

LettingGO

FALL 2018

CHICAGO!
ANNUAL CONFERENCE RECAP

THROUGH THE YEARS
NSA KIDS PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

**REMEMBERING
BROKEN WORDS**
POEM BY GLENN MINERVINI-ZICK

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THE WORKPLACE**
HELPFUL ADVICE & RESOURCES

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NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION
CHANGING THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WHO STUTTER

2018 AWARD WINNERS

Hall of Fame:
BERNIE WEINER

Chapter Leader of the Year:
DANRA KAZENSKI

Regional Chapter Coordinator of the Year:
KEVIN CHAMBERS

Chapter of the Year:
SAN DIEGO ADULT CHAPTER

Teen of the Year:
JOSH HEBEISEN

2017 Conference Dedication:
ANNIE BRADBERRY

Volunteer of the Year:
JOHN MOORE

Professional(s) of the Year:
KATHLEEN SCALER-SCOTT PH.D., CCC-SLP
LAURA PLEXICO PH.D., SLP



Congratulations to Andrew “Andy” Fitzenrider of Seattle, Washington, recipient of Hamilton Relay 2018 Better Hearing and Speech Month Recognition Award for the state of Washington. Andy was nominated by his peers because of his passionate work at the local, state, and national levels in regards to educating the public about speech disorders. Andy enjoys speaking about his experiences as a person who stutters

EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 29, 2018:

1-Day Conference - Tustin, CA

OCTOBER 6, 2018:

Don't Tell Me to 'Slow Down' 5k - Dallas, TX

OCTOBER 20, 2018:

1-Day Conference - Portland, OR

OCTOBER 21, 2018:

Don't Tell Me to 'Slow Down' 5k - Cary, NC

NOVEMBER 15-17, 2018:

2018 ASHA Convention - Boston, MA

JULY 3-7, 2019:

36th Annual NSA Conference - Fort Lauderdale, FL

For complete details visit westutter.org



2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

PACK YOUR FLIP-FLOPS AND GET READY TO EXPERIENCE FIREWORKS AS THE NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION HEADS TO THE BEACH FOR OUR 36TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA!

Situated along a quarter mile of private beach, the Fort Lauderdale Marriott Harbor Beach Resort & Spa truly offers something for all tastes. Minutes from the shops and dining of Las Olas Boulevard, a short drive from Fort Lauderdale Airport, a spacious lagoon-styled pool, and multiple restaurants are just a few of the perks and amenities you'll find awaiting you.

Of course, we'll also be bringing back the NSA Conference favorites you've come to know and love, as well as a few surprises we may just have up our sleeves. Mark your calendars now for July 3-7, 2019 and be sure to join us in Fort Lauderdale! ☺



THROUGH THE YEARS

By Nina Zito & Sarah Onofri,
NSA Kids Programming Committee Co-Chairs



Over the past six years, we have had the incredible opportunity to serve as Co-Chairs of the NSA Kids Programming Committee. We came together to lead the NSA Kids program for the first time in Scottsdale, Arizona, in 2013. We were able to get to know one another, while creating a welcoming and supportive space for the kids.

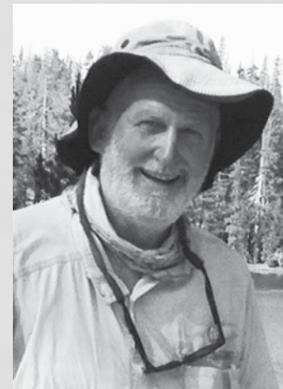
Now, six conferences later, we have decided to bid farewell to our role working with the kids, but we will always hold the NSA kids and their families in our hearts. It has been an amazing experience getting to know each other and see our own friendship flourish, as well as building relationships with the families of the NSA.

Each year, we have looked forward to being awed and inspired by the kids of the NSA. One of our favorite highlights of every conference was watching the kids perform at the closing ceremony with grace and poise. They stole the show time and time again, and we are so proud of the young people that they are growing up to be.

In addition to working with the kids, we have created an ever-lasting friendship over the years that we will always be grateful for. We take great pride in knowing that the kids program has grown and flourished over the past six years and we are confident that it will continue to grow and flourish for the next generation of NSA kids.

In the years to come, although we may not be breaking out into song and dance at the closing ceremonies, we will always be thinking about the kids. They can always count on us for a high five, a hug or a listening ear. We hope that everyone has a wonderful school year and we look forward to seeing you all in Florida next year! ☺

“...six conferences later, we have decided to bid farewell to our role working with the kids, but we will always hold the NSA kids and their families in our hearts.”



By Glenn Minervini-Zick

REMEMBERING BROKEN WORDS

A simple spoken sentence,
Slipped on a freestone mossy rock
in a fast moving blue-ribbon river.
The resident black bear made a note
And another berry bush shivered,
stripped clean.

The words hit hard,
Their weight folded into a mix of
pain and the chilly mountain river,
as rocks easily absorbed the fall of
strained and
broken words.

Beyond the fall,
the river, dropped quickly,
confused but circumventing every obstacle;
Only staying in control
because of the side banks.

My broken sentences
Multiplied like cancer cells.
They became a river and
rushed madly through the
knotted muscles,
tangled in my body.

Quiet, then silence, became the banks
that controlled the rushing river
of broken words.

This river runs a distance,
filled with narrow canyons and wide runs.
The broken spoken words rested from time to time in
eddies and pools; where
those spoken words found home
and a place to be heard, to find counsel.

The screaming river, the babbling river,
the voice of river harmonized as my shouting spoken words
found rhythm, felt the river's acceptance.
For that moment, in a resting pond between
rushing waters,
my knots relaxed. I was home.

But the river moved on
pushing rocks, hatching caddis, feeding fish
And spreading broken words
like ashes of my friend,
first floating,
then sinking,
then forming like a pearl,
beginning the journey to being gravel,
protected behind a large boulder
at the bottom of the river.

Even simple broken sentences
have a home,
live a life.
The river accepted them,
held them, cast them off.
I could not.





There is truly hope.
-KUNAL



Stuttering is a journey through suffering, fear, and loneliness. But as I learned this past weekend, it doesn't always have to be. I traveled by myself to Chicago for the four day National Stuttering Association conference knowing almost no one and left profoundly changed, connected, and accepted. I've always been fortunate to have family and friends who have been supportive through my struggles, but never anticipated what this community would be like.

-KABIR



The constant high levels of enthusiasm, warmth, sincerity and belonging permeated throughout the hotel, meeting rooms and surrounding areas. [The vibe] was palpable.

-TRICIA



I've spent my whole life bottling up my emotions. I've spent my whole life putting on the happy face in fear that others might see I'm vulnerable. I've spent my life in emotional turmoil, filled with fears and insecurities about stuttering, and though I've cried and released my emotions here and there, I've always been afraid to be vulnerable around others. As I wrote on the plane, I finally was able to let go.

-RANDY



Your willingness to be vulnerable shows your strength.

-CARISSA

"If You Stutter, You're Not Alone!" There isn't a place in existence where those words have more meaning than our national conference.

-TOM

nsa 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

893 TOTAL ATTENDEES
 { 308 FIRST-TIMERS
 216 FAMILY MEMBERS
 95 CHAPTER LEADERS

22,736 RAFFLE TICKETS SOLD

1.7 gallons OF TEARS SHED

84,296 TIMES PEOPLE LOL'D!

41 MIN OF HAND CLAPPING

ONE incredible EXPERIENCE IN CHICAGO

Hi, I'm in 5th grade.
 I started stuttering
 last year, but I was not
 scared. If someone makes
 fun of you, be BRAVE
 and say stop. Do not give
 up speaking because if
 you give up, then you
 will let the stutter win.
 A strategy I use that
 helps me is to speak
 slowly and take your
 time. I don't give up and
 I don't want you to
 give up either!

-Luke, 10



SENSE OF BELONGING

By Ryan Wong, Conference First-Timer

Overall, my first NSA conference exceeded every expectation. For me, my experiences with stuttering had always been overwhelmingly negative. Attending the conference in Chicago transformed my perspective not only in how I saw stuttering, but also in how I saw myself. At the conference I didn't see stuttering as a malicious entity hellbent on alienating and discriminating, but I rather I began to see it as a conduit for common ground, a conversation starter instead of an interrupter.

Stutter or not, I saw people living their lives the way they wanted. Ironically, during those five days, stuttering made it easier to communicate. New acquaintances and friends alike always had something in common. The intimidation of initiating conversation vanished. While many conversations began as descriptions of

the stuttering experience, the most memorable were those where stuttering was not the primary focus. Moreover, the sightseeing, dining out, and soccer games were the highlight. Normally, I'd much rather do things independently because I hate being that guy who self-invites.

Finding that people valued my company, my interests, my opinions was my epiphany (...or maybe they just wanted to hear me stutter). Undoubtedly, I've got so much more work to do, but for those five days, I felt like I belonged. It is precisely this sense of belonging that I would want others, especially first-timers, to experience. Come for the seminars, stay for the dialogue.

It is my hope that I can do my part to not only foster but also sustain that level of selfless commitment to the stuttering community. ☺



As the Executive Director of the NSA, my name and face is on a lot of what we do, but in all honesty, there is absolutely 100% no way that I could do it without such a solid team.

This Conference crew is pulled together from all over the country and from all walks of life - executives, family members, graphic designers, long-time NSA staff members, and beloved volunteers - and together these individuals form the core and the heart of the conference behind the scenes. They are there from the crack of dawn until late into the night to move tables, run last-minute errands, solve tech problems, write speeches, and keep it all together, all while maintaining their primary focus of serving our conference attendees with smiles on their faces.

You may see them as my team, but I see them as family.
 -Tammy Flores, Executive Director, NSA



2018 Annual Conference Staff & Volunteers (Not Pictured: Joan Ross)

STUTTERING IN THE WORKPLACE

By Pamela Mertz, NSA Board of Directors Special Projects Chair

There is no doubt in my mind that one of the biggest concerns facing people who stutter is how to manage stuttering in the workplace. Job interviews can be one of the most stressful speaking situations for most people, but especially for people who stutter. We feel time pressure, we worry about sounding competent, and we worry about what the interviewer is thinking when we block or have a string of repetitions. The process of interviewing for jobs has changed dramatically over the years. Today, we might be interviewing over the phone or via video technology before we even or ever get an invitation for a second, face-to-face interview. That in-person interview brings more worry. Do I talk about the fact that I stutter? Do I just assume it's obvious and not mention it? What if I do stutter or block and the interviewer reacts negatively? What do I do? What do I say?

People who stutter also face challenges when they are already in the workplace. They may feel that they cannot bring it up, so may spend lots of time and energy trying to hide it from coworkers and supervisors. They may feel they should bring it up, because having a reasonable accommodation at work might lessen the stress of the job, but the person doesn't know how to bring it up. Or maybe you do stutter openly and can't really hide it and someone laughs at you or says something annoying, like "did you forget your name?" or something else that we can all relate to.

The topic of job interviews and managing stuttering in the workplace comes up a lot. We see it in many of the social media stuttering forums. People post questions and scenarios about having an interview and asking people to wish them luck or offer advice. I see those types of posts, a LOT. People also post about having coworkers or clients make comments or react negatively and wonder how they should go about dealing with disclosure or advertising in the workplace. I also hear that it is regularly discussed at local NSA chapter meetings.

Stuttering in the workplace is a big deal. It affects everyone. New graduates discuss how they are having lots of phone interviews but can't seem to get past that phase and don't get invited back for a personal interview. Mid-career level workers also talk about sometimes feeling underutilized at work because supervisors make assumptions about the person's abilities or worse, don't want someone who stutters creating a "bad impression" of the organization. I've heard people who stutter say they're not allowed to answer the phone or wind up doing something different than what they were hired for.

Fortunately, the NSA has resources that can assist people in all stages of stuttering in the workplace. Did you know that the NSA offers mock interviews for anyone who wants to practice an interview before having a real one with a prospective employer? Visit our page called "Stuttering In The Workplace" and see how to sign up and what else we can help with. Many people have



taken advantage of this opportunity to practice interview skills. These individuals have told us they can't believe the NSA offers this, and it's free. If you don't have an interview scheduled but just want to talk about how to deal with disclosure at work, we can help with that too. Sometimes just talking about that with someone who "gets it" is really helpful and provides new ways to look at a situation that can seem really overwhelming.

The NSA has an Employment Advocacy committee and we have been offering these mock interviews and "talking sessions" for almost a year now. The committee includes a diverse group of individuals with a mix of workplace experience. Right now, your committee includes Carl Coffey, Hope Gerlach, John Moore, Frank Stechel, Catherine Moroney, George Daquila, and newcomers Jonathan Lazenby, Courtney Luckman and Jaymie Horak. The committee is chaired by Board member Pamela Mertz.

The Employment Advocacy committee also sponsored three webinars in the first half of 2018 that were facilitated by NSA member and Leadership Coach Mara Ormond. The webinars covered such topics as managing the phone at work, successful participation in meetings at work and making presentations at work. Did you know that 450 people signed up for these webinars? Of that number, about 150 actually attended the sessions, some coming to all three. These numbers alone show that these issues are hugely important to the stuttering community. If you missed the webinars, all were recorded and are freely available on our

Stuttering In The Workplace section on the NSA website. We are definitely planning to do more of these throughout the year.

At the recent NSA conference in Chicago, our Employment Advocacy committee ran a workshop called "Stuttering In The Workplace: Roundtable Discussions." We had groups devoted to discussing job interview strategies, managing difficult reactions to stuttering, disclosure and managing phone and conference calls. The workshop had about 85 attendees. We could have easily gone two hours, as everybody had a lot to say. Again, people are showing us and telling us that stuttering in the workplace is a big deal and needs attention.

Stay tuned. The NSA is coming up with more ideas and topics to help our community have more positive experiences in the workplace. Our goal is to provide resources and support so that stuttering in the workplace is no longer seen as a big deal and that people who stutter can find the employment they want and advance in their careers. We also want to help employers understand more about stuttering too so that better workplace outcomes are obtained for everyone, both employers and employees.

If you have any ideas, reach out to someone on the Employment Advocacy committee. And like I said, stay tuned; we have new initiatives coming soon! ☺

The world's largest gathering of people who stutter.



36th Annual Conference

JULY 3-7, 2019 • MARRIOTT HARBOR BEACH RESORT & SPA



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