

LettingGO



SUMMER 2016

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

ONE MOM'S STORY

EROSION
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CARYN HERRING
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NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION
CHANGING THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WHO STUTTER

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR: DR. MAGUIRE



It is with great honor that I accept the position as chair of the National Stuttering Association. I appreciate the tremendous opportunity to give back to the organization that has assisted me so much in my own growth as a person who stutters since I joined while still in medical training 24 years ago.

The NSA is set on a growth trajectory as it leads the stuttering community in advocacy, education, and research. We will continue to optimize our efforts in self-help and support for the stuttering community. I will work closely with our board, executive director and staff, and chapter leaders to ensure that our grassroots efforts in reaching the individual person who stutters thrive. We will enhance our outreach via more NSA Regional Conferences, chapter meetings, social media, and professional relations.

The NSA will continue to be the “go-to” resource for parents, healthcare professionals, and individuals who stutter educating themselves about the nature of stuttering, the latest research, and available treatments. Through enhanced fundraising efforts, the NSA will become a major source of funding research to investigate the underlying causes of stuttering and the development of enhanced treatments.

We have come a long way to decrease the stigma and ridicule of those who stutter, but we still have much to accomplish. Even in my own field of medicine, I am made aware of students who are told to not pursue a career in healthcare because of stuttering. We cannot let this bias continue. My hope is that the NSA will be able to expand our advocacy for those discriminated in the workplace and other settings because of their stuttering. Communication is much more than fluency, and society needs to focus on the abilities of those who stutter, not the disabilities.

As we learn more about the nature of stuttering, we must reconcile the thought that acceptance of stuttering is not mutually exclusive of seeking enhanced treatments. Such consolidation of thoughts can synergistically overcome the obstacles we who stutter encounter.

The NSA’s vision is to continue to serve as the preeminent organization providing support, education, advocacy and research for the stuttering community. Our goal going forward is bold but simple, “Meet the needs of the stuttering community today, while searching for the enhanced treatments of tomorrow”.

The members of the NSA are free to contact me at anytime - gerald.maguire@medsch.ucr.edu - and I look forward to welcoming all of you to our 33rd Annual Conference in Atlanta!

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EVENTS

May 31:

Last day to cancel your registration

June 1:

Last day to submit Scholarship Application Forms

June 10:

Hotel group rate ends

June 27:

Last day to register online

July 5:

2-Day Clinical Symposium begins

July 6:

33rd Annual Conference begins!

2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

In 2016, our Annual NSA Conference joins up with the International Stuttering Association World Congress in the Atlanta, GA. Once again, we’re also preceding the conference with our 2016 Clinical Symposium, a premier event for professionals in the speech community. Our hotel is the spectacular Hyatt Regency Atlanta, located right in the heart of downtown Atlanta. Conference favorites such as our Silent Auction, diverse workshop schedule, and Saturday Night Banquet are back again, plus we’ve got a few new exciting featured up our sleeves as well.

Make your hotel reservations and register today, and we’ll see you in Atlanta!

CONFERENCE TOP 10

Check out our top ten list, where we share the top ten things we’re looking forward to at this year’s Annual Conference in July!

1. VISITING THE LOCAL ATTRACTIONS IN AND AROUND ATLANTA
2. WORKING TOGETHER AT THE SUMMER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
3. STAYING IN THE GORGEOUS HYATT REGENCY ATLANTA
4. THE GREAT SELECTION IN THE SILENT AUCTION
5. HEARING FROM OUR OUTSTANDING KEYNOTE SPEAKERS – DAVID RESNICK, STEVIE SOUL, & VINCE VAWTER
6. DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY AT THE SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET
7. SEEING THE KIDS PERFORM AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY
8. THE DIVERSE LINEUP OF WORKSHOPS
9. SPREADING THE MESSAGE THAT: IF YOU STUTTER, YOU’RE NOT ALONE
10. SEEING ALL OF YOU!



QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

By Keri Ault

Tonight I was helping my son Fisher write a 23-paragraph essay to accompany his application to Benson High School. Fisher was struggling, trying to explain why he wants to attend without sounding like he is boasting. This kid, who built a homemade foundry in our backyard, who took apart our broken blender to connect the motor to a pack of batteries, who fixed our vacuum cleaner after his handy father gave up on it. It seemed so obvious to me why he wanted to go to this school.

You see, Benson is a unique place where you can choose between majors that include engineering and technology, arts and communication, or health care. You can learn how to be an electrician or an auto mechanic. They have a radio station. They teach manufacturing.

“Just write it”, I told him, trying not to sound frustrated. He wasn’t interested in my suggestions. He wrote down an outline of ideas and joked about writing, ‘I really, really, really...want to go to Benson’ until he reached the required 200 words. Eventually, he produced a very clear, unique, and efficient explanation of his specific desire to attend.

I had never understood this struggle to find words. Most of my writing desperately needs an editor. During classes, trainings, or team meetings I need to internally remind myself to quiet down and let others speak. I am a storyteller, and my brand of storytelling often involves the details. I can’t help it if I have a great memory. Context matters! For Fisher, though, his communication experience is different. As a lifelong stutterer, he has no problem being quiet in a group. Sometimes he will speak up, especially around his friends, but it’s hard to get the words out.

For many years we have taken him to speech therapy and gently reminded him to “use his tools”. We had hoped he would turn

a corner and stuttering would be a part of his past. We’d been frustrated at his “lack of insight” or his inability to just try harder. All of that was wrong.

A few months ago, Fisher and I saw the documentary, *The Way We Talk*, which explores one man’s own experience stuttering. The film focused on all the emotional baggage that comes along with this disability – the anxiety that arises when you need to order food, go to a job interview, or raise your hand in class. The film allowed viewers to meet several different people who stutter, as well as friends and family of the narrator. A turning point in the film involved the narrator’s best friend telling him that he actually likes the way he talks. He tells him that he appreciates how thoughtful he is about his communication. There is recognition that the stuttering has shaped his personality in ways that were positive. I sat in that theater with my sweet, beautiful young son and hoped that he wouldn’t see me crying.

I thought back to the essay, and asked both Fisher and his brother, Landon, if their experience with stuttering had also shaped them, and in particular, their writing. Both boys immediately nodded their heads and talked about how they have never gone over an assigned word limit. Both of them write beautifully, and their writing is certainly...efficient. Landon is more comfortable with writing, and his voice has become more advanced. Fisher struggles to get started, and becomes frustrated when he can’t find the right words. Both boys avoid clichés and choose their words very carefully.

I continue to hope for smooth speech for Fisher, but I don’t worry as much. He’ll be fine. As we look forward to high school, maybe I can trust all of those past teachers of his who told me that his dysfluency does not interfere with his ability to participate in class or his level of popularity. It may sound cliché, but my son has proven to me that it’s quality, not quantity. ☺

CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT



LAS VEGAS, NV

Michele Peterson, Chapter Leader

The Las Vegas chapter recently had their largest turnout yet, including two new members! In attendance were ten people who stutter and two SLPs (co-leaders of the chapter).

One of the chapter members, Lisa, volunteered to guest-lead the meeting so she could tell the group about her experiences in New York at the American Stuttering Institute. She was full of energy and excitement, and overall thrilled with her experience. She shared her experience being a covert stutterer and how it resulted in her feeling tired and run down all the time. It had taken her a long time to figure out that she spent so much energy every day trying to hide her stuttering, and that was sucking the life out of her.

She admitted that she had never even looked up anything online or did any sort of research on stuttering until she attributed her fatigue to being a covert stutterer. Then she said she “fell down the rabbit hole” and was completely overwhelmed with the amount of information out there for people who stutter.

Lisa shared how hard it was to advertise her stuttering for the first time, and that she did it in Grand Central Station of all places! She even made a video of herself advertising on the subway and shared it on her own Facebook page. She also said that it is still quite difficult sometimes to advertise and to “stutter easily”. Many people who met her before she went to New York were quite surprised in the changes in her speech, as she appeared to go from being fluent to stuttering pretty significantly. She shared all the tricks that she had previously used to hide her stuttering and also explained the cost of using them.

Lisa advocated acceptance, and while many members in the chapter aren’t quite ready to commit to acceptance, they were fascinated by her experiences and requested that she share more information at the next meeting.

Another chapter member shared that he had been interested in a real estate career for some time and had recently signed up for the courses. He attended for just two weeks and then dropped out because he was unable to speak without completely blocking and stuttering severely, and he felt like people in the class, as well as the instructor, felt he would not be able to do the job. The group brainstormed ideas for him to try.

Lastly, the group discussed the short film, *Stutterer* that recently won an Academy Award. Only two members had seen it, and they had mixed reviews. One liked it and the other thought it was okay, but not great. The group discussed how it bothers some of the members to watch movies with other people stuttering, because they get caught up in the emotion of it. Others felt that seeing other people stutter was cathartic.

AN INTERVIEW WITH CARYN HERRING

By Emma Alpern



This is the first in a series of interviews with speech-language pathology/communication sciences PhDs — and PhD candidates — who stutter. Their experiences and research interests vary, but all of them have been influenced by their personal experiences with stuttering and self-help.

First up is Caryn Herring, M.S., CCC-SLP, a 28-year-old PhD candidate from Pennsylvania. Caryn is finishing up her first year at the University of Pittsburgh, where she also received an undergraduate degree in speech-language pathology before earning her masters at Purdue. Caryn has worked as a speech-language pathologist for four and a half years, and was the first resident speech therapist at SAY (The Stuttering Association for the Young) in New York City. She can be heard in podcast form as part of the StutterTalk “B Team.” Caryn has been involved in the NSA community for almost a decade: She was a leader of the Brooklyn chapter for five years, the Pittsburgh chapter for almost two years, and an Indiana chapter for another two years. This year marks the ten-year anniversary of her first NSA conference!

We talked about how being involved in self-help influenced Caryn’s journey with stuttering, what she hopes to accomplish at Pitt, and when she knew she wanted to pursue a doctorate.

The National Stuttering Association: Did you always know that you were interested in working with people who stutter?

Caryn Herring: It was my ultimate goal even before I was in an accepting place about my own stutter. I got the idea to go into speech-language pathology when I went back to speech therapy in high school and was disappointed to learn that there wasn’t a known cure for stuttering. I got it in my head that I would go into this field and change it — I think my plan was to develop a pill. My ideas have changed a lot since then, and my goals are no longer related to that at all, but that’s how it started.

You’ve been involved in the NSA and self-help community for years. Does all that stuttering life experience inform the way you approach speech therapy and research?

Being involved with self-help definitely formed my view of what the goal of speech therapy and research is. I think my interest in speech-language pathology began on a more personal level of, like, I wanted a cure and I wanted to be fixed. Then I found self-help and realized that I was whole, and that there wasn’t anything that necessarily needed to be fixed. Maybe there were things in my speech that I could choose to change or work on, but there wasn’t anything wrong with stuttering. Seeing other people stuttering in a confident way shifted my goal toward effective communication, and toward making sure that stuttering doesn’t negatively impact my clients’ lives or the things they want to do.

How did you go from being covert about your stutter to being so involved in the stuttering world?

The way I live life, I do it in extremes. For a long time, I didn’t want any part of the stuttering world... the idea of coming out

of my covert shell just seemed too hard. But once I did come out, I did it in a very big way. It was Scott Yaris, who’s now my PhD advisor, who told me about the NSA again when I was at Pitt for undergrad. At that point, I was in a place where being covert and avoiding situations and changing words and not going with friends like I wanted to was affecting me enough that the pain of change didn’t seem that bad.

I went to the NSA conference in Atlanta ten years ago, and that was sort of the first time that I met other people who stutter. I met people who stuttered in a way that... it changed my idea of what the goal for myself was. Up until that point, my goal was to be fluent and to do anything I could to be fluent, but meeting, in my opinion, cool, successful adults in the NSA, and seeing them stutter and still communicate, was the first time that I realized you could do both.

Before, in my head, it was a given that if you stuttered, you couldn’t be successful and communicate well. It hadn’t really occurred to me until the that what I was doing — the way that I was avoiding — I wasn’t communicating as well as I could if I just stuttered openly. I think that was kind of the springboard of me trying to change how I felt about things and making sure stuttering didn’t hold me back.

Was there an “a-ha” moment when you realized that you wanted to go back to get your PhD?

It took me a long time to make that choice. I think the idea of going back to school was always in the back of my head. I was a clinician and loved my work, but it got to a point where I knew that if I didn’t go back

to school soon, I never would. It was definitely hard to pick up my life and move and be a student again, but it seemed like the easiest time to do it — it would only get harder to do.

I worked in two research labs in graduate school, so I sort of had an idea of what the research was, and I’ve always enjoyed reading articles and knowing what’s going on in the field. I also think there’s a lot of work that needs to be done, and a lot of great research that is being done, and I felt like I could add to what is happening.

A lot of the time, speech-language pathology is described as a helping profession — something very person-focused. Does that resonate with you? And does it fit in with what you’re doing now?

I think that it does. When I was figuring out what I wanted to do with my life, I was drawn toward healthcare-focused fields, where you can sort of build relationships with other people. I don’t know exactly the type of research that I want to do, but I for sure want it to be tied into clinical work. I definitely want to continue being a clinician, too, and I would like the research I do to impact clinical work.

Do you have an idea of what your research will look like?

I’m definitely still feeling it out. I came into my program with the idea of wanting to understand the stages of change, and how, within therapy, a client can change — how we can help them move through that experience. I think it was partly influenced by my experience of going into speech therapy and wanting to change, but feeling unable to do so. It was also informed by my experiences, as a clinician, of seeing clients come in every week, and seeing that they wanted to change, but found it really hard to pull off. I’d like to find ways to somehow tip the scales to make it easier to change.

I’m also really interested in the idea of desensitization and the cognitive, affective components of stuttering — and how voluntary stuttering plays a part in that. So the cognitive components may be what you think about your stuttering or yourself, while the affective components are how you feel. So you may think, “I am less,” or “I am dumb,” or “I can’t have a job that I want,” and then you feel sad or embarrassed, or other negative emotions. So I’m less interested in the overt stuttering, and more in how people who stutter think and feel about it.

What was your time as an SLP at the Stuttering Association for the Young (SAY), another stuttering nonprofit, like?

I started volunteering with SAY in 2008. I interned with them for a few summers and got to know the kids really well, and what the organization was all about. At that point they didn’t do speech therapy, but by the time I became an SLP they were playing around with the idea of a speech therapy program within SAY, as sort of an option for kids who couldn’t pay for private speech therapy. Since I knew them all so well and they knew me and my beliefs, they offered me the job.

It seems like they probably offer a very specific kind of speech therapy. I don’t think they would ever bring someone in who they

didn’t know very well — they need someone they can trust to not try to fix anyone, who believes that there’s nothing wrong with stuttering. The goal is to help the kids say what they want to say when they want to say it, and, through speech therapy, to give them the support to do that, and to not have it be so hard.

I think a lot of the kids at SAY were and are receiving speech therapy in school, and over the years, stories were shared... and it seemed like a lot of harm was being done, because the SLPs weren’t as comfortable treating stuttering. So the idea was to have someone on staff at SAY who they could see if they chose to.

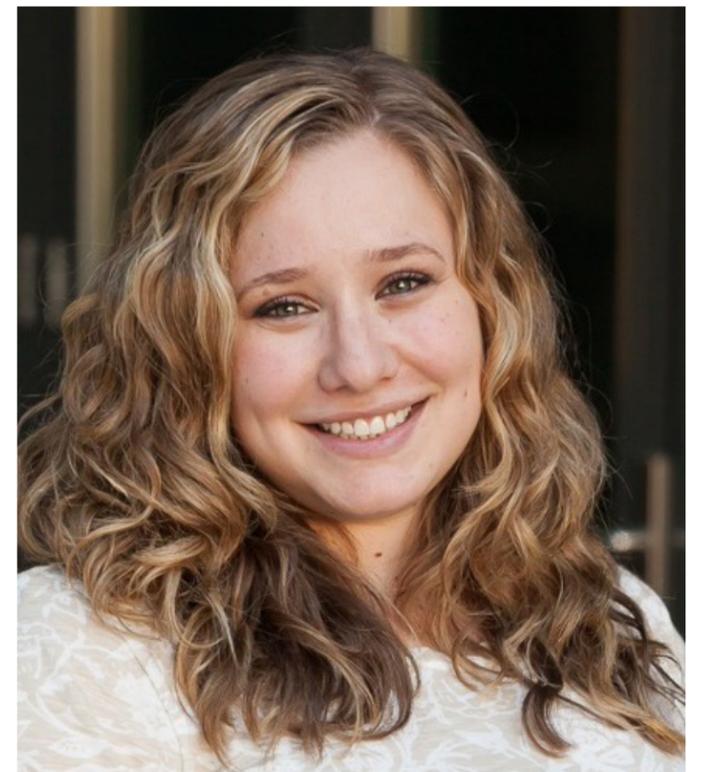
Is that a part of what made you interested in pursuing doctoral-level research? The idea that SLPs may do damage to their clients who stutter?

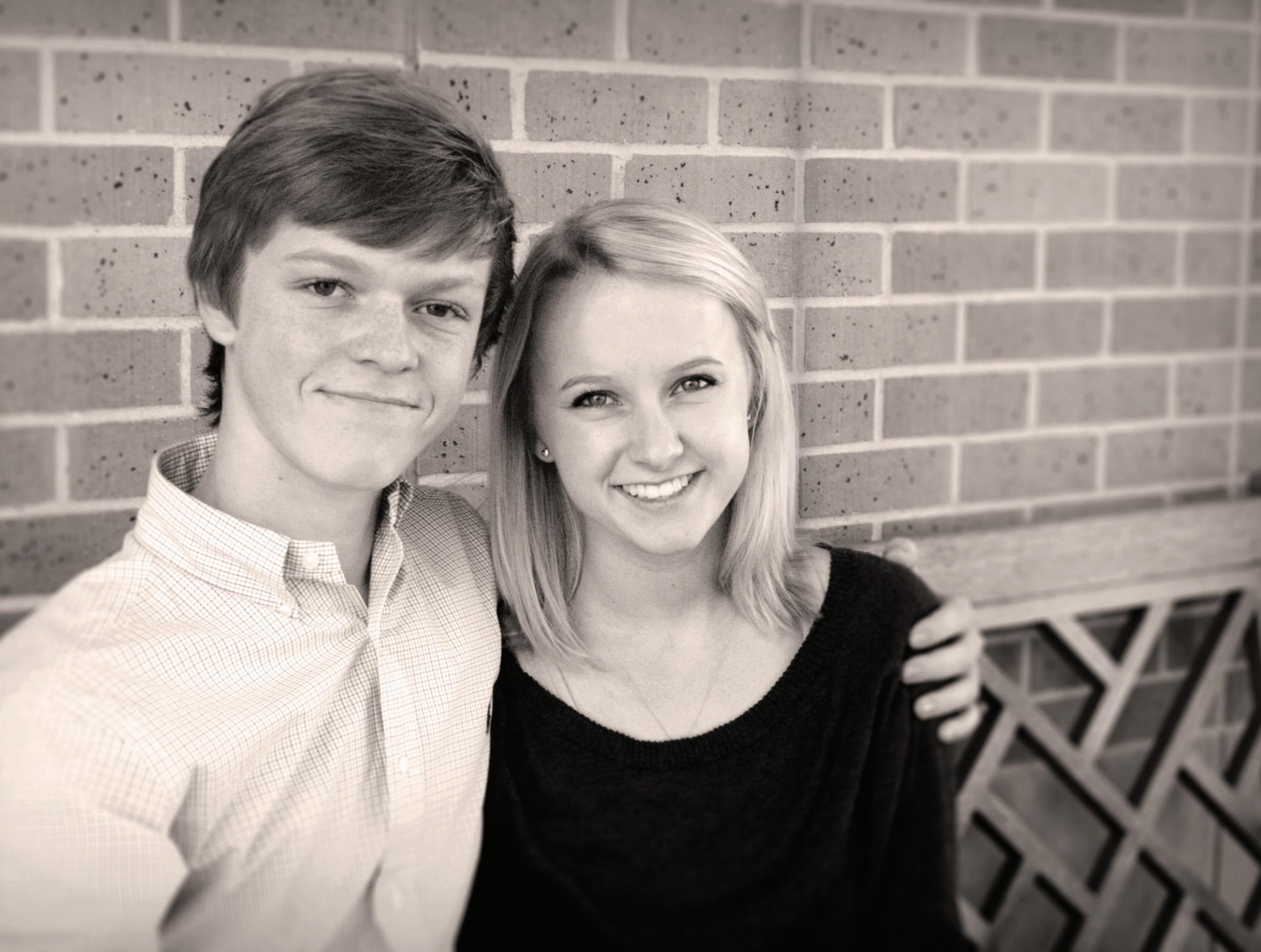
I think the education for the field needs to grow. A lot of SLPs didn’t even get a course in stuttering, or they did but they’re still not really comfortable. There is, for sure, a shortage of specialists who know stuttering well.

And you’ve volunteered with the NSA a lot, too?

Yes, in the sense that I ran chapters, and during the conferences I will present. I feel like I use the NSA more to help myself, to gain the support I need, and SAY was more of a chance to give back and be around children who are struggling with similar things.

Having good support allows you to give support to other people, I think. I don’t think that I would have been able to do my job as an SLP well if I hadn’t come to terms with my own stuttering. I needed to accept myself and feel comfortable in my skin before I could help anyone else. 🗨️





EROSION

By Layne Kinney

Fragmented words
tighten your chest;
Immobile like a picture
framed in grief.

Desperately reaching for
any utterance that might
finish your thought,
and save your lungs.

Contorted in pain,
and humiliation,
and frustration,
let me take it.

Take the frozen tongue,
the stunted stories,
and destroy the shackles
that imprison your fluency.

But you've grown stronger,
and the block
that once drowned you
erodes little by little.



JULY 06 **nsa** JULY 10

Atlanta

... Georgia ...

33RD ANNUAL NSA CONFERENCE
{ 11TH ISA WORLD CONGRESS FOR PEOPLE WHO STUTTER }

2016

NSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

JULY 5-10, 2016

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