



# Reaching Out

## FRIENDS – The National Association of Young People Who Stutter

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### Upcoming Events!

#### One-Day Friends Conventions around the country:

- October 5<sup>th</sup>, Des Moines Iowa
- November 2<sup>nd</sup>, Denver CO
- December 7<sup>th</sup>, Long Island NY

For more information, visit  
[www.friendswhostutter.org](http://www.friendswhostutter.org)



### Back to School!

It's that time of the year again, and many people are back to school! Whether you're starting a new school or returned to the same school, in this edition of Reaching Out you will find a few tips to help you have a great year.

Feeling comfortable in school can make challenging situations like asking questions in class, raising your hand, reading aloud, making new friends, and join clubs a little easier. Many kids who stutter say that advertising makes them more comfortable. What is advertising you ask? Advertising is letting people know that you stutter. For many people this sounds like a crazy idea. So why would someone want to let others know that they stutter?

#### Why to advertise:

- Makes you feel more comfortable
- Lets the other person feel more comfortable and less confused
- Helps the other person understand more about stuttering and then they are less likely to tease you
- Takes the pressure off of you, so you don't have to worry about stuttering or try not to stutter
- Raise awareness about stuttering
- Educate others about stuttering

#### How to advertise:

- Wear a FRIENDS t-shirt or bracelet
- Use social media to share a little bit about stuttering or share the FRIENDS website
- Stutter openly or voluntary stutter (fake easy repetitions: bo-bo-book)
- Use humor. "In case I hadn't made it incredibly obvious, I stutter...sooo now you know."
- If doing an icebreaker like "share three facts about yourself", tell the class something like: "I love hockey, I have two sisters, and I stutter."

## Start the School Year off on the right foot!



### Write a letter or email to your teacher.

Another great way to advertise and start the school year off feeling more comfortable and confident is to let your teacher know that you stutter. Below is an example of how a high school student let her teachers know about stuttering and what they can do (or not do) to help.

Dear Ms. Baker,

My name is Josette and I will be in your AP U.S. History class this year. I just wanted to let you know that I stutter. By letting you know, I think that both of us become more comfortable. Stuttering is a neurological issue and it causes my vocal cords to get stuck. It sometimes takes me a little longer to get a word out. I know what I want to say, but it just takes me an extra few seconds to say it. Stuttering is not caused by anxiety. However, in a stressful situation I may stutter more frequently. I also have secondary behaviors related to stuttering. I sometimes move my head or tighten my face while I'm speaking. I am currently attending speech therapy and working on being more comfortable with my stuttering. I am also working on speaking techniques to make stuttering easier and to reduce my secondary behaviors. I do not want to be treated differently than any of my classmates or get special attention. The only thing that I ask of you is, please don't finish my sentences. I enjoy participating in class discussions and oral presentations, so please do not be afraid to call on me.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me.

Sincerely,  
Josette

Ms. Baker's reply:

Josette,

Thank you for writing me that well written email. Not a problem – I know that you are a great student and love to take part in class. By having your positive attitude about stuttering, you are a true role model to others. I cannot wait to have you in class!

Ms. Baker

**For more ideas on how to prepare for school, visit [www.friendswhostutter.org](http://www.friendswhostutter.org)**

## Dealing with Teasing and Bullying



Most people experience teasing and/or bullying at some point in their life. Sometimes people tease because they are confused about what is going on, they are uncomfortable, or they are trying to make a joke. But other people bully with the intention to hurt you. If a person laughs at you or makes a rude comment because they don't know very much about stuttering, it may help to advertise to them and maybe educate them a little about stuttering. HOWEVER, if the person is bullying you to make you feel bad, then that's different and educating the person about stuttering may not help. Sometimes the most helpful thing to do is to think of "comebacks." Comebacks are short and easy phrases that you can say to the bully that will hopefully catch him off-guard and make him stop. The idea is not to be mean, but to find a way to show the bully that you are not bothered by what he/she is saying and that stuttering is not a big deal. What the bully does and says can be hurtful, but bullies often stop picking on people who don't seem to mind. So when you are saying a comeback, try your best to act like you really don't care and stuttering is not a big deal. Below are just a few examples of comebacks, but think of something to say that feels natural and good to you.

If the bully says something like, "You stutter!!" try saying something like:

- "So?"
- "Yea I stutter...so what?"
- "I already know I stutter...why don't you tell me something I don't know."
- "Yea, that's just how I talk...it's no big deal."

If the bully imitates your stuttering you can say

- "Oh wow do you stutter too?"
- "Come back when you can stutter as good as I do!"
- Just walk away and ignore them



## Convention 2013: Rewinding to The Music City

Like so many past years, this year's convention brought together hundreds of FRIENDS from across the country to join together for three days of laughter, fun, education, mentorship and friendship. Attendees had opportunities to showcase artwork, participate in the annual silent and live auctions, attend workshops led by Speech-Language Pathologists, parents, siblings and authors, listen to keynote speakers, participate in open mic and check out all that Nashville has to offer. It was an unforgettable weekend that left everyone excited and ready for Chicago 2014!

Luca Cardazzi won an iPad at the convention. His mom, Kim, took this picture when they presented it to the winner who happened to be his Teacher's Assistant from school, Margret Cosgrove. Congratulations Luca and Margret!



The FRIENDS convention in Nashville this summer was my first. It was great. I've been an elementary school based SLP in Queens, NY for 13 years. In that time, I have had the pleasure of knowing and working with some children who stutter, but not many. My direct experience with fluency therapy and the stuttering community has been somewhat limited. My wish is to broaden my understanding, knowledge and involvement.

At the FRIENDS convention, I learned from therapists who were kind, wise and who really know their stuff. I learned from young people *and* adults who stutter, who shared their personal stories of struggle and triumph. I also laughed, shed tears and shared meals with the families and friends who support them. Your stories are moving and inspiring. Thank you for sharing them with me, and I hope to see you again next year.

Sincerely, Michael Winkowski



FRIENDS would like to acknowledge the following companies and/or individuals who made generous donations to our 2013 Silent and Live Auction: Alex and Ani, AMC Theaters, Build-a-Bear, Canvas Pop, Casa Bella, Cheesecake Factory, CVS, Flirty Aprons, Grand Ole Opry Hotel, Lucky Strike, Marc Vetri, Matt Slauson of the Chicago Bears, NJ Devils, NY Giants, NY Rangers, Oriental Trading, Outback Restaurant, Panera Bread, Pentax, Planet Jill, Robert Matthew Handbags, Snap Sac, Sprinkles Cupcakes, Stephanie Johnson, Stop & Shop, Tennessee Titans and Walt Disney World.

FRIENDS would also like to take the opportunity to thank all the families who either made a donation to and/ or won an item from one of our 2013 auctions. Your generosity helped make it as successful as it was. With each and every donation and bid, however large or small it enabled FRIENDS to raise funds. Because of your support, you truly are helping FRIENDS make a difference.



Chris Constantino is a PhD student in Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Memphis. Chris is currently working under the mentorship of Dr. Walt Manning. His area of concentration is stuttering and his collateral area is counseling. His research interests include the therapeutic process, improving treatment outcomes, counseling, qualitative research, and the neurophysiological substrates of stuttering.

Chris shared the following reflection after attending his first FRIENDS Convention in Nashville, TN.

### The FRIENDS Convention Experience

FRIENDS is more than just the name of an organization, it is a description of what takes place at the annual convention. The children, teenagers, and young adults who I had the pleasure of meeting came to the convention for the primary reason of hanging out with their friends and having fun. Within the milieu of these friendships self-help, support, and acceptance grew and flourished. I cannot think of a better environment in which to empower and support young people who stutter.

This was my first FRIENDS convention and I met many new people and made many new friends in the process. There was a special little guy who took a unique liking to me, but he could never remember my name. He named me his, "big friend with the drawing on his arm". I made many other friends at the convention, from fellow speech language pathologists, to children, and parents.

The parents were the most inspiring people at the convention. Being a parent of a child who stutters is not easy. It can be isolating and filled with uncertainty about the future. It takes a leap of faith to bring your family to a FRIENDS convention for the first time. The looks on the first time parents' faces told me that their gamble paid off. They openly shed happy tears as not only their children but they themselves received the much needed support that had been missing in their lives. The veteran parents looked on with pride as their children acted as role models for the younger and newer children. Parents can rest assured that bringing their children to FRIENDS is a wonderful gift not only to their children but to themselves. It is easy to forget that parents need support too and there was plenty of it to go around at this year's convention.

The older children at the convention are true role models for the younger ones. The teenagers and young adults whom I met, and even some of the younger children, were at a much better place with stuttering than I was at their age. I am sure FRIENDS had a role to play in this. As parents and speech language pathologists we can try to empower children who stutter all we want but nothing we say will be more meaningful to them than meeting peers who also stutter. The level of self-acceptance among the children at FRIENDS was exceptional. It is this self-acceptance that leads to their mature outlook on their stuttering. The more children who are involved with FRIENDS the better the future of the stuttering community.

Stuttering has its own charm. I love hearing it and I love being around it. FRIENDS was a great opportunity to meet new people, make new FRIENDS, and have a lot of fun doing it. I will definitely be back next year.



Thanks to the commitment and dedication of the entire Ruden family, the FRIENDS 1<sup>st</sup> annual Golf Tournament was an incredible success. We are so fortunate to have them as part of the FRIENDS family. As a result of the hard work of the Ruden family and all those who so generously supported this fund-raiser, families will be attending the FRIENDS One Day Conference in Iowa at no charge. We look forward to seeing you all there!

## Parent Page

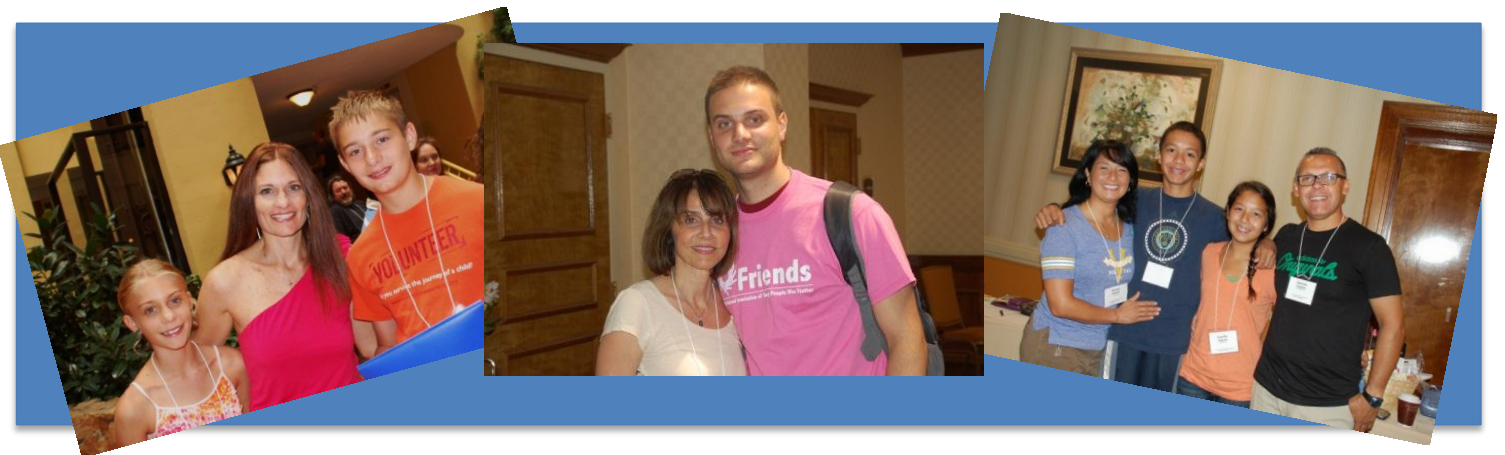
Parents asked teens some tough questions. Here's what the teens said:

### **I'm worried that my child is being bullied/teased at school about stuttering? What can I do to help?**

"When I was in high school, a teacher gave me a hard time, so I told my mom. My mom called the school to educate the teachers about stuttering. When I came in the next day, many of teachers heard about the phone call and I felt like a snitch and that the teachers then looked at me different. I wish that my mom had advised me to talk to the teacher myself so others would have seen that I can deal with my own issues."

"Encourage your child to self-advocate"

"Help your child figure out how to advocate for himself. Help him think of things that he can say or do if someone is being mean."



### **My 12 year old child has no interest in attending speech therapy, but I would really like him to. How can I encourage him to work on his stuttering?**

"I don't think you should force him if he isn't ready. He won't learn anything if he isn't ready. He may put up walls and then think negatively about speech therapy in the future."

"I think having them try it at least once can't hurt. Then if they still really don't want to, they don't have to."

"I think it's important to find out why they don't want to go. If the child is communicating well...is it just that change or something new can be scary? Not wanting to try again because other therapies have not been helpful"

**Do you have a problem or question that you would like to ask our Reaching Out readers?  
If so, email it to [caryn@friendswhostutter.org](mailto:caryn@friendswhostutter.org)**





## Ask a Stuttering Specialist

Sarah Vogel, MA, CCC/SLP is a Speech-Language Pathologist who works at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in the Center for Childhood Communication. Sarah provides evaluation and therapy services to children and teens who stutter as well as children with articulation, voice and language disorders.

### How should I advocate for my child in the school setting and what accommodations should be made?

Talk to your child's teachers and other school based professionals about the impact stuttering has on your child's life - be it social, academic or extracurricular. For example, some children who stutter do not order for themselves in restaurants or raise their hand in class even if they know exactly what they want to eat and the correct answers to teacher's questions. Bringing this impact to the attention of teachers and other professionals can highlight how even if they do not see and hear the stuttering, or think it has an impact - often it's the things we do not see or hear that are most debilitating for a child who stutters.

### How should I handle teasing and bullying in school and at home (with siblings)?

I think teasing and bullying needs to be handled for stuttering in the same way it would be handled for any other issue. Talk honestly with children about the issues at hand. Explain to them what stuttering is and how to better respond to a child who stutters. Often if you ask a child who stutters what they would like to say to people who tease them, they will come up with the best answers. One child told me that if he was brave enough to speak up for himself he would say, "I do not stutter on purpose." This kind of a statement should be shared with peers. Many children who stutter feel unsure about speaking up about their stuttering. Part of a therapy plan, for kids who are able and willing, can be to do a classroom presentation about stuttering so that other children in the classroom and school understand stuttering more and therefore are less likely to make fun of it. After the classroom presentation, keep the conversation open with children and teachers so that they are continually aware of how to best listen and respond to a child who stutters. Children are most likely to make fun of issues that they do not know about or understand - so empowering them all with knowledge and awareness of stuttering can help.

## 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 effect 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 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](http://www.friendswhostutter.org) for more information!**

## How to donate to FRIENDS

Our 2013 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:**

\_\_\_\_\_

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**CVC code: (3 digit code on the back of the card)**

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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.

**8 | If you stutter, you have FRIENDS.**



**The National Association of Young People Who Stutter**

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Send articles, questions or ideas to Caryn at  
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