

LettingGO

FALL 2016

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NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION

CHANGING THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WHO STUTTER

2016 AWARD WINNERS

Volunteer of the Year:
MICHELLE GEIGER

Chapter Leader of the Year:
KEVIN CHAMBERS

Regional Chapter Coordinator of the Year:
TOM SCHARSTEIN

Chapter of the Year:
**BROOKLYN, QUEENS &
MANHATTAN CHAPTERS**

Professional of the Year:
DR. NAN BERNSTEIN RATNER

2016 Conference Dedication:
HANAN HURWITZ

*Congratulations and thank you all
for your dedication to the NSA
and to the stuttering community!*

IN MEMORIAM

TED MARSH



In memory of Ted Marsh, an active, conscientious member of the Cleveland NSA (NSP) chapter from the late 1980's until about the year 2008.

Ted died a few months ago, at the age of 84. A doctor of internal medicine, Ted was a fine role model for people who stutter. As an example, he was a mentor/friend to long time Cleveland chapter member and speech pathologist Marilee Fini, one of the recognized "All-Stars" at the NSA Annual Conference held in Cleveland in 2010. Ted stuttered a lot, openly and freely for the most part, albeit with some evidence of struggle.

Ted was proud of his involvement with the NSA. He advertised this association by wearing an NSA (NSP) convention t-shirt, button and/or other memorabilia from time to time when he would be out in public, shopping at the grocery store or participating in other activities. Ted was an excellent group member for his friendly, earnest manner and caring willingness to engage and help.

Submitted by Doug Havighurst - Founder of the Cleveland NSP (NSA) Chapter

EVENTS

NOVEMBER 5:

Chat for a Cause

DECEMBER 3:

Phoenix Family Chapter at the Phoenix Zoo

JANUARY 7-8, 2017:

2017 Winter Meeting of the NSA Board of Directors

1ST FULL WEEK OF MAY:

National Stuttering Awareness Week

JULY 4-5, 2017:

2017 NSA Research Symposium

JULY 5-9, 2017:

34th Annual NSA Conference Dallas, TX - Fairmont Dallas

For complete details visit westutter.org

Dallas '17

2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

EVERYTHING IS BIGGER IN TEXAS, & THE NSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE IS NO EXCEPTION!

Join us July 5-9, 2017 for our 34th Annual Conference. 2017 is the 40th anniversary of the NSA, so you know we'll be making this an event to remember. With a program schedule that kids, 'tweens, teens, families, 20-somethings, adults, and SLPs are sure to enjoy, tours and events that are fun for the whole family, special guests and keynote speakers, and even a few surprises up our sleeves, this is one conference you will not want to miss!

Dallas – the 'Big D' – is a modern metropolis in north Texas, and a commercial and cultural hub of the region. Your room at the Fairmont Dallas will be the epitome of contemporary luxury, while maintaining the Southwestern charm of Texas. Located in

the heart of the downtown Dallas Arts District, our conference hotel offers all of the amenities you've come to expect from an NSA conference hotel will be available – plentiful conference space, fitness center, pool, high-speed Internet access, and more, all served with a side of southern hospitality.

During these four days we will come together as a closely-knit community of adults, children, families, and friends who share stuttering as a common bond. We will be educated, motivated, and challenged. We will be moved as we listen to the stories of our comrades and as we share our own stories, perhaps for the first time. Most of all, though, we will realize once again that we belong to a very special community of caring individuals who understand exactly what it is and how it feels to stutter and we will remember how important it is to be a part of that community.



WHAT'S YOUR STORY?



By Jolie D

Hi! My name is Jolie. I am almost 9 years old and I have a stutter. This is my story.

Do you know how stuttering feels? It is scary to me sometimes and it can be embarrassing. Sometimes it feels weird in my mouth when I talk. Sometimes I don't have control of what I want to say. Do you know how that makes me feel? I feel nervous. Sometimes I am scared to meet new people because I will have to introduce myself. I sometimes feel sad. I feel like I am the only one who stutters.

Do you know what stuttering does to me? Stuttering holds me back. It makes me not want to raise my hand in class because I am scared that I won't be able to say what I want to say. It makes me scared to talk to my friends or adults that don't know me. It's hard to introduce myself. Some days can be really tough.

I see a speech therapist and his name is Mr. Tim. He helps me a lot and we get to play fun games. We talk about how I can fix my words to have smoother speech. We talk about how I handled school that day and how I am feeling about my speech. Did you know that Mr. Tim stuttered when he was a kid? That's how he helps kids like me. He understands what it's like.

This summer, I went to a conference put on by the NSA (that stands for the National Stuttering Association). They help people like me. When we first got there, I felt very excited and a little bit nervous. This was the first time I was meeting other people who stuttered or had speech challenges. And there were a lot of people there! Then I realized that I wasn't alone anymore. I wasn't the only one. It wasn't just for kids, either, it was for adults too. And even all of the leaders stuttered.

We did lots of fun things besides talking about stuttering, like writing a note to our teacher (my teacher is Ms. Farr). We did a scavenger hunt, made bandanas for our dance performance to Fight Song by Rachel Platten, and made time capsules that we have to read in 10 years. I will be 18! Going to the NSA conference gave

me courage, taught me to have more patience, and helped me to be more confident.

This experience also helped me to realize who I really am. I am a good friend and a good big sister. I am nice and caring. I show Husky PRIDE! I am a really good dancer and a good artist. I am all of these things and NOT just a kid who stutters. I am so much more than that.

Starting off 3rd grade was tough for me. I got really nervous the week before school started. I was going to be meeting lots of new people from a new school and would have all new teachers. Even my friends who know me really well sometimes forget that I stutter. I spoke to my teacher at the open house and we agreed how to talk to my class. This made me feel a little bit better but I was still nervous.

In the first few weeks of school, I didn't raise my hand at all. I tried to remember what I had learned from the conference and tried to remember the confidence that I had felt. I talked with my mommy about being brave and decided to raise my hand the next day in school. Before I even had the chance to raise my hand, my math teacher called on me. I felt a tiny bit scared to talk but I decided to try anyway. I was really proud of myself even though I got a little stuck on my words. The next time I raised my hand, I felt a little bit more confident, and since then it has gotten easier to participate in class. What people don't realize is that stuttering makes me tired sometimes. I have to think about every word that I want to say. But also people should know that stuttering is no big deal. And I feel strong enough not to let stuttering stop me.

We all have challenges and this is mine. But we can all learn from each other and treat each other with kindness. I want people to treat me with respect, be patient with me and treat me like any other person.

This is my story. What's yours?



HUCKLEBERRIES & NEW HEIGHTS

By Annie Bradberry & Heather Najman

Memories of courage and connection during the NSA’s Fall Retreat still carry us through the days. This year’s fall event was different than others. After our Friday evening gathering, we stepped outside of the usual four hotel walls and into the trees. Saturday began at Adventure Dynamics where we came together in team exercises that eased our nerves while building trust. Integrating lessons about conquering fear, judgment, and vulnerability were tied to our stuttering lives.

MANY OF US VENTURED INTO UNKNOWN HEIGHTS WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THOSE BELOW, AND LEFT EXHAUSTED AND EXHILARATED.

Partnering with the NSA was Kim Krieger, Dr. Dorvan Breitenfeldt, Robby Jackson, and Jason Young who opened the campus of Eastern Washington University - Spokane for the afternoon, where we reflected on how the lessons of the day applied to our stuttering challenges and the changes we wanted to

make. Alongside the adult events, Dan Hudock, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Northwest Center for Fluency Disorders, Idaho State University held a CEU workshop for local speech pathologists and students. To end the day, we dined in a great big room sharing stories, great food, huckleberry cheesecake - a local treat.

Sunday morning we came together one last time with the usual mixed feelings of sweetness and sadness as the weekend came to an inevitable end. Together we shared our takeaways as well as what we wanted to leave behind: those things that hold us back from believing in ourselves. The highlight for us was the closing by “Dr. B” (Breitenfeldt), who, in his mid-80’s reflected on his stuttering journey, saying, “I haven’t outgrown it yet...”. He shared this with a smile, reminding us to take risks and to trust others, and that those of us who stutter are the experts on what each of us needs.

This fall retreat was a wonderful way to come together in an intimate setting, and made us even more excited about next summer’s Annual Conference in Dallas! ☺





“BUT, FOR NOW, I CAN TRY MY BEST TO FOCUS ON DOING THE BEST I CAN IN MY LIFE, TO BE A GOOD PERSON, AND TO TAKE THE LESSONS I’VE LEARNED FROM MY FRIENDS AT THE NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION AND REMEMBER TO TRUST MY FEELINGS, MY THOUGHTS, TO REMEMBER THAT I’M NOT ALONE, AND OF COURSE, TO ALWAYS STUTTER BEAUTIFULLY.”

-Landon Murray

2016 CONFERENCE RECAP

By Tammy Flores

Each year, the National Stuttering Association (NSA) hosts the largest national gathering for children and adults who stutter, their families, and speech professionals. With over 850 attendees, this four-day conference attracts attention across North America, creating a safe space where participants can learn about the latest stuttering information and find support for themselves and their loved ones.

In the days before the start of the Annual Conference, the NSA Clinical Symposium brings a cross-section of experts including early intervention strategies, the latest research, evidence-based treatment approaches, and more. What makes us stand out amongst the other professional conferences is the number of researchers and presenters who stay for the entire conference after the symposium ends. Some present their findings in workshops while many others stay to support their clients while learning first-hand what it is like to be a person who stutters. Where else can a student who is just starting out in their speech pathology career share a meal with one of the top in the country? This year’s conference brought us back to Atlanta, Georgia, where I am happy to report that we welcomed 864 attendees, including 207 First-Timers and 82 families!

Every year the team of individuals working behind the scenes grows. ‘Thank you’ is never enough to all of you who worked extra hard this year to move our conference and make it one of the best yet. With sincere appreciation, I want to thank: Joan, Dave & Heather Ross, Melissa Lopez, Brandie Flores, Mandy & Jean Finstad, Kat Skowronska, Kaylee Reardon, Rebecca Holmes, Erica & Aaron Perez, Jim & Lee Lowman, Tony Romano, Annemarie Whitesel, Sarah Onofri, Nina Zito, Pam Mertz, Annie Bradberry, and Vivian Sisskin. Thank you, also, to our dedicated NSA Board of Directors, for your support and tireless efforts.

We talked about the conference the entire 4-hour drive home. Theodore had the most fun, and is planning our route to Dallas in 2017. Peter and I were educated and inspired by everyone we met and we have come away with a new perspective and a new level of appreciation for what it means to be a person who stutters. Thank you to you, your tiny (but mighty!) staff, and all the volunteers. It was a great four days and we are looking forward to doing it again in Dallas!

-Erica, Peter & Theodore Katz

I just wanted to thank you. I wanted to thank you for thinking of me when you are were looking for someone to help out leading the children’s workshops. I work at a Summer Art Camp for children at my university. Before the conference none of the children or their parents knew that I stuttered and only knew my name because the other counselors told them. Even though I stutter mildly, while not at the NSA conferences, I did whatever I could to hide the fact that I stutter from the children and their parents. Which was obviously quite hard.

Fast forward to today. Today was the first day back at the camp. I introduced myself to the children and their parents, “Hi, I’m Evan, and I happen to stutter”. I would continue talking about stuttering to both of them, more so the children.

I am not hiding any longer. I believe a majority of this has to do with interacting openly with the children at the conference. During the conference I could say whatever I wanted (with reason, of course), whenever I wanted, since the children were already aware of stuttering and that most people there stuttered. So I thought, I can speak just as freely here at camp (and in life), I just need to advocate. Long story short, just know you are a reason why I am so confident at work right now, being the camp counselor named Evan, who just happens to have a stutter. THANK YOU, yet again.

-Evan

I had a valuable experience in the conference. I was happy to meet PWS from all over the world. I learned many things about stuttering. I will be trying to this experience into something positive. I want to see you again. Thank you very much.

-Yu Endo

This was my sixth conference and, once again, I have to say that it was absolutely amazing! It was even more amazing to see people across countries, cultures and generations coming together. In the past few days, I’ve met people from Russia, Croatia, Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, Finland, Australia and more regions. Stuttering may be frustrating, but it’s opened me up to this world of the most loving, supporting and inspiring people I know. So, thank you everyone!

-Sam Dunsinger



SIMPLE SHIFT

By Laura W. Rucker, CCC-SLP
Speech Language Pathologist,
Cleveland County Schools

I have been a speech pathologist for the past 20 years. Although I took a stuttering class in graduate school, I still felt unprepared to handle stuttering children. I was taught that indirect therapy was best, and not to mention the word stutter.

Recently, I attend a conference where I learned so much more about stuttering. Dr. Scott Yaruss opened my eyes about stuttering. I learned that it is more than just all right to use the word stuttering, it is our responsibility to be open and honest about it! People who stutter know that they are stuttering. It is not news to them; they've known since an early age.

This new insight came at the perfect time for me. Two new students, both in kindergarten, in the same class, found themselves on my caseload and both were stutterers. I used the new information that I had learned during the conference and began a whole different course of therapy, one that talked openly about stuttering and what it meant to these two young boys. The difference is amazing.

For so long, stuttering made me uncomfortable because I felt so compelled to "fix" the problem. The truth is there is no simple "fix" (which is a true statement for any speech and language difficulty or delay). What is far more important is to help these students be more comfortable with their speech, and to help them learn to be effective communicators even if they do stutter. That simple shift in my own thinking has led to unbelievable results. I see the structure of confidence being built in every session with these young boys. Stuttering therapy can be a rewarding part of our clinical practice, sometimes it just takes opening ourselves up to new ideas and really understanding what our goals are for our clients. ☺

THE ART OF RECOVERY

By Tim Mackesey, CCC-SLP, BCS-F

We've recently finished the summer Olympics in Rio, and one of the things to marvel over is how athletes recover after a very public disaster. Imagine a gymnast who has trained 12 years for this moment on the balance beam and she falls! 20,000 in the audience gasp all at once, 250 million at home watch it, and her coaches and teammates are counting on her to do her best. What does the gymnast do? She shakes it off immediately, re-mounts the beam, completes her routine, dismounts, throws back her arms with pride, and acts as though she never fell! She has to forgive herself immediately because she has move on other routines. Ice skaters have a similar champion mentality: get up and finish with pride even when hurt. When you add in a missed putt in golf, a strike out in baseball, and other critical sports situations you can create countless moments with potential humiliation.

If I stutter with a few witnesses, do I have to freak out and dwell on it for years to come? I had a severe stutter for more than 20 years. I used to think of some of my stutters as catastrophic. For example, if I stuttered alone in my car at a drive-thru window, I would beat myself up for months, or even years. Doing self-therapy as an adult I had to "edit and delete" all my old humiliating memories of teasing, avoidance, and the like. I had to learn to recover.

One of the most difficult things for a person who stutters (PWS) is being able to recover after an embarrassing stuttering event. Specific word fears and situation phobias are a result of dwelling on the stuttering event. Somatic memory is the memory that you can feel long after it happens; you might feel it in your chest and stomach. Many PWS fear saying their name, hometown, job title, school, or similar commonly spoken words. What does it take to remember to stutter on those words? It seems that the more we

try not to stutter, the more we do. I once helped a 55-year old who vividly described stuttering on his name 49 years earlier, at age six, in school! Speaking at the NSA convention in July 2016 I asked for a show of hands for PWS who remembered stutters from 5, 10, 15, 20, and even 20+ years earlier. Hands were up all over the room.

Many people who stutter report that using targets and fluency techniques are useless when they are anxious, nervous, or fearful. How do we know to fear stuttering? What if we stutter? State anxiety, social phobia, and anticipatory anxiety are often used as terms to describe the fear of stuttering. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is often vital to a truly integrated approach to speech therapy.

Starkweather and Givens* contributed a spot-on article entitled Stuttering as a Variant of PTSD. The authors explained how a person who stutters remembers past stuttering events, feels dissociation during stuttering events, and then anticipates and fears future speaking events. This highlights the phenomena of remembering stuttering events and attaching feelings.

When a PWS punctuates a stuttering event with shame, embarrassment, and the like it is stored away into memory. You might say that we then have 'malware' or a virus on our 'mental computer'. The Meta-Model** can help us to understand the specific cognitive distortions connected to this thing called stuttering. ☺

*2003 ISAD on-line conference. www.stutteringhomepage.com

** Bandler, Richard & John Grinder (1975a). *The Structure of Magic I: A Book About Language and Therapy*. Palo Alto, CA: Science & Behavior Books.

A PERSON WHO STUTTERS SHOULD ASK HIM OR HERSELF:

WHAT DO I BELIEVE ABOUT STUTTERING?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME WHEN I STUTTER?

IS IT A PROBLEM FOR ME IF I STUTTER?

A PWS must attach meaning to the stuttering event to dwell on it, right? Otherwise, it would be forgotten.

HERE ARE 5 POINTERS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION TO REDUCE ANXIETY:

- 1 Examine & eliminate the beliefs, projecting, & personalizing that is responsible for anxiety & fear
- 2 Open up & mention that you stutter (some call this 'advertising')
- 3 Try using pseudo-stutters (fake stutters) that feel meaningless
- 4 Attend a support group for stuttering &/or engage in an integrated model of speech therapy that includes CBT
- 5 Forgive yourself if you stutter, recover fast, & remember the athletes who rebound immediately in front of massive crowds



1977-2017



Dallas '17



JULY 5-9

#NSAINTX17



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