



# REACHING OUT

Publication of Friends: The National Association of Young People Who Stutter

Sept/Oct 2010

## Can't Fix What You're Born With, But Can Work With it!

My name is Ben and I am in 4th grade. I'm 9 years old.

I live in Illinois. I play the guitar and I sing. My favorite band is American English.

I did a presentation on stuttering and the speech machine and how everything works. It was in front of my class, 26 people! I presented to my class because I wanted to let them to know that I have a speech problem, so they know a little bit about it.



I talked about why I stutter and how stuttering relates to a relay race. Then I talked about the types of stuttering. At the end we played a jeopardy game about stuttering. We also talked about the famous people who stutter. I let my classmates guess the kinds of stuttering and what parts of your body help you talk. At the end, right before jeopardy, we had them ask any questions.

I felt pretty confident about myself because now everyone knows that when I talk I sometimes stutter. Now my classmates finally understand what stuttering is, what body parts are used in talking and..... now they know that stuttering is officially a part of me!!!!

Fast Facts: October 22 is International Stuttering Awareness Day. From now until then, there is an on-line conference going on with many papers about stuttering from people who stutter and speech professionals. There is one about Friends. Please be sure to check it out and many others.

You may be surprised to see someone you know mentioned in the Friends article written by Lee and Pam..

And the kids videos are available too. Go to the [www.stutteringhomepage.com](http://www.stutteringhomepage.com)

Table of Contents

Being Ready	2
Knowing I was Ready	3
Parent Survey	4
Using Skype to Connect	5
The King's Speech	6
Stepping Up -Mentors	7
I Was A Little Scared	8
Odds & Ends	9

Way to Go Ben! Thanks For Sharing This Great Story!!

If You Stutter, You Have FRIENDS



# Being Ready For Therapy-Patty's Point of View

At this summer's convention, Lee facilitated a very spirited and emotional workshop during which we addressed the question "Are therapy and support mutually exclusive, and can we have one without the other?" As we discussed this topic, we moved into the area of acceptance and its role in therapy. Acceptance can come in many forms. We can accept that therapy is ineffective, thus deciding that pursuing therapy is not an option. We can accept stuttering and choose to live with it freely and openly, or we can accept stuttering, and become empowered to find answers and change.

Certainly, one thing that brings families to Friends' each year is the frustration and hopelessness that results from failed and ineffective speech therapy. Sometimes isn't it just easier and less painful to accept that therapy will never work and stop trying? The belief that therapy is ineffective ultimately prevents people who stutter to search out help, even when they may need it most. It also can prevent families of children who stutter to search for help for their children. The belief that therapy is ineffective can also generate anger and distrust for speech therapists, especially those in the school setting. This form of acceptance ultimately prevents change.

While I understand the basis of such beliefs, and share the anger and frustration that has come from therapy that yields little to no progress, I feel it is important that we try to understand some of the factors that can have both a negative and positive impact on therapy so we can perhaps limit this type of acceptance.

Being ready for therapy is critical to success. Being ready for therapy is not necessarily based in desire to stop stuttering. Being ready for therapy means that the PWS needs to bring to the therapy table several important things. First, they bring the belief that they can be successful in therapy. This can be hard if have they have experienced failure in the past, but we need to find ways to help the child, teen, or adult who stutters become empowered in change. Meeting other children or adults who stutter who have had success in therapy can be very powerful in changing that belief. Also, developing a clear understanding of stuttering, what they do when they stutter, and the therapy process works sets the foundation for change.

In order to believe in successful therapy, the PWS must also believe in their therapist's ability to help them make a change. This can be conveyed through knowledge, experience, and commitment. A successful stuttering therapist understands the "stuttering experience" and does not focus only on the surface features of speech production but also on the attitudes and emotions of their client. I remember a workshop in Philadelphia where we asked some school age CWS what they wanted to know about their therapists for the new school year. They collectively answered, "We want to know that she knows more about stuttering than we do". Ultimately, it is the relationship between the PWS and their therapist that is the catalyst for all change in therapy. Therefore be sure that your therapist has experience in treating stuttering. Not all certified speech language pathologists have the training and/or expertise to be effective. Be a good consumer. Ask questions!!

Therapy can be a time intensive process that requires consistent attendance and considerable effort in order for therapy to be effective. As a result, it is best to begin therapy at a time when both are likely to occur. Often, some motivating factor is present that makes this happen. For some children and adolescents it may be teasing or middle school or high school starting, for teens it may be a social motivation such as asking girls out, finding a job or thinking about college. For adults it may be career goals, or even wanting to be able to say their wedding vows. Children may not understand the importance of working on their speech early on and may result in reduced effort in therapy. If therapy has not worked for your child, or for you in the past, does that mean it will never work? No. It means that the time may not have been right, the child may not have been ready, it may not have been the right therapist, or the motivation for change may not have been enough.

Acceptance of stuttering is important. It can lead us to change, it can empower us and give us direction. It can also mean giving up. As we continue to find support in each other through this journey in stuttering, I hope we can keep the belief alive that one day, therapy may be the answer.

**Written by: Patty Walton, a good FRIEND of FRIENDS**

# Knowing I Was Ready - Ryan's Story

Therapy was always a struggle for me as I grew up. Through high school I probably saw five or six different speech therapist. Not only were the techniques taught to me useless, but I did not feel like the therapists were knowledgeable nor wanted to be. During my sophomore year of high school, I decided I was happy with who I was and decided to stop therapy.

During my junior year at Bowling Green State University, I was enrolled in an Interviewing and Observation class. A major part of our grade included practicing interviewing techniques by pretending to be an interviewer in front of a small portion of the class. When it was my turn, I experienced major eye closure and trembling and even though this was apparent before, my professor informed me I needed to start going back to therapy or I was not going to pass his class. Needless to say, I thought therapy was going to be just like the past; a negative experience. I decided to go back initially just so I would pass the class. During my therapy at BGSU, I realized that I was making more progress than ever before.

Unfortunately, I withdrew after the fall semester of my senior year because I became overwhelmed with work and school. In February, I was accepted for an internship position in Boulder, Colorado. I knew that Patty Walton lived around the Denver area. For those that don't know Patty, she's a long time family friend and her family is very involved with FRIENDS. Knowing that she's a Speech Language Pathologist and specializes in stuttering, I decided to give her a call and give therapy another try. I've heard some of her clients and their success stories when going to her so I decided it couldn't hurt to try since I was going to be living out there for a few months anyways.

This opportunity couldn't have happened at a better time because I was also on my way to become a police officer for the city of Austin, Texas. My only goal at first when seeing Patty was to end the eye closure. Not only was this secondary behavior a frustration, but the Sergeant in charge of recruiting told me that if I was going to be a successful officer, I need to really work on this behavior with Patty. To my surprise, it did not take long to end the eye closure. From that point on, it was all uphill. Only after a couple months of therapy, I felt like I was in control of my stuttering and for the first time of my life, I became happier and happier with my stuttering.

My attitudes of therapy changed for a couple different reasons. One reason is that because therapy was evidently working and when I realized this, I knew that it was up to me how much I wanted to change. Another reason is because I felt comfortable with Patty. She has explained the techniques and methods of therapy like nobody else has done before. The keys to making therapy successful are motivation and trust. Since I trusted Patty, I became motivated and confident that this change could happen.

Before I moved home, I was informed by the police department that I needed to complete six more months of therapy and be cleared by Patty, despite already making a 180 degree change. Knowing what I needed to do, I was going to continue to everything possible to make as much progress as possible. I invested in a web cam and did therapy with her twice a week over Skype. Even after being cleared by her back in May, I am still skyping with her once or twice a week because there is always room for improvement. Therapy with Patty has been one outstanding experience and I will go to her as long as I can.

**Written by: Ryan McDermott, an original FRIEND and a great FRIEND**

# Parent Survey - Your Input Counts!

You are invited to participate in a survey on the experience of children, teens and young adults who stutter. This invitation is going to parents of children and teens who stutter, as well as to teens and young adults who stutter.

The survey is being conducted by the National Stuttering Association and Friends, The Association of Young People Who Stutter. You will be asked about the impact of stuttering on your (or your child's) life, and about your experience with stuttering treatment and support groups. The survey includes questions specifically directed at parents as well as teens and young adults who stutter.



The web-based survey is online, and you may begin the questionnaire by clicking on this link or pasting it into your browser: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/QX6H6RF>

If you are the parent of a teen, we would like both of you to participate in the survey. Because the survey web site allows only one access for each computer connection, we have set up an alternative link to the same survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/3KHJRJM>

The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete. Your responses are confidential, and will be combined with other responses for statistical results. Survey findings will be posted on both the NSA and Friends web sites.

The survey findings will be used to educate the public about stuttering, and to give speech professionals greater insight into the issues faced by children and teens who stutter and their parents. If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Jim McClure, [jim@jamcclure.com](mailto:jim@jamcclure.com).

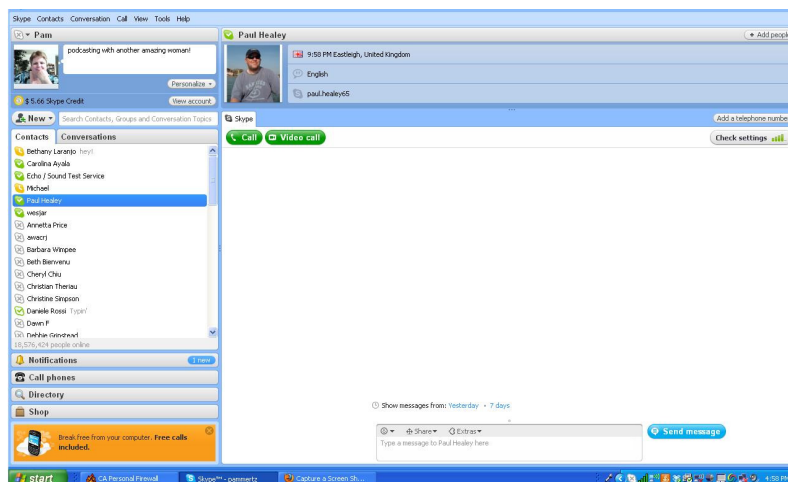
Thank you for participating in this survey. Your opinion counts!

## A Quick Note About Bullying

You probably are very well aware of the increase in attention to the issue of bullying in the news lately. With the new school year more than a month in, this is a good time to remind everyone to be aware that teasing and bullying does happen in schools. The middle school years are often the hardest time for kids to deal with teasing. Teasing is not nice, but usually it is harmless. Bullying is NOT. Bullying is when someone goes out of their way to intentionally cause harm - physical or emotional. Bullying behavior includes things like name calling, exclusion, spreading rumors, pushing, shoving or damaging property. All kids should know that bullying is not something to accept - EVER. Let kids know they should tell an adult - its not snitching. And parents, talk to your kid's teachers regularly. All schools are required to have anti-bullying policies in place! School should be a safe place!

# Using Skype To Connect: How To and Tips!

These days, more and more people are choosing Skype to stay connected with each other. Skype reports that it has been downloaded a half billion times. Many people are catching on to the tremendous benefits of using skype to make free calls to anyone in the world. That's right, FREE. All you need is a PC or Mac computer, with a microphone and speakers. Newer computers probably already have good speakers, microphone and a webcam built in. However, for the strongest reception, a headset is best.



Skype is easy to use. You don't have to have any special skills. It's the same as using the phone, except your computer makes the connection. And if both people using skype have a webcam, you can actually see each other as well. When more than two people use skype, like for a conference call, the web cam feature doesn't work (yet!)

Setting up skype is easy. Go to [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) and click on download the FREE version. There are other versions that you can pay for, but all you need is the basic free one. Follow the instructions to set up an account, or ID, which is what you will need to call a friend over skype. If you have skype and another person doesn't yet, your skype account can call a mobile or landline phone as well, but only in the United States.

Once you have an ID set up, let friends know what yours is. They then "add" you to your list of contacts. If you look up at the picture of my skype screen, you can see some of my contacts. Just like on Face book, you can see when a contact is on line - there will be a little "green dot" next to their name. When your friend is on line, you take your mouse and click on their name. Then you click on the green "call" button and skype dials the call for you. You answer and end a call the same way you do on a mobile phone. Hit green for answer - and hit red for end.

With skype, you can also do a conference call with up to 25 people. That would be a bit confusing, but I have done skype calls with as many as five people. Click on each contact that you want to have a conference call with, while at the same time pressing the control key. Once you have selected them all, hit the green "call group" button.

Skype is a great way for FRIENDS kids and teens and parents to stay in touch. But just like any internet application, teach your kids about cyber-safety. They should never accept contact details from someone they don't know. They also should never give out private details about themselves. Teach your kids to never give their phone number or street address over skype. Teach your kid to tell you immediately about anything suspicious they come across on skype. Periodically check your kid's skype account. Be sure you know who all their contacts are. Let your kid know that you are going to check this out. To be really safe, have the computer in a common area of the home.

These days, some SLPs are conducting follow-up therapy sessions using skype. It is a great, free technology for us to take advantage of. I have talked with people from all over the world from the comfort of my bedroom. It's a great way to stay in touch and stay connected, as long as you use common sense and stay safe.

**Written by: Pam Mertz** (for more information, visit <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/how-to-use-skype.html> )

# The King's Speech - Movie Review! (opens next month)

"The King's Speech" is a fantastic movie about the unlikely friendship that forms between shy, stammering King George VI (played by Colin Firth) and his Australian speech therapist, Lionel Logue (played by Geoffrey Rush) as he helps the royal conquer his stuttering. Even King George VI shared our familiar self-doubt: "How can I be king and lead my people with a stammer?"

I attended the screening of the already-award-winning film at the Toronto International Film Festival in September. I was excited to see this movie since I first heard about its production earlier in the year. In fact, I wasn't even previously aware that Queen Elizabeth II's father stuttered!

From avoidance and self-doubt to our backfiring covert tricks, you can tell this movie was written by a fellow stammerer. (stuttering is known as stammering in England). The movie perfectly portrays our stuttering experience. You can actually feel the king's growing painful nervousness in the pit of his stomach with every step he takes closer to the microphone before giving a speech. Also look for the touching scene where King George VI tries to tell a story to young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret but switches words only to end up with a confused look on his daughters' faces.

Don't expect to learn about Logue's therapy techniques as the movie didn't put too much emphasis on the "how-tos". Besides, I was too engrossed in the film that I did not pay too much attention to taking mental notes! For the most part, the film shows Logue taking the psychoanalytic approach, which shows us the human being behind the emperor of most of the world's population at the time.

There's a lot of Oscar buzz for "The King's Speech" and the film already won a number of awards including the People's Choice Award at the Toronto International Film Festival. And deservedly so. I can't stop gushing. Overall the movie is everything I hoped it would be. Fantastic acting, wonderful sets, engaging musical score and being a podcaster, it may come as to no surprise to you to find that among my favorite moments are the scenes depicting vintage BBC.

**Written by: Daniele Rossi, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.** (Danny is a good friend of mine in the stuttering community. He has his own website and podcast. Check it out at [www.stutteringiscool.com](http://www.stutteringiscool.com))

## Exceptional Teachers - Exceptional SLP's

Do you know a really great teacher or SLP who always seems to do just the right thing? Does he or she really understand stuttering? What kinds of things does this person do that makes them a really exceptional teacher or SLP?

Let us know . . . We want to recognize them so that we have lots of good examples of great teachers and speech therapists. Please send Lee your name, age and what school you attend, and tell her the name of your teacher or SLP and what they do to make things easier for you. Do they treat you just like everyone else?

We want to recognize exceptional teachers and speech therapists by devoting a section of each newsletter to their good work. Parents—if you know someone special who makes a big difference in your child's life, you can let us know too. It is important to tell people that they are doing a good job and make a difference!



# stepping Up

## Mentoring Program

### Teens and Children who stutter...we need your help!

**Friends**, *The National Association of Young People Who Stutter*, is a national organization created to provide a network of support and education for children and teenagers who stutter, their families, and the professionals who work with them.

**Friends** is excited to introduce a teen mentoring program, giving teens who stutter the opportunity to support children who stutter. This pilot program is a volunteer experience, involving a commitment of time. Each teen develops mentoring relationships, ultimately benefiting both volunteer and child.

*If you are a teen or a child who stutters, this great new program might be for you!*

#### Requirements:

##### Teens -

Each *teen* volunteer commits to:

- guiding at least two children throughout the year.
- providing support through weekly e-mails, monthly phone calls (optional), sending birthday wishes/card on each child's birthday, and if attending the annual convention, participating with your mentoring partners.
- participating for a minimum of one year.

##### Children -

Each *child* commits to:

- responding to weekly emails and monthly phone calls.
- (if attending the annual convention) - participating with their mentoring partner.
- participating for a minimum of one year.

If you are interested, please fill out the form below and return it to:

Lee Caggiano, c/o Friends  
38 South Oyster Bay Road  
Syosset, NY 11791

This pilot program is the first of its kind. Changes to the project will be ongoing. We welcome any comments and suggestions. Specific requirements will be determined on an individual need basis.

---

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*I was a little scared . . .*

*and I did it anyway*



We will introduce these young people in our newsletter and let others know that there are many cool kids who are doing what they want to do ...and stuttering.

If you would like to send in a photograph with your submission, please do so. We would love to print it.

Mail to:  
Lee Caggiano  
38 South Oyster Bay Rd.  
Syosset, NY 11791

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_

Three things you want us to know about you

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

I was a little scared and

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**My name is Zachary**

I am 7 years old and live in Iowa.

I really love football. My favorite player is . . .

I stutter and talked to my class about stuttering so they would know why it takes me a longer time to talk sometimes.

I was a little scared and I did it anyway!

**My name is Kristen.**

I am 11 years old and live in Tampa.

I have two sisters

I love acting.

I stutter and wrote a letter to all my teachers telling them about my stuttering.

I was a little scared and I did it anyway!

**My name is Michael.**

I am 9 years old and live on Long Island.

I love baseball. My favorite player is . . .

I stutter and I ran for student council at my school. I won!

I was a little scared and I did it anyway!

**My name is Ashlee.**

I am 13 years old and live in St. Louis.

I love playing soccer.

My favorite band is . . .

I stutter and volunteered for a part in my class play.

I was a little scared and I did it anyway!

FRIENDS, The Association of Young People who Stutter  
[www.friendswhostutter.org](http://www.friendswhostutter.org) Toll Free: 866-866-8335

## FRIENDS News & Notes:

Be sure to check out the really cool podcast episode one of our Friends teens, Aileen, did recently for the podcast

"Women Who Stutter: Our Stories". She was great. The link is on the front page of the Friends website.

If you know someone who could benefit from Friends, make an extra copy of the newsletter for them, or give them a copy of the Mentor program application form.

Parents—leave newsletters in your doctors or dentist's office and at your child's school. Good old fashioned word-of-mouth really does work. Spread the news!

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The National Association of Young People Who Stutter

38 South Oyster Bay Road, Syosset, NY 11791

E-Mail: [LCaggiano@aol.com](mailto:LCaggiano@aol.com)

Call Toll -Free: 1-866-866-8335

Co-Founders: Lee Caggiano and John Ahlback

Director: Lee Caggiano / *Reaching Out* Editors:

Print RO: John Ahlback E-RO: Pamela Mertz

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The annual subscription rate is \$35. You can subscribe or order our books, posters, and other materials online at:

Website: [www.friendswhostutter.org](http://www.friendswhostutter.org)

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## Find Friends On Face book

Hey Kids, Teens, Adults, Parents, Professionals and Anyone who cares about people who stutter, Friends has their own [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/youngpeoplewhostutter) page! Check it out, see what everybody's up to, post messages, tell us how your doing, share pictures, stay connected throughout the year.

[www.facebook.com/youngpeoplewhostutter](https://www.facebook.com/youngpeoplewhostutter)

## 14th FRIENDS Convention 2011



Thursday, July 21 - Saturday, July 23, 2011

Embassy Suites Washington, DC—Convention Center

900 10th Street NW

(202) 739-2001

Located between the White House and the US Capitol

**CEUs offered for Speech Language Pathologists \* Educational Grants Available \* Discounts for Speech Language Pathologists who attend with a client.**

For more information: Online: [www.friendswhostutter.org](http://www.friendswhostutter.org) or Toll-free: 866-866-8335