



THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION®

www.StutteringHelp.org

Spring 2023

A Nonprofit Organization Since 1947...Helping Those Who Stutter

KIDS LETTERS

A COLLECTION OF ARTWORK AND LETTERS FROM KIDS TO THE SFA
FEATURING A CELEBRITY SPOTLIGHT ON ED SHEERAN

STUTTERING FOUNDATION CELEBRITY SPOTLIGHT

ED SHEERAN

Now a seasoned singer/songwriter, Ed Sheeran first burst onto the music scene with his hit single, The A Team, in 2011. Sheeran hit No. 1 on the iTunes chart before even signing with a record label. Since then, songs like Give Me Love and Thinking Out Loud have kept Sheeran at the top of the charts. He is also widely recognized for collaborating with big artists such as One Direction and Taylor Swift. But before reaching A-level status, winning Best British Male Solo Artist and becoming one of today's most popular artists, Sheeran dealt with stuttering as a child growing up in England.

In a June 2015 honorary speech, Sheeran shared what he felt was the hardest part about dealing with a stutter: "The thing that I found most difficult about it was knowing what to say but not really being able to express it in the right way." For years, Sheeran tried a variety of speech therapies to help with his stuttering, but it was memorizing music that he said helped him effectively remedy his stutter. "I got heavily into music at a young age, and got very, very into rap music," Sheeran said. "Eminem was the first album that my dad bought me. He bought me the Marshall Mathers LP when I was nine years old, not knowing what was on it. And he let me listen to it, and I learned every word of it back to front by the age I was 10."

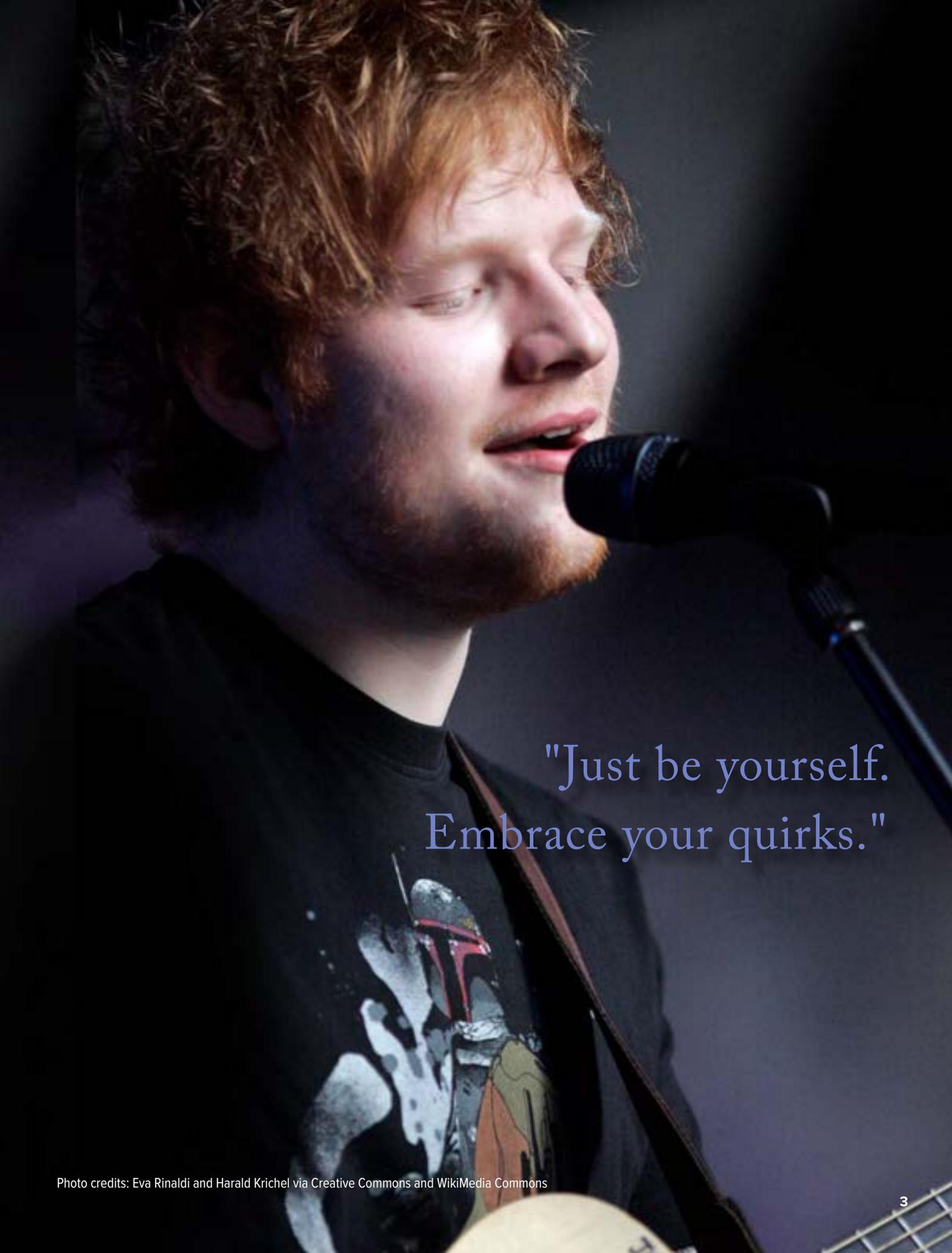
Sheeran elaborated on listening to Eminem's music on repeat, saying, "he raps very fast and very melodically, and very percussively, and it helped me get rid

of the stutter." The singer told the audience to embrace their inner weirdness: "Just be yourself. Embrace your quirks." Sheeran then shared his advice for coping with stuttering with the audience: "Work through it and get the treatment that you want to get, but ... don't see it as a plight on your life, and carry on pushing forward."

"The moment you stop trying to fit in is when stuff fits around you."

In an interview with ABC News, Sheeran spoke on how kids can often worry about fitting in, but that, "the moment you stop trying to fit in is when stuff fits around you."

Sheeran certainly hasn't let his stuttering limit him in his career; tickets to his stadium concerts sold out in less than three minutes. The secret to his success? "Don't be scared to be honest with yourself and with the people that love you." Ed Sheeran's acceptance of his stutter and his will to persevere in spite of it is a true inspiration to the stuttering community.



"Just be yourself.
Embrace your quirks."

DEAR SFA:

The Stuttering Foundation has been hearing from kids for over three decades, receiving more than 600 letters from children every year. Press releases, begun in the 1980's, resulted in a tremendous number of articles on stuttering nationwide. When Ann Landers featured the SFA in one of her classic newspaper segments, "Ask Ann Landers", the response from kids was immediate and overwhelming. Additional staff had to be hired to help with the incoming correspondence.

Anne Edwards, a librarian hired to help with the letters, was the first one at the Foundation to draft a response to kids, and it was her idea to have everyone from the office sign the letter. Those letters made an impact; and as time went by, the Foundation continued to hear from more and more children around the world affected by stuttering.

Today, the Foundation purposes to feature kids' letters in every newsletter and respond to each child who writes with a note of encouragement, advice, and heartfelt thanks from the SFA team.

**P.S. Check out our website, just for kids!
www.stutteringhelp.org/kids**



Hi my name is Joe. I am 12 years old and in 6th grade. I am good at soccer and basketball. I started to stutter when I was 7 or 8 years old. I typically don't catch myself stuttering when I stutter. I think this actually makes it easier for me to talk because I usually don't notice it. When I do notice it, I try to say the sentence again to see if I can say it better. Other people don't react to my stuttering which I think is a good thing because it means that my stutter is not a big deal to them.

I don't stutter very much when I am with my friends. The times that I notice my stutter are when I am playing an intense sports game and I am trying to speak quickly. When this happens, I try not to react and just move on because the game is moving too quickly to stop and repeat myself. At those times, I usually get out some of what I am trying to say and just hope my teammates know what I was talking about.

I would like to try to stop stuttering so that I don't have to repeat myself. But I know that this takes time.

Joe, 12, Aston, PA



Hello, my name is Kaleb. I'm nine years old and I live in Alachua, Florida. I am in third grade, and I go to Glen Springs Elementary. I like Minecraft, Fortnite, soccer, Roblox, and wrestling. I have one brother, two sisters, and no pets.

I stutter, **but that's ok!** It actually makes me unique. Here's my advice: Don't let stuttering stop you from doing what you want to do. When I go to speech it helps me a lot. I barely stutter in there. I haven't been bullied a lot since first grade, but when I did I was mostly fine. I learned that if someone bullies you, you can walk away. When I stutter, I mostly use smooth speech. It's helped a lot and I barely stutter now. It's really cool now that I don't stutter as much.

Kaleb, 9, Alachua, FL

Kaleb
age 9

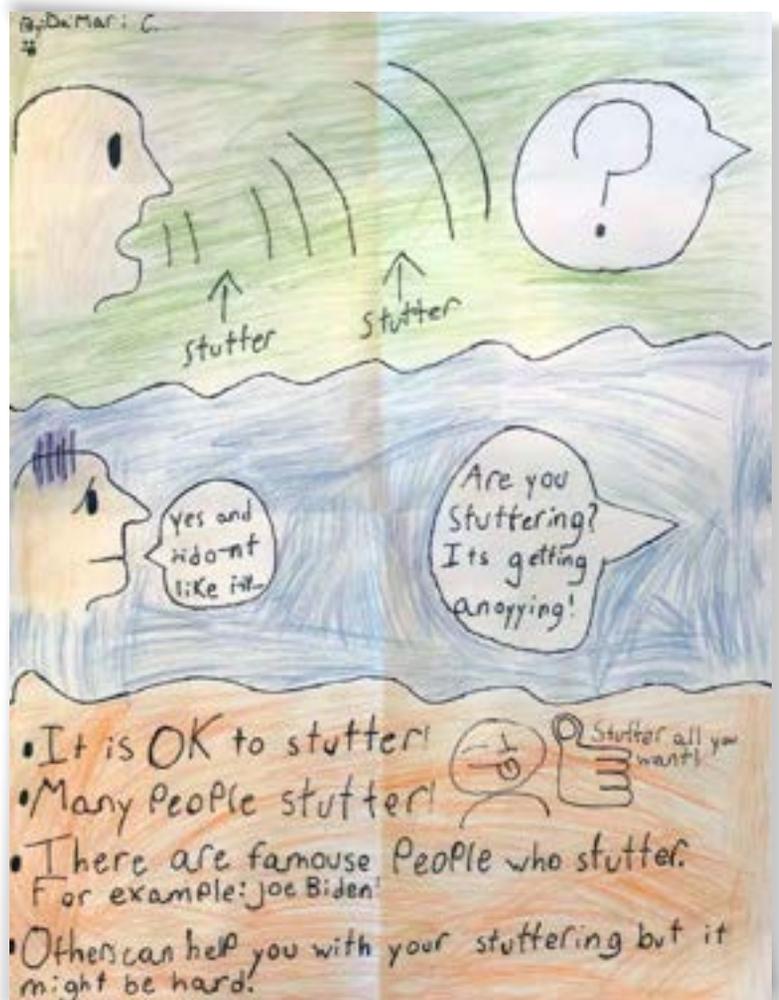


Hello, my name is Raylan.
I have been working on my
speech for a while.

If stuttering is annoying, try
to let it be. Stuttering might not
go away completely but you can
learn how to make it better
and less uncontrollable. Some
things that helped me were to take
a breath in and out and try to talk
a little slower than normal. You
might get frustrated but don't let
it make you feel super frustrated.

In my picture, I am not feeling
happy that I stutter but I am not
feeling sad that I stutter either.
Stuttering is okay.

Raylan, 10, Londonderry, NY



Da'Mari, 10, Milwaukee, WI



Hi, my name is Coralia and I am 10 years old. I have 2 cats named Mia Meow and Pamper. I also have a fish named Meridian and a hamster named Poppy.

I'm homeschooled in Western Massachusetts, but I do speech therapy on Zoom. When I stutter, I feel frustrated and it makes me really mad. I do stutter when I talk too fast, and it is hard to use strategies when I am stuttering. In my therapy sessions, the strategy that works is called the "move to the next sound" or movement strategy.

I have many interests and hobbies. In fact, many of my interests involve the arts. I love to do ballet, musical theater, including singing, playing piano, writing, and illustrating my own books. I do horse jumping and dressage 3-4 times a week.

Horses and cats are very calming to me. I really like the sound of the hooves when the horse walks - clip, clop, clip, clop, and the sound of the horse saying "neigh". Riding a horse makes me feel very relaxed and at ease.

That's why I want to meet a unicorn someday. I'm not sure if that is possible but I hope it is.

Coralia, 10, Adams, MA



Abigail, 10, Tomah, WI

Hi, my name is Jase. I'm 8 years old and in grade 2. I live in Canada. I have 1 bunny and 5 cats at my house. I like to ride my dirt bike.

And sometimes I stutter. Me and my speech teacher practice thoughts in a box and easy breath. Sometimes we walk around the school and talk about stuff in easy breaths. Did you know that Tiger Woods had a stutter?

Jase, 8, Ontario, Canada



Hi my name is Abby and I am ten years old. My favorite thing to do is ride my bike with my friend Michael. I have been stuttering ever since 1st grade and stuttering isn't that bad. The only thing is you can't say things as fast as others but you can take your time. You don't have to rush. My strategies are to take a deep breath. Also make sure to be calm when talking. If it helps try talking slowly. Another one of strategies is to use a easy onset. It's when you stretch out your words to make them easy to say. Some advice is to talk slowly like I said and don't be in a rush or just use some of my strategies I told you.

Abigail O., 10 years, Tomah, WI



My name is Courtney. I am from Newfield, NY near the Finger Lakes. My interests are Sonic, Among Us, Minecraft, and Roblox. I am building a house in Minecraft, the Super Mario Edition. It is spring here, but it is still pretty cold. Now I can jump on the trampoline with my sister, Selena. I also enjoy making bracelets and necklaces out of beads.

Talking slower can help you talk much easier. I know how all my sounds are made. For example, B is made with my lips and vocal cords.

My new puppy is Izzy. I play with her, and she gives me kisses and she bites me a lot.

Courtney, 13, Newfield, NY



I AM 7 YEARS OLD AND I LIVE IN PENNSYLVANIA. MY MOM AND DAD THEY WENT TO A HOUSE. STOP AND THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO SAY. MY NAME IS ALARIC. MY FAVORITE SPEECH IS SNAIL SPEECH. SNAIL SPEECH IS WHEN YOU SAY THE WORD SLOW WHEN YOU GET STUCK, YOU LOOSEN IT UP.

ALARIC, 7, MCCLURE, PA

Hi, my name is Aidan and I'm 11. I don't really know how long I've been stuttering for, but I've been going to speech therapy since 1st grade but for different reasons like good listening. Now my only reason for speech therapy is stuttering. At the start, I thought stuttering was a big problem and that it would mess up my speech over time. It felt awkward stuttering all of the time and it was a really big problem for me and I hated stuttering. But later on as I started to learn that stuttering was just a normal thing and that I'm not alone, I started to feel less anxious about stuttering. It's also not a big problem when I talk to anybody. I started to use speech techniques like slowing down my speech and not going too fast and that would help fix my problems with stuttering. Now, rarely anybody can hear me stutter that often. I've rarely let my stuttering keep me down or keep me from talking to other people or participating in conversations. What I want other people who stutter to know is that stuttering is not some sort of disease or problem but it's actually a normal thing for some people and that you are definitely not alone stuttering and don't let stuttering let you down from participating in conversations or other activities, like plays or sports.

Aidan, 11, Brookhaven, PA



Hello, my name is Jourdyn and I am a 15-year-old girl from Topeka, Kansas. I participated in track while I was in school, and I do javelin. Some of my favorites include hanging out with my friends, reading, and FaceTiming with friends and family. I began stuttering when I was 3 years old and began speech therapy when I started elementary school. I continue to have weekly speech therapy sessions where we work on using my strategies to increase my fluency. My most successful strategy is stretching and pacing. They give me more time to talk and get my words out.

I have had many Speech-Language Pathologists but 2 are my favorites.

Jourdyn, 15, Topeka, KS

I am a person that stutters sometimes. I keep saying a letter over and over. I try to use pausing and light contact.

I don't need help with my stutter.

A famous person who stutters is James Earl Jones.

Thanks for reading.

Karter, 7, Shepherd, MI



My name is Elana. I am 7 years old. I am in 2nd grade at Wilmore Davis elementary school. I like to read all kinds of books. I feel happy when I stutter. It makes me unique. I use the strategy 'Phrasing' to help me have smooth speech. My advice to others is that you can stop, take a breath, then retry. I love eating cotton candy, ice cream, and playing tag with my sisters. Lastly, I like playing with my American dolls.

Elana, 7, Wheat Ridge, CO

WHO CONTROLS YOUR STUTTERING?



My name is Alexander. I am 10 years old. I don't remember when I started to stutter. I got help in the 5th grade. It is hard to speak when I stutter, when I get excited or when I get stuck on a word. I am in the 5th grade now and I still do stutter, but not as much as I used to. The stuttering strategies I use to help me are light contact, speak in phrases, and take a breath.

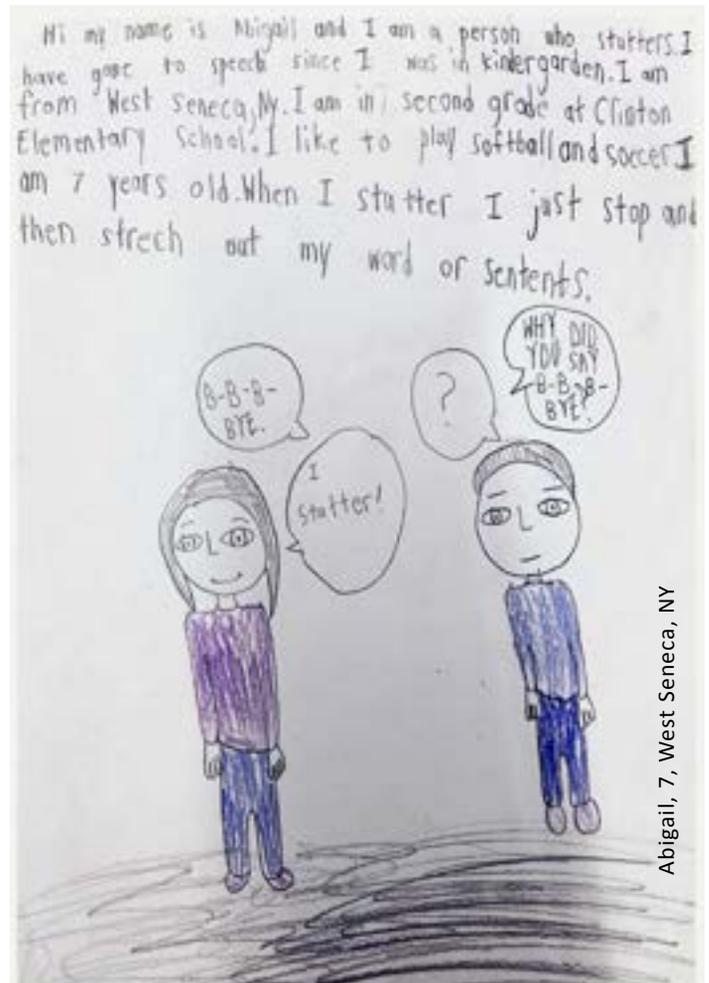
I have a younger sister and I am the older brother. I am glad my mom supports me with my stuttering. My mom has always said nice things to me and made me feel better about myself. If you stutter and people say you're not smart or anything bad, just remember you are as capable as anyone else or more!

Alexander, 10, Sunnyside, NY



Hi, my name is Landen and I'm in the 5th grade. I'm moving to a new school next year for 6th grade. I'm looking forward to more responsibility and freedom but will also miss my friends who go to a different middle school. I like to play football and my favorite position is running back. I like to create my own superheroes and make my own drawings of them. In the summer I like to kneeboard. I remember starting to stutter in kindergarten. I thought it was a disease at first, so I talked to my mom about it. Stuttering has been harsh at times because as I got older sometimes kids can get meaner. I mostly just ignore them. In my elementary school we do projects where we have to speak. By practicing these speeches, it helped me overcome my fear of speaking out loud. I'm still stuttering today but I'm overcoming it and I'm ready for middle school.

Landen, 11, Prior Lake, MN



Abigail, 7, West Seneca, NY



Hi, my name is Amauri. I am 9 years old, and I stutter.

I like to play sports. My favorite sport is basketball.

Whenever I stutter, I try to start over or take a deep breath. Slides help me

concentrate on my words. My friend also stutters. We like

to play together at recess. I

decided to write this letter

because I felt inspired by other people who wrote

letters. Also, did you know

James Earl Jones, the voice of Darth Vader from Star Wars,

used to stutter? If you are ever talking to someone and you stutter, try to start over.

If you are having trouble talking, tell them that you stutter. I tried this and it made me feel good.

Amauri, 9, Cincinnati, OH

Hi, I'm Kayla and I stutter. I've been stuttering for a long time now, although it wasn't that bad at first. In elementary school I would barely stutter. I would only stutter like once every 2 weeks! But then the pandemic hit and we were at home. When we went back to school, something seemed to have changed with my speech. I didn't stutter that much in 6th grade until my family and I went on vacation to Florida. I could barely get out a sentence. I was stuttering so bad, but I didn't understand why. Maybe it was the fact that I got older and realized what my stutter is. Since then I've been stuttering.

It gets hard sometimes, and I get mad or upset or disappointed in myself. But I know that I will always have my friends by my side cheering me on to do the best I can. I've realized something, when people first meet me and haven't been my friend for a while they don't really realize that I stutter. But to be honest I don't really show people I stutter. I just kinda hide it. I don't even tell people I go to speech therapy. My classmates and I have a good relationship and most of them don't know that I stutter or go to speech therapy, except for a few of my close friends. They just think I'm a normal girl who talks a lot and has a lot of energy. Whenever I'm in a comfortable situation I have a lot of energy and talk a lot like when I'm with my class or my friends and family. I don't even stutter that often when I'm in my class, but as soon as a teacher calls on me and I'm forced to talk, I mess things all up and stutter a bunch. I don't know why but the pressure just gets to me and I crumble under the pressure. I know that I will always have my family to support me and get me through everything including my challenges with stuttering.

Kayla, 13, Aston, PA

Hi, my name is Austin. I'm eight years old. I live in Phelps, NY. I like football, riding four wheelers and my favorite color is red. I have one brother and two cousins. We like to ride four wheelers together. I stutter sometimes when I get nervous. I use pausing to help me stop. When you pause you can tap your finger twice and take deep breaths. I feel like sometimes my stuttering comes back when I'm nervous and goes away when I'm calm.

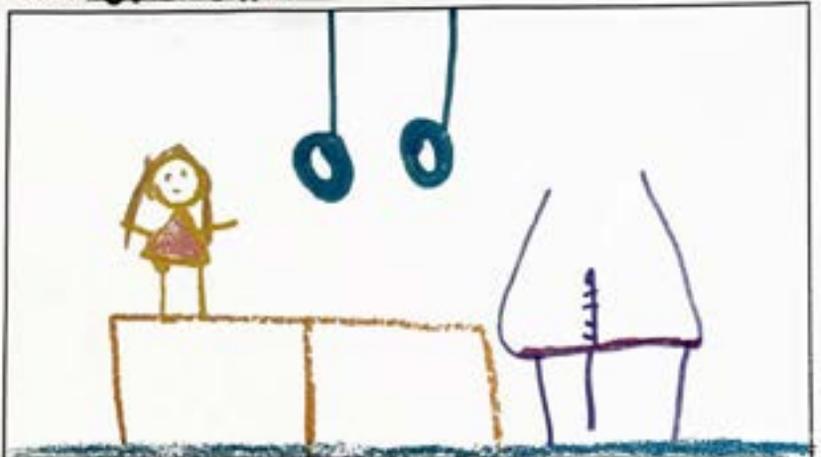
Austin, 8, Phelps, NY



Hi, my name is Leo, and I am 9 years old. I like painting and playing Minecraft. I have two older brothers named Dallas and Finn. I'm the youngest of the family and I stutter. Sometimes it's okay to stutter. There are a lot of ways to not stutter. Like, chopping your words down or talking more slowly, and don't let stuttering take over what you want to say.

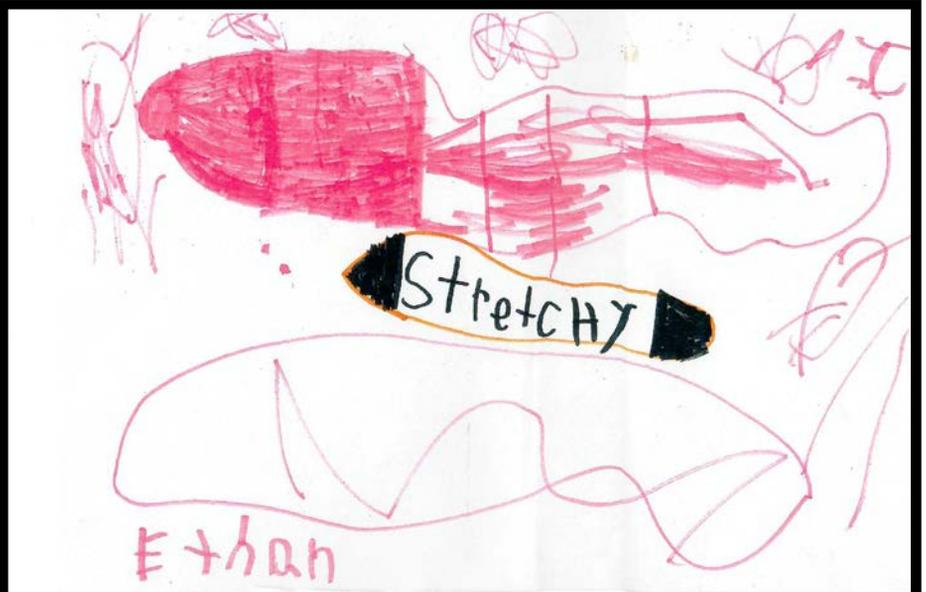
Leo, 9, Portland, OR

Name: Graclyn



Hi, my name is Graclyn and I stutter to like other people. But that doesn't stop me. I do gymnastics and I cook with my mom. And my favorite color is teal. I'm 8 years old and I'm in 2nd grade. I stutter on the word eight (8). I have four people in my family. I like horses. And I like robot talking. Do not be worried about stuttering.

Graclyn, 8, Greeley, CO



"Stretchy Speech"

Ethan, 6, Marietta, GA

Axel, 10,
San Diego
California

Hi my name is Axel and I am 10 years old. I was born in San Diego California. I like playing with my sister. My speech teacher is cool. I like playing soccer and baseball. My favorite baseball team is the San Diego Padres. When I grow up I want to be a soccer player. If you stutter it does not matter. Be happy with your life. Stuttering is cool. If people make fun of you leave them. I stutter. It does not get to me. Just get along with people you feel comfortable or safe with.



Hi! My name is Emma. I am 7 years old. My speech is unique. Sometimes, I have stucks, bumpy coughs, bumpy speech, and extras (um, like). In my first-grade class nobody has the same speech. Sometimes it takes me a little longer to say what I have to say. I learned that stuttering exists in all languages in all parts of the world! Sometimes when I get stuck, I take a big breath and get my voice box humming for a gentle start. I have 1 hamster named Sylvester, 3 other hamsters, and 1 guinea pig. I also have a twin sister and 1 older sister. In my free time I like to play the cello, go to my jazz class, and go camping in Vermont. My favorite food is ice cream, my absolute favorite flavor is vanilla soft serve. My drawing is of my favorite stuffed animal, I named him Bunny!

Emma, 7, Orchard Park, NY





My name is Leyan and I am 9 years old. Stuttering is easy but it is a little bit hard. The people who inspire me are Joe Biden and George Springer. I did a presentation for my class about stuttering. Ms. Williams helped me with the presentation because the kids in my class bully me. We told them about stuttering and how to be a good friend to people who stutter. We showed a video of George Springer and we gave them presents. It helped me with my friends. My friends don't bully me anymore because I know how to talk now. This picture is from Naruto, my favorite anime.

Leyan, 9, Houston, TX

My name is Ayden. I go to Parker Farms Elementary School. I am 9 years old. I stutter. I'm fine with stuttering a little bit, but not when it happens over and over and over. I go to speech therapy at my school. In speech therapy I learned it's OK to stutter but I need to keep practicing my strategies so I can be fluent when I want to be.

Let me tell you about myself. Some things I like to do are play video games (especially Minecraft), play outside, doodle, and read. Some things I'm good at are coding, science, reading, and memory. Some things other people like about me are that I am kind, smart, and interesting.

Here's a little piece of advice for all kids who stutter: It's OK to stutter. Keep practicing your strategies so you can be fluent when you want to be.

Ayden, 9, Wallingford, CT





HI, MY NAME IS ISAEEL. I LIKE MARVEL. MY FAVORITE CHARACTER IS SCARLET WITCH/WANDA AND I ALSO LIKE SCOOB!, THE MOVIE, AND I ALSO STUTTER AND IT'S OKAY TO STUTTER AND IF THEY ASK WHY YOU SPEAK LIKE THAT, SAY, IT'S A GLITCH IN MY BRAIN. I LIKE TO SPEAK TO MY SPEECH TEACHER CAUSE I FEEL SAFE WITH MY SPEECH MATE. PULL-OUTS MAKE ME SPEAK GOOD AND THERE IS NOTHING TO BULLY PEOPLE WHO STUTTER AND IF YOU STUTTER BE YOURSELF.

ISAEEL, 9, SAN DIEGO, CA

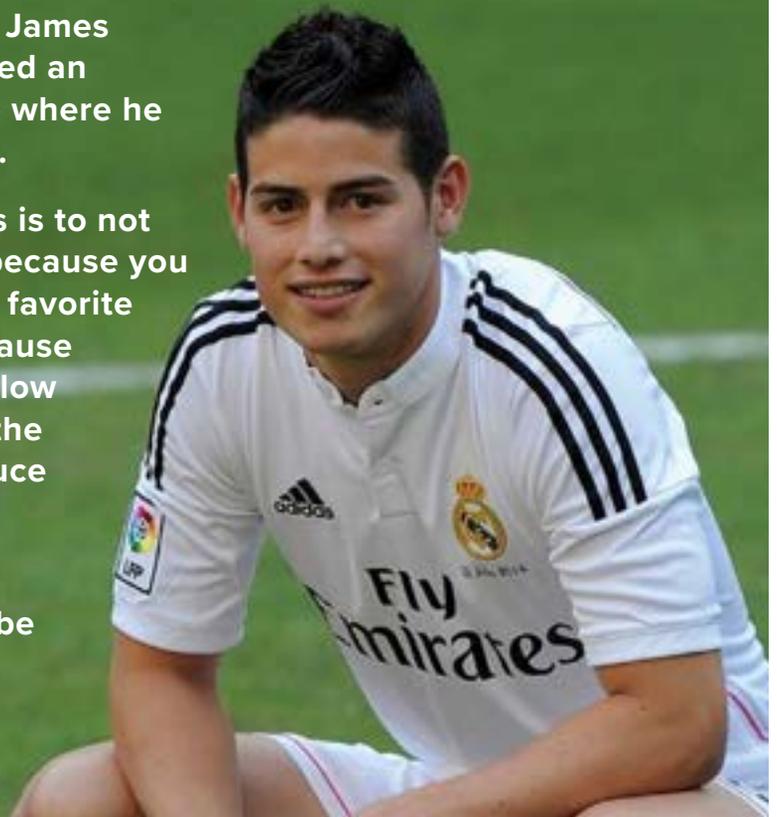
Hi my name is Houssam. I am 11 years old, and I stutter. I live in Michigan. I am also in 5th grade. Some things I like to do are play soccer and play FIFA with my family. I also like to buy new shoes and outfits and travel. One more thing is that my favorite soccer player is Ronaldo.

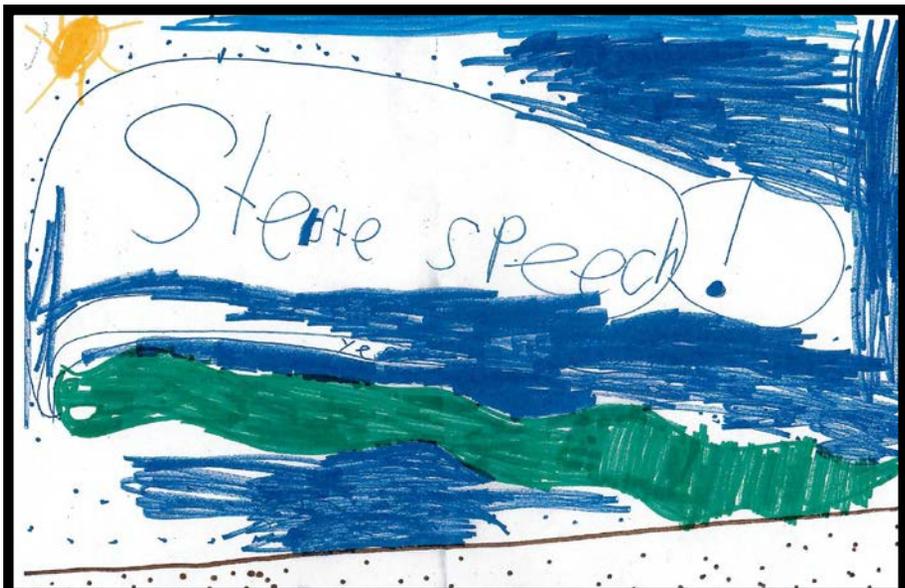
One of my favorite soccer players is James Rodriguez. He also stutters. He scored an amazing goal in the 2014 World Cup where he won the best goal of the year award.

My stuttering advice to younger kids is to not be scared to talk or say something because you are special just like anyone else. My favorite strategy is the pausing strategy because it reminds me to take a breath and slow down. My other favorite strategy is the voluntary stutter. This helps me reduce tension whenever I feel it coming.

In conclusion, don't be afraid to be you and say what you want to. Just be yourself.

Houssam, 11, Dearborn Heights, MI





"Stretchy Speech"

Henry, 6, Marietta, GA

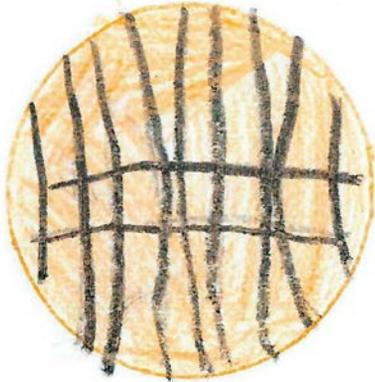
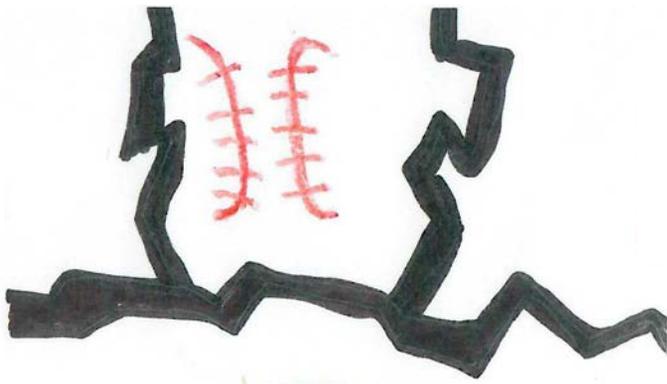
My name is Logan. I live in Farmington, Minnesota. I am 7 years old. I have one older sister. I am in 2nd grade. I like to play soccer and I won 4 times. My favorite toy is from anime and is Kakashi. I like collecting cars. I like collecting Pokemon cards and playing video games. When I was in kindergarten I started stuttering. Now I don't stutter so much. When my dog sits with me then I don't stutter. In my picture, I am wearing a BAPE sweatshirt over my head. It looks like a shark. I also drew my trophy from soccer.

Logan, 7,
Farmington, MN



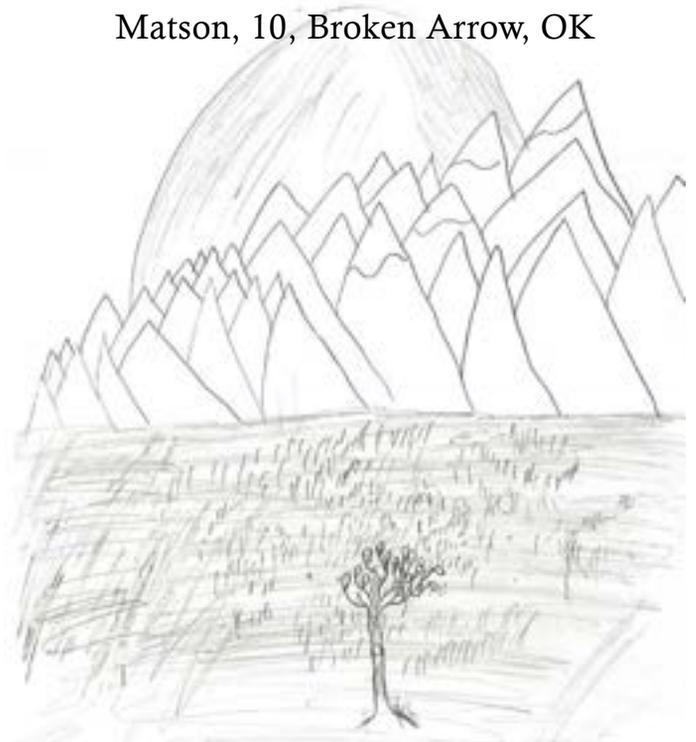
MASON 10, Lake Helen, FL





My name is Matson, I am 10 years old. I'm from Alaska but I live in Oklahoma. I don't care about my stutter, it just gets in the way of me speaking. My hobbies are exploring, hunting, catching animals and fishing.

Matson, 10, Broken Arrow, OK



Hello, my name is Brantley. I am 9 years old. I live in Sebring, FL. Me and my family live 2 hours away from Disney World. Some of my favorite things are baseball, football, and basketball. My speech teacher helps me by teaching me lots of strategies but my favorite one is slowing down, that is my go to strategy if I get stuck. I love sports, my family, and my speech teacher. Always remember you can do anything. NO MATTER WHAT!!

Brantley, 9, Sebring, FL



Hi, my name is Jake and I am 9 years old. I like a game called Wobbly Life. I also like another game called Gang Beasts. I am a person who stutters. Some of my tools are: 1. Belly breathing, 2. Use a slide, and 3. Take deep breaths. I like Culver's and Punch Pizza.

Jake, 9, Maple Grove, MN

MY name is Mason and I am 11 years old. My favorite place to eat is Huddle. I like to spend time outside with my family and my dog Sunny. Sunny likes to chase balls when I throw them and my family enjoys taking walks.

I started to stutter in third grade. My favorite strategies are pacing and stretchy speech. Sometimes stuttering makes me feel bad because I can't get my words out. I used to forget to use my strategies but now I'm used to using them. My SLP always tells me, "It's okay to stutter."

Mason 11, Topeka, KS



Hi, my name is Carter and I'm 10 years old. I live in Sebring, FL (south of Disney). I like maps, geography, video games (like Roblox) and playing the ukulele. I also have a big family. My speech teachers have helped me a lot. One of the strategies is taking a deep breath and then start my sentence. Stuttering doesn't make you different than anyone else.

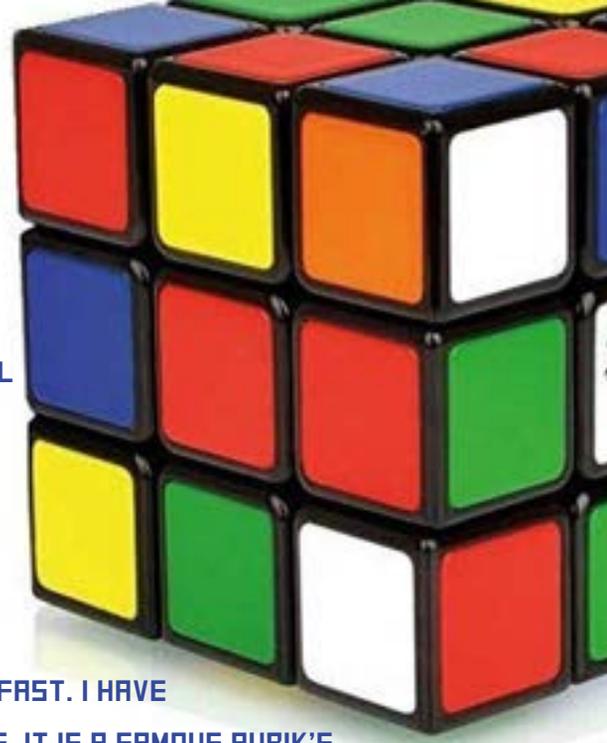
Carter, 10, Sebring, FL



Hi my name is Christian and I am 10 years old. I like playing video games and spending time outside. I play baseball and one of my favorite teams is the Houston Astros. Did you know that George Springer who played for the Astros stutters? I also stutter. I never like it when I stutter, but I know if I use my strategies, my speech can be fluent. My favorite techniques are syllable timed speech and easy onset. I have had speech therapy for 3 years and now that I realize that if I just slow down, I will speak fluently. If you stutter, you might be the same!

Christian, 10, Ada, MI

MY NAME IS RIWAJ. AT SCHOOL, THEY CALL ME RAY. I AM 7 YEARS OLD. I AM IN SECOND GRADE. I LIVE IN BOULDER, COLORADO. I LIKE MARTIAL ARTS. I HAVE AN ORANGE BELT BECAUSE I PASSED MY ORANGE BELT TEST. I ALSO LIKE TO PLAY SOCCER. I THINK ABOUT SOLVING A RUBIK'S CUBE FAST. I HAVE A 2X2 AND A 3X3 AT HOME. IT IS A FAMOUS RUBIK'S CUBE. I HAVE A GIANT RUBIK'S CUBE CALLED 21X21. I SPEAK WITH MY PARENTS IN NEPALESE, AND I TALK WITH MY SISTER IN ENGLISH. WHEN THEY MIX TOGETHER, I START TO STUTTER. I USE MY EASY ONSET.

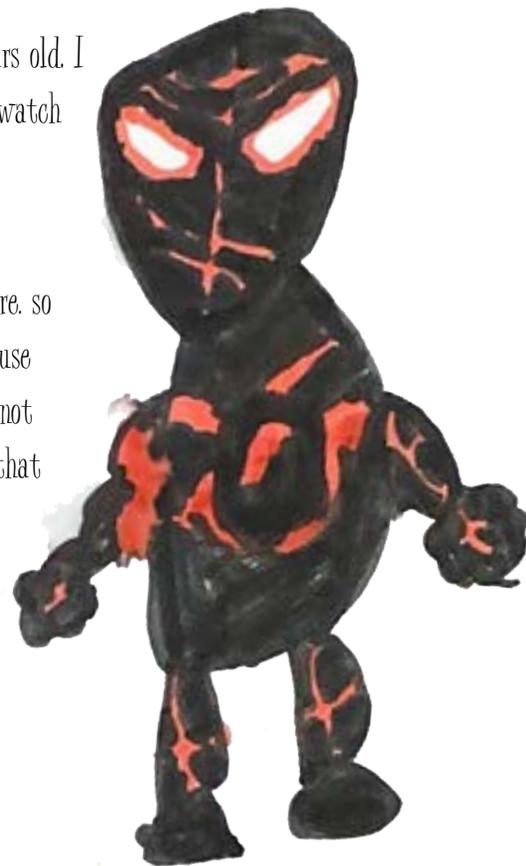


RIWAJ, 7, BOULDER, CO

Hello. I am Jordan and I am nine years old. I like to play Roblox, Gaga Ball, and watch YouTube. I also love Miles Morales.

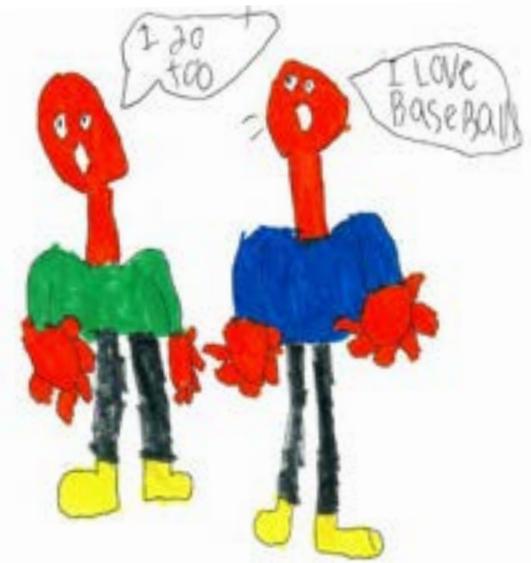
If you stutter, don't stop talking. Stuttering doesn't change who you are, so keep believing in yourself. Just because you stutter, it doesn't mean you are not smart, so don't give up. I've learned that if someone bullies you, just ignore them. I have also learned about easy starters, pausing, and smooth speech. They all help me talk without stuttering.

Jorden, 9, Gainesville, FL



Hi, my name is Brody. I like video games and baseball. I've played since I was three. I come to speech because I stutter. You should never feel different in a bad way. You are just special because of it. I learned about the diaphragm and the body and the voice box. I also love lung breath.

Brody, 7, Greendale, WI



My name is Pedro. I live in Fairmont, MN. I started having bumpy speech when I was a little kid. Pausing, breathing, and easy onsets help me have smoother speech.

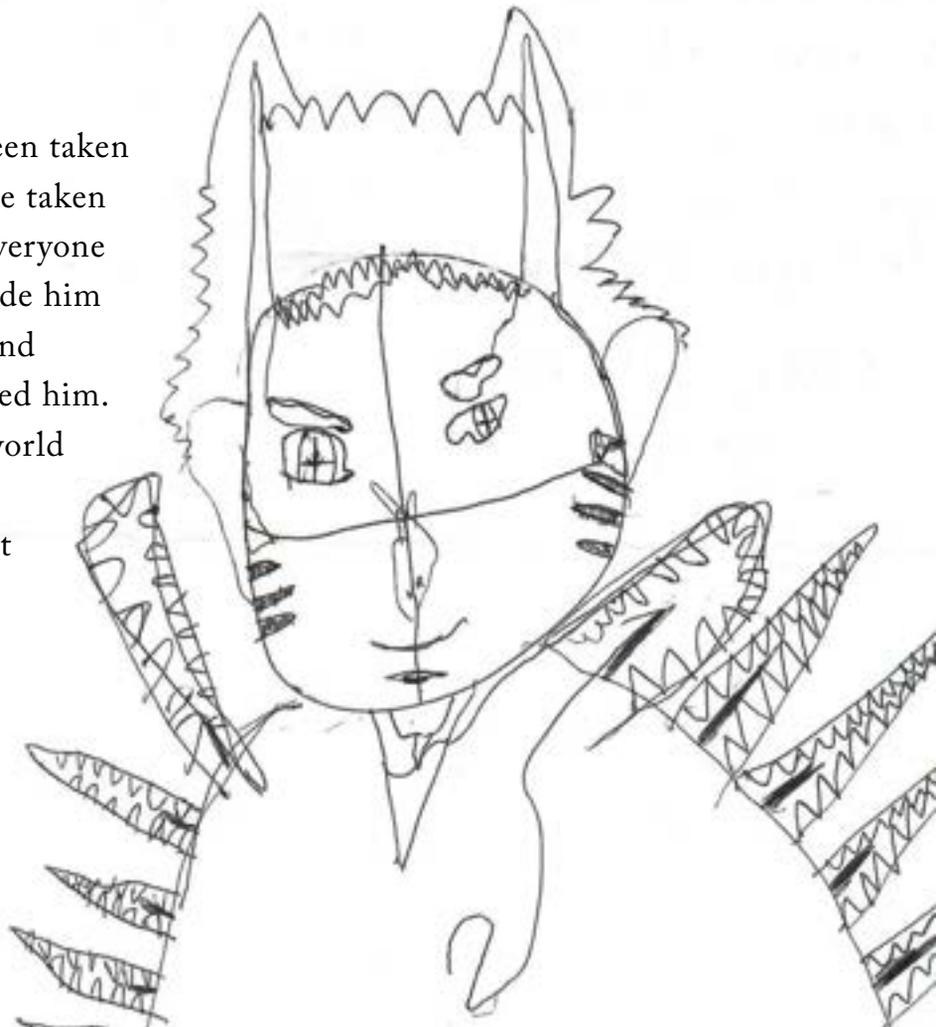
I like to play soccer. I am on the best team because I am the fastest one on the team. I like Roblox. I play it by myself or with my friends.

If you have bumpy speech, you could pause, breathe, and start talking with an easy onset.

Pedro, 9, Fairmont, MN

I drew Naruto because he may have been taken from his parents but your voice can't be taken away from you. Naruto was hated by everyone as a kid just because of something inside him but he overcame that as he got older and when he became Hokage everyone loved him. So, if you shut yourself out from the world the world will do the same and your voice will never be heard. You can't just sit around and let the world not hear you. You have to make the world hear you like Naruto did. Your stutter does not define or change you and all you have to do is just open your mouth and realize it.

Chris, 11, Willow Grove, PA





Hi, my name is Micah. I'm in a family of 5 soon to be six. I live in IL. I have a cat and a dog. My cat's name is Bubba my dog's name is Tennyson. I like chicken, tacos, my mom's food, McDonald's, and Fazoli's. I want to be an astronaut with NASA because I have always wanted to see outside earth. I don't know exactly when I started stuttering, I think about kindergarten. I feel fine about my stuttering it doesn't bother me, only when people talk bad about it bothers me. You shouldn't feel bad about stuttering. Just keep on talking and using your strategies then you will definitely get better at it. My favorites are slow rate, easy onset, and deep breath. I started with relaxed breath and slow rate then found out about easy onset.

-Micah, 9, Joliet, IL

Hi, my name is TJ and I'm thirteen. I like to read, write, sing, study, and draw. I'm writing all about my stutter. I've been stuttering for four years and have been in speech therapy for 8 years now. I usually stutter when I'm shy, nervous, when I'm around strangers, or sometimes stutter out of nowhere. I know a lot about stuttering and my stutter bothers and annoys me most of the time. Luckily, speech therapy helps me to control my stutter. Some of the strategies I use are slowing down, smooth movement, continuous phonation, and easy speech.

When I stutter, I feel tension in my jaw, face, and chest. There are different types of stuttering and mine are prolongation and repetitions. I often stutter on words that start with m, l, k, w, and s.

People do not help me by telling me to slow down, relax, or finish what I am saying. Please just take the time to listen to what I say instead of how I say it.

To people who get bullied, what people say about your stutter isn't true and they are wrong for mocking you. You are strong and having a stutter does not make you any different!

Tarnjit (TJ), 13, Yuba City, CA

Hi, my name is Michael. I am 13 years old, and I like to play soccer. I usually stutter when doing presentations or reading out loud to other people. I always feel embarrassed when I stutter. Whenever I am about to say something, I say it in my head so I can be prepared when saying it.

Michael, 13, Carlsbad, CA





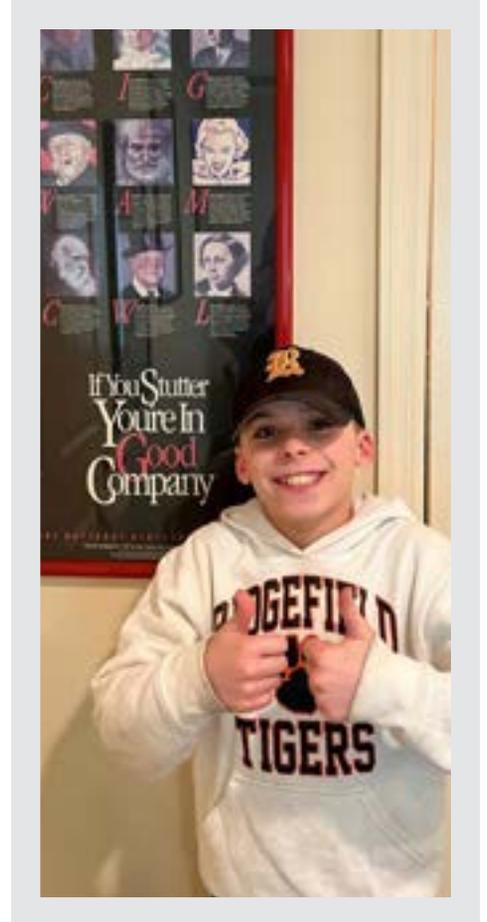
Hello, my name is Medhansh. I am ten years old and live in North Potomac, Maryland. My favorite game to play is Roblox Floor Is Lava! I also love to play with Legos. My favorite sport is Cricket. I started stuttering when I was five years old. I used to feel nervous when I talked to my teachers and my friends. But now I feel more confident. Some strategies I use are Stretchy Speech, easy onset, and also turtle talk.

Medhansh, 10, North Potomac, MD

Hi, my name is Matthew. I am eleven years old and am in fifth grade. My favorite part of school is Math, I like Math. I also really love sports. I was born in Philadelphia, so I am a big Philly fan. My favorite sports to play and watch are football and basketball. My favorite foods are mac and cheese and pasta. I don't know when I started stuttering but I've been getting speech therapy since kindergarten. When I am sharing something or having a presentation, the strategies that help me the best are easy onset and slow rate. Easy onset helps me out of a block and slow rate helps me to stay in control, so I don't speak too fast. I really recommend these strategies because they work very well and help me so much. I noticed that you can't stutter when you're singing or whispering, that's a fun fact. Sometimes you might feel down about stuttering or some people might not accept the way you are but you should just keep going and ignore what people are saying about you.

Everyone has their own issues to deal with, you are not alone!

Matthew, 11, Ridgefield, CT



Hello! My name is Paige and I'm 10 years old. Also, I've stuttered since I can even remember in general. But my cat Shadow helps me stutter less I guess and ever since I've started talking my cat has helped me through this long journey.

Paige, 10, Maple Grove, MN

Hi, my name is Mila and I'm 8 years old. I am almost a 3rd grader. I'm going to tell you my story about how I stutter.

Before we begin, I want to ask you questions. What's your favorite color? Mine is black. Are you a girl or a boy? Do you also stutter?

The first time I stuttered was when I was 5 years old. I started in speech when I was 6 years old. I also stuttered in 1st grade. Usually when I talk to people, I don't really stutter but I stutter just a little bit. Do we have something in common?

My feelings when I stutter are either - 1. angry, 2. a little bit sad, and 3. normal.

I have one sister and a dad, a stepdad, and a mom. I have 4 grandpas and 4 grandmas. It's kind of complicated. When I want to try something, my grandma makes me the food I want to try.

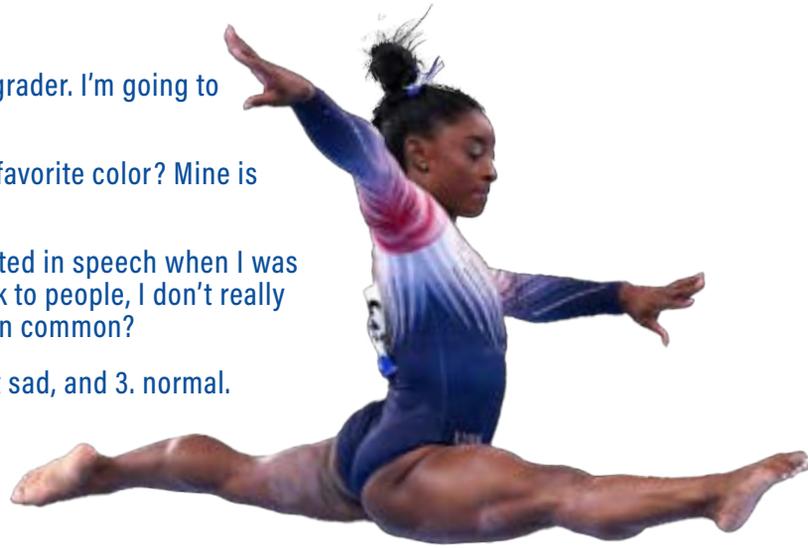
My favorite book is about Simone Biles. I love gymnastics and she inspires me to be strong and give everything I've got. I go to gymnastics on Saturdays. At the end of practice, we get to pick out a lollipop or Smarties. I won 2 medals at my competition. Whenever I learn something new, I get used to it and do it all by myself.

Every year we go to the beach. Every year we go to the lake too. I go to the beach with my mom and with my stepdad and with my uncles too. I go to the lake with my grandma and my uncle. 4 months ago, me and my uncles had an Orbeez gun fight, it was pretty fun! Me and my stepdad won!

Now that I've talked about myself, here's some strategies that I use. My speech therapist is named Mrs. Reinholt and she taught me easy onset and pausing. And if she was your speech therapist you would love her.

I know sometimes stuttering can be frustrating, but you'll get used to it like I did.

Mila, 8, Warsaw, IN



Hi! I'm Blake. I'm eleven years old and I'm in fifth grade at Iowa Grant Elementary & Middle School. I like to play lots of sports including basketball, football, baseball, & wrestling. Besides sports, I work on my family's farm. We help our grandparents at their farm too. We raise and show beef cows. I'm also interested in meteorology. Knowing about the weather helps for planning on the farm.



Photo from Blake's farm

I really look up to Steve Harvey as a mentor or a role model. He is always very funny on his TV shows and his speech doesn't affect him. He has learned strategies to overcome his stuttering.

I like to smooth out my speech when I talk. That makes it flow more easily with a rhythm. Whatever strategy you use, don't be ashamed that you stutter. Be proud and confident when you speak.

Blake, 11, Rewey, WI

Dear teens who stutter,

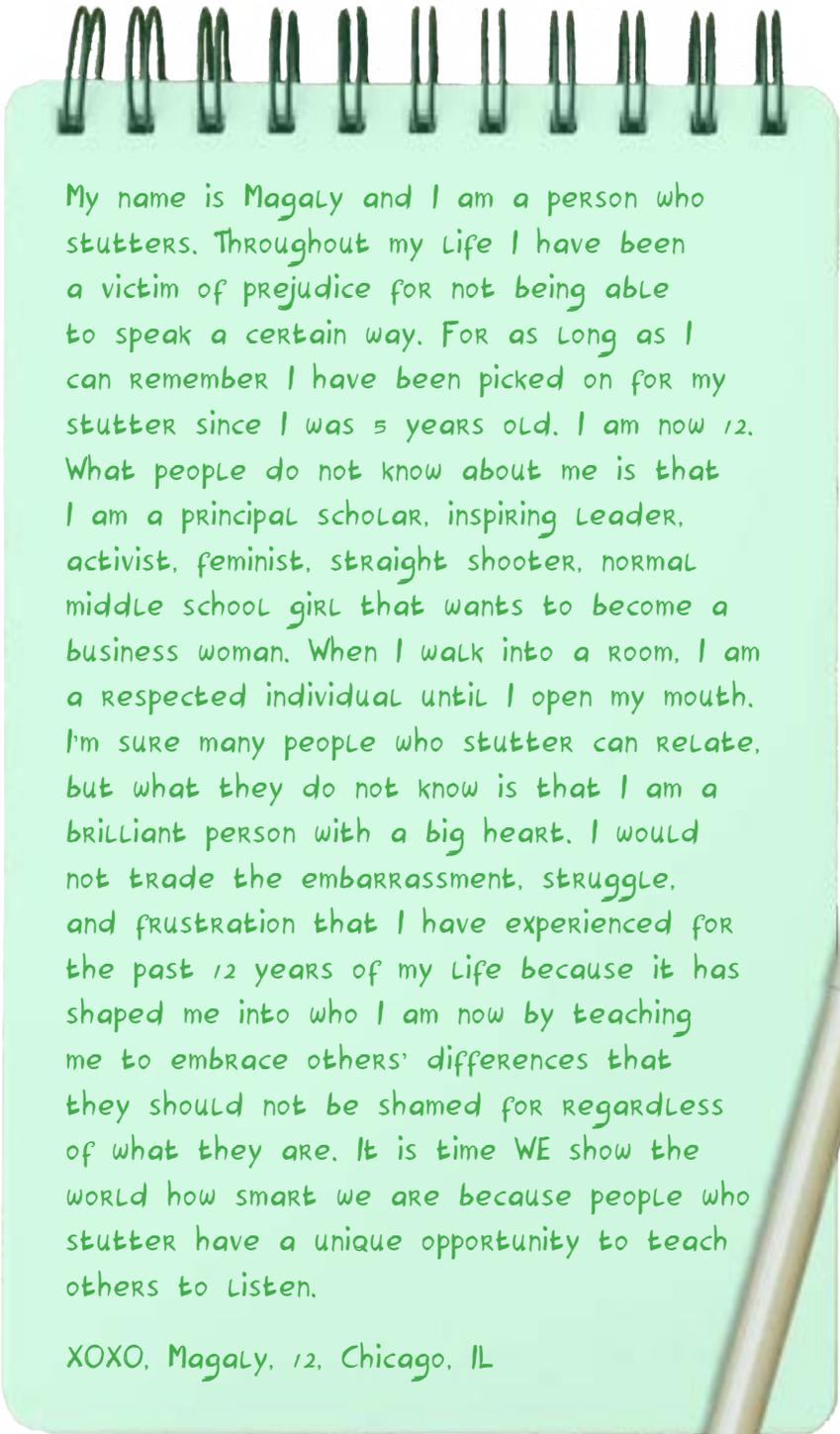
I have published many letters about myself and how I stutter. Usually, I talk about how stuttering has affected me and I give a little bit of encouragement. In this letter, I wanted to aim my message straight to teens. As a new teen, I wanted to share how I feel about stuttering.

I have been stuttering since I was 4 years old. So I've been stuttering for a while, considering I'm 13 now. But turning 13 is a big step in my life. You're not a kid anymore, even though some say you are! You take on more responsibilities and leadership roles, learn how to provide for yourself, and much more. But for us as stutterers we have more weight to carry than your average teenager. We have a stutter which makes everything harder. But that should not get us down!

Everyone has a different stutter; you might have repetitions or blocks like me. Some might stutter more than others. You might like your stutter or hate it because it stops you. But the truth is, it shouldn't stop you, you must push through the hard times. Don't let it ruin your life or stress you out. Take it from me, I stutter and I still accomplish my goals. I have a YouTube channel on the adventures of my life, play team sports, and play guitar and sing as part of the worship team at my church. If you want to check my channel it's Wildman Adventure - Kids on YouTube.

I hope this encouragement helps you through some of the hard times. The hard times will come but there will be good times throughout your life. Cherish the good times and use it to push through the hard ones. Don't let your stutter stop you from doing anything. Anything!

Your friend,
Wyatt, 13, Eustis, FL



My name is Magaly and I am a person who stutters. Throughout my life I have been a victim of prejudice for not being able to speak a certain way. For as long as I can remember I have been picked on for my stutter since I was 5 years old. I am now 12. What people do not know about me is that I am a principal scholar, inspiring leader, activist, feminist, straight shooter, normal middle school girl that wants to become a business woman. When I walk into a room, I am a respected individual until I open my mouth. I'm sure many people who stutter can relate, but what they do not know is that I am a brilliant person with a big heart. I would not trade the embarrassment, struggle, and frustration that I have experienced for the past 12 years of my life because it has shaped me into who I am now by teaching me to embrace others' differences that they should not be ashamed for regardless of what they are. It is time WE show the world how smart we are because people who stutter have a unique opportunity to teach others to listen.

XOXO, Magaly, 12, Chicago, IL

Stuttering

Always been a part of my life
The words have always been
trouble
Never really came out right

Stuttering

Always kept my head down
Never really talked
Didn't wanna share my voice

Stuttering

I know my words are important
I know I should speak
But it's still tough

Stuttering

It gave me a type of confidence
That I never knew I had
It showed that I was unique

Stuttering

Keep your head up
Most importantly share your
voice

Brooklyn, 12, Troy, MO



Hello, my name is Jackson. I am 8 years old. I'm turning 9 at the beginning of next year. My favourite creature is a dog. I like playing Minecraft and Roblox. My favourite sport is football. The reason why I like playing football is because of my favourite football player, Aaron Rodgers, on the Green Bay Packers.

I started stuttering when I was 3 years old. I've had many speech therapy teachers before the one that I have now. I'm excited to graduate from speech soon. The easy breath and robot talking strategies helped me with my stutter. It can help you too. Never stop believing in yourself.

Jackson, 8
Ontario, Canada

**Stuttering hurts.
We can help.
So can you.**



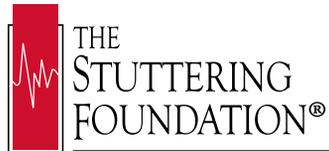
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