



REACHING OUT

Publication of Friends: The National Association of Young People Who Stutter

Why Friends Is So Special

January/February
2009

I have been to two Friends events as an adult. In fact, I had few interactions with people who stutter as a child and even as an adult, they are still rare. That is how I know Friends is so special.

Beside Porky Pig, I had not seen someone who stuttered until Lester Hayes. Hayes was a Raider and had the game of his life when I was in fourth grade. He was interviewed about one of the best games of his life and stuttered. My father, being a life long Raider fan, living in the Bay Area, called me to the TV and I watched in amazement. I thought, the world is going to make fun of this guy. That had been my experience, so I figured when I went to school the next day the kids in my fourth grade class would be talking about how funny he talked. The next day nothing happened. No one talked about and didn't really care. That day I learned that stuttering may be a bigger deal to me than it is to others.

From that time on there were few images of people who stuttered. I suppose that the most positive image was from the Howard Stern Show as a teenager. I had a huge crush on *Stuttering John* (John Melendez who is now the announcer for the *Tonight Show*) and was impressed with his willingness to stutter and not be ashamed. When you're a young woman with a disabilities and the most positive image you find is from the Howard Stern Show, you know there are gaps that need to be filled!

When I was seventeen I found the NSA which was then called the National Stuttering Project. I became a volunteer and met John Ahlbach. The gaps began to be filled. I discovered that I did not have to hide my stuttering and found role models. My participation led to understanding myself, altered my expectations for my speech, and had a positive impact on my self-esteem.

What I believe Friends does for kids is what I found when I became involved with the NSA. It is like *coming home* for a child who stutters. It allows kids to experience the variety of stuttering and people who stutter. You even get to see girls and women who stutter (something I barely knew existed as a girl)! You are able to find role models in the people sitting next to you at lunch, the speaker presenting on career options, and the person who checks you in at registration. It goes beyond the people who the media sees as inspirations and acknowledges the everyday experiences of people who stutter.

Written by: Nina Ghiselli, Psy.D Psy19027

Fast Fact:

January 20, 2009 was an historic day for our country. The United States witnessed the inauguration of an African-American man as President and a person who stutters as Vice President. Our great country has shown that all children can have a dream, work hard, and achieve that dream. There is nothing that we can't do!!

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If You Stutter, You Have Friends!



Upcoming Events

Friends: The National Association for Young People Who Stutter

and

Wake County Public School Speech and Language
Department

Presents:

CHILDREN, TEENS AND ADULTS

WHO STUTTER:

**Families, Professionals and Friends
Working Together**

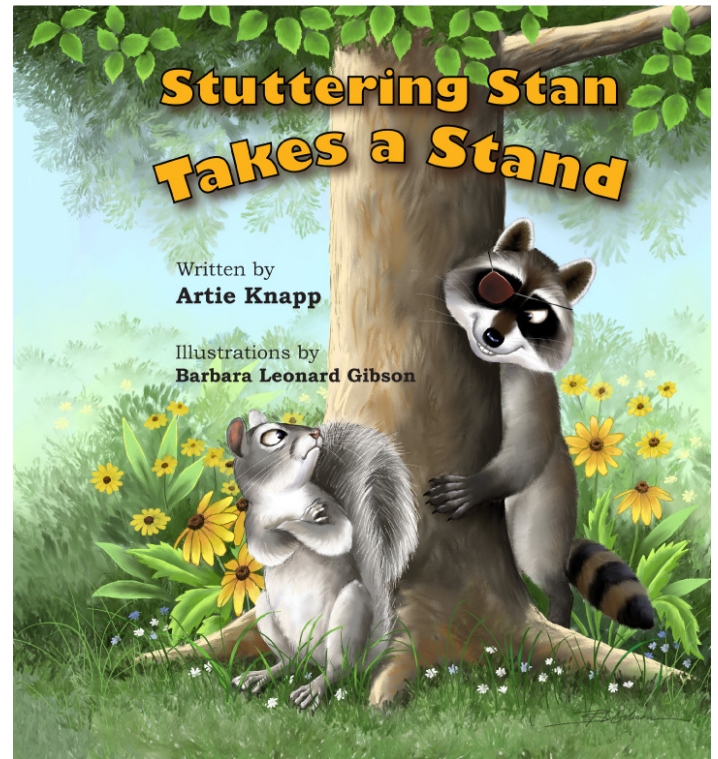
March 21, 2009

9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Location:

Wake County Public Schools
110 Corning Road
Cary, NC 27518

Great New Kid's Book



A new book for kids age 6-10

Stanley is like most squirrels: he loves nuts, climbing trees and playing with friends. But Stanley feels different from the other animals in his neighborhood, because he has a problem with words. Teased and bullied about his stuttering, Stanley refuses to let on that his feelings are being hurt, until one day he learns an important lesson from a new friend.

Stuttering Stan Takes a Stand is endorsed by both The National Stuttering Association and The American Institute for Stuttering. The book is available through these major outlets:

amazon.com

BARNES&NOBLE

[Target.](http://Target)

9th ANNUAL FRIENDS & FAMILY DAY

Saturday March 28, 2009 9:30- 4:30

**A Workshop for
Children who stutter, their families and
Speech Pathologists**

Edwardsville High School
6161 center grove road
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Call Lynne Shields @ 314 889 1464 for more
information

CEU's available

Stretching Stutters - A Fun Activity for Teaching Children to Stretch Stutters

Most clinicians understand the importance of teaching the disfluent school-age child to begin an utterance with an easy onset, especially on the first sound of a sentence where stuttering often occurs. In this paper however, I'm going to describe how I teach kids in the treatment room to tolerate a longer and unforced stretch of the sound as a technique to use when a short easy onset in isolation does not effectively work for the child. I typically reserve this technique for kids who are reacting to their stutter by resorting to recoiling and/or pushing and forcing through the stuttered moment, and one's who have made little progress with fluency shaping techniques. The purpose in teaching longer stretches is to help the child eventually feel more comfortable in holding on to a real stutter as he/she continues with the stretch in a forward flowing fashion while maintaining air and sound. In addition, I also emphasize holding the sound while trying to minimize the urge to push or force through it.

For a child to actually apply this technique in everyday, on-going conversation requires a great deal of practice within the treatment room. Similar to virtually all techniques that clinicians teach clients who stutter, there are a multitude of different activities that one can use to teach longer stretches. My favorites include those that involve items that stretch, such as clay, Play Doh (see Bill Murphy's recipe for making Play Doh in his write-up called "Smashing Stutters"), or Silly Putty. I like these items because as they are stretched out more than a few feet, they will break. The importance of this fact is explained below.

I always first model whatever it is I'm expecting the child to do next. In this case, for example, using clay as my stretchable material, I slowly pull it in opposite directions while simultaneously drawing out the first sound of a word as I say it. Next, I want the child to practice the stretch along with me. After modeling a few more times, I then give him/her a quarter-size piece of the same clay I'm using and ask him/her to imitate in unison what I'm doing. Initially, we do a short verbal stretch together as we simultaneously stretch out our individual pieces of clay; however, as the practice progresses we both begin to lengthen our stretch until the clay breaks. Most of the time this is an enjoyable activity because both of us laugh at our silliness in dragging out sounds until the clay we are holding breaks as it is stretched out a few feet or more. This is particularly the case when we progress to using only one piece of clay between us, each grasping the same piece as we pull in the opposite direction while holding on to our sound stretch until the clay breaks.

There are many possible activities that clinicians can use to help a child feel more comfortable as they are practicing how to more easily stretch through stuttering. I personally like using the clay or other similar stretchable materials because it is something that kids tend to enjoy. They can actively hold the material and manipulate it as we 'play' with a way to change some of the learned avoidant reactions that often develop as a result of the unpleasantness of stuttering. I believe that one's normal reactions to stuttering can often lead to continued struggle and avoidances, and these responses can maintain or exacerbate stuttering. Teaching and showing the child that there are many different ways to stutter, ranging from hard to easy, can increase his/her chances of stuttering less and with more control.

In addition to teaching sound stretches in a way that's enjoyable for the child, this activity is also desensitizing. Over time the child begins to better tolerate and change real stuttering by keeping air and sound activated as he transitions from the stretched sound into the next sound of the word. Similar to what Bill Murphy describes in his paper, stretching out and tolerating longer stretches helps to reduce the negative feelings that are often associated with stuttering.

Special Thanks to Peter Ramig for allowing Friends to reprint his 2008 ISAD Conference Article

StutterTalk.com: Self Help Conversations and Information about Stuttering

By Peter Reitzes, M.A. CCC-SLP & Eric Jackson, SLP Graduate Student, Co-Hosts

StutterTalk is a free weekly podcast focusing on open discussions about stuttering. A podcast is similar to an archived radio show. StutterTalk episodes may be listened to via streaming audio or downloaded from StutterTalk.com. StutterTalk is also available via iTunes and other free subscription services. Episodes may be downloaded onto computers and onto portable media players such as iPods, iPhones and cell phones.

We consider StutterTalk to be a digital extension of the self-help movement. Every week we get together and record and publish an episode about stuttering. We stutter openly and talk openly about stuttering. Sometimes we choose to just stutter and sometimes we let our listeners know that we will be using speaking strategies. Recently we joked on air that our slogan should be, "StutterTalk: Where fluency just isn't important." We share stuttering experiences and discuss many stuttering related topics such as voluntary stuttering, avoidance behaviors, acceptance, different speech therapy approaches, stuttering in the media, dating, discrimination and the importance of telling others that you stutter.

We frequently have guests join us for interviews and round table discussions. Recent guests Pam Mertz and Elana Yudman discussed the difference between fluency and effective communication and also discussed pressure they have felt to stutter less. Guests have included teenagers and adults who stutter, parents of children who stutter and leading researchers and therapists in the area of stuttering. For example, Joel Korte, a recent college graduate, joined us for three episodes to discuss his experiences during and after intensive speech therapy. Phillip Schneider, Ph.D has recorded numerous StutterTalk episodes on a range of issues including becoming an educated consumer, effective communication and the relationship between stuttering and breathing. Kristin Chmela, MA CCC-SLP discussed speech therapy for children who stutter. Joseph Donaher, PhD recorded an episode on the importance of self-help. David M. Luterman, PhD discussed the importance of listening and Gerald Maguire, Ph.D spoke to us about past and future of pharmaceutical options for people who stutter.

StutterTalk has recorded numerous podcasts from stuttering events. For example, we have recorded two episodes at performances by the Our Time Theatre Company (an artistic home for young people who stutter). We interviewed Our Time cast members, writers, volunteers, performers, the Our Time musical director and Taro Alexander (founder and director). We also recorded an episode at a Stuttering Foundation event where we spoke with Jane Fraser (president) and about a dozen leading researchers and therapists in the field.

Because of the success of StutterTalk, we have launched a second podcast titled Stuttering101 (available at www.Stuttering101.com). Stuttering101 episodes are shorter in length than StutterTalk episodes and focus more on lecture-style presentations delivered from leading therapists and researchers in the field. For example, Lee Caggiano, MA CCC-SLP spoke about the importance of self-help for people who stutter and their families, Dennis Drayna, PhD lectured on the role that genetics play in stuttering and therapy, Gary Rentschler, PhD discussed the emotional impact of stuttering and Ken St. Louis, PhD discussed research regarding person first language and his work in the area of measuring public attitudes about stuttering.

In addition, StutterTalk has published about 30 videos on our YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/StutterTalk>). These videos feature guests talking about stuttering and stuttering openly as well. Several of these videos feature StutterTalk co-hosts calling airlines and local establishments and "advertising" (talking openly about) our stuttering. For example, we called several airlines and during the conversations with sales agents we took the time to explain that we stutter. During one such conversation, the agent mentioned to Eric that her son sees a speech therapist. The sales agent and Eric then discussed communication disorders. During another conversation, Eric was hung up on and politely called back the establishment to explain that the listener had confused his stuttering with a poor phone connection. The listener apologized and Eric finished asking his questions.

To contact StutterTalk, email stuttertalk@stuttertalk.com or call our voicemail line at 206-888-4619.

**** Special thanks to Peter and Eric for sharing StutterTalk with Friends and for writing this great article ****

I was a little scared... and I did it anyway!



Young people who stutter show us acts of courage on a daily basis. They often make choices that may increase their risk of being uncomfortable, feeling different and possibly ending up at the receiving end of ridicule. Friends would like to honor these acts of courage, and encourage our young clients to continue taking risks and being honest about their stuttering.

My name is Michael.
I am 9 years old and live on Long Island.
I love baseball.
My favorite player is...
I stutter and I ran for student council at my school. I won!
I was a little scared...and I did it anyway!

My name is Zachary.
I am 7 years old and live on Long Island.
I really love football.
My favorite player is...
I stutter and talked to my class about stuttering so they would know why it takes me a longer time to talk sometimes.
I was a little scared...and I did it anyway!

My name is Ashlee.
I am 13 years old and live on Long Island.
I love playing soccer.
My favorite band is...
I stutter and volunteered for a part in my class play.
I was a little scared...and I did it anyway!

My name is Kristen.
I am 11 years old and live on Long Island.
I have two sisters
I love acting.
I stutter and wrote a letter to all my teachers telling them about my stuttering.
I was a little scared...and I did it anyway!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We will introduce these young people in our newsletter and let others know that there are many cool kids who are doing what they want to do ...and stuttering.

If you would like to send in a photograph with your submission, please do so.

We would love to print it.

Mail to:

Lee Caggiano
38 South Oyster Bay Rd.
Syosset, NY 11791

Name _____

Age _____

Where do you live _____

Three things you want us to know about you:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

I was a little scared and _____

Ellie's Stutter & Stephen's Stuttering Story

Hi, I'm Ellie. For those who don't know, I sometimes stutter. Do you know what stuttering is? I will tell you in this presentation. I will also share the tools needed to help with my stuttering.



Stuttering is when somebody's vocal cords get stuck and the words don't come out smoothly. This sometimes happens to me. For example, take that Chinese finger trap we handed out. Put your fingers inside and pull them out quickly. Did your fingers get stuck? This is what it feels like with my words sometimes.

Well, there are many tools to help with my stuttering. I mostly use sliding. Sometimes I talk slower which helps a lot, too. Now, put your fingers in the trap again. This time, slow it down and pull out your fingers slowly. Did your fingers come out easier? See? Now you know the tools I use to help with my stuttering.

I hope you liked my presentation!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! JJ Does anyone have any questions?!?!

My name is Stephen. I am 10 years old. I like sports. I loved school when I started this fall. I worked hard on my speech over the summer with my speech therapist and I felt great about it. My speech therapist has called my teacher before school started and I talked with teacher on the first day of school. It was going great.

After about a month, I had problem with bullies. They were teasing me about a little stuttering I was having. One kid would say, "uh..tuh..tuh..tohday Junior" every time I walked into the classroom. It was a line from a weird movie. I felt really sad and embarrassed. I tried to ignore them and it worked for about a week. Then they would start all over again. After they would tease me, the entire class would laugh hysterically.

My speech therapist called my teacher and he did talk to the ones who teased me. They would just wait until he left the room and start again. My stuttering got worse and worse. So, my speech therapist and I came up with a plan. When the biggest bully mocked me, I used a firm and straight face and said, "You call that stuttering? I stutter way better than you." Everyone in the class laughed. That really stopped him and he hasn't teased me since.

I just wanted to write about this because it may help one of you. It sure helped me. Thanks for reading this.

Membership Renewal Reminder!!

Given our economy's difficult times, we have worked hard to keep our membership dues at the same \$35 as we have for the past... 10 years. Please help us by sending in your 2009 membership dues of \$35.

It will be much easier for us to handle checks. Please make your check payable to Friends, and mail to:

Friends
38 South Oyster Bay Rd
Syosset NY 11791

Remember, your membership helps keep Friends alive for kids and parents who need us!

FRIENDS News & Notes:

Our newsletter is offered both in print and electronically. You will receive both versions, unless you tell us otherwise.

The e-version allows us to reach a wider audience, and make use of technology. E-RO can now be found linked on the Friends webpage.

Stepping Up Program (S.U.P.)

This is a teen mentoring program. If you would like to have a teen to talk to, or are a teen to befriend and help someone younger who stutters, contact Lee at L.Caggiano@aol.com

Visit www.stuttertalk.com for new episodes about stuttering! There is also a cool new forum. At least one teen is a member!



The National Association of Young People Who Stutter

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Reaching Out is published eight times a year. Articles should be sent to: jahlbach@sbcglobal.net and pmertz2@yahoo.com

The annual subscription rate is \$35. You can subscribe or order our books, posters, and other materials online at:

Website: www.friendswhostutter.org

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Don't Miss the Twelfth Annual Friends Convention

July 23-25, 2009

Tampa, Florida at Embassy Suites, near Busch Gardens

Plenty of activities for everyone:

Workshops for kids, teens, parents and adults who stutter.

Exciting Keynote speakers. CEU events for SLPs.

New activities on tap, including innovative projects using technology, just for kids and teens

Saturday Family night of fun, music and dancing

A special weekend of support, caring and Friends!