



THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION

A Nonprofit Organization

WINTER 2018

Since 1947... Helping Those Who Stutter



WORLD SERIES MVP GEORGE SPRINGER: A HOME RUN FOR STUTTERING

THE HOUSTON ASTRO SPEAKS OUT ON HIS SPEECH EPIPHANY

“Don't let anybody or anything get in the way of who you are and who you want to be.”

For George Springer, the 2017 World Series began with a shaky start. After striking out four times in game one, however, the outfielder quickly regained his usual stride. In game two, Springer helped his team secure the win with his two-run homer in the 11th inning. The win inspired confidence in Springer, prompting him to dream bigger. “I can't wait to tell the world that the Houston Astros are World Series champs,” he said in an interview after the game. “That's my dream.”

In about a week's time Springer's dream came true, as he appeared on television, in news features, and on the radio to tell the world of his big win. Springer's five home runs earned him the title of World Series MVP and with it, a hoard of requests for interviews. While today Springer jumps at the chance to speak publicly about his team and the game, this was not always the case.

“There was a point in my life where I used to hate this stuff,” Springer says of interviews. “But it kind of grew on me, and the more I kind of embraced who I am, it made me enjoy it more.”

Springer's old fear of public speaking stems from his stutter. As a child he would avoid speaking in class and even when ordering at restaurants.

“I was the guy who didn't talk,” he says.

“I would avoid speaking at all costs.”



His supportive family and friends inspired confidence in Springer as he grew up. He now strives to “get past it.” “It is what it is,” he says. “You can't let it prohibit you from going out and living life.”

Springer was speaking with children who stutter when he realized he could instill confidence in children who struggled as he did. “I had an epiphany,” he says. “I realized, seeing these kids and seeing the pain that they go through because they feel bullied and they feel isolated, and that’s so sad. So I decided right then and there, I’m going to expose myself as somebody who stutters.”



Photos Courtesy of the Houston Astros

And Springer did just that. He fearlessly faced interviews and even elected to wear a microphone during his All-Star game in Miami for an interview with Fox Sports. “I can’t spread a message to kids and adults if I’m not willing to put myself out there,” he told reporters after the game. “I understand I’m going to stutter. I don’t care. It is what it is. It’s not going to stop me from talking or having fun.”

George Springer’s refusal to stay silent and hide his stutter serves as an inspiration to all. We, at the Stuttering Foundation, hope that his example will encourage those who stutter to face their fears head-on. As Springer says, “Don't let anybody or anything get in the way of who you are and who you want to be.”

UNDERSTANDING NEW GENETIC FINDINGS IN STUTTERING

In May 2017, Stuttering Foundation videographer, Bob O'Brien, filmed world renowned geneticist, Dennis Drayna, at the University of Maryland, College Park. Thanks to the hard work of speech-language pathologist Vivian Sisskin, local SLPs and others interested in genetics were able to attend this fascinating session. It resulted in a new 72-minute DVD and provides us all with an update on recent research findings in the genetics of stuttering.

This video, *Understanding New Genetic Findings in Stuttering*, describes the evidence for genetic factors in stuttering and the genes discovered to date. It discusses the function of these genes and what they tell us about the underlying causes of stuttering. It also describes the efforts to create an animal model for stuttering by putting human stuttering mutation into mice and analyzing their ultrasonic vocalizations.



2018 WORKSHOP NEWS

Using Cognitive Approaches with People Who Stutter

The Stuttering Foundation's Eastern Workshop will be held June 25 - 29, 2018 at Boston University. Workshop leaders are Elaine Kelman, MSc, Cert CT, Cert MRCSLT, and Ali Berquez, MSc BA(Hons), Cert MRCSLT, of the Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children. The conference coordinator is Diane Parris Constantino, M.S., CCC-SLP, Boston University. The deadline to apply is March 31, 2018.

Treating Children and Adolescents Who Stutter

The Stuttering Foundation's Mid-Atlantic Workshop will be held July 23 - 27, 2018, in Philadelphia, Pa. It is co-sponsored by The Stuttering Foundation, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, and the University of Maryland. Workshop leaders are Joseph Donaher, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; Vivian Sisskin, M.S., CCC-SLP, University of Maryland; and Michael Boyle, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Montclair State University. The deadline to apply is March 31, 2018.

Download a workshop application at www.StutteringHelp.org/workshop-applications



THE 2017 JOE FULCHER AWARD



LONDON — The Michael Palin Centre for Stammering presented the 2017 Joe Fulcher Award to Chaye Foster on Dec. 13 in London. The Joe Fulcher Award is given to a person who has bravely risen above the challenge of stuttering and is an example of excellence in the stuttering community and beyond.

Chaye Foster, 15, was selected from the nominees by several people, including Stuttering Foundation Board Member Frances Cook, who said *“Chaye was chosen because of the resilience and determination that she has shown in her commitment to the demands of therapy. It was clear that Chaye has understood for herself the challenges that she faced and that, with support, she has made really important changes that will stand her in good stead for the rest of her life.”*

Stuttering Foundation President Jane Fraser presented the award together with actor and author Michael Palin. *“Chaye’s uncle also played an amazing role in Chaye’s success,”* Jane said. *“As Chaye’s primary caregiver, he has fully committed to get her the assistance she needs. But getting Chaye where she needed to be was more than enough; she was ready and willing to do the hard work it took, all on her own!”*

During his more than 30 years of faithful service to the Stuttering Foundation, Joe Fulcher served in many diverse capacities, including Vice President, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, and member of the annual Audit Committee. Joe’s dedication to his work with the Stuttering Foundation was an example to board and staff.

Joe had the privilege of working directly with Malcolm Fraser, the founder of the Stuttering Foundation, for many years. Malcolm thought highly of Joe’s financial oversight and planning abilities that greatly assisted the Stuttering Foundation in providing ongoing support and help to those who struggle with stuttering.

Joe Fulcher, who passed away on October 6, 2017, will continue to be remembered and honored with this wonderful award.



Chaye, with her uncle

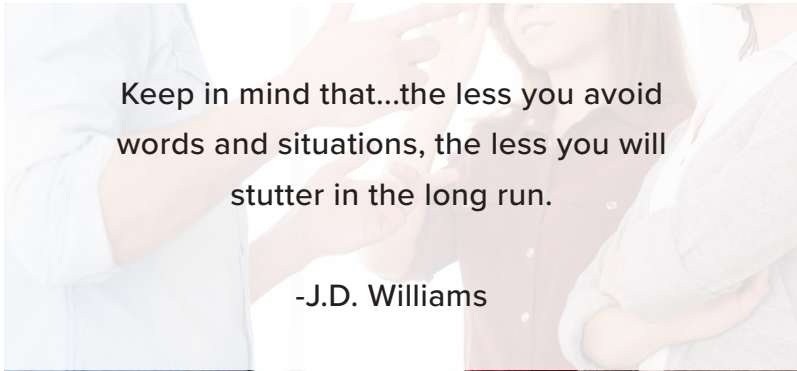




Here's what some of our more than **248,000 friends** are talking about in our Facebook community

Stuttering Foundation @stutteringhelp

Stuttering Foundation



A great reminder for everyone from Malcolm Fraser's book, *Self Therapy For The Stutterer*.

Anant: If you want long term pleasure, endure short term pain. Stuttering is about fear, lack of assertiveness and poor self image. Everytime people who stutter courageously face a speech block, they conquer fear. I've observed that when you consistently defeat fear (stuttering), stuttering is permanently dissolved. But, mere will power won't help. People who stutter must have powerful tools and techniques to dissolve blocking mentality first. Hence, get in touch with neuro-linguistic programming. Read John Harrison, Bob Bodenhamer and L.Michael Hall. BE DETERMINED TO DISSOLVE STUTTERING. IT CAN BE DONE.

Tim: The day I stopped avoiding or substituting words, my speech improved.

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"The one thing I've learned is that stuttering in public is never as bad as I fear it will be"
John Stossel, an American television personality and author, who's childhood and the early part of his career were fraught with the difficulties of stuttering says he, "remembers terror in the classroom."

Lyn: Even if it is as bad as I fear it will be, I just keep going straight ahead with my point. No stressing about apologies or trying to start over. No sir, we're good.

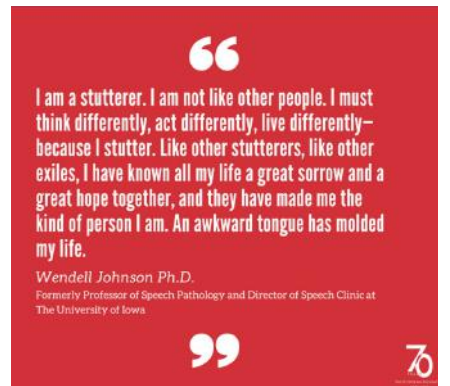
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For #FlashbackFriday we're sharing one of our favorite videos: **Stuttering For Kids, By Kids**

Amy: As a parent of an 11-year-old stutterer, please continue to share resources like this. It helps to desensitize the disability.

Stuttering Foundation



Professor Wendell Johnson gives his unique perspective on stuttering.

Massimiliano: Self-confidence, realism, acceptance, suffering and hope: Professor Johnson is a great thinker and therapist!

Nicole: True words!

SHELBY RAILROAD: ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Shelby Railroad Raises Over \$10,000 for Stuttering at September 2017 Golf Event

Memphis-based Shelby Railroad Services Inc. raised more than \$10,000 for the Stuttering Foundation during their annual golf outing and dinner in September at Wedgewood Golf Club in Olive Branch, Miss. The annual event honors Ruth McGuiness Tarver—the late mother of John Tarver and grandmother of Kirk Tarver, Shelby Railroad's President and Vice President (respectively).

While Shelby Railroad supports nearly 40 different organizations, Kirk says the Stuttering Foundation is "very near and dear to their hearts" because of his grandmother, Ruth. She stuttered from the time she was a young child; in those years, there wasn't much help for people who stuttered.

"We owe a world of gratitude to the Tarver family, Shelby Railroad, and all of those who participate in this annual event – it is simply wonderful," said Jane Fraser.



Jane Fraser and Kirk Tarver



THE STANLEY CUP & STUTTERING: BRYAN RUST

Pittsburgh Penguin Bryan Rust, a Michigan native and graduate of the University of Notre Dame, was cited in 2016 as one of the Penguins' stars in their impressive Stanley Cup run. A champion on the ice, Rust has also been a champion for stuttering, openly discussing his struggles with several media outlets.

Bryan and his older brother Matt (who was also drafted by the Pittsburgh Penguins) attended speech therapy together when they were young. "I've kind of embraced it," Bryan said. "My older brother has the same thing. It's kind of something we've grown up with together and just dealt with. I've had a lot of people around me that have really been supportive with it. Sometimes, it's not so bad. Sometimes, it's really bad It's just one of those things I've learned to deal with."

On May 2, 2016, Bryan Rust became the first rookie in NHL history to score two goals in game seven of the Stanley Cup playoffs, helping the Penguins to victory in game seven of the semi-finals. After this publicized feat, *Sports Illustrated* published an article about Rust and his brother. "Born three years apart, Matt and Bryan were bonded by more than hockey. As children, both attended speech therapy to help their stutters, and found themselves subject to the same type of teasing from peers. 'It's not the easiest thing to go through as a kid,' Matt said. 'We were always there for each other. That's probably a story in itself.'"

In his year with Wilkes-Barre/Scranton of the AHL, Bryan won the team award given to the player most cooperative with the media. In his rookie season with the Pittsburgh Penguins, a January 20, 2016 article in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette entitled "Speech impediment does not slow down Penguins RW Bryan Rust" brought his stuttering to the forefront with Penguins fans.

Last spring Rust helped the Penguins win a second Stanley Cup in a row, which hockey fans will laud as the ultimate. The stuttering community applauds his win and his transparency in discussing his stutter with the public.



TO MY STUTTER

AN OPEN LETTER TO A LIFELONG FRIEND

BY JAMES HAYDEN

Dear Stutter,

For most of my life, you've been the friend I didn't want, but couldn't see my life without. The majority of our friendship has been filled with anxiety, nervousness, hate, self-doubt, and insecurity; however, those negatives have since turned into beauty, acceptance, and ultimately self-confidence.

When we first became friends I was five. You filled me with a sense of doubt and made me wonder if I was the only person you were friends with. I went to speech therapy for seven years and as the years progressed our friendship weakened. When I went to high school, I thought you were a childhood friend that I would never see again, but wouldn't forget. Boy, was I wrong.

We became friends again when I was a senior in high school and we've been friends ever since. Our renewed friendship was difficult for me to accept. My senior year of high school and most of my college career was filled with a mix of self-doubt, nerves, anxiousness, and insecurities. During those years, you were winning. I didn't participate in class because I was afraid you would make an untimely visit. I had to write a script every time I wanted to talk on the phone in case it was a three way conversation between you, me, and the person on the other end. I wouldn't order through a drive thru in case you ordered something I didn't want.

My last two years of college were a time of transition for us. We went back to therapy and worked on our issues. I still didn't want you present in my life, but I began accepting our friendship. I learned ways to avoid you, but more importantly I learned how to not allow you to dictate what I could and couldn't do. I talked on the phone without a script, I started to participate in class, I volunteered for public speaking opportunities. I was allowing myself to say we are friends and not be embarrassed by our friendship.

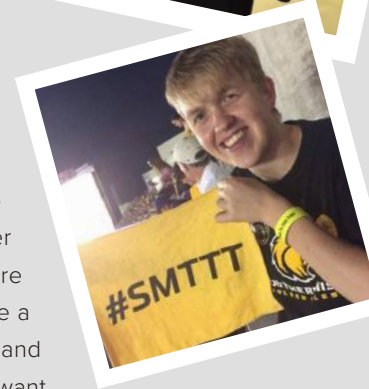
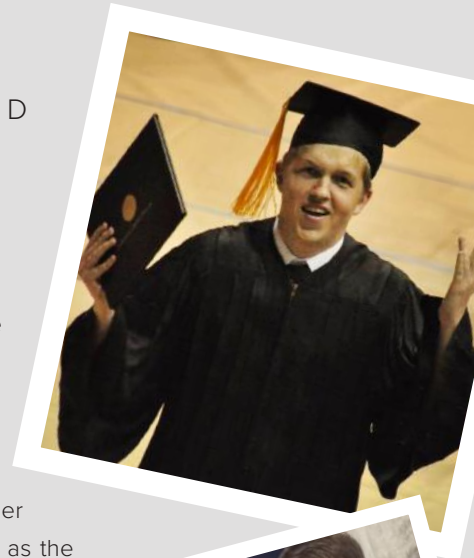
After I graduated college and moved to a new city, you were one of the few friends I had in my new city. I still didn't want anything to do with you, but I was becoming more accepting of our friendship. Shortly after moving to my new city, we went to our first NSA meeting and it was there where I met some of your other friends. That was the best thing I've ever done because it showed me I am not the only person you are friends with, a great thing for my younger self to know. Those meetings have allowed us to be better friends and be more open about our friendship. I now openly talk about our friendship with anyone who will listen. I write about our friendship regularly and share it with whoever wants to read our story. That's something I would not have when we re-newed our friendship.

Two years have passed since we went to our first NSA meeting and our friendship has only strengthened because of it. I've accepted that we will be friends for the rest of my life and I'm okay with that. Yes, I still struggle to keep eye contact with people because I want them to look at me and not you. Your visits still cause me to wonder what the other person I am talking to is thinking about your visit. At times, I need to assure them that you're no big deal and they should ignore you.

However, our stronger friendship has also made me see the good in you. Because of you I am a better person and more confident. I see people for who they are, not what they sound or look like. I am mentally stronger and I know who I am and what I want because of you. Although at times I wish we weren't friends, I'm glad we are. I don't know where I would be without you. I guess that means I won because I see your beauty and not your ugliness.

Better luck next time,

-James





DEAR SFA:

KIDS' LETTERS TO THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION

It Doesn't Define You

My name is Maya. I am 11 years old and I'm in fifth grade. I have been stuttering for a long time. Don't get frustrated because everyone stutters sometimes. It may not be something you notice but trust me they have stuttered sometime in their life. You aren't alone. A bunch of people stutter. Something that helps me is to think about what I'm saying before I say it. For example, I say "and so" before my sentences to help me get my sentence going. My speech teacher said for me to say it in my head and then say the rest of my sentence out loud, and focus on what I'm about to say. These are some of the strategies that help me. Stuttering doesn't define you. You are no different than any of the other students. Nobody is the same. Everybody is unique but stuttering doesn't make people treat you differently. You are still a student at your school, you still learn the same things. You are unique in a wonderful way. Everyone is unique but stuttering doesn't define you. Hope you have a great year and be happy!

Maya, 11
Wilmington, NC



Hi my name is Oliver. I am 8.
Stuttering is ok!!! No one cares if you do it. Easy onset helps me ~~write~~ speak. Speaking is hard. Some advice I would give: Keep going + speech and if it makes you mad Try using strategies to make it easier.

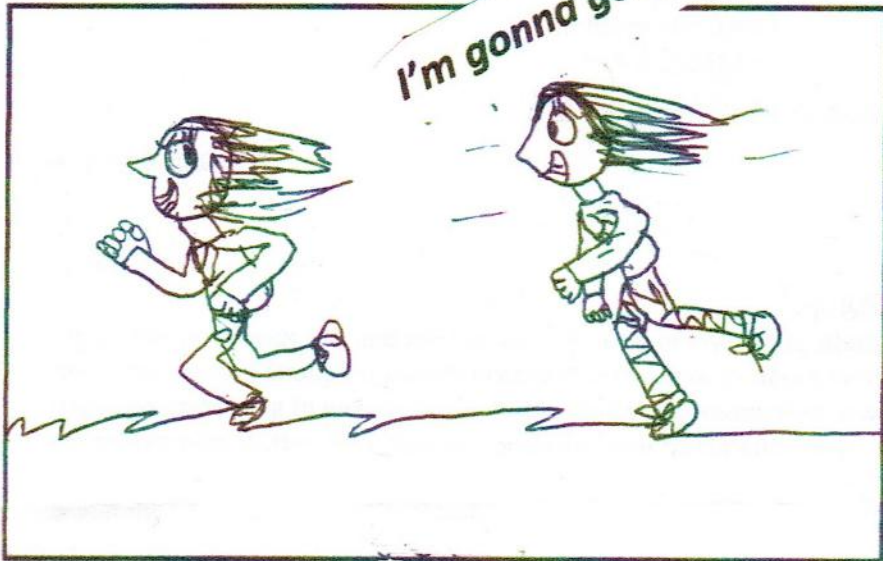
artwork and letter by Oliver, 8, from Benbrook, TX

We LOVE to read your stories, advice, and strategies!

Please send your letters, artwork and/or photos via email to info@stutteringhelp.org or mail to:

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

I'm gonna get you!



N-N-No you won't!



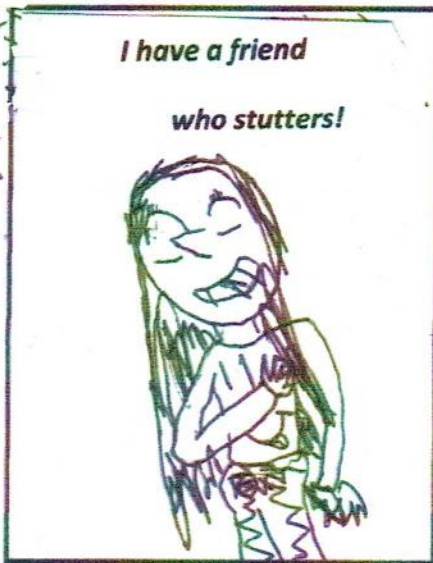
Wait!
Did you
just stutter?



Yeah, how
did you
know?



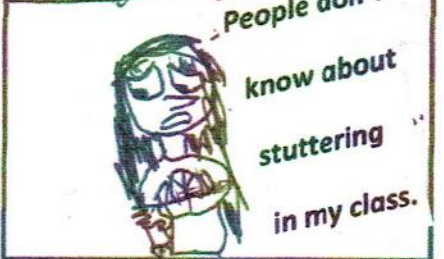
I have a friend
who stutters!



I did not know you
knew about
stuttering!



People don't
know about
stuttering
in my class.



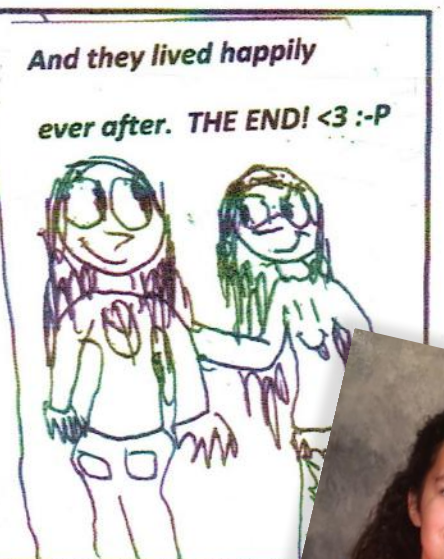
It's okay...



...Everyone speaks
different sometimes.



And they lived happily
ever after. THE END! <3 :-P



No Magic Pill In The Real World

My name is Colin and I made this comic story for the magazine. I am working on my stuttering at school. I hope that this helps kids not stutter any more. Thank you for reading this letter and publishing my comic!

Sincerely,
Colin
Suffern, NY





I Am Unique

My name is Patrick. I am 10 years old. I live in Santa Fe and go to Nava Elementary School. I have been in speech therapy for 3 years. I stutter but I don't let it bother me. I think that stuttering makes me unique. I have gotten better at stuttering, but I still stutter a bit. I do not care. Because I am unique! I live with my parents, my brother Ian, and my dog Jack.

Patrick, 10, from Santa Fe, NM

You Have More Talents Than You Realize

I am very talented and I stutter while doing presentations and in front of crowds. I play the piano, violin and recorder. I have one bird and one fish. I am very interested in birds and I am the best at recognizing and taking care of birds in my whole family. I have many things in my family like no one else has, for example: braces, a pet, a fidget spinner and I also swim the best. I also like to play games. The point is even if you stutter you have many more talents than you realize. When I first started speech therapy I had to jerk my arm, leg or head to speak and now I do not even have to think about talking.



Arsal, 10, from Old Westbury, NY

Stuttering is Not a Problem

My name is Madison and I'm 11 years old. I live in New York. I'm in fifth grade. I've been stuttering since Pre-K. I learned to cancel my speech and then I use my easy speech. I don't care about stuttering, it's not a problem if you stutter. I love to play Minecraft. When I play Minecraft I don't stutter. I love my speech teacher, she is very nice and smart!

Madison, 11, from Walden, NY

Practice Will Make it Get Easier

I, Danny, am in seventh grade and I have been stuttering for a long time. In third grade I did not mind it that much. It never came up with my friends. Same thing in the fourth grade. In the sixth grade, I practiced my techniques more and got more fluent. It was more important to me to practice because I would have to talk a lot more than I did in third grade. To those people that are still struggling with their speech, my advice is, it will get easier in the future, as long as you keep practicing.

I have some questions for you. Do you hear of more success stories or struggles over the years? Do you see a difference in questions from third graders to eighth graders and in what way?

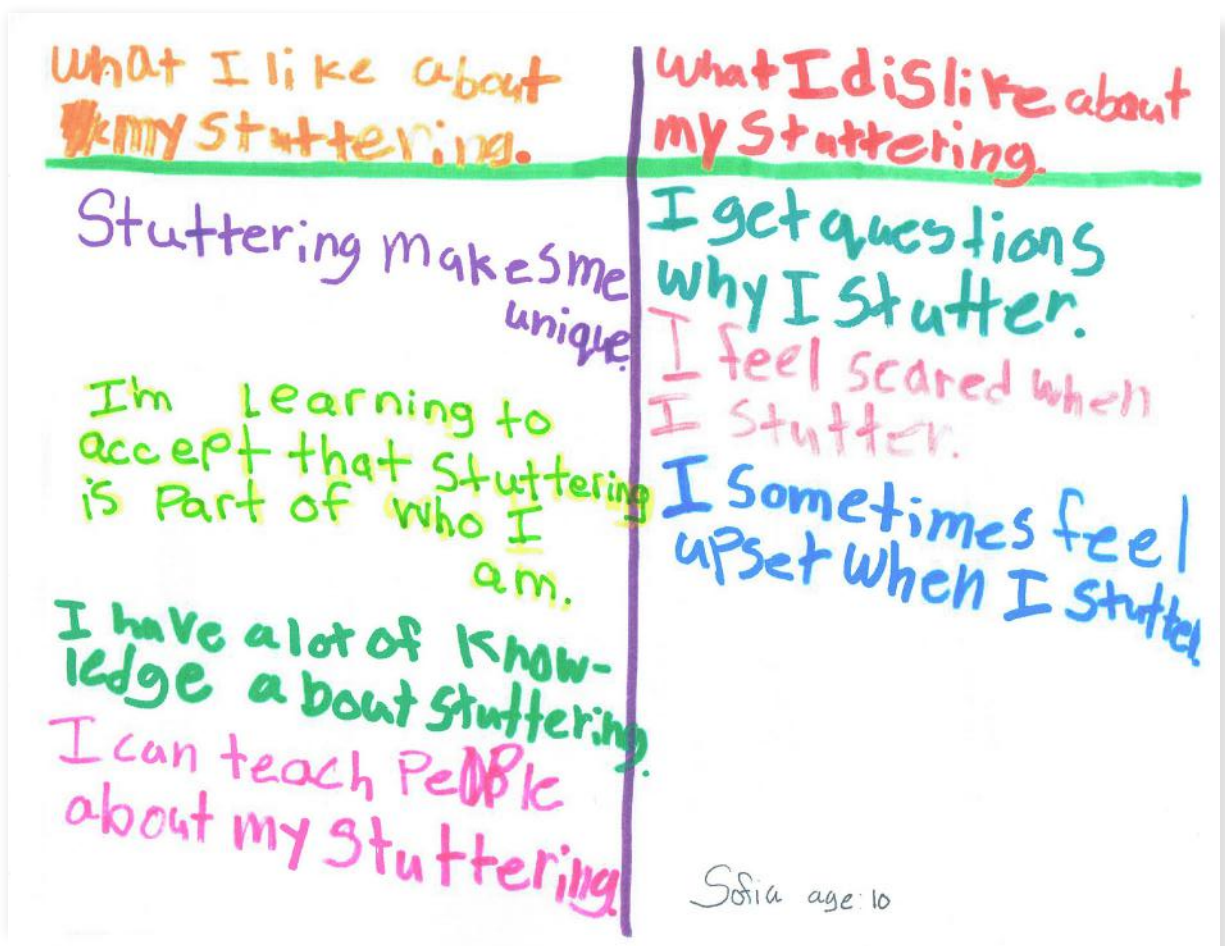
Thank you for your consideration!

Danny, 7th grade, from Provincetown, MA

Editor's Note: Danny, you asked great questions, but there are no simple answers. We hear both stories of struggle and stories of success. It seems everyone who stutters into adulthood will always grapple with their fluency to some degree. What we do hear a lot of is Positive Attitude stories such as "This is part of me but not all of me and I can still achieve anything I put my mind to!" As to your other question, third graders seem more interested in the mechanics of why they stutter and how to cope well with peers. Older kids sometimes just get comfortable with stuttering and they don't let it get in the way of school or sports or friends or talents. The key is, everyone is different – even if stuttering seems the same to some, it isn't and each person is unique! There is no "right" or "wrong" or 100% on any of it!

What I Like and Dislike About My Stuttering

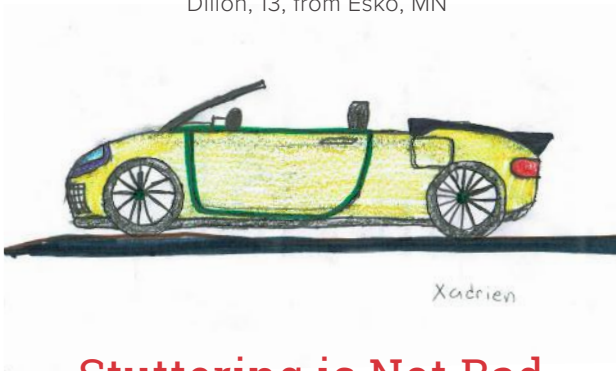
A Chart by Sofia, age 10, from Rochester, MN



Stuttering Can Come and Go

My name is Dillon. I am 13 years old and I started to stutter when I was in Kindergarten. That year I began going to speech therapy. I stuttered until I got into the third grade. Later, while I was in third grade, my stuttering stopped. My stuttering started back up when I got into sixth grade. Then, in seventh grade, I began to go to speech therapy again. I was taught many strategies such as tightening and relaxing my toes, taking deep breaths, stretching out the word, and simply just taking a break and trying again. The strategies that works for me is taking a deep breath.

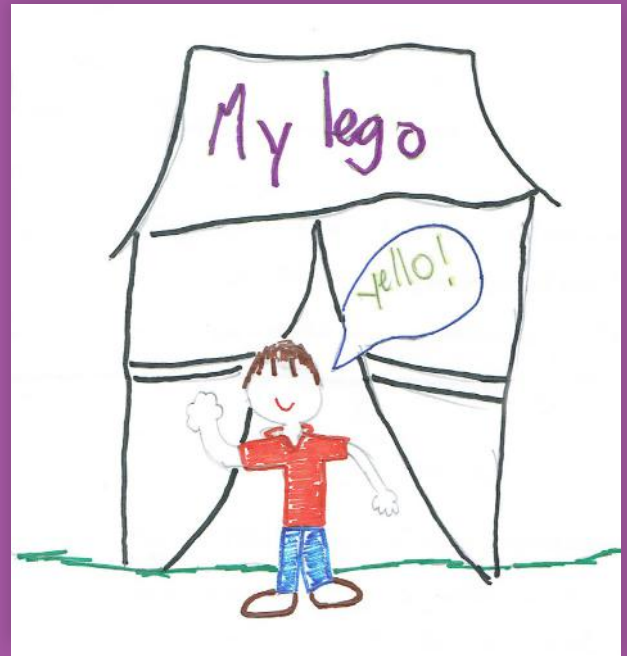
Dillon, 13, from Esko, MN



Stuttering is Not Bad

My name is Xadrien. I am 11-3/4 years old. I think that stuttering is kind of fun. It sounds like a crazy voice.

Xadrien, 6th grade, from Santa Fe, NM



I Recommend A Presentation

Hi, my name is Remy. I am 9 years old and I am in 4th grade. I live in Morganville, New Jersey. I never noticed that I stuttered until first grade. I don't stutter much. I have been in speech for three years. My speech tools are stretching, bouncing and pausing. Speech therapy was a great help. I really liked it.

My speech teacher, Mrs. G., gave me the opportunity to make a presentation on stuttering for my class, teachers, parents, brother and staff. It went very well. The class thanked me for educating them on stuttering and asked how they can be of help to me. I really recommend creating a presentation.

Remy, 9, from Morganville, NJ

When I Started Speech

Hi, my name is Sam. I have a story to tell you. When I was a little kid in preschool, nobody could understand me for 2 years. The 3rd year in preschool when I met my classmates I didn't talk that much because I didn't know what to say.

My parents wanted me to go to speech. Then it helped me, but there was a mean kid and he called me "half a brain." It made me mad because it's not true. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "People should be treated the way they want to be treated." I'm completely happy with stuttering because I like how I was made. The End.

Sam, 5th grade, from Seeley Lake, MT



Gabriel's Stuttering Story

I don't like stuttering. When I stutter I get upset at it a little. And I start to calm down because I do things that are fun, like drawing. Sometimes when I am upset with my stuttering I walk up the stairs of my house and I play games by myself. Sometimes, when I say "Yeay!" I stutter a little. When I stutter I don't like it. I started to stutter when I was 5 or 6. Sometimes I say, "Stuttering won't kill you!" I feel better about my stutter when I ride my bike outside. Sometimes when I read out loud I stutter, or when I ask questions. Sometimes I stutter the whole word.

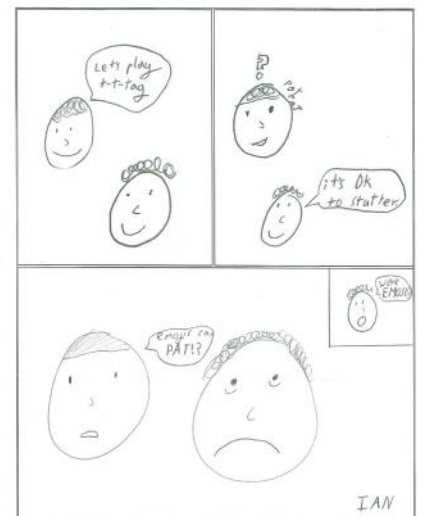
I stuttered more when I was living with my biological parents. This is a drawing of me on a ship with them before I was adopted, and before my siblings were born. I was trying to tell them how much I liked the toy shop on the ship. When I stuttered on the ship with them I felt shy. I stutter a lot less since I was adopted.

Gabriel, 8, from San Jose, CA

Stuttering is Fun

My name is Ian. I live in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I have a mom, a dad, a brother named Patrick, and a dog named Jack. I have a favorite stuffed animal named Squirtle. I like stuttering. I think it makes me unique. My friends don't laugh when I stutter. In fact, they don't mind. Stuttering is fun.

Ian, 8, from Santa Fe, NM



I Got More Confident!

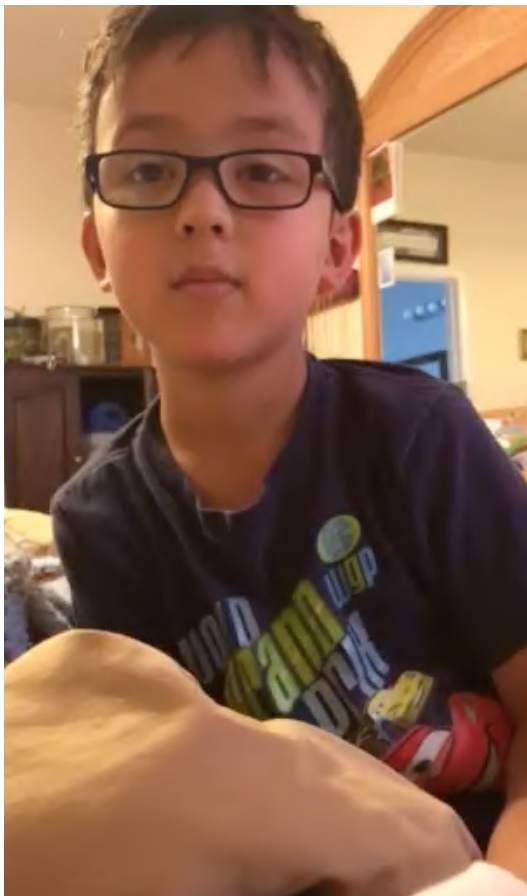
My name is Gianna. I have been going to speech for 5 years. I started my speech lessons when I was 3 years old.

At first, I was scared. But since the years went on I got less scared and more confident! In Speech I use two tools to help me with my speech. Those tools include slides where you stretch your word. And also, I try to take in that I stutter sometimes so I have to use bouncy speech. But I am past that and I accept it.

Today, my speech has improved a lot since 5 years ago. Now I am doing so much better, I have to go only once a week to speech.

Gianna, 8, from Logan Township, NJ

Editor's Note: Mrs. V, Gianna's SLP, told us that as of September 2017, Gianna was released from therapy – congratulations on that graduation, Gianna – we are glad you are doing so well! You encourage others to keep up their own good work!



I Might Get a Talking Speeding Ticket

My name is Zachary and I am 7 years old. I have 2 cats. Their names are Merlin and Joey. I like to play video games.

Sometimes people tease me about my talking. And sometimes they imitate my bumpy talking or ask me why I talk like that. Sometimes people interrupt me or finish my sentence. It makes me feel kind of mad and sad at the same time. I wish people would not tease me and let me finish what I want to say.

Sometimes I bumpy talk and then other people might want to finish my sentence or interrupt me and that hurts my feelings. And if you know another person that bumpy talks, can you please let them finish? They might have something funny or important or something they really want to show you.

I have a book about bumpy talking and what can help. I can ask God for help. I can pause when I am talking. I can forward flowing talk. I can remember to take my time when I talk - or else I might get a talking speeding ticket!!

Zachary, 7, from Little Elm, TX

It Isn't Bad To Be Different

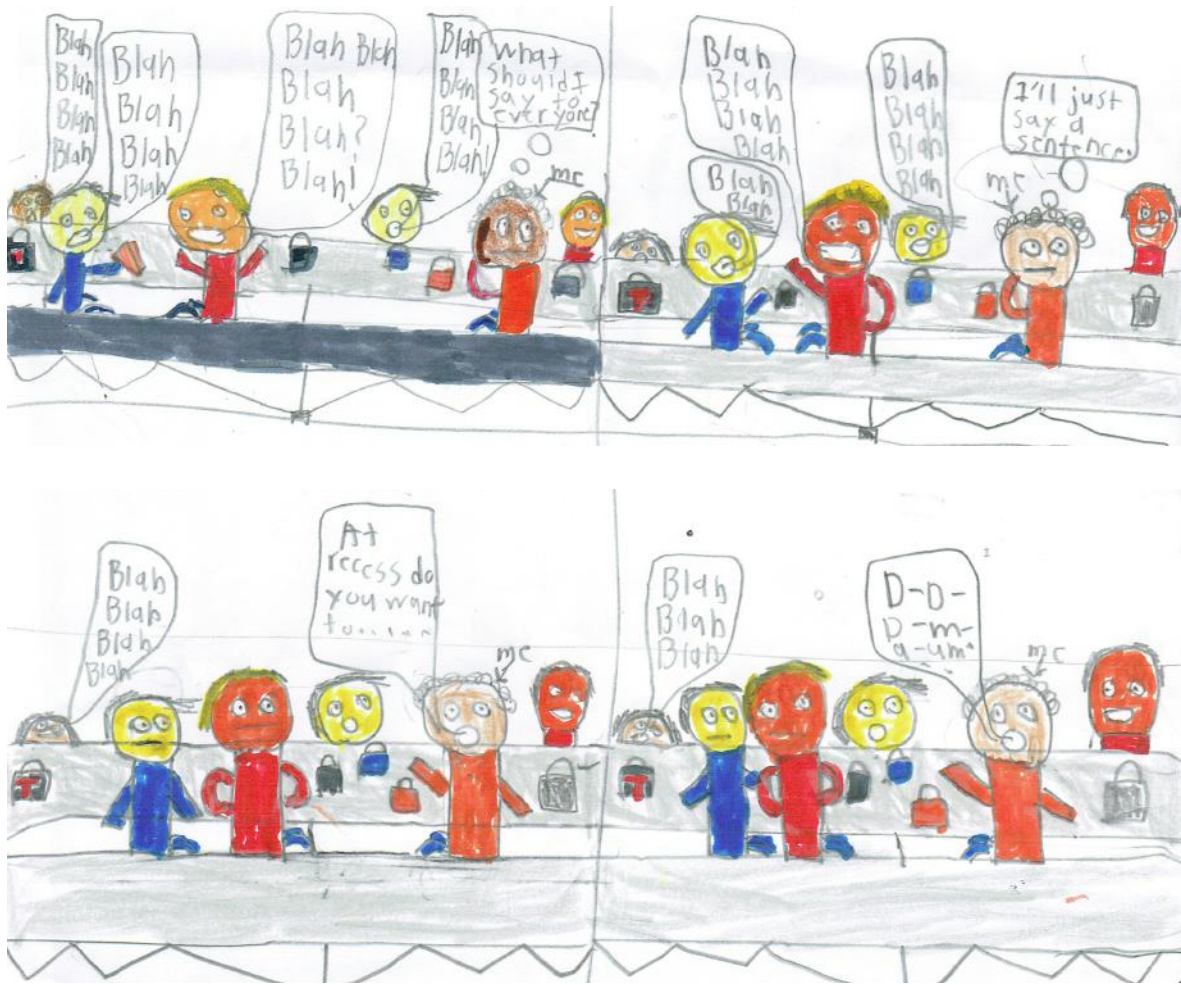
Hello, my name is Taran and I live in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I used to stutter for a long time. After I went to these classes, I stopped a little. Did you know I used to stutter for a very, very, very long time? And I used to think I was the only one in the entire world that used to stutter! I used to be laughed at a lot. Don't let the kids bully you because you are different. It isn't bad to be different.

My speech teacher is extra nice. She helps me with stuttering so I can speak more fluently. Remember, if somebody laughs at you for stuttering, just ignore them. My strategies are turtle talk, which means to slow down when you are talking. I also use pauses to help me slow down.

I used to play football but I was getting too hurt. I like to go to speech class. I like recess at school.

Thank you to all the kids who write letters because I enjoy reading them! You inspired me to write one too!

Taran, from Pittsburgh, PA



I Don't Know Why I Stutter or Why Anyone Stutters!

Hi! My name is Matthew. I live in Cranford, New Jersey. My speech therapist is Ms. F. I usually catch myself stuttering when I want to chat with my friends but I have completely no idea what to say. So I say a sentence but I don't know what to say next. And then I stutter. I don't just stutter in situations like that. I also stutter in sentences randomly. I don't know why I stutter. I don't know why anyone stutters!

Some strategies my speech therapist taught me is planning, full breath, and circle full breath. Planning is to plan what you are going to say first and then say it. Full breath is taking a big breath in and letting the air and talking out together. Circle full breath is taking a deep breath in and imagining you are drawing a circle on something and connecting the words smoothly while letting the air and talking out together.

I like to play Minecraft. I also like robotics. One day at speech therapy, Ms. F said when I stutter I lose eye contact with whoever I am talking to, I put my hand on my face and I hold my breath. But now she said I am doing much better at not doing that. Now that I don't really have anything else to say about stuttering, I am just going to tell you a short diary of myself.

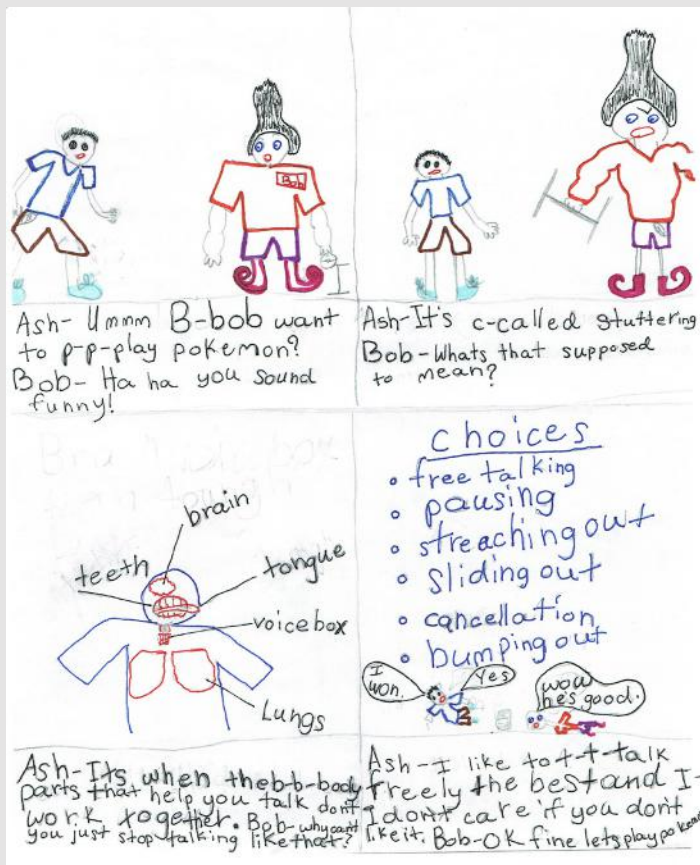
So one year I made a new friend. He told me about Five Nights at Freddy's. He told me everything about it. Over the year, I learned more about it and finally in second grade I knew everything about it. I asked my mom if she could get the video game for me because it costs \$3 but..... She read about it and saw it was rated 12+ and had violence in it. So, she said, "no."

If you stutter you shouldn't feel embarrassed, think you're a bad person, or let other people bully you! Just think: you're not alone, don't feel embarrassed because this is who you are and you are special. Now that you read this story I can say bye!

Matthew, 8, from Cranford, NJ

Ash and Bob Discuss Stuttering

A Comic by Timmy, 9, from Washington, D.C.



Hope This Helps You Too!

My name is Joe and I am 11 years old. I am kind and thoughtful. I am home-schooled and my mom is my teacher. I have been in speech since I was 6 or 7.

Some things I like are cars and designing them. I sent one of my ideas to Ford Motor Company but so far no response. I like going to my grandfather's house with my dad. I like playing with his dog, named Hans. He's a German Short-haired pointer. Hans likes me to throw the ball or stick and he returns it. He also likes me to chase him. Another thing I enjoy is going on the computer and looking at maps.

I am a regular kid and sometimes I stutter. If I get stuck on a word, I can take a breath and slowly let out the word. Another helpful hint is to start with the part of the word I know and connect it to a part of the word (or phrase) I'm having trouble saying. Hope this helps you too!

Joe, 11, from Northumberland, VA

I Remember

- I remember giving one of my first presentations in school.
- I remember being nervous.
- I remember being scared.
- I remember knowing that I was going to stutter, and I did.
- I remember being stuck, on a word I simply could not say.
- I remember the laughter spreading around the room.
- I remember the pain.
- I remember the shame.
- I remember being unable to say my name.
- I remember hating myself.
- I remember ever time I have ever stuttered, and have forgotten most of everything else.
- I remember being too ashamed to talk to my crush.
- I remember thinking that talking just a little, was more than enough.
- I remember crying because of my stutter, having words in my heart that I could not utter.
- I remember imagining what it would be like to talk fluently.
- I remember being snapped back to reality, realizing I will most likely stutter forever.
- I remember feeling sorry for other because they had to listen to me talk.
- I remember starting sentences over and over, only to stuck on the same word as before.
- I remember thinking that nobody would ever like me.
- I remember trying to find something I liked about myself, but I was unable to see.
- I remember not being good enough, for anybody, or anything.
- I remember being good at one thing though, embarrassing myself time and time again.
- I remember not being able to see somebody who considered me a friend.
- I remember just now, that these are not memories, but rather how I feel about myself right now.

Kyle, 10th grade

Highlands Ranch, CO



A STUTTERING FOUNDATION TRIBUTE
REMEMBERING MEL TILLIS
STUTTERING DIDN'T SILENCE HIS SONG

Early in his career, country music superstar Mel Tillis stuttered so severely that he couldn't even thank the audience at the end of a performance. But ever since his role as the curtain-puller for a first-grade play, Tillis wouldn't let stuttering keep him from the stage.

"I found out early that I could sing without stuttering," Tillis said. His first-grade teacher realized that too. She encouraged young Mel to sing in front of the class at elementary school in Plant City, Florida, paving the way for his future success.

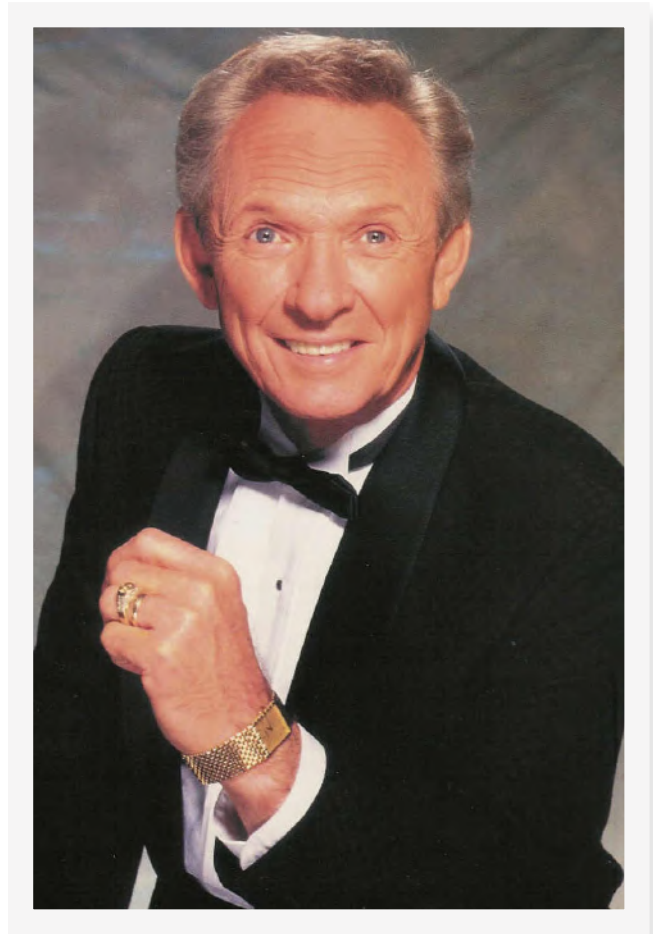
Singing in front of the class was Mel's first step toward legendary fame as a Country Music Hall of Fame recording artist, Grand Ole Opry member, stage performer, and songwriter. Tillis was spokesman for the nonprofit Stuttering Foundation of America and served as Honorary Chairman of National Stuttering Awareness Week in 1998.

"Mel Tillis proved again and again that people who stutter could be highly successful," said Jane Fraser, president of the Stuttering Foundation.

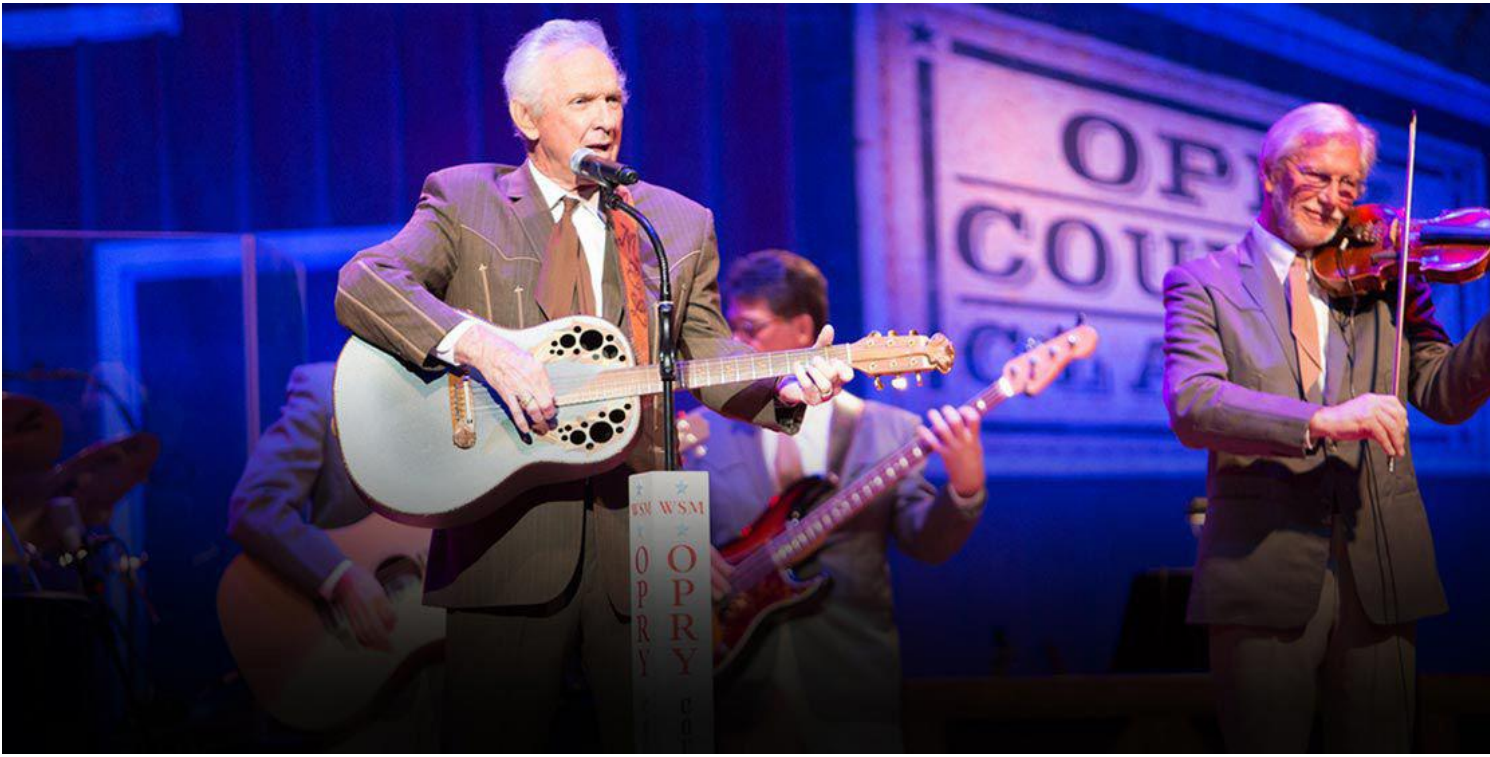
Tillis joins a host of other famous people who stuttered, like Winston Churchill, singer Kenrick Lamar, actor James Earl Jones, and journalist John Stossel. The Stuttering Foundation estimates that stuttering affects more than three million Americans.

But like so many artists, success only came after hard work and long hours on the road. Tillis played music wherever he went, even putting together a band in the Air Force to entertain the troops.

Mel never spoke on stage until long after he moved to Nashville and became an established songwriter and guitar player. Things changed after he joined Minnie Pearl's band. Minnie,



Mel Tillis passed away on November 19, 2017 at the age of 85 while surrounded by family and friends. His memorial service, held on November 27 in Clarksville, Tennessee, celebrated his kind spirit, optimism, and sense of humor most of all. The front page of the program titled "In Loving M-M-Memory" was a loving nod to his lifelong stutter, which he used in his stage and screen comedy performances. He was a lifelong advocate and spokesman for The Stuttering Foundation and a champion for people who stutter worldwide.



a notable country music comedian and Grand Ole Opry member, noticed Mel's great sense of humor as he joked with band members off stage.

"Minnie Pearl was the one who convinced me to talk on stage,"

Tillis recalled. "She told me, 'If you want to be a singer, you have to learn to talk on stage!'" I told her, "Miss Minnie, I just can't. They'll laugh." She replied, "Let 'em laugh. Goodness gracious, laughs are hard to get, and I'm sure they'll be laughing with you and not against you, Melvin."

"That first step was an important one."

"Minnie was right. That first step was an important one. I started to talk and joke some - a beginning. It took a long time before I made much progress, but it did happen over the years. It came real slowly. Still, just the idea that I could dare to talk in front of crowds of people was great."

Tillis, who never had formal therapy, said his sense of humor carried him through some of the tough times. "Laugh through it, if you can," Tillis advises people who stutter. "Don't let it mess up your life."

While Mel could joke about his stutter during performances later in life, he was careful never to poke fun at others who stutter. "It can be too painful," he recalled. Even he couldn't laugh it off in his younger days, when other school kids teased him about the "funny" way he talked. His advice to kids who stutter today: get help from a speech therapist. "When I was a child, we didn't have that."

In the end, the stage was where Tillis felt most comfortable with his speech. "When I'm on stage, I feel like I'm the king. This is my world," Tillis said.

Readers looking for help with stuttering can obtain a list of speech-language pathologists who specialize in stuttering from the Stuttering Foundation. For more information, call 800-992-9392 or visit www.stutteringhelp.org.

THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION at ASHA

The American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA) Convention of 2017 was a huge success. More than 14,000 visitors attended the convention in Los Angeles between November 9 and 11, and many stopped by our booth to visit with some of our Stuttering Foundation team: Ed & Patty Reed, Scot Squires, Madison & Donna White, and President Jane Fraser.

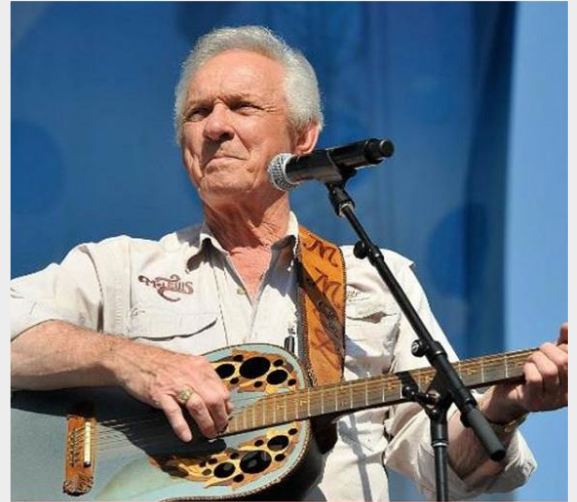
Stuttering Foundation materials are always in high demand at the ASHA Conference. Along with our stacks of teaching and research materials, hats, patches, and bumper stickers were popular with attendees. We were thrilled to promote the new book, *“What I Wish People Knew About Stuttering,”* edited by Courtney T. Byrd, PhD., compiled by children and adults who stutter.

The Stuttering Foundation table also featured the groundbreaking new DVD *“Understanding New Genetic Findings in Stuttering,”* by Dennis Drayna, PhD.

We hope to see you at our booth at ASHA 2018!



@stutteringfdn
SFA on INSTAGRAM
Remembers Mel Tillis



AUGUST 8, 1932 – NOVEMBER 19, 2017



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Follow

stutteringfdn How did Mel Tillis inspire you?
[#stuttering](#) [#stammering](#) [#slp](#)

stutterinjimmy Mel was a great example for me to take the songs I wrote and sing them with all I've got and do it LIVE! Most of all he showed me that my stuttering is only an excuse if that's where I leave it.

billy_joel_fan_1 He taught me that my stutter won't hold me back no matter what.



46 likes

NOVEMBER 21



Here's what some of our more than **248,000 friends** are talking about in our Facebook community

Stuttering Foundation @stutteringhelp



Stuttering Foundation



I stutter. As a result, I have been mocked, insulted, misjudged, and refused service. A bank teller, a cop, and even a bartender was suspicious. This has to stop.

an article by Rachel Hoge from washingtonpost.com



Joann: As a Speech Language Pathologist and basic human being, I commend you for standing up for yourself as well as trying to educate the many individuals who do not stutter. I remember in college I had an assignment where I had to stutter to see the persons reactions. I went to a deli with a friend and tried to order a corned beef sandwich with pickles. The waitress relied on my friend rather than dealing with me. When I later confronted the waitress and told her about the assignment she got very angry. This was over 25 years ago.! There are many famous people who stutter as you know. I'm sure you have an arsenal of strategies that you use. Stuttering is physically and emotionally draining for the stutterer and the listener. I guess that is why I try to be a patient listener with my students . I share with them my weaknesses while pointing out their strengths. Remember you are an important person with important things to say.



Madeline: My job is nerve-wrackingly phone-centric, and that's where the worst of my stutter comes out. I was talking to a newcomer to my industry a few months ago, and I stuttered on my name early in the conversation. After he said "Well, M-m-madeleine..." I wished so hard I could reach through the receiver and slap him across the face. Some people are just going to be awful, and I feel worse for them than I do about being a stutterer.



Prakash: As a stutterer myself, we're the most impatient people on this planet when it comes to speaking. If we only consistently reduce our speed words will ease out more. The worst mistake we tend to do is before we start to say anything we have many negative thoughts such as what will the listener think if I stutter or gosh hope I don't stutter now, and many other such thoughts and the situation worsens. What really helps is don't bother about anything and say it in a relaxed way. It's definitely tough but it works most of the time. Being ridiculed by a few rotten apples in the society should not affect us. There are many who take a stutterer seriously and knows that he or she is a normal person with a slight problem. And who doesn't have one??



Stuttering Foundation



How Kids Helped Me Accept My Stutter *an article by Rachel Hoge*



Linda: I have stuttered since I started school and the school picked it up and told my mother. I work as a pediatric registered nurse and I am definitely more at ease with my speech around children. I have definitely found my calling in life and feel truly blessed.



Stuttering Foundation



When Police Encounter Persons Who Stutter *a Stuttering Foundation article*



Tara: I was pulled over once for a headlight being out and ended up being questioned if I was drunk, because I was "stuttering" as the cop said. It was embarrassing and difficult to explain. The police officer eventually believed me. I now carry a "I stutter" card in my glove box with my other information.

Dr. Mother Goose

The Positive Role of Nursery Rhymes in Stuttering Therapy

T

eachers have intuitively known the secret for years: nursery and counting rhymes have an important place in the learning process. But what can we learn from this from a therapeutic perspective?

Nursery rhymes constitute an amazing source for language learning and speech therapy, because they represent some of the fundamental aspects of each language, and their universal presence—all languages have nursery rhymes and many languages have the same—indicates the huge universal impact on language learning for the young child.

The fundamental aspects of nursery rhymes and counting rhymes are the rhythm and the typical phrase melody of a specific language, the repetition of rhymes, of sounds and consonants, the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables. The “non serious” context of nursery rhymes and counting rhymes with nonsense words included is another important aspect of their specific role in learning and in therapy. They are learned for fun.

**Jack and Jill went up a hill
to fetch a pail of water
Jack fell down and broke his crown
and Jill came tumbling after**

Jack and Jill is sung in a typical rhythm, with a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one. This simple beat (/ - / - /) helps the child to easily follow the phrase and to learn in repetition new sounds in opposition with the first consonant repeated.

**Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall
All the King’s horses, and all the King’s men
Couldn’t put Humpty together again.**

Humpty Dumpty, also recited in a typical rhythm, has the repetition of /a/ in /sat, had, and again/ in opposition to /a/ in /wall, fall, all/ is learned in the same way: repetition-opposition and rhyme with the same simple beat of stressed and unstressed syllable. Accent and intonation are the basis for emerging communication.





When singing the nursery rhymes or counting rhymes, the child learns to repeat the correct accent and pronunciation of familiar but different sounds in the correct phrase rhythm.

In the clinical setting of stuttering therapy and in the home environment, both rhythm and easy rhymes that receive the accent, help the child to master beginning sounds that constitute a difficulty. Moreover, and another important aspect in stuttering, the nonsense words in the rhymes alleviate the linguistic burden of the speech output and therefore help the child to experience stutter-free speech in a pleasant way, just for fun.

The nursery rhymes and counting rhymes are fun for the child and the family, making the child inclined to repeat them over and over. They can give a child the feeling that speech is easy and can help regulate the respiration, which helps the child in mastering language in a smooth, easy-going way.

What do nursery rhymes and music teach us about cerebral activity in relation to stuttering?

Music (and the positive feelings, emotions that music cause to arise) attracts attention and concentration through the neurotransmitter dopamine, which affects the hippocampus and the frontal cortex in a positive way, in order to stimulate memory.

While singing a song, music and language work together, provoking an interaction in brain activity: the words and the phonological processing appeal in most cases to the activity of the left hemisphere (Broca's area, the left temporal and parietal lobes). The melody and the pitch are generally processed by the right hemispheric regions (right prefrontal, superior temporal lobe. In this way, the left and right hemispheres collaborate in order to produce fluent speech production. The subtle variations in tone, timing, pitch and accent are learned thanks to this collaboration of the two hemispheres.

In a study by Vannest et al. (2009, American Journal of Roentgenology, 192: 1190-1196), observing brain activity in children during passive listening to speech and non-speech sounds, "bilateral activity in auditory processing regions" was noted.

When singing, the sung intonations increase stress and duration elements and amplify normal speech contours. In this way, the melodic speech -the sung rhymes- resembles the way parents speak to their little baby. And it seems that just this way of speaking in this specific melodic rhythm creates the basis for the understanding and acquisition of language.

When phrase structure and musical structure coincide in the rhythm of stressed and unstressed syllables, learning is facilitated. And fluent speech is enhanced. This reminds us of the words of Van Riper (1987) "music serves as a carrier for communication".

by Prof. Dr. Henny Bijleveld,
Université Libre de Bruxelles





MYTHS ABOUT STUTTERING

Myth: People who stutter are not smart.

Reality: There is no link whatsoever between stuttering and intelligence.

Myth: Nervousness can cause stuttering.

Reality: Nervousness does not cause stuttering. Nor would we assume that people who stutter are prone to be nervous, fearful, anxious, or shy. They have the same full range of personality traits as those who do not stutter.

Myth: Stuttering can be "caught" through imitation or by hearing another person stutter.

Reality: You can't "catch" stuttering. No one knows the exact causes of stuttering, but recent research indicates that family history (genetics), neuromuscular development, and the child's environment, including family dynamics, all play a role in the onset of stuttering.

Myth: It helps to tell a person to "take a deep breath before talking" or "think about what you want to say first."

Reality: This advice only makes a person more self-conscious, making the stuttering worse. More helpful responses include listening patiently and modeling slow and clear speech yourself.

Myth: Stress can cause stuttering.

Reality: As mentioned above, many complex factors are involved. Stress is not the cause, but it certainly can aggravate stuttering.



Thank you for your generous gifts to the Stuttering Foundation in honor of Joe Fulcher.

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See You in Buenos Aires!

In celebration of their 20th year, the Argentina Association for Stuttering (Asociación Argentina de Tartamudez) celebrated by organizing the second Latin American meeting of people with disfluency and mutual aid groups.

The event took place in the City of Buenos Aires in May of 2017 and brought together more than 100 people from all over the region. Within this two day event, attendees were able to share their common experiences, carry out workshops on body expression, and above all, have fun while talking to one another.

The organizer, Ingrid Castro, hopes to continue this great success and meet again next year! For more information on the Asociación Argentina de Tartamudez and how you can get involved, please visit www.aat.org.ar.



@stutteringfdn
SFA on INSTAGRAM



aishaapc

Follow

aishaapc A lot of people don't understand much about stuttering so I always try to bring more awareness to it. I struggle with stuttering and I bought this shirt a long time ago to help bring more attention to the stuttering foundation. [#stutteringfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/stutteringfoundation)

gevonden_insta I stuttered for a long time, I managed to get over it but I will never forget that time. The meaning of words is more important than the time you need to speak them!

caliberphotography7x So proud of you!

richard_king_artist That is an AWESOME shirt!



261 likes

OCTOBER 11



To order your own Stuttering Foundation T-shirt, call 800-992-9392 or email info@stutteringhelp.org with your size.

STUTTERING: A CREATIVE ALLY

The Stuttering Foundation recently had the privilege of sitting down with one of its most creative partners, Nino Ilievski. Nino is a copywriter in Cyprus and is the creative genius behind the Stuttering Foundation's most poignant PSA advertisements to date.



From top: Nino Ilievski; Nino receiving the Best Poster Award at the Golden Drum Festival

Q: Nino, tell us about you!

A: I was born and raised in Skopje, Macedonia, later moved to Berlin, Germany. And, if someone told me one year ago that in 2018 I would be living close to the sea in Montenegro, I would have laughed it off... But here I am.

I like snowboarding, drumming and football. I also like connecting various thoughts and converting them into meaningful words. The excitement of solving a creative puzzle is the reason why I became a copywriter.

Q: Do you have any personal experience with stuttering?

A: I've stuttered since I was a little kid, and this has shaped me as a person in many different ways. It sounds crazy, but being a person who stutters has actually helped me develop my writing. *How?*

By looking for substitute words for each phrase I've stuttered on, I've built a tremendous bank of synonyms I can use when writing.

By trying to come up with the shortest possible sentence so I don't have to speak much, I learned how to write concise concepts and headlines.

By creating multimedia presentations at college, I've learned how to create work that speaks for itself, so I don't have to do the talking.

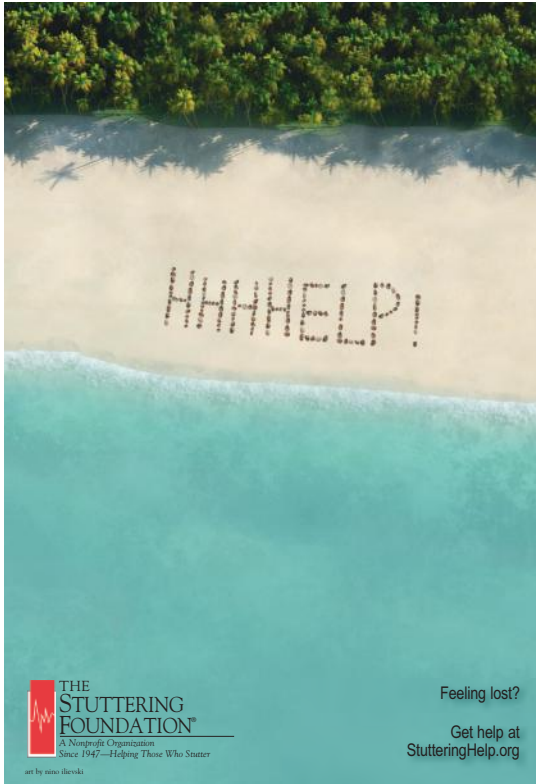
I strongly believe that all stutterers are unconventional thinkers, which comes in handy when you do creative thinking for living.

Q: How did you get started in the advertising world?

A: I always wanted to be a copywriter. Or to be more honest, I always wanted to write commercials, but only later I found out that people who (among other things) create ad concepts are called copywriters.

At college I felt ready to give it a go, and when my professor recommended me to one of the biggest local advertising agencies - I gave my best. Those people recognized my determination, took me under their wing and taught me everything they knew. They helped me see my career path. I can only repay them by passing on the knowledge to the next kid with a creative spark in the eyes.

We would like to thank our good friend Nino Ilievski for his contribution to this article and for the gift of his partnership with The Stuttering Foundation. Nino, we are inspired by your work, spirit, and dedication to your craft! Thank you for sharing your talent with us, to the benefit of those who stutter worldwide!



Q: Your ads for the Stuttering Foundation are so poignant... and so beautiful. What was your inspiration for these ads?

A: First of all, thanks for the lovely words! These ads are by far the most personal work I've ever done. Created in times of personal defeat, in moments when I felt that stuttering undermined everything I did... When my speech once again betrayed me in the worst possible time. Meanwhile most people out of my closest circle didn't even consider stuttering a real problem. Some even found it funny. That's why I decided to tell the world about it. And it felt better right away.

Q: How did you connect with The Stuttering Foundation?

I wanted to know who is fighting for the same cause as me, but on a much bigger scale... One simple Google search brought me to The Stuttering Foundation. Jane Fraser and her amazing team responded within a couple of hours, giving me hope right away. That's how we started our collaboration.

Q: What is the greatest piece of advice that you've ever received in regards to stuttering?

Get support and spread the word! Sounds like Captain Obvious but it's true - don't even think about going down the stuttering journey alone. I don't know where I would be today if it wasn't for my ever-supporting wife Iva (who is designing the next batch of stuttering creatives), my parents and my brother (whom I'll always be proud of) and my friends (who have patiently "wasted" countless hours waiting for me to finish a sentence). They are my stuttering advocates army. Who's part of yours?

I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT ALL STUTTERERS ARE UNCONVENTIONAL THINKERS, WHICH COMES IN HANDY WHEN YOU DO CREATIVE THINKING FOR LIVING.

- Nino Ilievski

Looking to improve your communication skills in a place where everyone may be as afraid of public speaking as you are? Consider joining Toastmasters!

Learn more about
Toastmasters at
www.toastmasters.org



Dr. Courtney Byrd, Ph.D., makes the first sale of her new book, *What I Wish People Knew About Stuttering*, during the Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association conference. **Dr. Byrd's new book is available to purchase at www.StutteringHelp.org**



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

MY BEST ADVICE: TIPS FROM OUR READERS

Dear Stuttering Foundation,

While email is a great time-saver and can help me get in touch with almost anyone, it is not very good at improving/maintaining my fluency. I've found that the best way to proceed with self-therapy is through talking with people directly or giving them a telephone call.

Sincerely,

Dan Pappas



THE
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FOUNDATION®

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"We are dedicated to improving
the lives of those who stutter."

- Malcolm Fraser, SFA Founder
1903 - 1994



Since its beginning in 1947, the Stuttering Foundation has created a community of millions through research, education, and support. **Founder Malcolm Fraser's vision and our continued mission is to bring hope and help to those who stutter, all over the world.** Thank you to our generous family of supporters, who together with the Stuttering Foundation, are making Malcolm Fraser's dream a reality.

The National Stuttering Association will hold its annual conference July 4-8, 2018, in Chicago. For more information, visit www.westutter.org.

The National Association of Young People Who Stutter will hold its annual convention July 19-21, 2018, in Omaha, Nebraska. For additional information, visit www.friendswhostutter.org.

The International Conference on Stuttering will take place June 14-16, 2018, in Rome, Italy. For more information, visit www.internationalconferenceonstuttering.it/index.asp

One World, Many Voices: Science and Community is the inaugural Joint World Congress of the International Cluttering Association (ICA), International Fluency Association (IFA) and International Stuttering Association (ISA). This event will be held in Hiroshima, Japan, from July 13-16, 2018. For more information, visit www.theifa.org/index.php/2018-world-congress

The Stuttering Foundation will hold workshops for speech-language pathologists. Please visit www.stutteringhelp.org/workshop-applications to download an application.