



# THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION®

A Nonprofit Organization

FALL 2009

Since 1947... Helping Those Who Stutter

## Childhood Stuttering

**A new look at how language, motor, and emotion factors may influence early childhood stuttering**

By Hayley S. Arnold, Ph.D.  
Purdue University

As a postdoctoral researcher in the area of stuttering at Purdue University, I am studying how language, motor, and emotion factors may influence stuttering in young children.



Hayley S. Arnold, Ph.D.

One way I've explored these factors is with electroencephalography (i.e., EEG, electrical signals from the brain) in

preschool-aged children who stutter and their peers who don't stutter.

During my previous doctoral work with Edward Conture at Vanderbilt University, I measured emotions using EEG and the behaviors produced by nine children who stutter and nine children who don't stutter. The EEG measures of emotion did not distinguish children who stutter from those who don't stutter. However when I analyzed behaviors, the children who stutter, compared to their peers who did not stutter, were less adept at emotion regulation.

The study had children listen to several conversations in which adults were happy, angry, and neutral in their emotions.

I found that the children who did not stutter responded with significantly more frequent self soothing, problem solving, and other regulatory behaviors immediately after

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## An introduction to cognitive therapy

By Jane Fry,  
MSc (Psych Couns.), Dip CT (Oxon)  
Michael Palin Centre

Cognitive therapy, or cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT), is increasingly referred to in work with people who stutter. Jane Fry from the Michael Palin Centre, London, UK, discusses some of its' key theoretical and clinical principles.

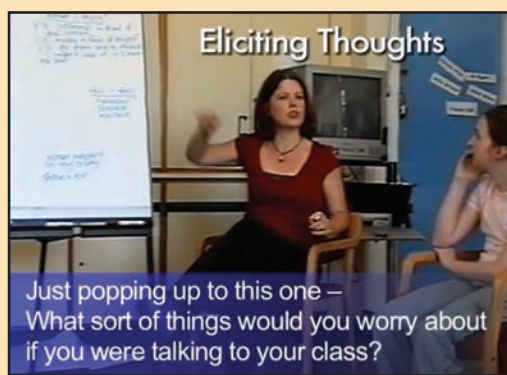
sometimes make errors, jump to conclusions or generally get things wrong. While it is human nature to make mistakes, Beck proposed that some people develop systematic, unhelpful biases in

the way they interpret information, and patterns of negative or unhelpful thinking which help to explain their vulnerability to emotional problems.

Cognitive theory thus emphasises the

role of cognitions (thoughts, assumptions and core beliefs) in explaining the way people feel. For example, when people feel anxious it is because they are predicting that an imminent situation will be threatening in some way. Furthermore, the level of anxiety will be higher the more a person views the feared event as being likely to happen, the more that is at stake should it

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Jane Fry works with children.

### What is Cognitive Therapy?

Cognitive Therapy is a form of psychotherapy which was originally developed by Aaron Beck in the 1960's to understand and treat depression. Beck proposed that as human beings, we are constantly engaged in a process of filtering and interpreting information in order to make sense of the world and our experiences. While this is helpful because it makes the world more predictable, he argued that we all

## Rio Resonates!

Rio de Janeiro was the site of this year's International Fluency Association World Congress. Speech therapists from 29 countries were represented, including Estonia, Turkey, Iran, Sweden, Argentina and Brazil.



There was great interest in Stuttering Foundation materials; and on the last day, Willie Bottherill and Jennifer Watson with an SLP from Estonia at the Stuttering Foundation booth.

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## Therapy

*Continued from front*

happen, and the less the person views themselves as being able to cope.

Beck also proposed that thoughts, feelings, physiological and behavioural responses are linked. For example, when we get anxious a 'wired-in' response triggers physical feelings, such as 'butterflies' or an increased heart rate, and also a natural and instinctive behavioural response to something protective, such as avoiding the source of threat. Furthermore, in difficult situations people tend to respond in ways which inadvertently exacerbate or reinforce problems, creating a 'vicious circle'. Continuing with the example of anxiety, avoiding a feared situation might get an individual 'off the hook' but ultimately it stops them from finding out that things might have actually been OK, or not as bad as they feared, or indeed that they might have coped. The person loses the opportunity to build confidence and their fears associated with that situation are reinforced.

### How might this relate to stuttering?

People who stutter often notice that when they feel apprehensive about speaking this is linked to negative thoughts or predictions about the situation. These tend to be about stuttering itself (i.e: "I'll get stuck"; "It'll go on forever"), how other people will react (i.e: "they'll laugh at me, they'll ignore me") and how they will be viewed (i.e: "they'll think less of me", "they'll think there's something wrong with me"). They may then find that they approach the situation with more emotional and physical tension than they would otherwise have done, and that as a result they are indeed more likely to stutter. Alternatively they may cope by doing something protective, such as deciding not to speak, or choosing a safer word, which may offer a short term solution but not fit with how they want to cope with stuttering in the long term. Importantly, the dynamic of negative self-talk and use of unhelpful coping strategies can become a pattern which reinforces rather than diminishes anxiety about speaking. At a deeper and more complex level, individuals may develop an underpinning system of negative assumptions and beliefs which more generally influences how they experience the world.

## What happens in therapy?

One of the first tasks is to help clients explore the links between their thoughts, feelings, physiological reactions and behavioural responses, to introduce the



concept of the vicious circle and help them weigh up which of their typical ways of coping are helpful and which are less so.

Next, clients are encouraged to carry out 'experiments' which help them to test predictions and see how accurate they are. For example, a recent group of teenagers at the Michael Palin Centre spent a morning watching their therapists stuttering and noticing how members of the public reacted, a task which they threw themselves into wholeheartedly, ensuring that we all stuttered sufficiently to make the experiment valid.

“...thoughts, feelings, physiological and behavioural responses are linked...”

Cognitive therapists use questions to help clients explore other perspectives, and reach their own conclusions, taking care to work collaboratively and avoid any sense of debate or instruction. Questions that we encourage clients to ask themselves include:

- What is the evidence that supports my prediction?
- Is there any evidence that what I'm thinking is not entirely accurate, or that something else could be true?
- Is there another way of looking at things?

People are also helped to recognise when they are adopting an unhelpful pattern of thinking or 'thinking trap'. Our group of teenagers, and not a few of the therapists and students too, recognised some of the following:

### All or nothing thinking:

This is where you look at things in absolute, black and white terms rather than considering a continuum of possibilities. Perceiving something to be a 'total failure' or 'rubbish' because it is not 100% perfect is an example of all or nothing thinking.

### Catastrophising:

You expect that the worst will happen even when there is no evidence to suggest that it might. You don't consider other possible outcomes which might be just as, if not more likely.

### Mind-reading:

You make assumptions about what other people are thinking or are going to think.

### Over-generalisation:

You make a sweeping conclusion on the basis of one event, that goes far beyond the current situation.

### Mental filter

You dwell on the negatives and magnify them or blow them out of proportion, while ignoring or minimising the positives.

### Post mortem thinking

You go over in your mind all the things that went wrong and don't pay attention to the things you did well.

Importantly, in cognitive therapy there is recognition that adverse events do occur. At times people who stutter face very real social stigma and sometimes fears are justified. One of the real strengths of this approach is that it focuses on building coping strengths and problem-solving skills so that individuals are more flexible in their thinking and more emotionally resilient when things are less than ideal.

## Research and the evidence base

There is not a great deal of research into the use of cognitive therapy with people who stutter yet, however several studies have discussed links between social anxiety and stuttering, lending weight to a theoretical argument for its use. Fry, Botterill and Pring (2009) and Menzies, O'Brian, Onslow and Packman (2008) have recently referred to the use of cognitive therapy as a component of treatment for, respectively, teenagers and adults who stutter, and certainly at a clinical level it seems to

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*Dr. Jennifer Watson and Tom Watson. Tom pitched in with much-needed help at the conference site.*



*Speech therapists look over Stuttering Foundation materials.*

**Rio** *Continued from front*  
 everything we had very quickly. Many were disappointed when we ran out of materials.”  
 “Rio was a wonderful conference,” said therapist Willie Bottherill. She added, “We had a lovely time distributing SFA materials to people who really wanted and needed them.” □

**ESPN Hits Home Run**



ESPN readers from across the country are calling and emailing the Foundation after seeing full-page public service ads in not only one but two issues of the magazine this summer. The donated ads are reaching hundreds of people who want help with stuttering. Thank you, ESPN! □

**Journalism Award Winners**  
*Media Awards Celebrate 18th Year*

The Stuttering Foundation has announced its 2009 Awards for Excellence in news reporting. The winning entries successfully enhanced public understanding of this complex speech disorder during the past year. “Journalists in a variety of media have done an outstanding job of focusing on the causes and treatment of stuttering over the past year,” said Jane Fraser, president of the 62-year-old nonprofit foundation. “We were particularly pleased this year to see an increased focus on young people.” Three distinguished journalists are honored for their outstanding contributions. They are:

**Category: Daily Newspapers**

**First Place: Martha Phifer,** *The Orlando Sentinel,* Orlando, Florida. “Take control of stuttering.” The English and Spanish articles give readers the tools needed to identify stuttering and offers useful advice on how to help children overcome stuttering. These articles provide different points of view on the problem, offer lots of resources for help, and reach a large Hispanic audience.



*Martha Phifer*

**Second Place: Kit Bradshaw,** *Jupiter Courier,* Stuart, Florida.

“Kids who stutter don’t want to be defined by their speech,” a multimedia presentation, provides readers with positive and accurate information about stuttering through the viewpoint of two teens. Speech-language pathologist Liz



*Kit Bradshaw*

Blake shares accurate information with viewers.

**Third Place: Jill Moon,** *The Telegraph,* Alton, Illinois. “Don’t stifle stutterers.” Moon focused on help for classroom teachers with students who stutter including resources at the local library.



*Jill Moon*

**Category: Television**



*Diana Montano, left, speaks with Lisette Betancourt.*

**Honorary First Place:** Producer **Diana Montano** and Telemundo TV for their timely segment on stuttering, targeting Spanish-speaking parents with help nationwide. This excellent segment featured speech-language pathologist Lisette Betancourt of Miami Children’s Hospital.

The awards were announced during National Stuttering Awareness Week, May 11-17.

San Diego Charger Darren Spoles led this year’s awareness campaign. Among other famous people who stutter are VP Joe Biden, actor James Earl Jones, *20/20*’s John Stossel, and basketball star Kenyon Martin. A complete list of famous people who stutter can be found at [www.stutteringhelp.org](http://www.stutteringhelp.org). □

## Childhood

*Continued from front*

hearing the happy and angry conversations compared to the neutral one.

The children who stutter used about the *same* frequency of regulatory behaviors across the happy, angry, and neutral conversations.

I also found that the children who stutter using fewer emotion regulation strategies also stuttered *more*. In other words, it appears that use of regulatory behaviors is related to stuttering; however, we do not know if the stuttering decreases the occurrence of the regulatory behaviors or if less regulatory behavior results in more stuttering. Further research is needed to answer this question.

More recently, I studied electrical brain responses (i.e., event-related potentials) when 4 and 5 year old children who stutter listened to sentences while they watched a cartoon. These 26 children, thirteen who stutter and

thirteen who don't, were in their first year of a longitudinal project directed by Anne Smith and Christine Weber-Fox at Purdue.

When we analyzed their brain



*Hayley S. Arnold works with a young client.*

responses, we saw subtle, but statistically significant, differences for the children who stutter compared to their peers who do not stutter. The differences in brain activity were more pronounced when the children heard words that were out of order in a sentence (“He wanted this *that* ball”) rather than the meaning of words (“He stood on the one *music*”). This study is helping us to under-

stand that the brain activity for language may differ for some children who stutter when they are simply listening to speech without speaking themselves.

I've also started studying the body's response to emotions (i.e., autonomic arousal) by measuring changes in the skin related to sweat gland activity and blood flow. This study includes school-age children who stutter and their peers who do not during speech and non-speech tasks.

Because the recordings we use are “kid friendly,” the children often talk about how much fun they had and even ask when they can return! I hope that these and other studies will help us better understand stuttering and eventually lead to therapy that helps prevent chronic stuttering.

If you live in Indiana and would like your child who stutters to participate in our studies, e-mail [harnold@purdue.edu](mailto:harnold@purdue.edu). □

## Therapy

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have a good fit with clients' experience and therapy goals.

### In summary

Cognitive Therapy is not concerned with teaching clients to ‘think positively’ or to be more ‘rational’. It is concerned with helping people to understand the way in which their thinking affects them on a day-to-day basis, and to cope with difficulties more effectively by being more flexible in how they look at and respond to situations, developing more effective problem-solving skills, maximising the use of more helpful self-talk, and developing life-enhancing core beliefs. It provides a structure for therapists to explore their own negative thoughts, emotions and responses, and to understand parents' anxieties better.

At the Michael Palin Centre cognitive therapy may be integrated into work on fluency skills, desensitisation or general communication skills, or it may be delivered on its own for young adults and adults who want to focus more the psychological aspects of their experience. It is particularly important

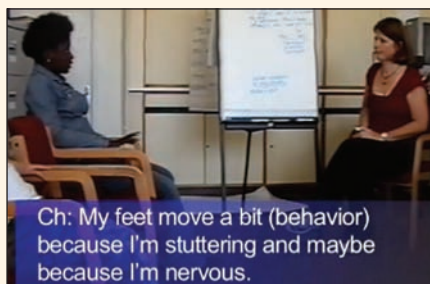
in our work with children, parents and young people where developing a robust and positive self-view is likely to protect against future difficulties.

### Where to find out more

There are a number of self-help resources available which provide a good place to start, some of which are listed below.

**In addition, the Stuttering Foundation has recently released the DVD, *Tools for Success*, which provides a “taster” to the core skills of CBT, presented by speech therapists from the Michael Palin Centre and based on a workshop held in Boston in 2008. (Photos shown in this article are found in the new DVD)**

In the USA Christine Padesky is a high-profile clinician, writer and



trainer at the Centre for Cognitive Therapy ([www.padesky.com](http://www.padesky.com)) who provides training and resources for mental health professionals.

### References

- Fry, J., Botterill, W., & Pring, T. (2009). *The effect of an intensive group therapy programme for young adults who stutter: A single subject study*. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 11 (1): 12-19.
- Menzies, G., O'Brien, S., Onslow, M., Packman, A., St Clare, T & Block, S. (2008). *An experimental clinical trial of a cognitive-behaviour therapy package for chronic stuttering*. *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research*, 51, 1451-1464.

### Self-help books

- Butler, G. (1999) *Overcoming Social Anxiety and Shyness. A self-help guide using Cognitive Behavioural Techniques*. Robinson, London.
- Butler, G. & Hope, T. (1995) *Manage your Mind: The Mental Fitness Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Willets, L., & Creswell, C. (2007). *Overcoming your child's social anxiety and shyness: A self-help guide using cognitive-behavioural techniques*. Robinson. London

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# A Hero of Their Own

By Casey Pearce  
Chargers.com

## NFL Star Inspires Students

Darren Sproles spent a May morning encouraging approximately 30 youngsters who, like the star running back, battle stuttering issues.

When Alex Scharnitzky, a sixth grader at San Diego's De Portola Middle School, shook hands with Darren Sproles, it wasn't just about meeting his favorite athlete. It was about finding common ground with someone who has faced and overcome similar obstacles.



"I didn't know anyone else who stutters and my dad told me that there was a famous football player who stutters, too," Scharnitzky said. "It was cool to know that I'm not the only one."

As part of National Stuttering Awareness Week, Sproles visited roughly 30 San Diego students who also struggle with the speech disorder. The students gathered at Morse High School where Sproles answered many of their questions, signed autographs and mingled with the group for approximately an hour.

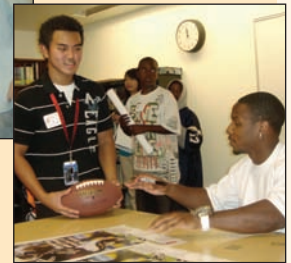
"I was nervous at first, but I'm glad I got to meet these kids," Sproles said. "Hopefully I encouraged them a little."

Sproles, who has stuttered throughout his life, sat in front of the room as students asked him not only about life in the NFL, but also about his personal speech struggles.

"Sometimes when I talk, I try to go too fast, and that's what gets me in trouble," he explained. "If you put a camera in my face, I get



NFL Star Darren Sproles signs autographs for young fans.



nervous. That's when it (stuttering) comes out the most. Once I get relaxed, I'm fine. I've got to stop and breathe and just try to talk slower. That helps."

The students' questions were pointed. They asked if he was picked on at school because of his speech and were eager to hear how he's overcome his struggles.

"They got right to the point," Sproles said. "I told them that I never really worry about it. If you let something bother you, it can get in your way. It's

like football. You just have to work at it.

Sproles became acquainted with the Stuttering Foundation through San Diego native and former NBA star Bill Walton. Sproles has formed a friendship with Walton, and Walton has helped Sproles with the running back's speech issues.

Sproles now serves as a national spokesman for the Stuttering Foundation, and his image is featured on a large poster that each student received. The poster contains the message, "Stuttering didn't keep him out of the game."

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# Western Workshop is Best Ever ... Again

By Susan Hamilton, M.A.

Once again, Susan Hamilton and Jennifer Watson concluded that this year's workshop was the best ever! Both presenters agree that "We couldn't have done it without our awesome organizer Ellen Reuler." Reuler, a former workshopper, is the Director of Clinical Services at Portland State University and was responsible for the behind the scenes tasks that made the workshop flow seamlessly from start to finish.

Susan Hamilton and Jennifer Watson joined forces at the podium for this 5 day event where participants were chosen from across the world. This year we had attendees from Canada, Thailand and Argentina as well as across the United States. Watson and Hamilton's goals for this year's workshop were to help the attendee's to increase their "comfortability," competence and confidence when treating children who stutter.

"This group really impressed me in that they were positive and so supportive of each other during the learning process," commented Watson.

Both presenters agreed that the participants were willing to step out of their comfort zones and build on past experiences to learn more about providing therapy to children who stutter. "It takes courage to practice newly learned skills in front of your peers," stated Hamilton. This year's group took it a step farther and took their newly acquired skills and tools out to the streets of Portland! Workshopppers agreed that it's vital to be willing to do what we ask our clients to do!

One workshopper stated that " I feel that a conference is successful if I take one thing away from a conference, well I've taken hundreds," another remarked that this was the best conference she had attended in her career. " I can't wait to get back to work and start practicing all of my new skills with my clients!" □

*Susan Hamilton facilitates a session.*



*Small groups work together.*



*Front row: Claudia Zapata, Ellen Reuler, Jane Fraser, Susan Hamilton and Jennifer Watson. Middle row: Jaimee Kupferman, Srinikorn Prohmtong, Carrie Smigelski, Kristy Stefanucci, Amanda Wells, Jennifer Irvine and Liliana Bejarano. Back row: P.J. Seymour, Alicia Fox, Mary Ackles, Cecelia Myers, Jennifer Katz, Gail Rothwell and Stephanie Cooper.*



*Participants enjoy Susan and Jennifer's interaction.*

# New England Hosts 11th Workshop

By Diane Parris, M.A.  
Boston University

Twenty speech-language pathologists gathered at Boston University's Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences for a 5-day workshop. They came from twelve states and two foreign countries - Thailand and Australia - with backgrounds as diverse as their geographical origins. However, from June 10 - 14th, they shared one thing in common: increasing their expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of children who stutter.

Hosted by Diane Parris, MS CCC/SLP Clinical Associate Professor, a team of extraordinary researchers and master clinicians provided the right blend of information and skills training to help increase confidence and competence in an integrated approach to fluency therapy.

The program included: Dr. Edward Conture, Professor and Director of Graduate Studies at Vanderbilt University, Diane Parris, Dr. Sheryl Gottwald, Assistant Professor at the University of New Hampshire, Dr. David Luterman, Professor at Emerson College, and Adriana DiGrande, MS CCC/SLP, Adjunct Clinical Faculty at Boston University.

Direct clinical skills training culminated in mock therapy sessions with children gathered from the local area.

Participants commented that the 'hands on' learning was a highlight of the program. One workshopper said, "This is the best professional training I have had since grad school. It was so empowering to have these experts here with us for 'stuttering boot camp.' I felt quite comfortable exploring the limits of professional knowledge, and making



Front row (left to right): Sheryl Gottwald, Judi Cheng, Jane Fraser, Voon Pang, Rachel Whorton and Christian Oliva. Middle row: Kathy Thomas, Joy Kling, Maryann Kaminsky, Nittaya Kasemkosin, Adriana DiGrande, Andrea Elson, Beth Deiter, Carol Hinchey and Gayle Daly. Back row: Laura Graham, Kari Meyer, Francine Vasquez, Laura Buckley, Patricia Keiling, Joanne Boucher, Beth Baccari, Diane Parris and Michele Coogan.



Dr. Conture reviews Dual Diathesis Stressor Model of Stuttering.



Dr. Luterman conducting direct skills training.



Dr. Gottwald focuses on treatment of preschoolers.



Diane Parris facilitates a practice session for scoring disfluencies.



Workshoppers relax during a break.



*this journey with such wonderful colleagues."*

Many were inspired by the practical nature of the training and by the friendships that resulted from the intensive nature of the program including sharing living quarters in the University's dorms.

As they begin to implement their new learning with clients, most will also be offering in-service training to colleagues in upcoming months. Spreading the knowledge and skills provided in the regional workshops is essential to the mission of the Foundation. □

# Iowa Workshop *Sizzles!*

By Patricia Zebrowski, Ph.D.  
University of Iowa

This year's Midwest Workshop was held in Iowa City, under the leadership of Dr. Patricia Zebrowski with Dr. Lisa Scott of The Florida State University as guest lecturer during the five day course.

"We continue to attract strong applicants to the Midwest Workshop – and this year's group of practitioners met our expectations – and then some," says Tricia Zebrowski.

This year's attendees hailed from Iowa, Illinois, California, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Virginia, Texas and Japan.

Added Zebrowski, "Teaching this workshop gives me the opportunity to talk about how research and clinical practice complement each other and to hear from others about how this relationship functions in the real world."

One attendee remarked, "I hope to be much more effective when treating children who stutter and be a better communicator with parents."

Another said, "The way I provide stuttering therapy has changed dramatically. I now feel that I have a plan of action..." □

**"I plan to make changes in all aspects of my interactions with students who stutter and their families. I now have a clearer understanding of evaluation and counseling."**

~ Workshop Attendee



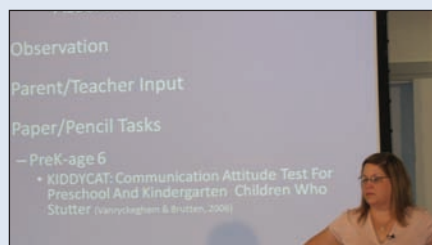
Front row: Julie Raynor, Brenda Ross, Kavita Kaul, Susan Beers and Pat Brush-Lorey. Second row: Juliane Svingen, Barbara Johnson, Diane Monroe, Jane Fraser, Jennifer Mollerud, Toni Cilek and Jamie Ryan. Third row: Kathryn Johnson, Tricia Zebrowski, Donna Smith and Nereida Ybarra. Back row: Terry Douglas, Yoshimasa Sakata, Michele Mikita, Julia Hollister, Stacie Greene and Kyle Brouwer.



Jennifer Mollerud and Kavita Kaul.



Donna Smith and Yoshimasa Sakata.



Dr. Scott demonstrates assessment tools.



A "get-together" at the end of the day.



Participants hard at work.





# Rising Blues Star

Following in the footsteps of blues legends B.B. King and John Lee Hooker, teen guitarist Myles Mancuso loves the "blues." Myles is an outstanding performer and also a person who stutters - just like King and Hooker. He has shared some personal insights with the Stuttering Foundation not only about his music but also about how he deals with stuttering.

**Q. How did you get started in the music business?**

**A.** I got started when I was nine years old when I played on stage with Levon Helm from "The Band" in Woodstock. Then shortly after that I played at a few shows in NYC that were promoted by Sid Bernstein, he is the promoter that brought the Beatles to America.

**Q. What instruments do you play, and how do you classify your music?**

**A.** I play the guitar, piano, bass, sax and drums. Even though my music has "bluesy" elements, I still consider it to be classified as a mix soul, funk and R&B.

**Q. What was your reaction to the B.B. King and John Lee Hooker feature in the last SFA newsletter issue?**

**A.** It surprised me because I never knew that BB King and John Lee Hooker were stutters. I've noticed when they talk - they control it so well. I really respect them for their music and

effort to overcome their stuttering.

**Q. Do you think about your stutter when you are on stage?**

**A.** When I'm on stage all of my problems seems to disappear because I'm so comfortable in front of an audience that I usually don't stutter.



around my friends and so a lot of them don't notice my stuttering. My family treats me like I speak normally.

**Q. Do you think stuttering holds you back in anyway?**

**A.** My stuttering does not hold me back because I've learned that even if I do stutter and people do make fun of me - no one can change who I am inside.

**Q. You have met many famous people. Is there a person who stands out as particularly meaningful to you?**

**A.** Tab Benoit stands out most to me - not only because of his great guitar playing and song writing, but because of his passion for saving the Louisiana Wetlands. I have a lot of respect for someone who devotes their life to a certain cause.



**Q. Have you sought therapy to help with stuttering?**

**A.** Yes, I went through speech therapy most of my elementary years and the first part of my middle school years. I feel the techniques my speech therapist gave me have helped a lot through the years.

**Q. How do friends or family members treat you in regards to your speech?**

**A.** I try to talk as smooth as I can

**Q. Do you plan to stay in the entertainment field as a life-long career?**

**A.** Yes, I plan to play music and be a producer or composer like Quincy Jones. I'm starting to look at music colleges because I'm going into High School this fall.

*For show dates, more articles, pictures and other information, visit [www.mylesmancuso.com](http://www.mylesmancuso.com). □*

# Dear SFA: Reader Response



Send letters to SFA, P.O. Box 11749, Memphis, TN 38111-0749 or e-mail [info@stutteringhelp.org](mailto:info@stutteringhelp.org).

## Be Yourself

Dear SFA:

Hi I'm Tyrell. This is my story.

I have been stuttering for as long as I can remember and it really is a big thing with me. Well, when I was little that is. I always had a hard time controlling my stuttering. I would talk really fast and then get caught up on a word. I would try to talk fast because I won't stutter. The time I usually did was when I talked slow.

I don't get mad over it anymore because I'm older now, and I won't let people get to me when they talk about me and my stuttering. I just brush it off and keep going. I really can't say I was born stuttering because maybe I was and maybe I wasn't. To tell you the truth stuttering is the main reason I never talk out loud during class. It's also the reason why I don't go on stage in front of anybody or even read out loud. It's just something I have never been able to do. So for every one who stutters, don't let what others say about it get you down. Stay strong and be yourself. If they can't accept you for who you are, then that's their loss. To every one like me: smile and be happy. Never let anyone hold you back.

Good-bye and good luck!

Tyrell

E-mail

## Speech Teacher Helps

Dear SFA:

I am a 10-year-old boy named Mustafah. I do not like when people make fun of me when I stutter. I do not like when I stutter, but it doesn't really matter to

me. It only gets on my nerves when other people say, "Why do you go ahah ahah ah?" Then I get mad. I try to stop but sometimes it is hard. I only stutter when I am trying to get myself out of trouble or tell on some-

slow at the same time. This book helps me go with the flow and just let it out sometimes.

Thank you and goodbye from,  
Mustafah, 10  
California



*My name is Andrew. I am 8 years old. I am in 2nd grade. I stutter so don't feel like your alone because our bodies stutter sometimes.*

*Andrew, 8  
Litchfield, Maine*

body when they have done something bad. How do you make people stop stuttering if they have a really, really hard time stopping?

At school, I have a Speech Therapist that is really nice and I love her because she really helps me with my stuttering. Since I have been going to speech I have been getting a lot better at talking and not so much stuttering. At speech, I am reading this book called *Sometimes I Just Stutter*. It talks about how other people stutter and how they feel. Like, people have different emotions and do different things to stop stuttering. Some of the people in this book, do not have any friends because they stutter and make fun of them. I try to stop stuttering by talking fast and

## Answering Questions

Dear SFA:

My name is Aaron and I am in 5th grade.

I do not really mind stuttering but it really annoys me when people ask about it. Because it annoys me, I don't answer. They keep asking and trying to get it out of me. After about the millionth time, I answer that some other people do it and no one is quite sure why. This answer does not always satisfy them. Because it doesn't satisfy them, they don't bother with me. That makes me feel unhappy.

In my speech class, we are going to be putting on a video with a power point presentation to educate the school about stuttering.

Thank you for your time,

Aaron

California

## Techniques Help

Dear SFA:

I started to realize I stuttered when I was in first grade, and I was 6 years old. Then, a couple months later, I started going to speech. This year is my third year because I'm in third grade now, and 8 years old. I've been using something called *Frog Eyes* and *Load the Raft*. Now, I am less bumpy and smoother.

Nick, 8

Grafton, Wis.

Continued on page 11

**Letters**

*Continued from page 10*

**Like a Train**

Dear SFA:

My name is William. I am 8 years old. I live in Miami, Fla. I like to play basketball. I just might be a basketball player. I started stuttering at age 6. I like my speech class. It helps me not to stutter. My friends do not tease me. I think that speech is like a train because when you do not stutter, you are at the end of the train. I feel O.K. about my stuttering. I stutter a lot.  
William, 8  
Miami, Fla.

friend or sang songs with my sisters, my words came out more fluently. Our class was preparing for a play. I was really nervous,

was great! It was after that when I realized that I couldn't always rely on someone to talk for, or with me. That's when Susan Cochrane stepped into my life. She's been my speech therapist ever since that week in the Spring of 2006!!!

I'm telling you this because now I'm ready to manage my own stuttering. Not only am I ready to do this on my own, I am geared up to help others who struggle with their speaking. Since second grade, I've come a long way. Over time, I have learned to overcome fears about speaking. Once I learned to accept my stuttering I was able to learn about belly breathing, phonating, and learning about what I call "social chords" (vocal folds); not to mention articulating! I also learned about all of the parts of my body that you've probably never heard of before, like the palate. Ask someone what it is!! I have really benefited from Ms. Susie. This all seems tiring to learn, but not with an awesome speech therapist like Mrs. Cochrane.

Will, 5th grade  
Geneva, N.Y.

**Reading Letters**

Dear SFA,

Thank you for putting letters from kids that stutter in your magazine. It shows that you care about stuttering kids. Because in the letters we can read them out loud and that will help us not to stutter. If someone says that you stutter, you say, "I do stutter. And I'm working on it." I feel pretty good about myself right now because my speech teacher is helping me get better with my speech.

Shane, 11  
Crestline, Ohio



*I drew this picture of George because sometimes you have easy speech days and some days you have terrible, bad speech days. If you are like George, here are some tips for bad speech days:*

- 1. Relax your mouth*
- 2. If you are talking fast and you start to stutter, slow down!*
- 3. If you try to push it out really hard, it might take longer to come out and your face might turn red.*

*I want people who have bad speech days to know that it's okay to stutter.*

Aaron, 8, Iowa City, Iowa

**Keeping the Upper Hand on Stuttering**

Hi, my name is Will and I stutter. Even though my parents said that I started stuttering when I was 3, I didn't realize it until I was in second grade. I felt sad that my friends could speak better than I did. At the same time I became aware that when I said the Pledge of Allegiance with my classmates, recited a poem with a

thinking I would stutter, so I asked my teacher if I could say my lines with a friend. She said I could! It was a relief!! The play

I'm excited. I talk really fast when I'm excited. So, it doesn't give my speech machine enough time to con-

*Continued on page 12*

**Tips for Teasing**

Dear SFA:

The Stuttering Foundation is a proud participant of the Combined Federal Campaign. Please note our number.  
**CFC #11047**



**Letters***Continued from page 11*

centrate. A way I help it is to talk loudly and slowly. I practice it mostly in speech therapy. From practicing so much now, even if I don't think about it, I talk loudly but not so slowly. I'm lucky because kids don't tease me about stuttering, but my brother did. It made me really sad when he did, but he doesn't any more. If kids do tease you, ignore them and tell an adult or talk to them about stuttering and tell them what it is. You could tell kids "that's called stuttering. Stuttering is when my speech machine jams up and I make my words come out like that. So sometimes I can't help it and it is really frustrating."

Trevor, 10  
Denver, Colo.

**I Feel Good**

Dear SFA:

Hi. My name is Moshe. I'm 6 years old. I'm in first grade. I stutter in school and at home. When I stutter, it bothers me and I feel sad. My mom takes me to a therapist to help me. I feel good about myself.

Moshe, 6  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

**Famous People Stutter**

Dear SFA:

My name is Andre. I am 11 years old and in fifth grade. I am

**Basketball Dreams**

Dear SFA:

My name is Edwin. I am 10 years old, and I live in Miami, Fla. My favorite hobby is basketball because I want to be a basketball player. I started to stutter at the age of 9. My speech teacher helps me most of the time with my stuttering.

Edwin, 10  
Miami, Fla.

**Kids Speak Out on Darren's Visit**

Students gathered at Morse High School for Fluency Awareness Day gave Darren Sproles high marks. It is not surprising the number one comment was, **"My favorite part of the event was Mr. Sproles, of course!"**

One student said, **"I learned today that stuttering should never get in my way. It doesn't have to stop me from doing what I really want to do."**

**"It was great meeting Darren Sproles. He stutters just like me. It's okay to stutter!"** commented another student.

Vinita Rajah who worked so hard to make the visit a reality commented, **"I cannot even begin to say how amazing this event was. The students left feeling elated and empowered. Our school principal was just as excited!"**

**"We are extremely happy to have Sproles as our spokesman. He is a role model for young people who struggle with stuttering because he never gave up working to achieve his dreams,"** says Jane Fraser, president of the Stuttering Foundation.

*For the full story written by San Diego Chargers reporter, go to "A Hero of Their Own" on page 5.*



the only person in my family who stutters. When I was asked about my stuttering, I felt ashamed.

But when I soon learned that many people who were kings, queens, etc., stuttered, I was astonished!

King John IV stuttered (in the U.K. he was called a stammerer) and Petolemy, ruler of Egypt, stuttered too.

Andre, 11  
Miami, Fla.

ing. That helps me from stuttering.

D'Angelo, 12  
Miami, Fla.

**Don't Pressure Yourself**

Dear Eddie,

I read your story in the book *Sometimes I Just Stutter*. I had a comment about what you said about your stuttering problems. I think you shouldn't pressure yourself about your stuttering. I do it too. I think your therapist is right about stuttering.

Tyler  
Portland, Ore. □

**Sproles***Continued from page 5*

"It's wonderful for these kids to have a role model like Darren," said Jennifer Taps, Senior Speech and Language Pathologist for the San Diego Unified School District. "It means so much because in a lot

of ways, they feel like they're alone, that they're the only ones that have this kind of challenge. To see someone with the same challenge that is so successful, it's really encouraging to them."

Taps was impressed that Sproles engaged the students as a group and carefully answered

each question.

"As he said, this kind of a group environment is a challenge for him, yet he was outstanding," Taps said. "It would have been easy for him to just sit down and sign autographs, but he didn't ask for that. He was outstanding." □

# LOOK WHO'S TALKING\*

While the world knows Bruce Willis as an A-list actor, few know that he struggled with stuttering throughout his first 20 years.

Walter Bruce Willis was born in 1955 in West Germany to his German mother, Marlene, and his American GI father, David Willis. The family settled in David's hometown of Penns Grove, New

Asirvatham, Willis admitted that at times he was reluctant to discuss his childhood in probing interviews because it was too painful and a large part of the pain was due to his stuttering.

In high school, Willis became the class cut-up, which eventually led to getting involved in drama. Becoming the class joker was his way of trying to

strived for by first cutting-up in class and then becoming one of his high school's drama stars. Willis later told an interviewer, "A big part of my sense of humor came out of my stuttering, in trying to overcome

Jersey in 1957, and the couple has three other children.

After Willis came onto the radar screen in 1985 with his role as David Addison in the hot TV show

*Moonlighting*, the actor would

occasionally discuss his past struggles with stuttering in both print and television interviews.

In the 1997 book, *Bruce Willis: The Unauthorized Biography*, by British author John Parker, Willis is quoted as saying, "I could hardly talk. It took me three minutes to complete a sentence. It was crushing for anyone who wanted to express themselves, who wanted to be heard and couldn't. It was frightening. Yet, when I became another character, in a play, I lost the stutter. It was phenomenal."

Parker also writes that Willis had a definite formula to conquer his stuttering by implementing a series of confidence building exercises encouraged by a school speech therapist.

According to a 2001 biography, *Bruce Willis: Overcoming Adversity*, by Sandy

fit in. In fact, Anthony Rastelli, a high school teacher vividly remembers Willis' struggles and first attempts to speak before an audience. Rastelli is quoted in Parker's book as saying, "At an age when most boys were finding their feet, Willis had a hard time. The stammer was a problem and in the end he began to compensate for it by his antics.

He had to establish himself among the pack, and, unable to do so with fluent speech, he did it another way – making himself stand out in the crowd by becoming the joker, the mini-tearaway. What he was doing was saying 'Yes, I stutter – but doesn't mean I'm not good as the rest of you, better even.' I nearly died for him when he went on stage to make a speech. The kids were all laughing but somehow, he stuck it out and finished his piece, which was fairly typical of his spirit. And eventually, of course, he discovered that in front of an audience, he could overcome his disability."

Willis achieved the image that he

that and have some dignity. I said, Yes, I stutter, but I can make you laugh."

However, Willis left high school with no definite decision to become an actor. As a stuttering youth with poor grades and a family

that could not fund a college education, Willis hung around town and saved his money. After a couple of years, Willis enrolled at Montclair State College in New Jersey which had a noted drama program. It was there that drama professor, Jerry Rockwood, was impressed by Willis and encouraged him to see a speech therapist - making the combination of acting and speech therapy the undergrad's ticket to both fluency and future success.

Willis' spectacular acting career exploded from *Moonlighting* to Hollywood's A-list, and to box office smashes - *The Sixth Sense*, *Armageddon*, *Bonfire of the Vanities* and the *Die Hard* franchise of movies. Willis ranks as the 7th highest-grossing actor in terms of leading roles.

Willis' struggle with stuttering is inspirational. Unfortunately, it is rarely mentioned in interviews. However, by identifying himself as a person who stutters, Willis has an opportunity to put a human face on the daily struggle stuttering often presents. □

**\*Bruce Willis starred in the 1989 movie *Look Who's Talking* as the voice of baby "Mikey."**



**International Stuttering Awareness Day is Oct. 22!**

## Less Costly Options for Electronic Devices

By Peter Reitzes, MA CCC-SLP

Altered auditory feedback (AAF) has been used since the 1960s with people who stutter to reduce stuttering behaviors. Currently, the most utilized types of AAF are delayed auditory feedback (DAF) and frequency altered feedback (FAF). DAF and FAF technologies are now available in portable prosthetic devices. The most advanced devices are worn in one ear and are indistinguishable from hearing aids. Prosthetic AAF devices capture the speaker's speech signal, digitally alter the signal and then re-introduce the altered speech signal into the speaker's ear.

DAF returns the speech signal to the user's ear with delay times of varying lengths.

The user feels as if he is speaking in unison with himself or speaking in an echo chamber. FAF returns the speech signal with an altered pitch. Many users choose higher pitch settings which return an "Alvin and the Chipmunks" type of voice to the user's ear. Lower "Darth Vader" sounding pitch settings are used as well.

People who stutter report varying degrees of benefit using portable prosthetic devices. Some report that the devices are helpful and practical across a range of speaking situations; others find that the devices lose some or much of their stuttering-reducing effects over time or are uncomfortable and awkward. There are

multiple theories or beliefs as to why DAF and FAF are able to alleviate and reduce, at least initially, the symptoms of stuttering. One theory is that DAF creates a speaking experience which is similar to speaking in chorus or unison, thus reducing stuttering behaviors.

Additionally, it has been noted by many that DAF slows the speaker's rate of speech which may account for reduced stuttering.

There are now less expensive options that make use of Bluetooth technology using handheld computers and phones. For \$1600 VoiceAmp offers their Fluency Enhancer device which looks similar to an iPod or other mp3 player.

The Fluency Enhancer is digital and its software can be upgraded as AAF technology and options improve.

The ArtefactSoft software company sells the DAF Assistant for Apple's iPhone and iPod Touch. This software application includes both DAF and FAF and is available for download for \$9.99. ArtefactSoft's Pocket DAF/FAF Assistant software application (version 2.0) sells for \$69.95 and is used with portable devices running Windows Mobile 5.0 operating systems in conjunction with Bluetooth (wireless) headsets.

If you are interested in trying AAF, download free software for DAF and FAF from Rick Arenas' Web site <http://myweb.uiowa.edu/rarenas/index.htm>. □



▶ **The annual ISAD On-line Conference, More than a Tangled Tongue, Oct. 1-22, International Stuttering Awareness Day.** Go to [www.stutteringhomepage.com](http://www.stutteringhomepage.com)



**Books on Stuttering or Related Topics**

▶ **Treatment of Stuttering: Established and Emerging Approaches: Conventional and Controversial Interventions** by Barry Guitar. 2009. Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore. [www.LWW.com](http://www.LWW.com)

▶ **Clinical Decision Making in Fluency Disorders** by Walter H. Manning. (2009) Delmar Cengage Learning, Clifton Park, NY. [www.cengage.com](http://www.cengage.com).

▶ **Practical Intervention for Early Childhood Stammering** by Elaine Kelman and Alison Nicholas. (2008) Speechmark Publishing, Ltd. Milton Keynes, U.K., [www.speechmark.net](http://www.speechmark.net).

▶ **Stammering, Advice for All Ages** by Renee Byrne and Louise Wright. (2008), Sheldon Press, London, [www.sheldonpress.co.uk](http://www.sheldonpress.co.uk)

▶ **Speak Freely: Essential Speech Skills for School-Age Children Who Stutter** by Mark Allen, Ph.D., (2007) Speak Freely Publications, Evanston, IL, [www.cfst.com](http://www.cfst.com)

▶ **Stuttering: An Integrated Approach to Its Nature and Treatment**, Third Edition by Barry Guitar. 2006. Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, [www.LWW.com](http://www.LWW.com)

▶ **Beyond Stammering**, Revised edition by David Maguire. (2008) Souvenir Press, London.

▶ **Stuttering Recovery Personal and Empirical Perspectives** by Dale F. Williams. 2006. Available from Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, [www.erlbaum.com](http://www.erlbaum.com)

▶ **Speech Therapy for the Severe Older Adolescent and Adult Stutterer: A Program for Change** by George Helliesen. 2006. Available from Apollo Press, Newport News, VA, 800-683-9713, [www.apollopress.com](http://www.apollopress.com)

▶ **The Child and Adolescent Stuttering Treatment and Activity Resource Guide** by Peter Ramig and Darrell Dodge. 2005. Available from Thomson Delmar Learning, Clifton Park, NY.

▶ **Early Childhood Stuttering: For Clinicians by Clinicians** by Ehud Yairi and Nicoline Grinager Ambrose. 2005. Available from ProEd, Austin, TX and [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). □

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