



Reaching Out

FRIENDS – The National Association of Young People Who Stutter

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In this issue:

Annual Convention: page 1 – 5

Kids Corner: page 6 & 7

Teen Talk: page 6 & 7

Friends Across America: page 8 & 9

Contact Information: page 10

Upcoming Events:

- April 26, Toledo, OH
- May 5, Orange County, CA

FRIENDS CONVENTION 2014!!
July 17-19, Chicago, IL
17th Annual Convention!

For more information, visit
www.friendswhostutter.org



Gearing up for the 2014 Convention!

Frequently Asked Questions:

I have never been to a convention before, what should I expect?

To have tons of fun! You can also expect to meet kids, teens and adults who stutter, parents and siblings of children who stutter, and Speech-Language Pathologists. Our goal is that when you walk away on Sunday morning, you will have had fun, gained support, made new friendships, and had an unforgettable experience!

When should I arrive at the FRIENDS Convention?

Registration opens at 1 pm, Thursday, July 17. At the registration desk, you'll receive a registration folder containing a convention schedule, FRIENDS information, and a contact card so you can stay in contact with your new friends. Workshops will begin around 2pm, followed by dinner, an open mic, a talent show, and lots of socializing.

What is the dress code at FRIENDS?

Please dress comfortably. Our convention is very casual. Some people choose to change into a little dressier clothing for our Saturday night dinner/karaoke dance.

Where do people eat and hang out while at FRIENDS?

Right at the hotel! An important component to the FRIENDS convention is sharing meals together. Breakfast and lunch are included every day as part of registration, and dinner on Thursday and Saturday. There are also restaurants outside of the hotel, but some of our best experiences take place during "down time", during mealtimes, and social gatherings in the evenings. Also, please take advantage of our teen and adult hospitality rooms each night. It's a perfect time to form friendship and socialize

I've heard the FRIENDS is a non-for-profit, volunteer organization. How can I help support Friends?

The silent and live auctions are enjoyable, exciting and one of the main ways FRIENDS raises money to provide scholarships for families in need to attend the convention. 100% of every dollar raised goes directly back to FRIENDS. If you aren't able to bid on anything this year, you can bring one or two auction items to the convention, items should be something YOU might like to bid on! For questions about the auctions, email Kim Cardazzi at kcardazzi@yahoo.com.

Annual Convention 2014 – Chicago, IL

What does a typical day look like at the convention?

Below is the tentative convention schedule. The amazing workshops are still being finalized, but this tentative layout should give you an idea of how each day of the convention is jam pack with workshops, socializing, support, and fun!

Thursday July 17, 2014	
1:00-2:00	Registration
2:00-5:00	Workshops
7:00-9:30	Dinner and Open Mic FRIENDS 2 nd Annual Talent Show
8:00-10:30	Kids PJ party
9:30-11:00	'Twenty Somethings' Wine and Cheese Get-together (21 years old and older ONLY)
Friday July 18, 2014	
8:00-9:00	Registration
9:00-12:00	Workshops
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-5:00	Workshops
Friday night optional activity Woodfield Mall and Gameworks	
Saturday July 19, 2014	
8:00-9:00	Registration
9:00-12:00	Workshops
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:30	Dessert and Live Auction
1:30-5:00	Workshops
7:00-11:30	Dinner, Dance, Karaoke
<i>Schedule subject to change.</i>	



This year's keynote speaker is...Michael Turner!



Michael Turner is an adult who stutters who created *The Way We Talk*, a personal documentary about stuttering. Michael explains the documentary as an exploration of the way stuttering affects his life. It's about looking at something he's run away from his whole life, and discovering that what he thought made him different is actually what connects him to the human race.

What have you learned about stuttering or about yourself from your documentary project?
Well, I'm not an expert but I have learned a lot about stuttering in the past couple years. I've learned that there's a community of people who stutter from all over the world, who have felt the same fears about dating, talking on the phone, having certain jobs or being a mom or dad someday because they stutter... and they've felt the same joy when they discover they're not alone, and stuttering is ok. That it's ok to just go ahead and stutter and to live your life is the biggest thing I've learned.

What inspired you to create *The Way We Talk*?

Growing up, I never asked why my brother and I both stuttered. If I'd asked that question, it would mean I'd have to look at my stuttering, and I wasn't ready for that. For a long time I felt like a bad older brother for never talking with my younger brother about stuttering even though we were both going through the same thing. I felt a lot of guilt. Talking about stuttering out loud for the first time when I was 25 opened the floodgates for me, and after that there was no going back. Three years later I attended my first stuttering support group. A lot changed for me that night: just seeing other people stutter blew away what I thought I knew about stuttering and about myself. Making films is my way of working through what I'm feeling, so I started work on *The Way We Talk* pretty soon after that first meeting. I had to try and figure out what was going on inside me.

What is something about stuttering that you wish you had known when you were younger?
It's always ok to stutter. That almost everybody is patient and kind, and knows what it feels like to be different. It's not just me.

What are you most excited about for the FRIENDS convention?

Being around a ton of people who stutter is the best feeling in the world, and I'm excited to see young people and their families taking control of their lives beyond fluency. It's important to have good memories of stuttering, so when you think of "stuttering," it's not all darkness - it's your friends from FRIENDS, it's saying what you want and knowing that people like you anyway. I think when you're surrounded by other people who stutter, it's easier to see that it's not a big deal and shouldn't hold you back.



Looking back at last year's convention

Dear Friends,

We were lucky enough to attend our first convention in July 2013 in Nashville. I had many anxieties, hopes and wishes for this convention. I was very scared and excited about this journey. My family and I prepared and talked about it a little before we left but, I think we were all filled with the same sense of hope and fear. This was a big step for my daughter, apart from the two one-day workshops she has attended, very little attention has been brought to her stuttering specifically. I was nervous because this was three days! Would it be too much?

We got to Nashville and it was hectic! There was construction, it was crowded and other groups were checking out as we were trying to check in, we didn't know where to go or what to do. We saw the signs pointing to the Friends convention area and we followed them. We started to calm down immediately when we got in the line to check in. The people that checked us in were so friendly and helpful. Sofia immediately ran off to look for kids her age and I began reading the information I was given. So many friendly people approached us and welcomed us! Through the workshops and classes, speeches and meetings, I began to realize that I had made the right decision. For the rest of the evening my anxieties and fears began to melt away. I relaxed and enjoyed hearing what others had to say. I learned so much. The questions I held were addressed by the topics and the other people there.

On Friday night, we decided to check out the local scene and went to the mall. As Sofia and I were walking she said something to me that will forever make me a part of this organization. She looked at me and told me "Mommy, you are going to notice me stuttering more this weekend because I know I don't have to hide it here. Everyone here is like you and Daddy; they love me no matter what!" I have seen so much growth in her since this convention. I wanted to wait until after the school year started to really note the changes because that is where most of her issues come from. She is the only kid that stutters in her class (the entire school I believe) and this has been stressful in the past. She has not had problems at all this year! She continues speech therapy at school, but comes home and talks about not wanting to ever get rid of her stutter. She says it makes her unique and special and she is proud of it! When we go out, she no longer expects me to order for her or talk to the cashier for her, she does it on her own most of the time. She still gets stuck sometimes and looks to me for help, but she tries on her own before turning to me and that is awesome! She does not hide her stutter at home, she knows that it is ok to stutter and get stuck.

My husband and I learned to be more patient and relaxed for her. We learned new ways to help her cope and let her know that she always has support from us. Nashville was so much more than I had hoped for. Despite all the physical chaos (construction!!) that convention was a peaceful, calming, enlightening experience. I enjoyed everything and learned so much. We laughed, learned, cried and bonded. Thank you so much for the opportunity.

We are hoping to see you all in Chicago 2014!!!!

Thank you so much,

Stephanie



Passing the Torch

Back in 1961, during his inaugural speech, President John F. Kennedy talked about “Passing the Torch” to the new generation. He wanted us to step up and give back to our country. Those of us around in 1961 were moved by President Kennedy’s words and eager to act on his ideas. This winter we watched the Olympic athletes “Pass the Torch”. As the torch was passed country to country, and then athlete to athlete, there was a sense of pride and a lump in many throats as we watched those hard working men and women attain their dreams. As I watched the opening of the FRIENDS conference last July, those same words came to mind. The twenty something’s were moving forward with their grown up lives and stepping back as the next group of FRIENDS was moving seamlessly into their places. Those formerly quiet children and young teens that had sat and listened to their mentors for years, were now stepping up and opening the 2013 FRIENDS conference. What an amazing process!

For many years, when I attended the conferences, it was all about, and for, my own son. I watched him grow, change, gain confidence, and come into his own as a young man. However, the last few years I have attended because I can’t wait to see the growth of the FRIENDS children, teens, and other young adults. Each year they return they are taller by a foot or two, more talkative, happier, and definitely more confident. These kids, who were all initially strangers to each other, are now best friends. They look forward to each summer conference. While they initially came, some dragged by desperate parents, to learn how to cope with their stutter, they now come to laugh, confide in, and share memories with their new found family of FRIENDS. In fact, the July conference should really be referred to as the FRIENDS Family Reunion!

Not too long ago, my son asked me how much longer I would attend the conference since he was now an adult and attending with his wife. I was taken aback by his question – it never occurred to me that he thought I would eventually drift away. I suppose, in the beginning, I **did** expect to “graduate” from this group. After all, I came looking for answers and help because of him. Surely, after 13 years, I had learned **something!** However, just like Ryan, I discovered that sometimes what starts out as a difficult, painful experience becomes a life changing, amazing, new journey! The Torch will continue to be passed, and we will be there to cheer each group forward!

- Ruth McDermott

Kid's Corner and Teen Talk

What you have to say

Your voice may waver and grow weak,
 Your words may take a little longer to speak.
 You may be nervous to say what you know,
 Afraid your stutter will follow wherever you go.
 Forget these fears, let your voice ring!
 There are countless changes your words can bring.
 You are important; you deserve to be heard.
 There is much strength in the spoken word.
 You have a voice, imperfect as it may be,
 Use it to change the injustices you see.
 You may feel like you're powerless, but that isn't true!

The only person who can silence your voice is you.
 So don't fall victim to fear or self-doubt,
 Your ideas have power, and your words have clout.

-Mary, age 16



Stuttering makes me kind of mad
 And sometimes it makes me even sad

But on the positive side it has made me, me
 And that's who I've grown up to be

Sometimes I feel like punching myself
 So I get a book from the bookshelf

It doesn't make me feel self-conscious
 Even though other people can be obnoxious

So, I try my best to do my work
 Even if someone is being a big jerk

So I keep on speaking
 Even when there's people peeking

-Matt, age 18

Everyday in my dojo I get asked by all my
 friends

What's up with your voice
 Are you scared or something
 And I reply, no there's nothing wrong
 Nor is it a choice

Everyday in school I get asked by all my
 teachers
 Do you want to read, or just be skipped over
 Depending on my mood
 I say yes or I say no

Here is my opinion
 This is what I want to say
 Never let anything hold *you* back
 Or let someone tell you, *you* can't

-Christian, age 13

Kid's Corner and Teen Talk

What you have to say

Myia is a registered nurse who shares the following advice for kids and teens who stutter:

As a kid I remember going to McDonald's and being excited about ordering a Happy Meal. My parent's ordered for me so I didn't have a care in the world, I just wanted my burger and toy.

As I got older, I dreaded ordering my own food. Every time I went to McDonald's or any other fast food establishment the cashier would be impatient and rude when I stuttered. Some have even rolled their eyes, laughed or service the person behind me because I am "taking too long" to place my order.

When I approach people who are unaware of my stutter, I like to use several techniques to ease the conversation. One of the techniques I use is to tell the other person, "Excuse me, I stutter" and it has worked wonderfully. It gives me an opportunity to inform others and help us both feel comfortable engaging in conversation.

My parents and friends used to order my food for me. Now that I ooze so much confidence, I proudly order my own food and sometimes theirs.

-Myia

Stepping Up Mentoring Program

The Friend's Stepping Up Mentoring Program gives teens who stutter the opportunity to support children who stutter. The program is a volunteer experience, involving a commitment of time. Each teen develops mentoring relationships, ultimately benefiting both the volunteer and child. If you are a teen or a child who stutters, this great new program might be for you! Check out www.friendswhostutter.org for more information.

Graduate Student Training Program

FRIENDS developed the Graduate Student Training Program (GSTP) to help graduate students in Speech Pathology get a better understanding of stuttering and its affect on children and their families. The FRIENDS GSTP will provide a much needed and valuable clinical opportunity for many graduate students. This program will also enhance the knowledge and experience graduate students acquire in the field of stuttering. The GSTP will address the affective, behavioral and cognitive behaviors of a young person who stutters. In order to do this each graduate student will spend at least one full day working with experienced Speech Language Pathologists in the children's workshops at the annual three-day convention.

PhD Student Scholarship Program

The PhD Student Scholarship Program provides doctoral students with a research and clinical focus in stuttering, an opportunity to participate in a self-help/support program for children who stutter and their families. It also helps these students to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of children who stutter and their families, and their point of view concerning stuttering treatment and research

Scholarship covers

- Travel expenses (\$500 maximum)
- Hotel (sharing of suites is encouraged)
- Registration (includes most meals)

Go to www.friendswhostutter.org for more information!

FRIENDS Across America

Philadelphia One-Day – March 1, 2014

I was very lucky to be able to spend a day at the FRIENDS one-day conference at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. As a graduate student in speech-language pathology, I have learned about fluency disorders and taken classes on how to work with people who stutter. However, I feel that I learned more about stuttering during this one-day conference than I ever could have learned from reading a book or taking a class. The kids, teens, and families I met were truly inspiring, and my favorite part of the day was getting the chance to speak with them about how stuttering affects their lives. This experience will make me a better graduate clinician, and as a speech-language pathologist I hope to one day work with many people who stutter! I had an amazing day; being at FRIENDS really reinforced my interest in the area of fluency disorders.

- Devon, Graduate Student



Just wanted to share an amazing moment Will and I had after Saturday's workshop.

I often struggle with knowing if and how to help Will when he is ordering at a restaurant. Saturday evening as we stood in line at COSI, I waited for him to take the lead. He ordered his meal himself, working through it bumps and all while I kept my eyes on him to avoid the cashier talking over him. I couldn't believe it! Previously whenever he got "stuck" he would glance at me to finish speaking for him. And even better, as we stood waiting for our food he looked over at me and said, "Thanks for letting me order, Mom." I was so happy that he had the confidence to say what he wanted, regardless of how it came out. It brought tears to my eyes.

Thanks to all of you for giving him the opportunity to begin to face and accept this piece of himself.

- Stephanie, Mother

FRIENDS Across America

Chicago One-Day – March 15, 2014

On March 15, 2014 FRIENDS collaborated with Elmhurst College in Chicago to host a one-day conference that brought over 50 parents, teens, kids and SLPs together. This was the first one-day workshop in this area and it was a great turn out. For many of the kids and teens it was an opportunity to meet other people who stutter and to learn about stuttering.

In the teen workshop, many things were discussed including things they want teachers and parents to do when they are stuttering. The teens also listed some of the positive things stuttering has brought them. These included, listening to what other people are saying more intently, PWS are good listeners--they know what it is like to be interrupted. And an overall sentiment throughout the day for the teens was "it's only awkward of you make it awkward."

The parents and the SLP also had the opportunity to listen to a panel of teens, an adult who stutters and a few parents of teens who stutter. This was a wonderful opportunity for the teens to share their experiences, and answer questions for the parents and the SLPs. These teens were open and honest about their acceptance of their stuttering, it was a wonderful experience for all who participated in this workshop session.

At the end of the day, all of the children and teens contributed to an "Ask the Experts" session by answering any questions from their parents, SLPs and other adults who stutter. They also shared what they had learned throughout the day. It was so wonderful to see how the kids and teens who stutter bonded with one another and had transformed through this one day. As many families were leaving for the day they thanked us and told us they were looking forward to the FRIENDS convention in Chicago this summer. It was an overall fun filled day with lots of discussion about stuttering, what to do when someone stutters and how to be more accepting of stuttering. It was a pleasure to meet all the families and SLPs that attended this one day workshop and we look forward to doing this all again next year.

What did you learn from the One-Day Conference?

Brayden: I learned that lots of other kids stutter and I met a lot of them and had a lot of fun

Nathan: I want to thank my mom and dad for bringing me here. I learned to speak what's on my mind

Alden: This is my third year here. I learned that I'm not alone and that make me feel more comfortable and I can talk more freely

Brendan: I learned how to use my tools to help my stuttering

Steven: I learned my parents perspective on stuttering. It's interesting to hear what they have to say.

Daniel: I learned how to help my brother when he stutters.

Chris: I learned its ok to stutter. No matter how bad of a day I'm having with my speech it will always get better.

FRIENDS Across America has already reached many families in New York, Denver, Idaho, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Iowa and Chicago! Visit www.friendswhostutter.org to see when FRIENDS will be hosting an event near you!

How to donate to FRIENDS

Our 2014 goal continues to be what it has always been: to reach more children and families, allowing them to experience and learn what other young people who stutter have learned...**they are not alone.** Instilling a sense of empowerment, providing an environment where feelings of isolation disappear and growing confidence and self-esteem continues to be the foundation of our vision.

Your generosity and support enables us to meet our goals so we can reach out to more young people who stutter and their families.

FRIENDS is established as a non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization under section

501(c) 3; 100% of your donations are spent on our programs.

I would like to make a donation to FRIENDS.

\$ _____

Please charge my:

_____ Visa _____ Master Card

Name:

Account Number:

Expiration Date:

We are grateful for your support; we have touched the lives of many young people and their families and could not have done so without your continued generosity and support.



The National Association of Young People Who Stutter

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Send articles, questions or ideas to Caryn at
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