Family VOICES

FIRST QUARTER 2013

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

Meet Our Newest TAC Member...

BRYAN CASTRO (NJ)

My name is **Bryan Castro** and I'm eighteen years old. I have been involved with the NSA since the 2011 conference in Fort Worth, Texas. Through the NSA, I have been able to gain many benefits such as a accepting my speech impediment. One of the ways, though, that I am now benefiting from the NSA is by being part of the Teen Advisory Council (TAC).

I applied for a position on the TAC because I believed that it would be a great opportunity for me to give back to the stuttering community. When I applied, I thought about the wonderful benefits that come with being a TAC member. Some of those benefits include leading some of the workshops at the Annual Conferences, being the main attraction in some of the workshops, and serving as a role model to younger children. There are definitely more benefits than this, but my original intention for joining the TAC was to make an impact on the NSA, the stuttering community, and the world outside of the NSA.

My role on the Teen Advisory Council is great because I have the opportunity to impact teens who stutter in positive ways. I have the responsibility to use the TwST (Teens who STutter) page – and any other NSA related page on Facebook – to offer advice, support, and help to any of its users. I can answer questions that anybody posts on the TWST page, people can ask me questions on that same page, I can offer encouraging words to those who are having a tough speech day, and I can even just listen to anybody who just wants to talk to me and share some of their feelings. Before the next Annual Conference rolls around, I also have the responsibility to help plan for workshops and assist with any other tasks that I am called to do, such as spreading important information about the conference. During the conference, I will be responsible for leading workshops, supporting my fellow teens, young adults, and pre-teens who stutter, and helping to keep the conference running smoothly. I am excited that, with my role on the TAC, I have responsibilities during the Annual Conference, on Facebook, and in spreading awareness about stuttering to the local, national, and even international level.

While I am in the Teen Advisory Council, I would like to accomplish several things, particularly spreading awareness and knowledge about stuttering to the public. I would also like to influence people who stutter with my advice and support. Not only do I want to impact people who stutter, but I would also like to learn from their experiences and listening to what they have to say. With my position as a TAC member, I really just want to improve other stutters' lives.

I would like to thank **Chloe Whittaker** for a wonderful job in serving the Teen Advisory Council. I would also like to thank all of those who nominated me for this position in place of Chloe. Thanks again Chloe for your fantastic service and thank you NSA for believing in me! ::

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Be sure to check out 'WeStutter' on Facebook and Twitter today!

Teen TALK

The TAC Celebrates ISAD

MIRANDA SMITH, TAC CHAIRPERSON

Since the 2012 NSA Conference in St. Petersburg, the Teen Advisory Council has done nothing short of staying busy! October 22nd was International Stuttering Awareness Day and our goal was to spread the word and show our own communities that it's okay to stutter and we are not alone! From hanging up flyers at local stores, to making a YouTube video, to being broadcasted on the local news, the TAC did a wonderful job at raising awareness to each of our communities.

"On October 22nd I hung up posters in my Music Faculty and I handed out pamphlets and bracelets to my friends, professors, and classmates. I wore my Stutter Like A Rock Star Bracelet, the most recent conference T-Shirt, and an NSA button! I had a few people come up and ask me questions and I told everyone how fabulous the NSA is and how it changed my life!" – *Alex, Ontario*

"Just before Hurricane Sandy hit I went to the store to get some last minute things for the storm and on my way out I saw a lady flipping through the brochure I had hung there. Watching her flip through the brochure and take the time out to read parts of it and see what it was made me feel very happy and proud that I was the one to hang that brochure there and that the brochure would continue to enlighten people on stuttering!" – *Courtney, NJ*

"I set up a table outside my lunch room with NSA posters, pens, buttons, bracelets, and brochures. My mom and I stood by the table during my lunch period answering questions, and explaining stuttering more in depth to my peers. I was pleasantly surprised to see all the support I was given that day and days to follow as my friends and peers continued to wear the bracelets and buttons. It was an amazing day!" – *Dan, PA*

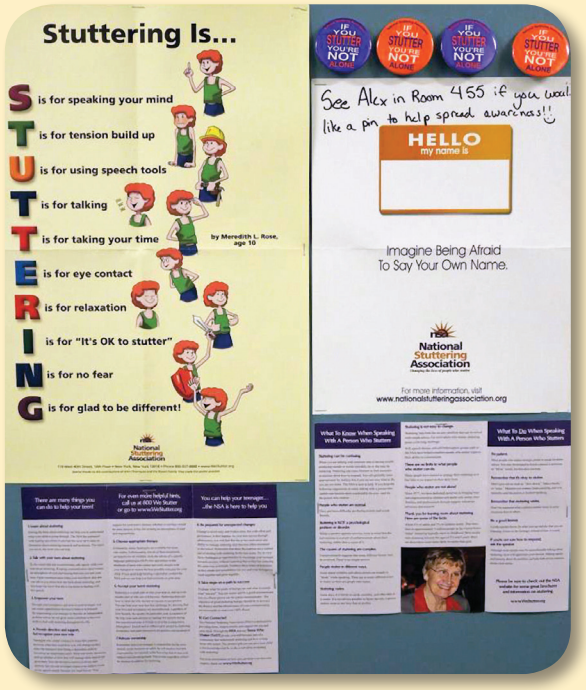
"The fun fact sheets became a great idea. They were full of information about stuttering and people could read them quickly. I also got more than half of my grade to wear teal/blue to support ISAD." – *Danny, NH*

"I did a story on my school's broadcast educating people about stuttering and telling them about the NSA and what the NSA does. After it aired I learned that people were very proud of me for being able to talk so openly about my stuttering. I had tons of friends come up and ask more questions. I got to hand out tons of NSA bracelets to all my friends and everyday I see them wearing them." – *Eddie, AL*

"The only website my mom found that gave her the hope was the National Stuttering Association's site. I owe a lot to the NSA because every year the people there completely renew me. That is what inspired me to make an informational video from a stutterer's point of view about the questions people may have. I just wanted to provide a little insight for someone who's searching for answers." – *Katie, PA*

"After writing three news stations, the next day I got an email back from a medical reporter, Liz Bonis, from Channel 12 WKRC Cincinnati News, she wrote short and sweet "Could we talk with you on camera at 9 am, on 10/22 for the story you suggested… we could meet you where ever you live, work, or even outside somewhere – will air the story same day to help raise awareness.. Thanks for writing… Warm regards Liz Bonis Channel 12 medical reporter". I was in shock! I had no intention on being on camera for the entire Cincinnati area to hear me stutter! After the story aired, I felt great! And when the story went online for all of my friends and family and their friends and family to see I felt even greater!" – *Miranda, KY*

International Stuttering Awareness Day was a huge success for the TAC members! Always remember, you are not alone! ::



A Message FROM:

PATTIE WOOD, FAMILY PROGRAMS CHAIR

Now that the holidays are over, it's time to start thinking about the 2013 Annual Conference in Scottsdale, AZ, taking place July 3rd–7th. Conference preparation is always an exciting time in our household – making travel arrangements, discussing workshops, and looking forward to seeing all of our NSA family. This year, we are even more excited to be heading back to Arizona. Such a beautiful area, great hotel, and as my kids say, 'best pool ever'!

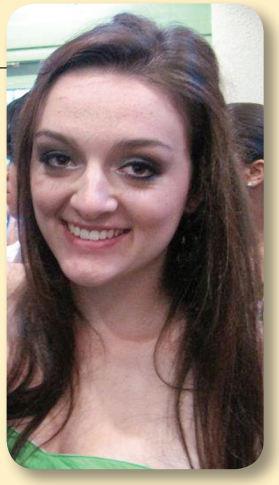
For me personally, it's a time to reflect about my NSA experiences both past and present. This will be our 6th conference, and I remember feeling so overwhelmed at our first conference in New Jersey, wondering if this experience would be a positive one for my son and our family. As it turned out, it was one of the best decisions I ever made. I met parents that have become life-long friends and supporters. Not only do I get a chance to spend time with them at conference, but we are able to keep in touch all year long. These friendships are invaluable to me.

My son has made meaningful friendships as well, friends that keep him eagerly awaiting the conference each year. The NSA has helped him grow into a mentor and leader to others. I love to see him spending time with the younger kids, knowing that he remembers what it was like when we started attending the NSA conferences. This opportunity to give back has given him the strength to face these challenging teen years with confidence and a place to turn when he needs support.

Leaving that first conference with so much gratitude, I needed to find a way to give back, which led me to start a local chapter in our area and to serve as a member of the NSA Board of Directors. The people of NSA have become my second family, and there isn't an organization I care about more.

Recently I became certified as a Speech-Language Assistant after developing an interest in speech while feeling my way through my son's issues with stuttering. I am hoping to go on to become a Speech Pathologist and would love to work with children who stutter and their families. It is through the guidance of our own fluency specialist and the support of the NSA that I hope to give back to other families the support that my family has experienced. It has been a challenging road, but filled with great blessings. I hope to see you at the 30th Annual NSA Conference in July! ::

TAC News



NSA Family Programs would like to thank **Chloe Whittaker** for her years of service to the youth and families of the NSA as a member of the Teen Advisory Council. Chloe has recently stepped down from her position on the TAC but is sure to be a strong presence within the organization and especially at future conferences. We wish you all the best, Chloe!

Family Programs would also like to congratulate and welcome **Bryan Castro** to the TAC. Bryan's enthusiasm and dedication to helping others who stutter will make him a fantastic addition to the TAC. We look forward to working with you, Bryan! ::

Family Chapter NEWS

Dallas, TX TwST

People Bingo was the icebreaker at the most recent Dallas TwST meeting, and all the teens and parents enjoyed mingling as they tried to find people who fit the descriptions on their BINGO boards. The group welcomed several new families, and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to talk with the others attending the meeting. The meeting was special in that the Chapter Leaders had invited a group of adults who stutter to join the meeting and talk with the teens and parents. The two adult guests spoke with the group and answered questions for over an hour. Questions were asked by the teens as well as the parents and very interesting and thought provoking topics were covered. Everyone who attended expressed great appreciation to the guest speakers. The group has decided that they would like to hold this type of meeting to have on an annual basis since it attracted several new families and seemed to hold the interest of everyone in attendance. – *Tricia Krauss-Lehrman*

Orange County, CA TwST

The Orange County held its last meeting at the Katie Wheeler Library with three teens, one sibling, and three parents in attendance. The meeting was casual, and the group took the opportunity to talk about the holidays and how the kids were doing in school. The group also discussed attending the 2013 Annual Conference in Scottsdale, AZ. The teens enjoyed playing board games and eating holiday cookies! The Chapter Leaders are working hard to increase attendance by reaching out to more families. – *Karen Huey-Spohn*

Phoenix Family Fun Day

BECKY PETERS, PHOENIX CHAPTER LEADER

One of the best things about Phoenix in the fall is our Annual NSA Family Fun Day! This year's event was held on November 3rd on the Arizona State University campus.

SLPs attended a day-long workshop presented by **Dr. Lisa Scott** on the *Applications of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to Children and Teens Who Stutter* while kids, teens, and parents met together and in separate groups to explore 'backpacking through the adventure of living with stuttering'. The kids group created their own backpacks and discussed the items they most wanted to carry along with them on their daily journeys. The teens met with **Dr. Christopher Nichols**, psychologist, to talk about moving ahead in relationships and life's experiences. Teens then discussed what their "backpack" for life would contain so they would be prepared for the adventures that lay before them. The parent group discussed the *Common Core Standards* and the implications for students who stutter, and also heard about and discussed family coping skills.

The panel discussion was a big hit, as always, and the day ended with our own version of the NSA's video "3 Words About Stuttering". It was an amazing, fun experience for everyone who attended and we can't wait for next year. We are also excited that the NSA Annual Conference will be held in nearby Scottsdale at the Westin Kierland Resort & Golf Club, July 3rd – July 7th 2013, and hope to see you all there! ::

Finish That Sentence!

Even more from the Kids of the NSA!

In **Sarah Onofri**'s F*inish That Sentence* workshop at the 2012 Annual Conference in St. Petersburg, the kids of the NSA were asked to finish the following sentences regarding their speech. Read below to see what they had to say!

The NSA is…

…So nice and understanding
…Awesome
…Very understanding
…FUN!
…Friendly and willing
…Fun
…Awesome
…Helping others out
…Awesome and cool and exciting! You can stutter there, and it's so, so fun!
…Cool
…Great
…Kind people that have trouble speaking
…People like me
…Helping

A Message FROM:

STEPHANIE COPPEN, FAMILY PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATOR

As a new year unfolds, it is the perfect time to assess and to give thanks for all the blessings in our lives as well as to look forward to the exciting new possibilities and opportunities that lie ahead. As I step back and take stock of my life, I am struck with just how fortunate I truly am. I have a wonderful husband, Matt, who is also an amazing dad to our three children, Cam, Rachel, and Deacon. My children are happy and healthy and have given so much meaning to my life. (They have also given me sleepless nights - and I hear it's going to get worse before it gets better(!) – but that's part of the parenting experience, isn't it?).

I am also fortunate to have such a great group of friends who are there both to support me through tough times and celebrate the good times. Many of these friends are the wonderful parents of the NSA who are, in a way that they uniquely understand, my family as well. The families that make up NSA Family Programs - the kids, teens, parents, and siblings - are some of the most special people I have ever met; kind, thoughtful, and supportive.

I will be forever grateful that almost six years ago we decided to take a chance, to step out of our comfort zone, and to head to Parsippany, NJ with Cam for our first NSA Conference. This was a life changing event, and we haven't looked back since! Each July we are anxious to reconnect with old friends and to meet new ones. If you have never attended a NSA Conference, I encourage you to join us in Scottsdale, AZ July 3-7, 2013; you will not regret it! I invite you first to visit the Annual Conference section of the website at *WeStutter.org/AnnualConference/ConferenceInformation/index.html* to keep up with all the latest conference information. If your family is in need of financial assistance, the National Stuttering Association is proud to be able to offer scholarships to qualifying applicants, thanks to the generosity of others. Please contact Tammy Flores, Executive Director, at *tflores@westutter.org* for additional information.

As I look ahead to 2013 I am excited about what this year may bring as well as what is already taking shape. With the support of **Craig Coleman, M.A., CCC-SLP BRS-FD**, the NSA and Family Programs are very pleased to roll out our new *NSA Virtual Support Group* program. These groups will be offered to parents, teens, and kids (8-12 years) who would like to participate in a support group (NSA Chapter), but do not have access to one in their area. Each age group/demographic will have their own meetings designed specifically to their needs, and all you need to participate is a computer with a web camera and you'll able to join in! For more information, please visit *WeStutter.org/localChapters/Virtual_Support.html*. We will continue to offer support through our traditional local chapters, and we invite you to join us in whichever way you are able. For more information on Family Chapters (NSA TwST & Kids), please feel free to contact me at SCoppen@westutter.org.

Lastly, Family Programs and the Family Programs Conference Committee are hard at work planning workshops that will meet the needs of each member of every family. Our goal is to make each conference even better than the last, and NSA 2013 Conference in Scottsdale, AZ is no exception! We are currently accepting Workshop Proposals for the 2013 Annual Conference, and encourage you to visit the *WeStutter.org/AnnualConference/WorkshopInformation* and complete the Workshop Submission Form if you are interested in presenting a workshop for parents, teens, 'tweens, kids, or siblings at this year's conference.

Wishing you and your family all the best in 2013! ::

Join Us for NSA Family Radio

Your Virtual Family Chapter for Parents, Kids, and Teens!

NSA Family Radio is hosted by the Family Chapters Committee of the NSA. The mission of the show is to bring together kids and teens who stutter and their parents, siblings, and other family members in a way that is convenient from all over the world! We will be sharing ideas and information, as well as providing support.

Best yet, you can join us for a live conversation as the show allows you to call in and participate. In addition, all shows are recorded and archived if you can't catch us live. For dates, times, and upcoming show schedules, please visit www.westutter.org. JOIN US LIVE! Call (310) 807- 5072 or toll free number: 877-560-5873

Turning Points: A Dad's Perspective

MARK HAUS (PA)

My name is Mark Haus and I am the proud husband of Helene and the father of two boys (Daniel, 14, and Tim, 17). Daniel started stuttering at age 3, which started our family's strange journey into the unknown.

Daniel's stuttering seemed to start off mildly and we thought he was just excited or thinking much faster than he could talk. We didn't know what stuttering meant and figured he would grow out of it. Well, he didn't! We noticed it a lot more, but it didn't seem to bother Daniel so we continued with "slow down", "take a breath", and "just relax". The turning point for us was when Daniel came home from his first day of school in 2nd grade and handed us a note saying, "I'm not going back to school". Wow!

We did manage to convince Daniel to go back to school, but he was not the same person he had been. After many phone calls we had an appointment with Dr. Joe Donaher of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. We went in looking for the "magic pill", but it took years to realize that Daniel already had the remedy. It was subtle, but Dr. Donaher showed Daniel a poster of a bunch of famous people who stuttered and asked him to pick out the stupid person. Daniel studied it (and guessed a couple times), then realized there were NO stupid people, just people who spoke differently.

Still, we were confused and trying to figure out why we should all just accept that he stutters. We also wondered where all of those other stutterers were. Then, we finally found them! They were all in a hotel together in New Jersey at something called the NSA Annual Conference! The conference was being held less than 2 hours from us, so my wife and Daniel attended. Helene was so shocked at the newfound wisdom, strength, and love after just one day at that conference that she called and told me to come. My son, who rarely raised his hand in class, was going to sing karaoke. Now *that* I had to see! That moment was a huge changing point for our whole family.

Daniel started therapy in school and then quit when all they did was play games. We tried an independent SLP, and then found a great one when Daniel was in 7th grade. Even though she later she moved from the area, she was able to continue to conduct therapy sessions with Daniel over Skype. Daniel's confidence with himself is tremendous, and he is not afraid to

tell people about stuttering. He talks to his teachers about it, gives announcements at school, and recently manned a table at his school with buttons, bracelets, and literature for International Stuttering Awareness Day. Daniel was elected to the NSA Teen Advisory Council and is excited to help other stutterers and educate the world. We continue to have yearly family vacations with 700+ of our closest friends. Daniel still stutters, sometimes changes his words if he knows he will stutter, doesn't always use his speech tools, and tries to hide it occasionally. There are still trying times, but it is easier now that Daniel has his magic pill; self-confidence and acceptance.

Everyone's journey is unique. Some people work to become fluent, while others strive for confidence in how they speak. Wherever you are on your stuttering journey, you are NOT alone. The NSA, dedicated SLPs, family, friends, and hundreds of fellow stutterers are right there with you to support you along the way. ::

FAMILY VOICES is a forum for views and information about stuttering directed toward families of the NSA. The opinions expressed are those of the individual contributor, and are not necessarily the opinion of the National Stuttering Association. The NSA accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of any opinion or information provided by the contributor, nor do we endorse or reject any therapeutic strategies, programs or devices mentioned in these pages. FAMILY VOICES is published by the National Stuttering Association through the collaborated efforts of Mandy Finstad, Janna Carter, Tammy Flores, and Stephanie Coppen, as well as the many NSA members who wrote letters and articles for inclusion. © 2013 National Stuttering Association. All rights reserved.