

# National Stuttering Association

...for kids and teens  
who stutter,  
their parents,  
SLPs and others who  
support them!

# family Voices



## National Stuttering Association

Changing the lives of people who stutter

### One Proud Dad

By Barry Liben

In two months my wife Sindy and I will walk my son Michael down the aisle when he marries his beautiful high school sweetheart, Lindsay. Four months ago, he began work as an assistant district attorney in Brooklyn, NY. He is happy, confident and ready to embark on a fabulous new chapter of his life. And by the way, Michael still stutters.

As we look at this new chapter in my son's life I think back to the first time I went to an NSA convention in Atlanta in 1998. My son's speech therapist and life-mentor, Phil Schneider, urged us to go. I think he wanted me to go more than he wanted Michael to attend. Just the two of us headed out to steamy Atlanta not knowing that, for at least one of us, life would be forever changed!



Barry and Michael, 2007

The very first session I attended was Russ Hick's first-timer meeting. I was overwhelmed by how "well" he stuttered and by how funny he was and by his insistence that these three days would change us. Being a tough New Yorker, of course, I wasn't buying the last part! As the hours and days went by, what really hit me was that I was surrounded by hundreds of people that stuttered and among them were immensely happy and successful people. All my fears about my son's life and his stutter that filled my being - would he ever get a job, would he do well in school, would he get married- seemed to drift away for those days in Atlanta because I was engulfed in the living proof that he would!

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### Talking

By Izabella W.



Hands sweating, lungs tightening, I walked up to the podium, and began my speech. My voice was scratchy when I began.

"I Isabella Ward..." those were the first words that came out of my mouth. At that moment I wanted to run, run all the way home, lock myself in my closet, and never have to show my face again. But I couldn't. Frozen there on the stage, I finished my speech and walked off. I felt proud of myself for having the guts to go up and represent. Before the election I promised myself that I would never stand in front of a crowd, because I hated the way I talked.

Talking can be hard for people. Stuttering is my difficulty, and I have to go through it for all of my life. Unlike others, I think about words that I stutter on and avoid them to keep people from laughing. I hate that I stutter. I watch people talk fluently on TV and even at my own house. I keep quiet in class and I don't raise my hand, even though I know the answer. I feel trapped in a bubble, not wanting to be popped.

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## Ask The Expert

Tricia Lehrman - Krauss



### A Delicate Balance

Q: Is it possible to convey to my child everything I feel is important about stuttering without sounding hypocritical? If I emphasize that stuttering is only a small part of who he is and that it really is okay to stutter, can I also encourage

him to work hard in speech therapy and learn all he can to manage his stuttering?

A: ABSOLUTELY! But it can be a delicate balance.

These 2 goals - acceptance and self-mastery - are not mutually exclusive but actually can complement each other beautifully. By showing your child every day, through your words and actions, that you see the whole of him and hear the music of his voice and the content of his message, you will help him grow up without shame. He will know that stuttering does not define him. If you also encourage and support him in his efforts to learn to manage his stuttering, you help point him in the right direction on his journey with stuttering.

I often remind families that they are truly on a "journey". Coming to grips with stuttering and the impact it will have on your child's life is a process for you as well as your child. It is a dynamic process that changes and goes through a variety of phases ... learning that it is okay to stutter ... acknowledging feelings ... learning about stuttering and learning to talk about it ... changing beliefs ... learning speech modification techniques ... developing new attitudes...being in and out of speech therapy...meeting others who stutter. Before you can help your child realize that he can accomplish whatever he sets out to achieve in his life, YOU must internalize this idea. Thank goodness for the support available through groups like the NSA so that you can see for yourselves that stuttering does not have to limit your child in his attempts to reach his dreams!

Isn't it interesting that no one worries about sending mixed messages when encouraging healthy eating habits as well as regular exercise as ways to get the body in good physical shape and stay healthy? It is widely accepted that this 2-pronged approach is ideal. Why is it any different if you want your child to be as healthy and comfortable as possible with his speech? When you let stuttering be a comfortable topic of conversation in your home and your child can sense that he is loved and accepted for who he is at his core, you have created the safe haven to which every child needs to be able to come home.

When you encourage your child to work hard and gain all he can from speech therapy, you are being honest with him. You are telling him that his life will be less challenging and he will be empowered as he reaches for his dreams if he learns all he can about stuttering and how to communicate effectively. But always remember, it is HIS stuttering and therefore he is on his own journey. We must always remember and be respectful of that fact. We must encourage and allow him to take ownership. He is the one who has to do the work and it IS hard work. But you can support him. Always listen with your ears AND your heart so you will know how you can best support and encourage him during each phase on his journey. It is a delicate balance, but one worth trying to achieve.

*Tricia Lehrman - Krauss worked at the UTD/Callier Center for Communication Disorders for 28 years, where she assessed and treated individuals with communication disorders with a special emphasis in fluency disorders. She also supervised graduate students working on their master's degree in Speech Pathology. She is a Board recognized fluency specialist. In August 2010, Tricia retired from the Callier Center and now has a private practice where she works with individuals of all ages with fluency disorders.*

## Talking

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When I raised my hand in class for everyone to see that I wanted to be president, I knew there was no chance on turning back. When I told myself that I would never run for president, I was terrified that I would get laughed at for who I am. It's not my fault that I stutter and I can't help who I am. I knew that all the courage inside of me was going to be put in the speech.

I thought about how I promised that I would never stand in front of a crowd, and I set a new thought. I, Isabella Ward, will not give up on school president and I will never be afraid to speak again. I also set up a new phrase for me: talking can stop you but others (like me) choose to move on and make a future.

*Isabella W. is a 12 year old seventh grader from McKinney, TX. She wrote this piece as a school assignment.*



*Ethan wrote this poem for his humanities class this week and he read out loud in front of the 50 students.*

## I Have a Voice

by Ethan, East Brunswick, NJ

Looking at me from the outside  
You and I really aren't all that different  
I breath air, I do my hair, and I think about  
What I wear, and the way I walk  
And the way I t... well...  
There is a difference, isn't there.

Of course you don't know that, You have committed,  
Committed yourself to judgment  
Not judgment by race, religion, gender, or sexual  
orientation  
But rather by an outside manifestation  
You have chosen to only see my exterior shell  
Well, if you are only judging me by my book's cover  
Then, there is no way, you will ever discover.

You see... I stutter  
My words don't flow like butter, Instead they get stuck!  
Like my vocal box is behind bars  
Words acting like traffic struck cars

But I, have a voice!  
And it is important what I want to say  
Talking for me takes effort, so don't walk away  
Delay comes with the territory, please,  
I would love for you to stay  
To listen to what I have to say.

So open up your mind  
Be kind, it don't matter if I was blind or if I signed  
Because either way, I am still a part of mankind  
I'm not slow, or stupid  
My mind is completely lucid.  
So just show me the respect that I deserve

I have a voice! A voice that is loud, that is proud  
That can talk to a big crowd  
What I have to say will not be disallowed

I have a voice! It doesn't matter if I stutter,  
If my words don't come right after each other  
Although what I am saying might come out slower  
I still want to be heard. Because I... have a voice!

## Leading By Example

by Shawn Czerwinski

### **Q: What is your definition of a leader?**

A: A leader to me is someone who has confidence in him/herself. A leader is able to stay positive in tough situations by offering advice or guidance. A leader is mentally strong and confident and uses this when leading a group or taking care of a situation. A leader will see obstacles and face them by taking care of the underlying issue and not avoiding the obstacle.

### **Q: Tell us about your relationship and experiences with the NSA**

A: My mom and I started a TWST support group in my community. We held meetings for a while, but since our city is so small we had only one participant other than myself. We contacted all of the school districts from the surrounding areas and sent out flyers. There were a few other teens who stuttered, but only one was interested in going. I would love to be in a support group, but there aren't any in my area. The closest support groups are about two hours away.

The NSA is just amazing. The NSA has allowed me to change in many good ways and has helped me to find confidence in myself. I have also accepted the fact that I stutter and am not afraid to talk about my stuttering with others, which I learned from the NSA. I have been to six NSA conferences and each year is even more spectacular than the year before. Before I found the NSA I never really knew anyone else my age who stuttered. Since I have been going to the conferences I have not only met other people who stutter my age, but have also had the opportunity to talk to numerous famous people who did not allow their stuttering to interfere with their career. The conferences have also taught me how to cope with situations that I have to face every day because I stutter. The NSA has done so much for me which I am so grateful. I want to be able to help out others who may be new to the NSA or may not be as fortunate as I am to be able to attend the NSA conferences every year.

### **Q: How do the challenges/successes with stuttering shape you?**

A: The challenges/successes with my stuttering have shaped me in numerous ways. I have been bullied a lot about my stuttering and I believe that learning to cope with that has made me stronger. Before I accepted the fact that I stutter I was terrified of giving speeches. Now when I give speeches it is a challenge, but I feel really good about myself for giving the speech regardless of the results. I have done numerous jobs and volunteer work where I knew I would have to communicate with a lot of people. I worked concessions for the Erie Seawolves a minor league baseball team. I took this job because I knew I would be working the cash register having to deal with all kinds of people. I volunteered at the hospital because I knew I would be passing things out to the patients giving me an opportunity to talk to many people who were hard of hearing which used to be one of my fears. After completing over seventy hours at the hospital I was no longer afraid of talking to people who were hard of hearing. I used to have a fear of talking on the telephone, but I challenged myself to make calls to various places. Although I may stutter a lot more on

the phone than talking in person, I am no longer afraid of talking on the phone. Turning my struggles into challenges and then into success has shaped me in making myself a much more confident person who stutters. I do not let my stuttering hold me back anymore.

### **Q: Indicate your passions/hobbies**

A: I have many passions and hobbies. I have been a tennis player for over nine years now. I played number one for my high school. I have won numerous tennis tournaments. Although I am currently not playing for a college I still enjoy playing tennis as much as possible. I also enjoy playing hockey. I love to fish and hunt as well. I enjoy going perch fishing on my family's boat. I enjoy the outdoors whether its hunting, fishing, kayaking, or just simply going for a walk. I also love to travel and the NSA conferences have helped me to see various places.

### **Q: Who is someone that inspires you? Why?**

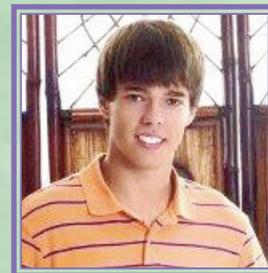
A: Joe Biden is someone who inspires me. Joe Biden is a person who stutters even though he controls his stuttering very well. He has not let his stuttering get in the way of allowing him to achieve his goals. He is currently the Vice President of the United States and has been in politics for a good portion of his life. He is an amazing public speaker and communicator. Joe Biden obviously has seen public speaking as a challenge and has won the challenge. Although most of us would never attempt public speaking to the degree that he has as the Vice President of the United States, but he has shown us that it is possible and to never let your stuttering hold you back.

### **Q: List some of your community related involvements. How have you made others aware of stuttering in your community?**

A: I am very involved with my community. In 2009, I participated in the Erie Police Explorer program. This past summer I volunteered over seventy hours at a local hospital (Saint Vincent's) by helping where needed. I have also volunteered in various community service days and projects since I started college this year. I have also made others aware of stuttering in my community in many ways. First, I am very open about my stuttering. I have told a bunch of people such as my friends, family, teachers/professors, and basically anyone else that's willing to listen that I stutter, what stuttering is, about the NSA, and I answer any questions which they may have about stuttering. During my senior year I wrote a ten page research paper about stuttering. Everyone seemed interested in my research paper including my teacher who I found out used to stutter.

### **Q: List some of the ideas you have about how teens in the NSA can reach out to help others**

A: As a TAC member, I can reach out and help others who stutter by being supportive of them whether it is on Facebook, emails, or at the NSA annual conference. Parents really like to talk to teens to get ideas about how their child that maybe doesn't talk much may be feeling. Parents learn a lot from the teens who can help them be more supportive and understanding of their own kids. NSA teens are role models for other kids and teens to help build up their self-confidence.



*This is an excerpt from Shawn Czerwinski's TAC application letter. He is a member of the NSA's 2011 TAC. He has attended 6 NSA conferences with his parents and sister, Chelsea. At this year's Fort Worth conference, he will be leading a few workshops for teens and for parents.*



## One Proud Dad

*Continued from page 1*

I understood why Phil Schneider wanted me to go to the convention and I have never missed one since, with or without my son, Michael.

In life, people have heroes and so do I. My son is my hero. Time and again, he could have chosen many other paths in life to make his road easier but he never did. He was president of his high school class and gave a major speech at graduation to a huge audience, which greeted him with a standing ovation. There was plenty of stuttering but



Barry and Michael, 2011

no one seemed to notice or care. He could have chosen a career less dependent on his voice than law. He didn't. And he certainly could have decided on a segment of law other than being an assistant district attorney which will require trial work.

With all these accomplishments and goals realized I would be lying if I said I don't worry about my son, I do. But I worry about my two other children and their issues as well. I have no doubt that they will handle their problems as I know my son has and will continue to handle his. So, yes I am one proud dad of my beautiful baby boy who is now 26 and will be married in two months.

*Barry Liben is a long time member of the NSA and enjoys spending his free time with his three amazing kids, two dogs and beautiful wife, Sindy.*

### Find More NSA Social Media Resources!

**NSA Facebook:**  
[facebook.com/WeStutter](https://facebook.com/WeStutter)

**NSA Twitter:**  
[twitter.com/WeStutterNSA](https://twitter.com/WeStutterNSA)

**YouTube Videos:**  
[www.nsastutter.org/stutteringInformation/Stuttering\\_Videos](http://www.nsastutter.org/stutteringInformation/Stuttering_Videos)

**Ask the Expert:**  
[www.nsastutter.org/whoWeHelp/parents/AsktheExpert](http://www.nsastutter.org/whoWeHelp/parents/AsktheExpert)

**Yahoo email groups**  
(private sharing)  
[www.nsastutter.org/connect/internet-groups](http://www.nsastutter.org/connect/internet-groups)

## Social Media: What it means for the future of speech therapy.

*By Jack McDermott*

We've all heard it by now: social media is changing the face of communication. With the rise of websites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, social interactions have become both instantaneous and ubiquitous. Yet, despite the growth of these popular networks, I continually hear one resounding question from speech-language pathologists, parents, and stutterers alike: how can social media affect my speech therapy?

As new resources become available at the touch of a digital button, it is difficult to say how social media will fully impact the speech therapy field. However, one thing is clear: speech therapy is at a defining crossroads. If you consider that 1% of the population stutters and that Facebook has more than 650 million users, then we are left with approximately 6.5 million "friends" who stutter. Meanwhile, hundreds of SLPs have already taken to Twitter—the popular "microblogging" website—using special "hash tags" specifically dedicated to speech therapy. At a growing rate, the speech therapy community is sharing information through this new form of communication. So, is it time for you to plug into some of the web's most useful social media resources? Here are a few places to start:

### If you're a speech therapist...

-Engage with your students: Social media is most widely adopted and understood by "Generation Z". Look to incorporate video, podcasts, and mobile apps into your therapy routines, especially with adolescent to young adult students.

*Recommended: StutterTalk podcasts, PocketSLP, BalbusSpeech.com*

-Share your information: Websites like Tumblr and Blogger make blogging as easy as ever. Create your own blog and discover others' posts to tap the pulse of the stuttering community. Looking for new connections? Reach out to other SLPs professionally via LinkedIn.

*Recommended: Blog.ASHA.org, GeekSLP.com, SpeechTechie.com*

### If you're a parent/student...

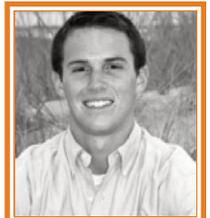
-Look for new resources: Facebook and Twitter are great places to start. The stuttering community has numerous Facebook pages that are regularly replenished with the latest news and stuttering information.

*Recommended: Facebook.com/WeStutter, Facebook.com/ASHA.org, Twitter.com/search/SLPeeps*

-Ask for help: "Web 2.0" communities are more responsive than ever. Many websites are predicated on "social sharing," or fostering dialogue across forums, tweets, mobile devices and email lists. So, if you're looking for simple advice, go ahead and ask!

*Recommended: Facebook.com/iPhoneiPadSpeechTherapy, Twitter.com/AvocadoTech, SpeechForGood.com*

*Jack McDermott is the Founder & CEO of Balbus Speech, a start-up that uses social media and mobile technology to enhance speech therapy. He is a person who stutters and is currently studying at Tufts University. Learn more about Balbus Speech at [www.BalbusSpeech.com](http://www.BalbusSpeech.com), @BalbusSpeech or [www.facebook.com/BalbusSpeech](https://www.facebook.com/BalbusSpeech).*



# Stutter Buddies

## Disadvantages and Advantages

By Danny W, Auburn, NH

I'm Danny. I've been stuttering since I was 3 years old. With stuttering comes disadvantages. You have a harder time speaking and you are probably bullied more than others. You also probably have to leave class to go to speech therapy. On top of the disadvantages of stuttering, there are also



advantages. I get to come to the NSA conference every year. This allows me to travel the country. My all time favorite thing about stuttering is I get to meet people who stutter just like me. Even though I have to overcome obstacles, I really like stuttering because it makes me who I am today.

*Danny and his family are active members of the NSA. They had attended multiple conferences and are involved in their local family chapter. This year, Danny will be part of the NSA All-Stars panel at the 2011 NSA conference.*

## A+ Report on Stuttering

By Alex C, from Winchendon MA

My name is Alex. I have been stuttering since I ever started talking. I went to my first speech therapist in kindergarten. His name was Chris and he taught me lots of cool techniques. Then I met my new therapist in sixth grade. Her name is Judy and she helped me go through my rough times.



Now I'm in eighth grade and in my English Language Arts class we had to do a report on a disability and I chose stuttering. The first paragraph was the introduction. The second paragraph was what the definition of my disability that I chose. And the third paragraph was the symptoms of it. The fourth and last paragraph was the treatment. The last paragraph was the conclusion. I got a hundred on the report! I was very proud of myself.

When I talk I have blocks. My therapist taught me to use easy onsets to help me get through them. An easy onset is when you ease through a word or sentence. You should never give up even on the rough times.



## Letting Up The Tension

By Elijah

My name is Elijah and I am 9 years old.

When I started stuttering, I didn't notice it. I started when I was about 5 years old. Then my parents sent me to a speech therapist.



What I have learned so far in speech is that the best thing to do for me is a pullout. It helps to pause and let out the tension as you say your sentence.

If I were to tell listeners one thing about stuttering, it would be that everybody is dysfluent but only some people stutter.

Your friend,  
Elijah

**Family Voices needs you!  
Send photos, stories,  
questions and feedback.  
Contact NSA today!**

## "Giddy Up NSA"

**Annual  
Conference**  
Fort Worth Texas  
July 6- 10, 2011  
**Register Today!**

### What's New with Family Programs?

Family Programs (FP) has been busy over the last few months working on the structure and processes of our Chapters. Beginning in December of 2010 we adopted the name Family Chapters to communicate more effectively that while NSAKids/TWST local chapters are for kids and teens who stutter, meetings are also open to parents and other family members collectively. In addition, once we began reviewing the chapter processes, requirements and the chapter leader manual we felt that there were areas that needed significant attention, revisions and clarifications which resulted in revising the manual and addressing how we view the structure of chapters moving forward. Our goal throughout this process has been to ensure the health and sustainability of our chapters along with the level and scope of support the NSA Family Chapters are able to provide to kids and teens who stutter and their families. Anyone interested in becoming a Family Chapter Leader can locate the new manual on the NSA website under Local Chapters in the Chapter Leader area.

Sheryl and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Marybeth Allen for her support and dedication to the NSA and Family Programs over the years. Marybeth recently stepped down as co-chair of FP and has been an invaluable resource to Sheryl and myself as we transitioned into the roles of FP co-chairs.

Lastly, the FP conference committee has been hard at work on this year's conference in Ft. Worth, TX. The conference is shaping up to be one of our best! We invite all of our NSA families to join us in Ft. Worth for Texas sized fun, friendship and camaraderie! And of course you'll also have the opportunity to learn a thing or two at our fantastic workshops!

See you in Texas!  
Stephanie Coppen,  
Co-chair Family Programs

The NSA's Family Program at this year's conference in Fort Worth will be BIG! HUGE! FUN! A hotel full of people who stutter is in many ways an altered world - one where stuttering is the norm, and is understood by all. We have heard time and again that being in this environment makes a huge difference in the life of a person who stutters. From the family orientation to the closing ceremony and banquet, the Family Program schedule will provide fun and informative activities and workshops for everyone.



Here is a sneak peek of some of our family workshops we are offering at the 2011 conference:

#### For Parents:

"Questions and Answers; Therapy Quandaries' Resolved!?" – Susan Cochrane  
"Unraveling the Mystery of Struggle" - Vivian Sisskin  
"Transitioning to Middle School" - Patty Wood and panel  
"Meet the Experts (AKA Teens!)" – The NSA Teen Advisory Council

#### For Teens:

"Building Self Confidence - Elevating Self Esteem" - Norbert "Nobby" Lewandowski  
"What to do when someone asks about your speech: Disclosure is not always verbal" - Kathy Swiney  
"Nurture Freedom and Eliminate Fear in Stuttering: For Teens Who Stutter" - Kevin Eldridge  
"Dating Workshop" - Ben and Miranda  
"Avoiding the College Trap" - Dr. John Gamble

#### For Kids:

"If I were the King... If I were the Queen..." - Laura Overton  
"Crime or No Crime" - Rita Thurman  
"Self Control and Overcoming Fears Through Martial Arts" - Tom Scharstein  
"Scavenger Hunt and Obstacle Course"

#### CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!

Need help getting to the conference this year? Due to generosity of corporate sponsors and many of our members, we are pleased to announce that scholarships are available once again to provide financial assistance for adults/families who would like to attend our annual conference. If you would like more information regarding scholarships please drop us a note and tell us why at: [tflores@WeStutter.org](mailto:tflores@WeStutter.org).

## Gaining Awareness:

### Situations that Make Communicating Difficult for People Who Stutter

By Sheryl Hunter, Co-Chair, Family Chapters

The Twin Cities NSA Adult Chapter had a meeting on April 14th during which the attendees shared their most difficult communication situations as people who stutter. The attendees brainstormed difficult situations and listed them. Then everyone marked up to three of their top difficult situations on the list. The group then took the four situations that had the greatest number of check marks, and broke into four smaller groups to talk about them more, including possible strategies to manage these difficult situations.

With the permission of Chapter Leader Linda R. Hinderscheit and with many thanks to the group for sharing their experiences (and to Linda for summarizing the group's list and suggestions), here is an insightful list that surely will help the families and friends of people who stutter to be more aware of circumstances that may pose an especially challenging speech environment for people who stutter.

Difficult communication situations (\*\*the situations marked with an asterisk were the top "vote-getters")

- being called on in class\*\*
- ordering at a restaurant (especially a place like Subway or Chipotle)
- socializing at parties
- small talk
- phone calls\*\* (even harder when the person on the other end does not speak English as their native language or has a hearing impairment and lots of repetition is required)
- having to say feared words that can't be switched or avoided
- group meetings
- presentations to large groups\*\*
- public announcements over PA systems
- drive throughs - restaurants/banks, etc.
- getting a turn in a group discussion
- job interviews\*\*

Recognizing when our friends and family members who stutter may be faced with increased speech challenges can empower us to be a better source of support. We must also help each other to develop strategies and therapies to make these challenging situations less difficult. Among the strategies the Twin Cities Chapter brainstormed are:

**Small talk:** Sometimes people who stutter have a hard time with small talk, because they are thinking too much about their stuttering and are not sure what to say to someone. Possible common small talk topics include: weather, jobs, and families. It is good to get the topic off ourselves and our stuttering and think about what the other person is saying. People will generally continue talking if you respond to what they are saying. Most of the time people are probably not even thinking about our stuttering. It's important to try to remember that. People usually don't care if we stutter. We think about it too much ourselves. Small talk can be particularly problematic when meeting and getting to know friends

and family of a significant other. It can be tough because you naturally want to appear impressive to these people, so that they know that their friend or family member chose a good partner. Some of us have those nagging memories of being embarrassed by stuttering, and it can be difficult to realize, in the moment, that stuttering is never something to feel inadequate about.

**Phone calls:** Before making a phone call, think about what you want to say. In some situations it may even help to write down a script beforehand. When the person answers, it may be helpful to tell the person upfront that you stutter. Another thing to think about beforehand would be how are you going to get through the phone call? Is it by using a certain technique or stuttering forward? A positive attitude? Not let your stuttering stop you? The most important thing is to make the call even if you are scared or fearful. Avoiding making the phone call will just make it harder later.

**Presentations:** Be upfront about stuttering and telling the audience, before you start your presentation, that you may stutter. Try to do something to relax before the presentation to get your mind off of it. Have your material prepared in advance and go over your presentation beforehand so your comfortable with the material. Try to not think about your stuttering beforehand. If you think about it, to try to get your mind off of it. Practice relaxed breathing to calm yourself and keep the air flowing. Visualize yourself successfully giving important information to the audience.

**Being called on in class:** Communicate with the instructor during the first week of class and let him/her know that you stutter. If you have to go around the room to introduce yourself, it may be beneficial to tell the class that you stutter. Self-disclosing your stutter to the class will make it easier later if you want to volunteer or ask a question in class. If you have to do a presentation to the class, and can choose the topic, try to have it be on some aspect of stuttering. It's a great way to self-disclose and educate the public at the same time.

Probably the most important strategy in almost any situation is ADVERTISING! During all our group discussions the idea of somehow advertising that you stutter was discussed as an important strategy. Whether it's telling your teacher/peers at the beginning of class or during a job interview that you are a person who stutters, it's a great way to create a stutter-friendly environment. By advertising you give yourself permission to stutter and you no longer feel the added pressure of having to speak fluently. There is nothing to hide! Plus, it makes you an even more confident communicator!

Great insights and advice, Twin Cities!

**GIVE  
BACK!**

Become a  
Member

Volunteer

Attend an NSA Event

Donate: time, auction  
items, money

**Contact NSA today!**

## Family Chapter Reports

### Cincinnati, OH TWST Chapter

by Miranda Smith

The Cincinnati TWST chapter had an awesome meeting this month! While the average attendance is 7-10 teenagers, there was only one in attendance this month, and he enjoyed having the leaders all to himself! The topic lately has been "Adults Who Stutter", and the chapter has been inviting members of the Cincinnati adult chapter to come and talk to the teens and tell their "stuttering story". The teens then can ask questions, get advice, and talk about anything they're feeling.

### Dallas TWST, TX Chapter

by Shannon Beaty

Shannon reported that the Dallas TWST Chapter had a great time during their April meeting! There were 16 people in attendance, including one new family. The topic was "Free Speaking," selected by the teens. After a brief group discussion, the teens, led by TAC member Braden Barber, split off from the parents for an 'open forum' meeting. Parents engaged in an open forum as well, sharing stories, questions, and getting to know each other. The teens said they really enjoyed this type of meeting, and would like to do it more often. May's topic will be "Preparing for Job Interviews."

### Long Island, NY TWST

by Lori Melnitsky, MA CCC-SLP

The Long Island TWST chapter met in April. There were 3 teens and one graduate student in attendance. The group discussed The Kings Speech, and confidence-building in speaking situations. Some of the teens shared which speech tools have helped them. The group also discussed 'easy onset', as well as some of the difficulties of stuttering. The group plans to have an end-of-year party in June!

### Mesquite, TX Kids/TWST

by Lana Dodgen

In April the Mesquite Kids/TWST Chapter had a very inspiring meeting! The group hosted a six-member panel consisting of a Principal, Diagnostician, SLP, teenager, and two young adults. The 34 people in attendance were encouraged as they listened to the challenges, successes, fears and personal experiences that the panelists shared. Many questions were asked, and the panel was very honest and engaging. Over the past three years, this has been the most popular meeting of the year!

### Omaha/Lincoln, NE

by Maria Tarrell and Kena

The Omaha/Lincoln, NE chapter welcomed speaker Andy Greenberg at their last meeting, and he did not disappoint! Maria and Kena state that they "...always find so much of what is said by people who have stuttered important, and of course much of what they say is applicable to all of our lives. The way that they have overcome painful moments and fears (self imposed or those from a bad experience) are defining moments that allow us to figure out who we are. Stepping over those boundaries, that someone else or we put in front of us, are empowering moments in our lives. We have control of our outcomes."

### Southern NH NSAKids (Planning Report)

by Pattie Woods

The Southern NH kids group was SNOWED OUT in April! Their May meeting will be an informal meeting, and will include the Easter Egg Hunt that was postponed from last month's meeting. After that the 3 boys will have a chance to play basketball and soccer and hang out together. The parents will be given more information about conference along with an opportunity to visit a graduate class at UNH.

The group's co-leader, Sheryl, has been contacted by a film maker who is making a documentary about teasing and stuttering. The group is planning to discuss if any of the kids from their group might be interested in sharing any of their stories. The chapter meetings usually break for the summer, so they will also discuss how everyone sees going forward in the fall.

## NSA Family Chapters Blog Talk Radio

NSA Family Chapters is thrilled to announce that in June we will host the first of many NSA Family Chapters Blog Talk Radio shows.



Having our own internet radio show will enable Family Chapters to reach so many more children (and teens!) who stutter and their parents and family members, worldwide. Think of the radio show as your virtual support group. We will have guest speakers, opportunities for kids to host the show, and we can take calls from kids and parents who can access information and support from the comfort of their own homes. Our first show will be a pre-conference special, designed to help you discover what awaits us in Ft. Worth. This year is expected to be the best yet. Watch for announcements for the June debut of NSA Family Chapters Radio!

### Family Chapters Continue to Grow

Contact Family Program chairpersons with any questions:

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