

Fluency Friday Plus 2006!

Affiliate Support Grant in Action

Over fifty children/teens with stuttering ages five through 18 participated in the Fluency Friday Plus project November 3rd and 4th at Mercy Healthplex-Fairfield located in the northern part of Cincinnati. The children/teens received individual and group treatment in sessions designed by graduate clinicians from the University of Cincinnati and Miami University. Fluency Friday Plus activities focused on providing the children and teens with positive speaking experiences a number of situations that are often difficult for children who stutter. The graduate clinicians were supervised by experienced speech language pathologists from the Cincinnati area. Each graduate clinician and supervisor received a manual containing diagnostic and treatment ideas developed by the Fluency Friday Team along with handouts from guest speakers attending FFP along with ideas/forms for future use with parents and teachers.

The FFP theme this year was “Find Your Hidden Treasures” using characters from “The Pirates of the Caribbean” to teach concepts. Jack Sparrow and members of his crew were used to guide students to find their inner treasures. PowerPoint presentations provided background on the pirates’ quest for treasure while focusing on the importance of becoming better communicators and learning new skills.

Student Booklets contained activities designed to help the children/teens discover special qualities and to structure the intensive treatment segment of the program. The booklets included “Affirmations” (skills or talents) for each participant, a Stuttering Fingerprint to analyze the stuttering pattern and a “map” of hidden treasures for the Conversational Breakfast.

Attitudes and Emotions around speaking were discussed in group sessions along with other difficult aspects of dealing with stuttering including teasing, embarrassment and avoidance. The children/teens participated in games and role plays to evaluate emotions and generate

solutions to manage emotions and to practice difficult speaking situations related to stuttering. To practice speech skills, the children/teens developed group skits which were performed at the end of the day. Participants also told jokes during Open Microphone during lunch on Friday. On Saturday morning, they participated in a Conversational Breakfast where they visited 10 Talking Stations.

Sessions were also available for the parents on Friday and Saturday morning. The parents listened to sessions led by Nina Reardon, Donna Cooperman & Derek Daniels. These sessions dealt with topics such as how to talk to your child about stuttering and the various aspects of treatment. In addition, members of the FFP planning team fielded questions in an open forum where parents shared their personal questions and concerns. Later on Friday, a Teen Panel answered parents' questions concerning stuttering. On Saturday, Adults with Stuttering shared painful and positive experiences/reactions to their stuttering throughout their childhood. This panel was led by Derek Daniels who shared his personal story growing up with stuttering.

A special session was held on Saturday morning for the siblings of the children/teens who participated in FFP. The video "Stuttering for Kids by Kids" was used to educate the participants about stuttering. Role playing of "Time Pressure" and other concepts related to stuttering provided the siblings with "hands on" practice of how interruptions and comments can impact stuttering. The siblings asked questions, discussed their concerns and wrote letters or made drawings for their brother or sister.

Fluency Friday Plus is a combination intensive treatment for children/teens who stutter along with a training program for graduated students. Experienced clinicians from the community participate to learn more about stuttering and to support the graduate students. This program could not exist without the financial support of grants such as the Affiliate Grant Program from the Ohio Speech Language and Hearing Association and financial support from the Southwestern Speech Language and Hearing Association. In addition, Hamilton County Education Service Center lends support in printing materials and recruiting community speech language pathologists for this training experience.

This year, grant monies were used to develop a web page: www.fluencyfriday.org. The web site contains the diagnostic protocol used at Fluency Friday, treatment ideas, the booklet used by the children at FFP, handouts from speakers and other interesting articles to help community speech language pathologists in the treatment of children and teens who stutter. The web page will be updated and expanded each year to include new materials.

An event of this nature requires the support of many people. The entire team of speech language pathologists who participated in FFP-2006, the children/teens who stutter and their families and the graduate students from the University of Cincinnati and Miami University would like to thank Procter & Gamble, OSLHA, SWOSHA, Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, HCESC and the many individuals who work behind the scenes for their support!