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NUCASLL

Northwestern | COMMUNICATION

Center for Audiology, Speech,
Language, and Learning

NEWS

Monthly updates from the
Northwestern University Center for
Audiology, Speech, Language, and
Learning



Supporting Communication in our Local Community and Beyond

This month, we're highlighting ways NUCASLL supports communication in our community. From creative programs like Break the Blocks to evidence-based treatment for stuttering, speech, and language, our faculty and students help individuals of all ages communicate more confidently.

Free Community Screenings!

Regular screenings are important at every age to support communication health. Contact the clinic to schedule your appointment, or share these opportunities with a friend or family member. Upcoming sessions include swallowing, adult hearing, and speech, language, and hearing assessments for children — unofficially geared toward bilingual participants.

Upcoming Events and Programs

Community Hearing Screening

November 14

Adults can get a hearing screening, talk to an audiologist, and demo hearing devices.

Swallowing Screening **December 5**

These screenings are designed to help detect swallowing difficulties early and promote communication health

Speech, Language, and Hearing Screening

December 12

Screenings for children ages 5-12 with an audiologist and bilingual speech-language pathologist.

These screenings are free but spaces are limited and appointments are required. Contact us today to save your spot!

[Check out our full event calendar.](#)

Understanding Stuttering

Stuttering affects about 1% of the world's population, including more than 3 million Americans. It's a speech difference that can vary widely from person to person—some experience brief repetitions or pauses, while others may have more frequent disruptions in fluency.

Common characteristics include:

- Repetitions of sounds or parts of words ("W-W-W-What are you doing?")
- Prolongations of speech sounds ("SSSSo what do you think?")
- Blocks, when the mouth is positioned to speak but no sound comes out

Stuttering is most often identified in early childhood, as speech and language skills are developing. While the exact cause isn't fully understood, research points to a combination of genetic, neurological, and developmental factors. Early evaluation can help determine whether a child's speech patterns are part of typical development or if therapy may be beneficial.



Program leaders David Catlin and Elisha Boxer Magnifico with student leaders of Break the Blocks improv program.



It's important to remember that stuttering is not caused by anxiety or nervousness, and it's not something a person can "just stop" doing. Many people who stutter lead full, successful lives—including well-known figures like President Joe Biden, Emily Blunt, Ed Sheeran, and even Scatman John, who famously turned his stutter into rhythm and music.

Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) at NUCASLL evaluate stuttering through observation, speech analysis, and discussion of family history. They work with clients of all ages to provide individualized assessment and therapy, helping each person find strategies that support smoother, more confident communication. Treatment may include techniques for managing breathing, pacing, and self-expression—along with encouragement to embrace one's unique voice.

October 22 marked International Stuttering Awareness Day, a reminder that everyone deserves to be heard—and understood.

Break the Blocks supports tweens, teens, and young adults who stutter

The sixth series of Break the Blocks, our improvisation-based program designed for the stuttering community, is in full swing! We're excited to welcome seven new participants alongside many returning ones. This diverse group ranges from tweens to young adults, all with their own lived experience of stuttering. Together, they come to have fun, build community and become more confident communicators while exploring the guiding principle of improv: "Yes, and...". Through this approach, we focus on sharing and accepting ideas, collaboration, and active listening.

This unique collaboration is co-lead by Elisha Boxer Magnifico, MA, CCC-SLP, Assistant Clinical Professor in Communication Sciences and Disorders, and David Catlin, Head of Acting in the Department of Theatre, along with a dedicated team of student leaders. At its heart, Break the Blocks builds community, confidence, and connection. We're thrilled to host our second ever Friends and Family Participation Night this November!



Participants in Break the Blocks explore communication and teamwork through creative activities.

NUCASLL and Northwestern University are proud to support the community through outreach, education, and programs led by our faculty and students that make communication more accessible for everyone. Break the Blocks is just one of the many ways we're helping local families connect and thrive.

Join the Communication Research Registry

Our clinic, NUCASLL, is partnering with Northwestern University's [Communication Research Registry](#) (CRR; STU00070769) to support research on the cause and treatment of conditions related to communication, learning, and development. The purpose of the CRR is to provide NUCASLL patients with valuable opportunities to participate in research studies related to communication, learning, and development at Northwestern University.

Interested in helping support research by participating? Adults can register by clicking this short [link](#) or by scanning the QR code below, which will direct you to a registration page. If you are a parent or caregiver who would like to register your child, please contact us.

commresearchregistry@northwestern.edu
(855) 354-3273.

