I feel I sacrificed parts of myself that I would not be willing to sacrifice today.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL CHILDREN AND PARENTS OF CHILDREN WHO STUTTER?

My advice is primarily for the parents: let your children stutter. Do not feel the need to correct them; let them be exactly who they are. Constant correction can make stuttering worse by emphasizing the idea that something is "wrong." In reality, nothing is wrong—it is just the nervous system processing things in its own way. The best thing is to be comfortable and not afraid to stutter. In my experience, the more you fear it, the more it persists.





STUTTERING FOUNDATION CELEBRITY CORNER

ERIC ROBERTS



Photo by Frazer Harrison/Getty Images

*Eric Roberts is an American actor known for his prolific career across film, television, and stage. He first gained major attention for his role in *King of the Gypsies*, which earned him a Golden Globe Award, and later received an Academy Award nomination for *Runaway Train*. Over the decades, he has appeared in hundreds of projects, ranging from mainstream films to independent productions and TV series. Roberts is also recognized as the brother of actress Julia Roberts and father of actress Emma Roberts.*

Veteran actor Eric Roberts has long appeared on the Stuttering Foundation's list of "Famous People Who Stutter" in addition to being profiled in one of our 2005 Celebrity Corner articles. However, in terms of appearances, what is most compelling is his more than 700 screen credits which makes him one of the very most prolific English-speaking screen actors of all-time. He received Golden Globe nominations for his roles in *King of the Gypsies* in 1978 and *Star 80* in 1983. In 1985 he was nominated for both an Academy Award and a Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actor for his critically acclaimed role as an escaped convict in *Runaway Train*.

Some of his numerous movie roles have been *Raggedy Man* (1981), *The Pope of Greenwich Village* (1984), *The Best of the Best* (1989), *Final Analysis* (1992), *The Specialist* (1994), *The Cable Guy* (1994), *The Dark Knight* (1994), and *The Expendables* (2010). His extensive television work has included recurring roles on the NBC drama *Heroes* (2007-2010), the CBS soap opera *The Young and the Restless* (2010-2011), and the USA Network's *Suits* (2014-2019).

On September 17, 2024, the Oscar-nominated actor released his memoir, *Runaway Train: or, The Story of My Life So Far*, which was co-written with Sam Kashner. Ironically, the release of the book coincided with his appearance as a contestant on season 33 of *Dancing with the Stars*. As can be expected, the memoir garnered a lot of attention in the entertainment media because of the actor's relationship with his sister, Oscar-winning actress Julia Roberts, which has been known to be strained at times. In addition, with the book's release the same type of attention in the media was given to his relationship with his daughter, actress Emma Roberts.

In the memoir he opens up about rifts in the Roberts family and offers what he called a "public apology" to his sister Julia. He wrote that at age 15 when his parents divorced in 1971, he was heartbroken to have been split up from his six-year-old sister Lisa and four-year-old sister Julia when they went to live with his mother and he stayed with his father.

Roberts writes openly of his troubled upbringing with his parents, Walter Roberts and the former Betty Lou Brademus, both of whom were actors and ran an acting school in Atlanta. He has stated in interviews about the memoir that he did not write it to shock people. He is extremely open about many subjects other than his fascinating career, such as his romantic liaisons, his drug abuse, and his 1981 car accident that left him in a coma for three days and impacted his memory.

The actor strongly emphasizes throughout the book that his 32-year marriage to wife Eliza, an actress and casting director, who is the daughter of famous screenwriters David Rayfiel and Lila Garrett, as the positive and stabilizing force in both his life and career.

The 269-page memoir is an in-depth look at the modern entertainment industry with never-ending appearances of big-name actors, directors and rock stars. A full review of this memoir packed with fascinating information is not possible, as his struggles with stuttering of course must be the focal point. Several times in the book Roberts refers to his stuttering, the most compelling of which is the following passage:

“I surely never had friends growing up. And I know why – I had a terrible stutter. I was ostracized by the other kids, especially for the first three years I was in grammar school, which is kind of your foundation for how and when to make friends. At my first school where I went to kindergarten and first grade, we all had to read out loud, so I was laughed at a lot when it was my turn to read.

Even today, I get really broken up when I think about that sixty-year-old memory of those kids laughing at me in class. I still get ripped apart. It had such a terrible effect on me. I know that’s part of what drove me to get out, to achieve something on my own, even to become an actor. I found that when I memorized stuff, I didn’t stutter! It was like finding the pot of gold. It was a gift, like getting kissed on the mouth by a beautiful girl when you expected a handshake.

I remember discovering I could conquer my stutter when I first memorized a monologue. I don’t remember what the monologue was, but I remember walking around, reciting it

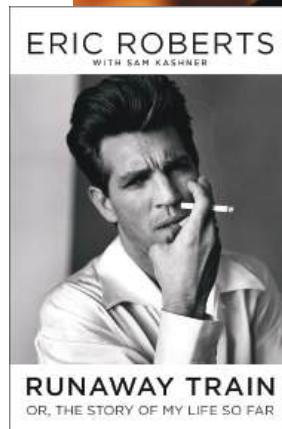


Photo by Frazer Harrison/Getty Images

to myself. I realized I could say it to anybody and not stutter, so I started reciting it to everybody: “Hey, hey, listen! Listen, listen to this.” And I’d recite it perfectly. Wow. It was a big deal to me, a huge revelation to know that’s how I could beat my stutter, that’s how it could be done. Beating that stutter really changed my life.”

Runaway Train: or, The Story of My Life So Far is the kind of book that any person who follows the entertainment industry will find hard to put down. The famed actor is brutally honest about so many aspects of his life, including stuttering. During the peak years of his career in the 1980’s, he spoke about his overcoming stuttering during interviews in a way that gave hope and inspiration to people who stutter. Forty years and more than six hundred screen credits later, in this memoir Oscar-nominated actor Eric Roberts continues to provide the same compelling inspirational message and remains a role model to people struggling with stuttering.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR : ADVICE & TIPS

Send us a letter! We'd love to hear from you!

Stuttering Foundation
PO Box 11749
Memphis, TN 38111-0749

Dear SFA,

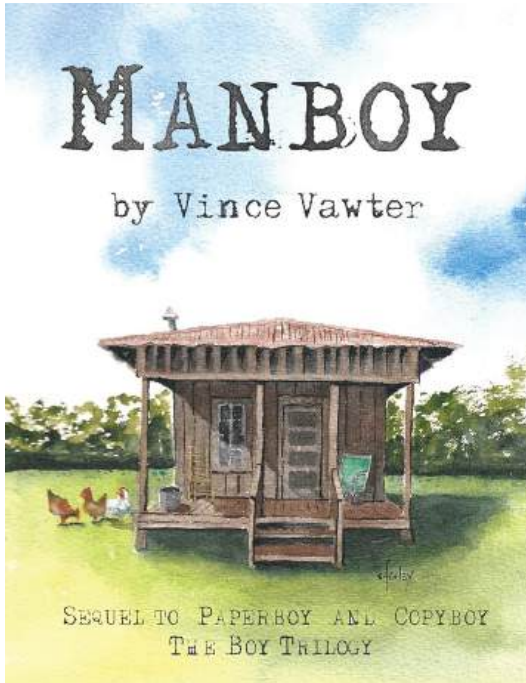
< I came across a small secret today:
do something (anything) that you've
been putting off. Once done, you will
get a small burst of energy. >

It works to temporarily improve your
outlook on life... and in my case, I
will tend to speak more fluently for
a short span of time. A short burst
of energy I can use to my advantage.

This technique works especially well
to get out of a rut or to use in an
especially challenging situation.

Sincerely,
Dan Pappas





**WHAT WE'RE READING:
THE SFA BOOKSHELF**

Manboy is the third and final book in Vince Vawter's autobiographical trilogy, following Paperboy and Copyboy, published in late 2023. It continues the story of protagonist Victor Vollmer, now 21, as he navigates a life-changing event in April 1968, set against the backdrop of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis. The novel explores themes of love, loss, and empathy as Victor reunites with Philomene Moreau and deals with his stutter amidst world-altering events.

2026 GIFTS IN HONOR

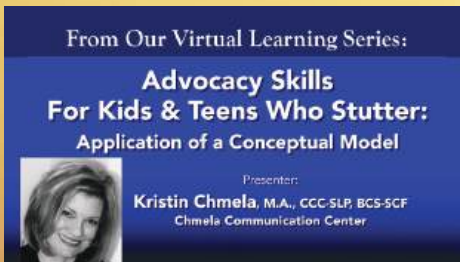
2025 Eastern Workshop	James Crennan	Alejandro (Alex) Hernandez	James T. Mills, Sr.	Joshua Snider
Ranya Agrawal	Susan Dietrich	Evan Herrington	Tommy Milot	George Springer
All my past students who stuttered	Dolores Donovan	Michael and Kacie Herrington	Mission MS Speech Students	John G. Stebbins
All who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

NEW CE COURSES FOR SPRING



Temperament: Relevance & Implications for Children Who Stutter

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



Advocacy Skills for School-Age Kids and Teens Who Stutter: Application of a Conceptual Model

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



Building Confidence and Resilience in Children Who Stutter

In this one-hour presentation, Sarah Caughter, MSc, MRCSLT of the Michael Palin Centre in London explores the potential negative impact of stuttering on children and young people and discusses ways to support them and their parents to build their confidence and resilience in therapy. The presentation includes clinical examples and videos to demonstrate therapy ideas.

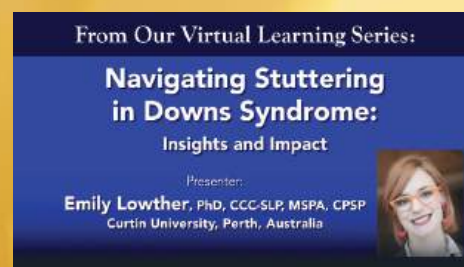
Client, Family, and Therapist: A Convergence of Temperaments

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



Navigating Stuttering in Downs Syndrome: Insights and Impact

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



Cluttering Assessment and Treatment

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



STUTTERING FOUNDATION PODCAST SERIES : SEASON 7 EPISODES

Empowering Clients with Dr. David Luterman

David Luterman, Ed.D., CCC-SLP | Emerson University, Professor Emeritus

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and Stuttering

Gemma Clarke, MSc, BA (Hons)| Michael Palin Centre, London

Research Update: Atypical gut microbiota composition in a mouse model of developmental stuttering

Ho Ming Chow, Ph.D., Nicole Guarino, Ph.D., Saya Nanda, M.S. | University of Delaware

Cluttering Assessment and Treatment with Dr. Kathleen Scaler Scott

Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF | Misericordia University

Cluttering Assessment and Treatment with Dr. Kathleen Scaler Scott

Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF | Misericordia University

Counseling Approaches Mini-Series with Daniel Shaw: SFBT

Daniel Shaw, M.S., CCC-SLP | Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Counseling Approaches Mini-Series with Daniel Shaw: Motivational Interviewing

Daniel Shaw, M.S., CCC-SLP | Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Counseling Approaches Mini-Series with Daniel Shaw: Motivational Interviewing

Daniel Shaw, M.S., CCC-SLP | Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Behind the Scenes of Group Therapy

Ali Berquez, MSc, PG Dip. CT (Oxford), BRIEF Cert. SFBT, MRCSLT, RegHCPC; Martha Jeffery, BSc, BRIEF Advanced Cert. SFBT, MRCSLT, RegHCPC. | Michael Palin Centre for Stammering, London, UK

Inside the Development of the 'Finding Your Voice' Therapy Program

Tim Saltuklaroglu, Ph.D.; Tricia Hedinger, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF; Eddie Brown, M.A., CCC-SLP University of Tennessee Health Science Center

Outwit, Outplay, Outlast: Mitch Guerra on Survivor and Stuttering

Mitch Guerra, Survivor Contestant

Emotional Processing in Children Who Stutter

Hatun Zengin-Bolatkale, Ph.D., CCC-SLP | San Diego State University

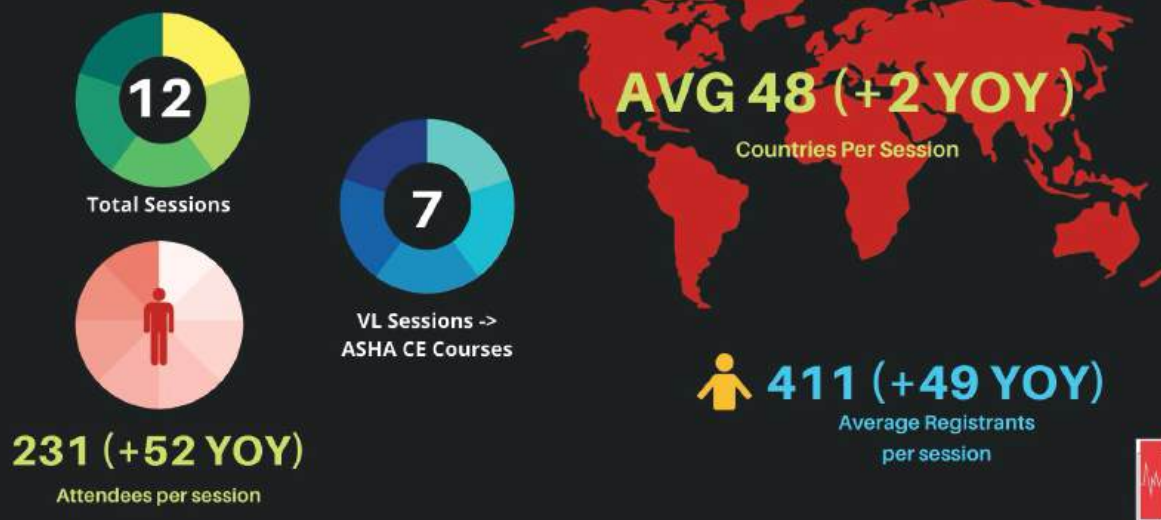
Investigating Stuttering at the Cellular Level

Shahriar Sheikh Bahaei, Ph.D. | Stony Brook University



Virtual Learning by Stuttering Foundation 2025 Analytics

[YOY= year over year growth (from last year)]



Virtual Learning by Stuttering Foundation, our monthly webinar series, continued to grow in 2025, providing expert-led sessions on clinical topics, components of self-therapy, and emerging research in the field. Over the past year, the series continued to expand its global reach, welcomed an even broader range of distinguished speakers, and generated an ever-growing sense of enthusiasm across the stuttering community. Virtual Learning continues to serve as a leading space education and connection in our field and has increasingly become a go-to resource for those seeking accessible, current, and high-quality learning opportunities. In 2025, Sara MacIntyre, M.A., CCC-SLP hosted 12 sessions, average attendees per session was 231 (+52 from previous year), with an average of 48 countries represented within registration. We now have more than 6,639 (+ 1,214 from previous year) unique VL users in our database.

Donating to the Stuttering Foundation is easier than ever! 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.



CASH GIFTS

Checks can be mailed to: Stuttering Foundation of America
P.O. Box 11749, Memphis, TN 38111-0749



OTHER GIFTS

Stocks, securities, remainder trusts, employer matching gift programs, annuities, and/or retirement asset donations



TRIBUTE GIFTS

Honor a birth, an anniversary, graduation, wedding, or memorialize a deceased loved one



LEGACY GIFTS

It's easy to include the Stuttering Foundation in your will! Contact us and/or your legal advisor for assistance.



**DONATE
HERE**

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.



STUTTERING FOUNDATION AROUND THE WORLD



Dear Stuttering Foundation,

Thank you once again for the wonderful resources you provided for my trip to Ghana. I was able to visit three major SLP facilities and share the Stuttering Foundation's materials. These included the Speech-Language Clinic at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital (a tertiary and university-affiliated hospital), the Greater Accra Regional Hospital, and the Speech and Hearing Center in Haatso, Accra.

At Korle-Bu, I met with SLPs who expressed a need for more stuttering assessment resources and professional development opportunities in treatment. At the Greater Accra Regional Hospital, I spoke with a neuropsychiatrist who heads the children's unit. She lamented the absence of SLPs in her department, as funding shortages forced the hospital to disengage SLPs and clinical fellows despite having space for them. I left materials with her, as some children who stutter in Accra are referred there. I also shared materials with the Ghana Stammering Association's secretariat, SLPs who staffed the summer camp I attended, and members of the public around these facilities.

I also gifted the Stuttering Foundation's anniversary T-shirt you sent me to a graduate SLP student currently conducting her thesis on stuttering, whom I co-supervise. I've attached her photo wearing it.

I am also attaching a letter of thanks from an SLP at Korle-Bu. Unfortunately, schools were on vacation during my visit, so I could not carry out awareness activities there, but I hope to do so on my next trip.

Thank you again for your generosity. I am hopeful that, together, we can continue to make these resources available to support SLPs and people who stutter in Ghana.

Sincerely,
Emmanuel Addo



STUTTERING FOUNDATION REPRESENTS AT THE TSHA

At the recent Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association conference in Fort Worth, the Stuttering Foundation was proud to be represented by Prof. Tricia Hedinger, MS, CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF, and Tom Scharstein, member of the Stuttering Foundation Board of Directors. Conferences such as TSHA provide a valuable opportunity to connect with both the next generation of clinicians and experienced professionals already serving people who stutter. Graduate students, in particular, are eager to explore the full range of knowledge available to them as they begin their careers, while established SLPs bring years of clinical insight and curiosity about emerging resources.

Throughout the conference, we enjoyed meaningful conversations with students, clinicians, and educators while showcasing the Stuttering Foundation's extensive library of publications, videos, and educational materials that support professionals, families, and people who stutter around the world. Central to these efforts is the mission of the Stuttering Foundation: education. As the world's foremost resource on stuttering, with a truly global presence, the Stuttering Foundation is committed to ensuring that accurate, practical, and accessible information about stuttering reaches clinicians, educators, parents, and individuals who stutter everywhere.

We were especially excited to share the revitalization of the "Van Riper Tapes," the original recordings of the teachings of Charles Van Riper, now available for free viewing thanks to the continued generosity of Malcolm Fraser. These historic recordings connect today's clinicians and students with foundational ideas that helped shape modern understandings of stuttering and its management.

Participation in professional conferences like TSHA helps ensure that the full range of resources and perspectives remain accessible to the community. All therapy--whether self-directed or guided by a professional--begins with acceptance of oneself as a person who stutters. From that starting point, individuals, parents, and clinicians can explore approaches that align with their personal goals and needs. By keeping doors open to evidence-based research, clinical experience, and time-tested concepts, we help ensure that people who stutter and those who support them have access to the knowledge needed to make informed decisions about their own paths forward.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to the TSHA organizers and attendees for creating such a welcoming and engaging professional environment, and to the city of Fort Worth for its warm hospitality during a memorable and productive conference.





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 published. Colorful marker and crayon art is encouraged (pencil drawings are 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.

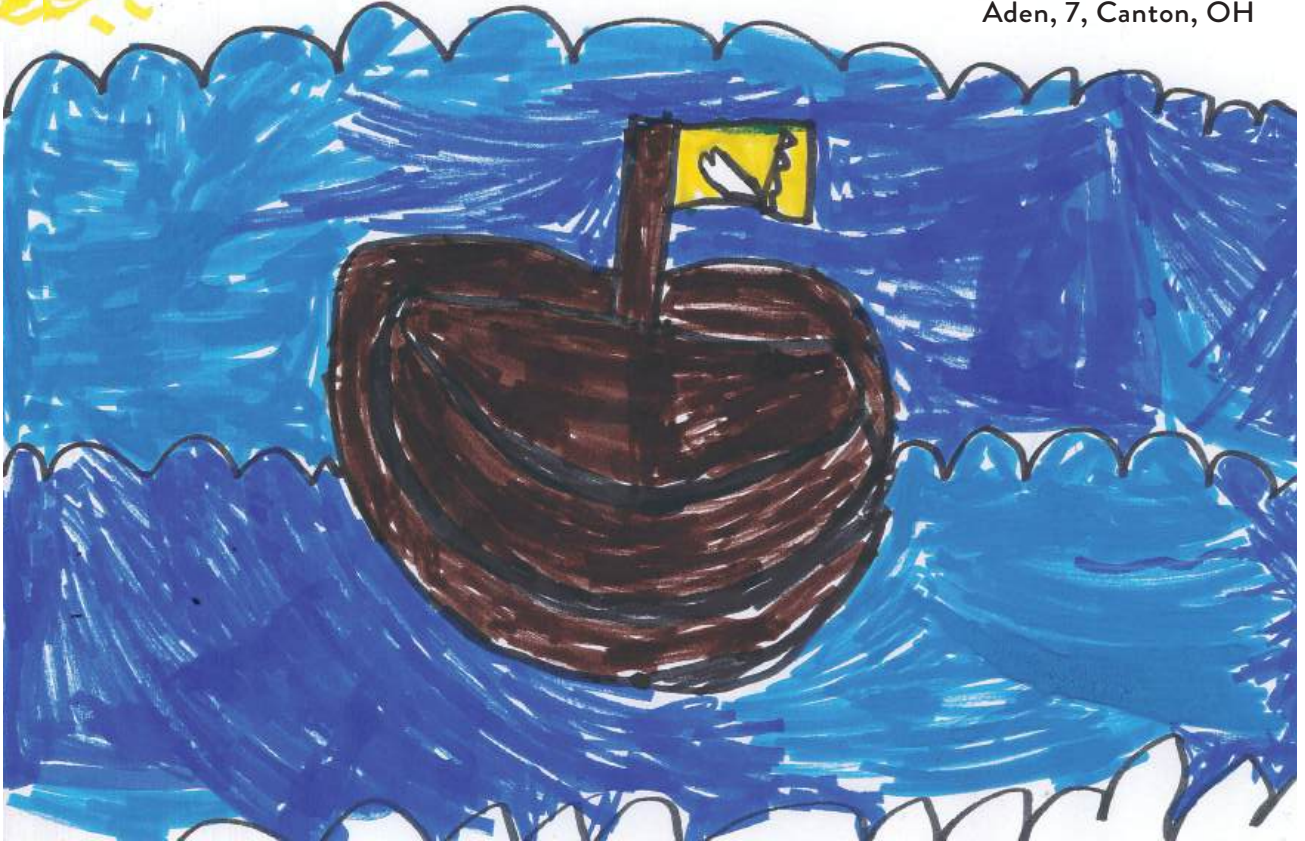
Mail your letter, permission form, original color artwork and/or photographs to:

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

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

My name is Aden. Sometimes I stutter. My favorite food is pizza, and my favorite snack is popcorn. I usually stutter when I am nervous. I like to draw. I am usually calm. I have a lot of toys. Usually when I draw on my own, my drawings sometimes come out good, but when I do tutorial drawings, they come out perfect. After I get off of school, I watch TV.

Aden, 7, Canton, OH



Hi! My name is Adah. I'm 10 years old and I live in Normal, IL. I like to draw, play soccer, play Roblox, play D&D, make comic strips, and do gymnastics. My favorite gymnastics moves are back handspring drills and handstand rolls. I want to be the president when I grow up. While I'm president, I will make a law to have chocolate every day. My favorite singers are Sabrina Carpenter and Taylor Swift. I even rocked at my school talent show this year by singing, "You Belong With Me" by Taylor Swift. My favorite speech tools are slow speech, restarts, and stretchy speech. My advice is: BE WHO YOU ARE AND NO ONE ELSE!

Adah, 10, Normal, IL

Hi! My name is Jacob. I am 8 years old. I live in Laramie, Wyoming. I like to play football. I have chicks and they are my only pet. When I stutter, I usually have repetitions and blocks. When I stutter, I like to use pullouts and cancellations. I am really good at playing basketball and baseball. I am in 2nd grade but by the time this is published, I will be in 3rd grade.

Jacob, 8
Laramie, WY





Hi, my name is Tucker. I'm seven years old and I love spending time with my family. I like playing football with my brother and watching him hunt. I also like fishing on the boat with my dad. My favorite football team is the Baltimore Ravens, and I like to watch them on TV. Sometimes when I stutter, I repeat things and I like to use "turtle talk" and full breath to help me.

Tucker, 7, Gulf Shores, AL



My name is Isaiah. I'm in 4th grade and I stutter. My stuttering feels weird like I am stuck. I have been stuttering for a long time. I like to play video games. My favorite subjects at school are music, STEM, library and art. When I grow up, I want to be a teacher or a restaurant worker.

Isaiah, 9, Moscow Mills, MO

Hello, my name is Jace. I am in the fifth grade, and I'm 11. I live in Greensboro, NC. I love basketball. I like playing Roblox. My favorite thing at school is PE. I stutter too. If you're stuttering, just try to stop and say it again with stretches. If you feel your chest getting tight, you can take a breather and try again. I'm also going to the 6th grade; I'll be in middle school.

Jace, 11, Greensboro, NC



Hi, my name is Aidan. I am ten years old. I like Pokémon, Minecraft, and geology. Sometimes I stutter when I talk. I started stuttering in kindergarten. My main speech tool is 'chunking and tapping.' One future goal is to overcome my stutter. Another future goal is to join SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics). I also want to become an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician). One of my past victories was me riding a zipline at summer camp. My advice is to never give up and try your best.

Aidan, 9, Putnam Valley, NY

Hi, my name is Sydney. I am from New York. I am in second grade, and I just turned 8 years old. I play soccer and flag football and I love it.

I was 2 when I started stuttering and I did not like it. I was talking smoothly and then I suddenly had an incoming stuttering problem. It was like an asthma attack, but you can still breathe. It almost blocks your whole windpipe. It hurts to breathe.

Don't give up. Keep trying if someone is making fun of you.

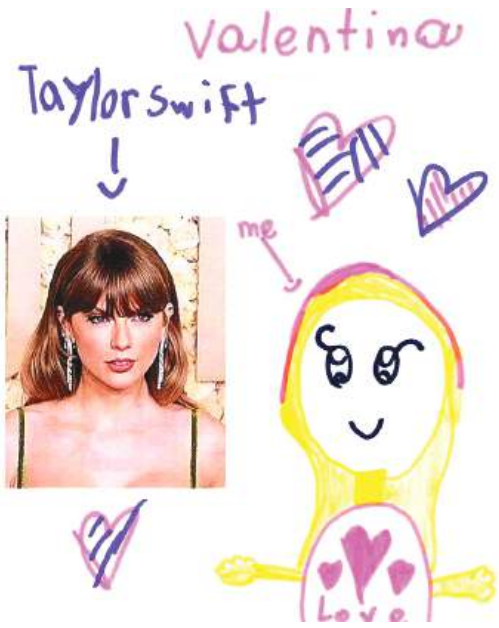
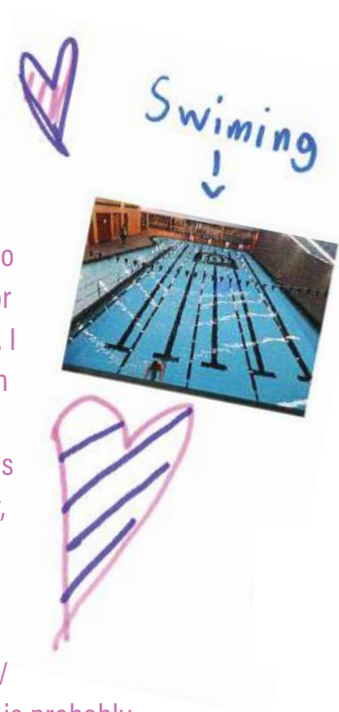
First my parents tried to teach me speech techniques but that did not work so they brought me to a speech teacher instead. Speech therapy helped. I am into music and I don't stutter when I sing. My parents told me at home if I have trouble they would always say SING! So, when I would sing at home, I would get more talkative and have a better chance of having no stutter.

Sydney, 8
Old Bethpage, NY



My name is Valentina and I am 9. I am going into fourth grade. I like to play with my friends and my sister. When my friends come over, we play princesses, and we also like to play with dolls. We like to sing Taylor Swift songs to our parents. I go swimming. I like my teacher because she helps us learn how to swim. I do tumbling too. It is like gymnastics. We learn how to do cartwheels and handstands in stations. When I stutter, I get stuck on some sounds. When that happens, I don't feel bad, I pause and then start over! Some strategies that I learned are beat speech, easy onset, and the ninja/fairy technique (light contact). My favorite is probably beat speech! Never give up and keep trying to use your strategies! **BE BRAVE!**

Valentina, 9, Port Washington, NY



Hello, my name is Royce and I am 12 years old. I am in the 6th grade. I like to watch Anime. I'm really good at Blox Fruits and Minecraft. My biggest problem in stuttering is that sometimes I'm talking and I stop. I use the strategy of 'stop and think' to help me say a word that I want to say.



Royce, 12, Kalamazoo, MI

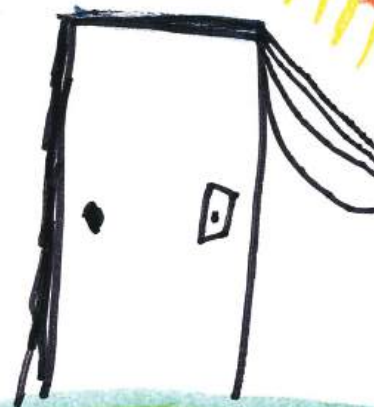


My name is Vincent and I stutter. It's sometimes hard for me to talk. And I want my stuttering to be a lot better. It helps me when people don't interrupt me when I'm talking. I like playing on my trampoline, my swing, and swinging rope. I like reading "BadGuys" books. I have a whole collection of Squishmallows.

Vincent, 8, Moscow Mills, MO

Hi, my name is Aileen and I'm 8 years old. I like playing with my sister. We play hot potato. My favorite singer is Karol G. When I stutter, I usually have repetitions and blocks. I feel calm and happy when I stutter because it's not a big deal. The strategies that help me most are slow speech and belly breathing. My advice to other kids who stutter is to remember that it's okay to stutter.

Aileen, 8, Spring Valley, CA



My name is Alexa, and I am from Alabama, and I am in the 5th grade! I have a stutter. My stutter is just getting stuck on words, or sometimes I might repeat some words or letters. I think that stuttering is really not a huge problem, or it's not even a problem at all! I really like acting, music, and drawing, and my favorite thing about liking all those things is that my stuttering doesn't stop me! My favorite stuttering strategies are using a slow rate and taking in a full breath before I start a sentence. For me, those strategies really help me in conversations, presenting, and acting! I really like soccer and I also play it! My favorite soccer player is Ricardo, or you may know him as KaKá! My advice to young fellow kids who stutter just like me is to not worry at all when you are going to stutter or even if you do, because every single human being has stuttered once before in their life, so don't think you're different than others!

Alexa, 11, Gulf Shores, AL



Hi, my name is Will. I live in Gulf Shores, AL, and I'm 10 years old. I like to play basketball, football, and baseball.

My favorite teams for all those sports are the Golden State Warriors, the New Orleans Saints, and the Atlanta Braves.

I like to go hunting and fishing and play video games. My favorite video games are Fortnite, Madden 25,

NBA 2K25, and GTA-5. I like to eat seafood at

Mikee's and Shrimpy's because those are

my family's restaurants. My favorite

speech fluency strategies are slow

rate and cancellation. My advice to

kids is when people ask you why you

stutter, it's okay to tell them that you

stutter and it's not a big deal.

Will, 10, Gulf Shores, AL



My name is Ryetavious and I'm in the fourth grade, and I stutter. I'm working on cancellations and stretch-out. I like to play Fortnite with my friends and I like to play basketball and football. My football team got to play in the championship last year.

Ryetavious, 10
Brown Summit, NC



My name is Jad. I am 12 years old. My birthday is May 3rd. I live in Buffalo, New York. I stutter when I say long words like some words that start with the /h/ sound. Sometimes I have repetitions, prolongations and revisions. The strategy I use the most when I stutter is easy onsets. When I stutter, I feel fine. If I stutter, I will repeat my words again. When I have free time, I like to use my 3D printer to make fidgets and toys. I also like to play wiffle ball outside with my friends. My advice to other kids who stutter is to try using easy onsets and don't be afraid to stutter. Stuttering is natural.

Jad, 12, Williamsville, NY

My name is Ali. I am 12 years old, almost 13, and I'm in seventh grade. I live in Michigan. I love art, especially crafting and painting. It just feels good for me. My brother, sister, and I love to play Fortnite. I love Japanese food like sushi and Ramen noodles with some rice cakes. I love to watch My Hero Academia and Lego Ninjago.

I get nervous or get anxiety sometimes when I am stuttering. The strategies that help me are pausing, breathing in and out, and repeating the word again. It's ok to stutter. A few years ago, when I was stuttering a lot there was a bully. The bully was mean and one time he was copying me when I was stuttering.

Some of my friends supported me and they stood up to the bullies that were making fun of me. Good friends are always there for you and make you happy. Have the courage to stand up for who you are!



Ali, 13
Dearborn Heights, MI



Basketball is fun, just like stuttering. In speech, we play games and practice speech tools. My favorite speech tool is bouncing because it helps me control my talking. Some of my favorite things are pizza, basketball and Fortnite Blitz Royale. I live in Denver, Colorado with my parents and older brother. If you're scared of stuttering...stutter, it's fun!

Zev, 8, Denver, CO



My name is William, but people call me Will. I like to play football and baseball. When I grow up, I really want to be somebody who plays for the Savannah Bananas. I love playing Fortnite, and I play 24/7. I have only two skins because my dad won't let me spend my V-Bucks. I love my dog, Sadie, and doing stuff with her.

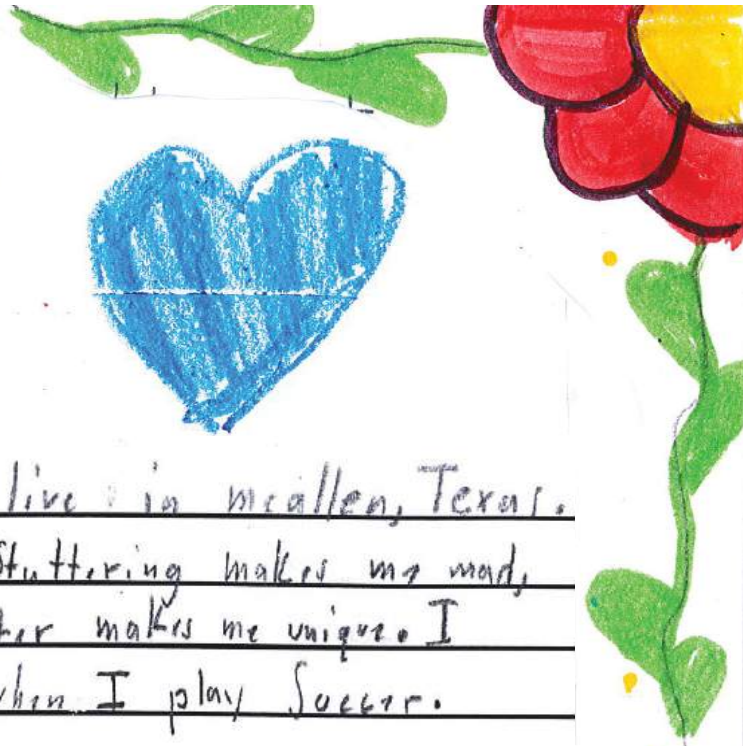
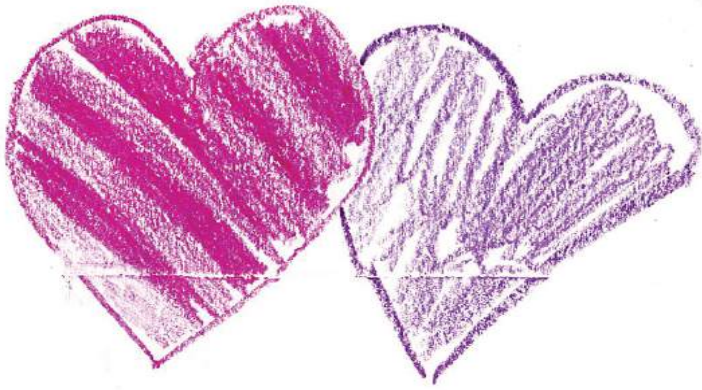
Sometimes I think about my stuttering like a dragon taking over me. And I try to tame that dragon at Speech. I like doing Speech because I can talk about my feelings.

William, 7, Watkinsville, GA



Hi, my name is Anthony. I'm in 6th grade. I live in Madera. My favorite games are Fortnite, Roblox, and Minecraft. Also, I like to play Wolves VS Chickens on Fortnite. Stuttering to me doesn't bother me. My favorite thing to do at school is PE. In PE I like to do dodgeball. The four different types of speech are repetition, prolongation, block, and fluent. I think I started stuttering when I was in preschool. It's ok to stutter.

Anthony, 12, Madera, CA



Hi my name is Aria. I live in McAllen, Texas.
I also stutter. Some times my Stuttering makes me mad,
but now I realize that my stutter makes me unique. I
sometimes forget my Stutter when I play Soccer.
Soccer is my favorite Sport.

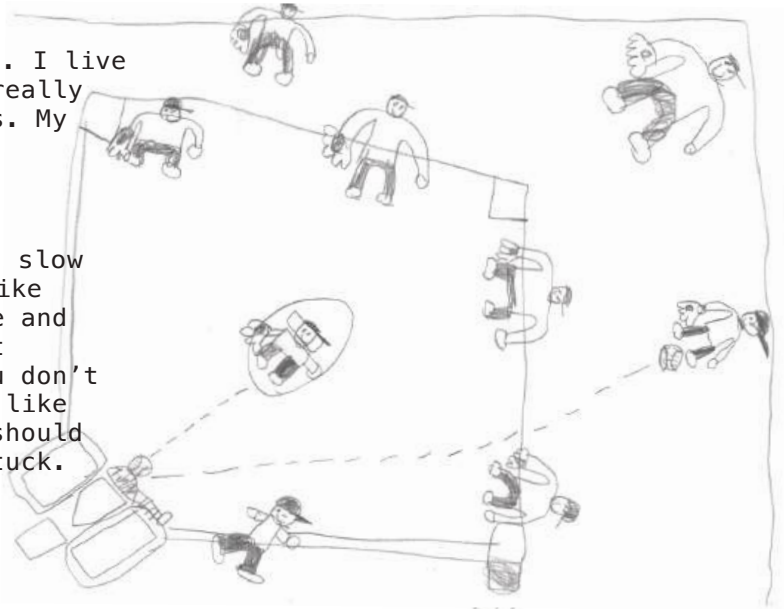
Aria, 10, McAllen, TX



Hi, my name is Asher. I am 10 years old. I live in Lacey, WA. I play baseball. I am a really good hitter. I also like to build Legos. My favorite holiday is St. Patrick's Day.

I also stutter but sometimes it could be frustrating. I use three strategies for stuttering, but I'll say one which is slow speech. Stuttering and baseball are alike because if you're a runner on first base and you're going to run you need to go fast and then go slow to second base, so you don't fall off the base and get out. This is like stuttering because when you talk, you should go slow so you don't mess up and get stuck.

Asher, 10, Lacey, WA



Hi, my name is Leilah. I am eight years old. I stutter but I think that's okay. I like soccer, math, solitaire, and drawing. My advice is if you like something keep practicing (acting, etc.) and sometimes it can help. One strategy that works for me, that might be helpful for you, is basketball speech which is bouncing from word to word.

Leilah, 8, Boise, ID



Hello, my name is Lucas. I am 10 years old and it has been a year since I wrote my first letter, and I have gained new interests. I play Black Ops 6, and I am acting in a show called Infected: Rise of the Lavas, which is being posted on YouTube. My drawing is a bo6 calling card, and I have a hobby of making OC's. My OC's name is Alek Pangedict. He is in a CIA group with some of the other actual Black Ops 6 characters - Troy Marshall, Frank Woods, Russell Adler, Sevati Dumas, Felix Neumann, and William Case. I started stuttering about 3 years ago. My stuttering is annoying, I wish it would go away.

Lucas, 10, Moscow Mills, MO

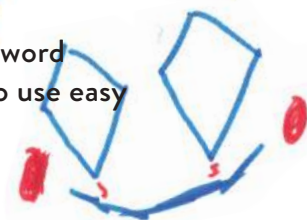
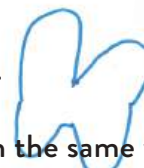


My name is Lewis. I am 10 years old and in fourth grade in elementary school. I like my dog named Milo; he is very smart and funny. I got a snake; it's a ball python. Also, the color is banana leopard morph. Next, I like to listen to music and I prefer rap music. My favorite rapper is Kendrick Lamar. He stutters too. Also, my dad and my dead uncle stutter too. My favorite TV show is SpongeBob because he is funny. My favorite SpongeBob character is Patrick because he is funny. I like to play outside, and I like to play soccer with my cousin. I practice shooting inside of a goal. I have a big soccer goal and play with it a lot. My favorite pop (Ms. Liz said everywhere else they say soda) is Dr. Pepper. My favorite food is over easy eggs.



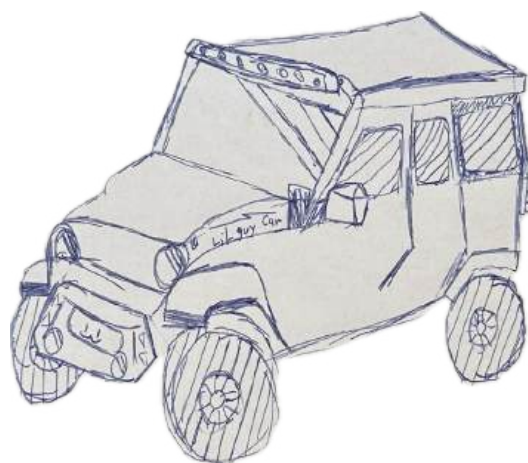
My speech teacher tells me that stuttering is okay. I think stuttering is very annoying sometimes.

When I stutter in class, I feel embarrassed. Sometimes I stutter on the same word and sometimes I don't. The words "morning" and "I" are really hard to say. I like to use easy onsets. Some people stutter, you're not alone because I stutter too.



Lewis, 10, Coon Rapids, MN

Hi my name is Audra.
I like to sing Taylor
Swift songs. I stutter.
I learned tools that
can help me my favorite
tool is easy starts.
Stuttering is just
a verbal difference.
it is ok. to stutter
You can do what
ever you want when you grow
up



Hi, my name is Cain. I am 10 years old and I stutter. In my speech I have blocks, prolongations, and sound repetitions. Here is a strategy that helps me a lot. I call it the blue jeep. First pick your favorite thing in motion. For example, a car, bike, or a skateboard. When you are speaking keep the word going and visualize your thing in motion. You can also practice your breathing with this strategy.



Audra, 8, Nashua, NH

Cain, 10, Covina, CA

Hi, my name is Jane. I'm 7 years old. I like video games and soccer. In speech, I learned about light contact, which is when you talk lightly, like a tissue when it falls. I also learned about body parts like lungs, windpipes, voice box, brain, teeth, tongue, and lips which we use to make speech sounds. My advice to other kids is it's okay to stutter.

Jane, 7, Woodinville, WA

Hi my name is Mason. I am 10 and I love Roblox. I have a little brother named Mateo. He loves playing with me. My favorite subject is social studies. Fun fact a famous person who stutters is James Earl Jones. Also he is the voice actor for Darth Vader. My favorite speech strategy is belly breaths.



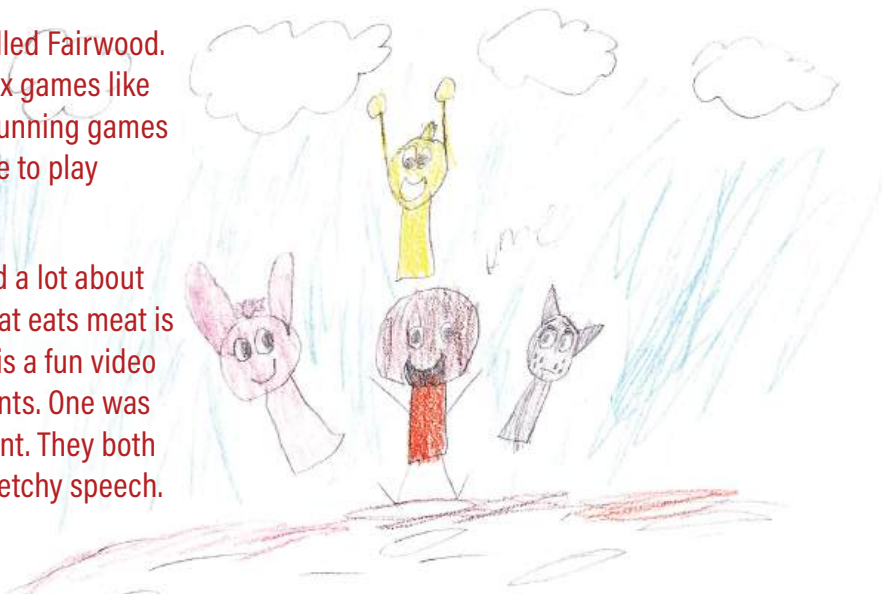
Mason, 10, Arlington, VA

Hello, my name is Langston. I live in a suburb called Fairwood. I am 9 years old and I stutter. I like playing Roblox games like Dragon Adventure or 1+ Speed Maze. I also like running games like tag, Sharks and Minnows, or sometimes I like to play 4-square.

I also like learning about new things. I've learned a lot about dinosaurs. I learned that the biggest dinosaur that eats meat is Spinosaurus. I also like Sonic the Hedgehog. He is a fun video game to play. I used to have two carnivorous plants. One was a venus fly trap and the other was a pitcher plant. They both died though. My favorite fluency technique is stretchy speech.

Langston, 9, Renton, WA

Langston





Hi my name Melanie im in 4th grade
 I have a lot of squishmallows my strategies
 are slow rate and stop if you here
 YOURSELF stutter.

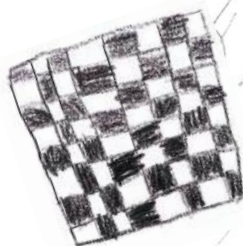
Melanie, 10, Fort Myers, FL



Hi, my name is Ben, and I like to build
 Lego sets. I like building animals with
 Lego sets and have built a T-Rex,
 bunny, fish tank, Brachiosaurus, and
 I am working on a giraffe. My favorite
 color is green. I do gymnastics on
 Saturdays, karate on Wednesdays
 and Fridays, and piano on Tuesdays. I
 am really good at puzzles, math, and
 phonics. I'm really good at chess and
 checkers and usually play after school
 with my sister.

I stutter a little. Sometimes I get
 stuck on the first letter of the word
 and sometimes I repeat letters. My
 favorite strategy is light contact. It
 helps me by stopping my stutter. I use
 light contact when touching the parts
 of my mouth together.

Ben, 8, Barrington, RI

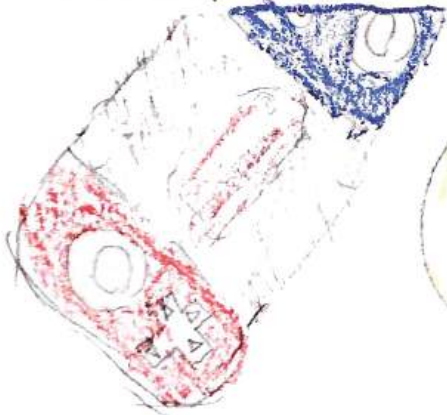


Hi, my name is Dean and I stutter. I am 10
 years old. I'm in 4th grade and I live in San
 Diego, CA. My favorite things to do are to play
 guitar and watch baseball. My favorite food
 is steak. If you stutter, don't be scared. My
 speech teacher is really nice at my school.

Dean, 10, San Diego, CA



Hi, my name is Christian. I have a brother, Rob. I like to play on my switch. I think of becoming a Youtuber some day. I may stutter but it is okay, if I use my strategies and practice them, I just might be able to graduate from speech some day.



Christian, 9, Wanaque, NJ



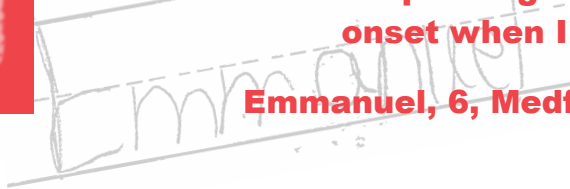
Hi! My name is Noah. I am 10 years old and I like Fortnite, Minecraft, and Zelda: Breath of the Wild. My birthday is July 19th. My favorite techniques are **SLOW SPEECH AND PAUSING AND CHUNKING**. My favorite sports are basketball, baseball, and football. My favorite basketball player is Michael Jordan. I have an outdoor cat named Fluffy. I have 4 brothers and 1 sister. Even though I stutter I still have lots of friends! I've stuttered since I was 4 or 5. I have an uncle who stutters too. I like playing with my Rubik's Cube, brothers, and sometimes my sister. My message is to not get mad at yourself when you stutter because that will make it worse, instead believe in yourself!

Noah, 10, Uniontown, PA



Hi, I'm Emmanuel. I'm going to be in 2nd grade in September. I like playing soccer and football. I like to play Fortnite, Roblox, Minecraft, and FIFA. I use pausing and easy onset when I stutter.

Emmanuel, 6, Medford, OR

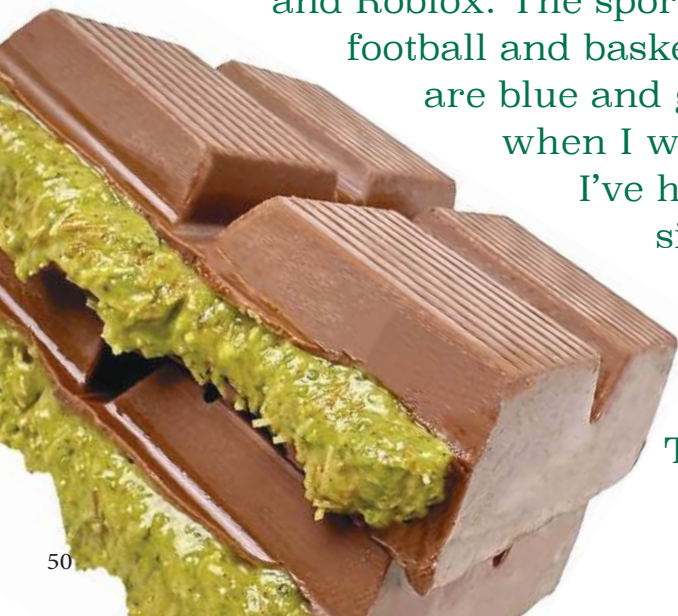


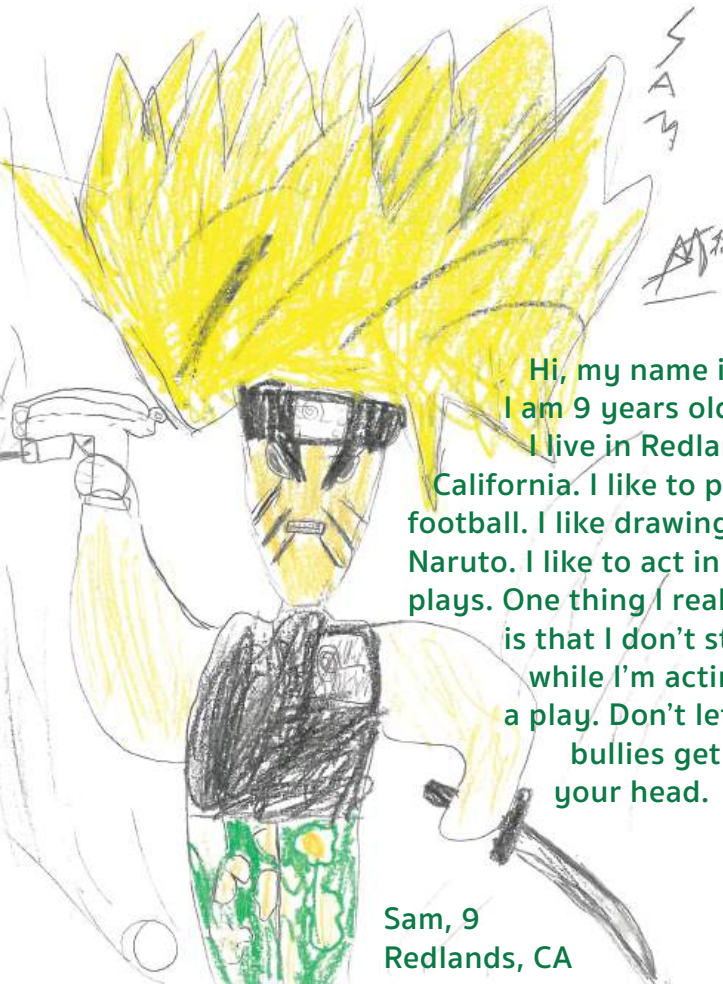


Felix, 8, Raglan, New Zealand

My name is Taylor. I am in 4th grade and I stutter. My favorite thing to do in my free time is ride horses and play with my dog. My favorite candy is Dubai chocolate. My favorite video games are Fortnite and Roblox. The sports I like to play are football and basketball. My favorite colors are blue and green. I started stuttering when I was in kindergarten and I've had speech therapy ever since. Here are the speech strategies I use: pacing, stretchy speech, and cancellation.

Taylor, 9, Park City, IL



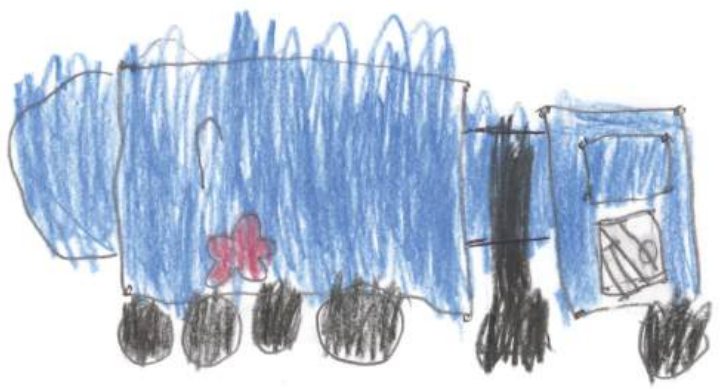


Hi, my name is Sam. I am 9 years old and I live in Redlands, California. I like to play football. I like drawing Naruto. I like to act in plays. One thing I realized is that I don't stutter while I'm acting in a play. Don't let the bullies get to your head.

Sam, 9
Redlands, CA

Hi. My name is Sebastian. I like to play Roblox, Minecraft, and Subway Surface. I have a really cool collection of garbage trucks and 22 trash bins. I am a person who stutters. I go to speech therapy and I am smart. I feel good about my speech. My advice to others who stutter is, you got this!

Sebastian, 13, Richmond, CA



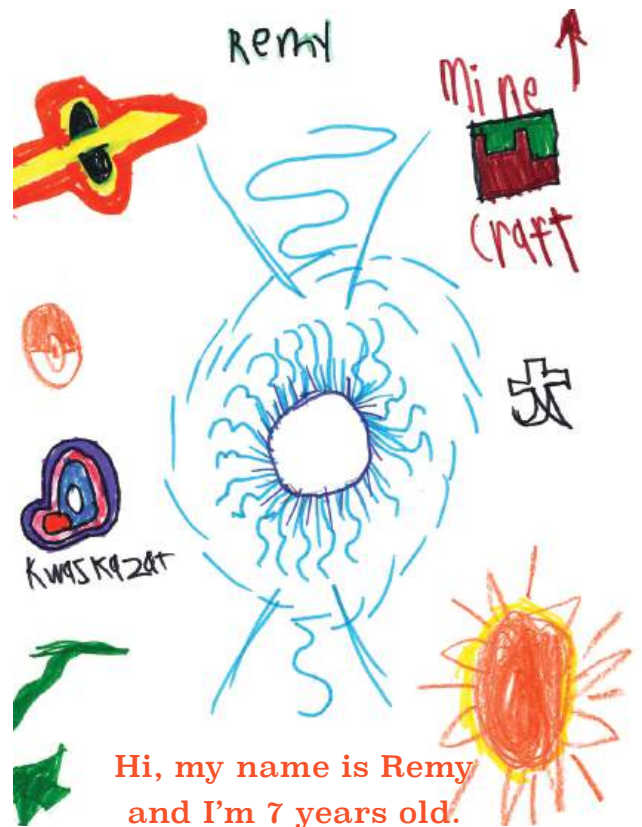
Hi, my name is Elijah and I'm 7 years old. I really like Selena and Olivia Rodrigo. My favorite things to do are singing and dancing. I also love wearing skirts and dresses. I never fight my stutter; I just let it happen. I usually have stretchy and bumpy speech when I stutter. I feel calm when I stutter, it doesn't bother me. The strategy that helps me the most is pull out. My advice to another student who stutters is that stuttering is okay.

Elijah, 7, Spring Valley, CA



Hi, my name is Colin. I am nine years old and I live in Taipei, Taiwan. I like drawing, playing basketball and playing video games. My favorite games are Brawl Stars, Roblox, and Minecraft. My favorite subjects are math and art. I want to be a singer when I grow up. I live with my Dad, Mom, little brother and a nanny. My school is an American school, so I speak English more often than Chinese, but my parents encourage me to speak Chinese more often because I am from Taiwan. The problem is that I stutter, so I don't like talking too much. I go to speech therapy 3 to 5 times a month and I like my teacher a lot! She teaches me what to do when I stutter. My advice to all the kids who stutter is: When you feel like you are going to stutter, breathe in and out before you start talking. Don't worry if you stutter, try out my advice and say what you want to say - Don't give up!


Colin, 9, Taipei, Taiwan



Hi, my name is Remy and I'm 7 years old.

I like to play with King Leader on Minecraft. In Minecraft I like to build structures. I also really like Pokémon and Pokémon cards. My favorite food is Spam, beef, cheeseburgers, and fries. I love learning about physics (especially quantum physics), black holes, red supergiants, and neutron stars. I like going to speech and my family likes that I learn Spanish at school. I have bumpy speech when I stutter. I feel calm when I stutter, I don't think it's a big deal that I stutter. My favorite strategies to use are slow speech, pull out, and cancellation. My advice to other people who stutter is to use the strategies that help you the most.

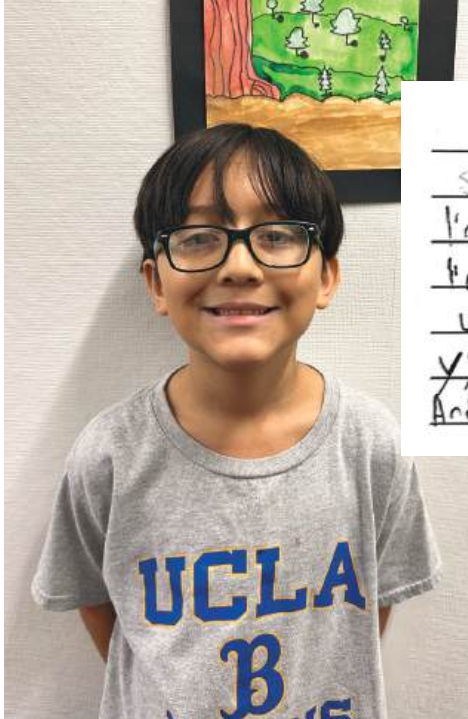
Remy, 7, Spring Valley, CA

Hi, my name is Eloise. I'm 10 years old.
I live in Woodinville. 
My favorite colors are purple and mint.
At first I didn't realize that I statter
until my mom pointed it out.

Just because I statter does not mean
I have to like it and you don't either. I
want everyone to know its okay to statter.

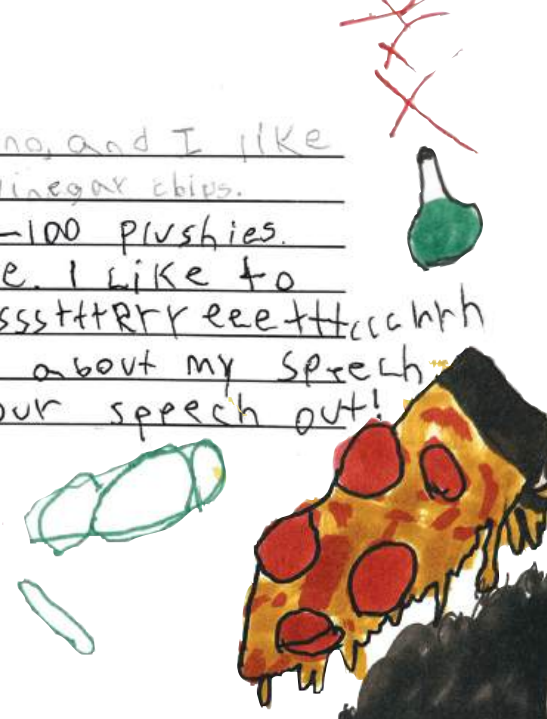


Eloise, 9, Woodinville, WA



Hey, my name is santino, and I like science, Pizza, salt and vinegar chips. I'm nine and i have 70-100 plushies. I'm also in fourth grade. I like to use consonantations and sstttRRR eeettttccchhh yyy Speech. I feel fine about my speech. And i recommend stretching your speech out!

Santino, 10
Santa Ana, CA



My name is Evelina, but I like to be called Evelin. Do not be scared to stutter, because I also stutter. My family is from Moldova, and I am in fourth grade. I stutter in my country too. One time when I went with my mom to visit Moldova, I went to a Moldovan school. I went to school with my cousin. I speak Romanian and English; I stutter in both languages. I speak English a little good, but Romanian is bad. I stutter when I read out loud. I don't stutter when I say verses in front of people in my church. You should not give up because I stutter too.

I really love tennis. I really like art, singing and playing piano. I really love dogs and cats. I really love fidgets, because when I write it makes my hands feel much more comfortable. I really love slime and Squishmallows. I most really love in the whole entire world is God. I really like animals. I play Roblox with random friends that I never ever met. I really like to color, and I love my teachers. My speech teacher's name is Ms. Liz, and she tells me that I speak very well. I am in the fourth grade.

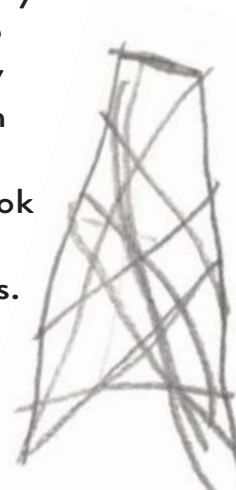


Evelina, 10, Coon Rapids, MN

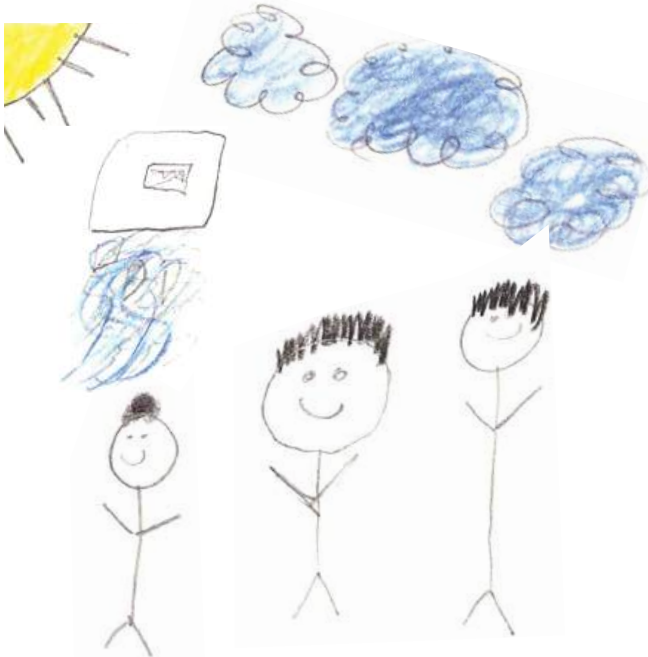


Hi, my name is Giovanni, and I am 11 years old. I live in Brooklyn, New York. I play many sports like soccer and basketball. I also have my gray and black belt in jujitsu. My favorite players are Ronaldo and Stephen Curry. I like to play Fortnite and FIFA. I am a person who stutters. My favorite strategy is pausing because it helps me when I'm stuck on a word. My speech teacher helps me make my stuttering better and we have a lot of fun in speech. It's ok to stutter. There are a lot of famous people who stutter and that didn't stop them from giving up on their dreams.

Giovanni, 11, Brooklyn, NY



Name Sebastian.R



Hi my name is Sebastian.
I have an IEP for my
Stutter. The tools that
help me are easy on set
and breaths. Outside of
school. I like to Play
with my brother. I'm
going to middle school in
September. what I like to
do in school is to hangout
with my friends.

Sebastian, 10, Medford, OR



Hi, my name is Shequair. I'm nine years old. My family is from Jamaica, and we live in Gulf Shores, AL, now. I like to play Minecraft and a Kirby game. I got a Nintendo Switch for my birthday this year. My favorite speech tricks are full breath and slow rate because they help me talk to my family and my friends. My advice to other kids who stutter is that stuttering is ok. Sometimes people stutter when they're talking to their family and friends and that's ok.

Shequair, 9, Gulf Shores, AL



My name is Hallie and I
am From Kansas and I am
10 years old. One way I
know I am stuttering is I
catch myself and I take a
deep breath in and out.

Hallie, 10, Olathe, KS

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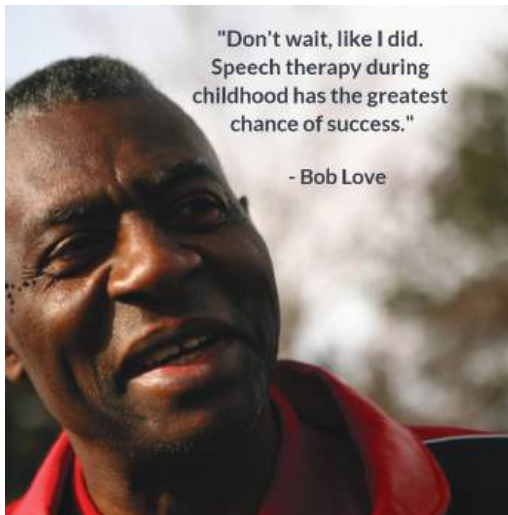


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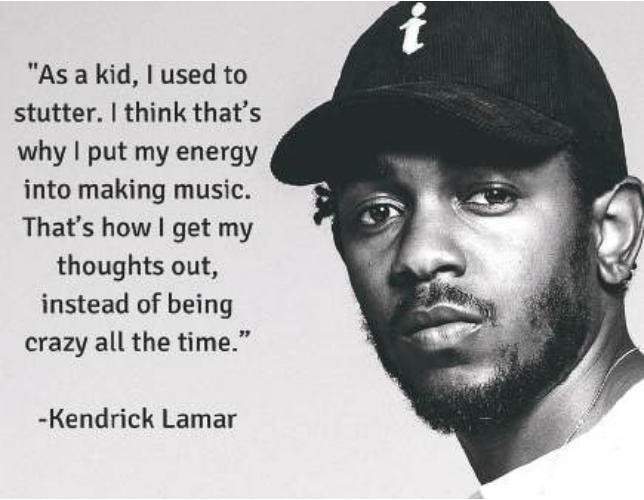


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