

Coach Tim!!

It's me, Matt Pulford! For the past several months my parents have been asking me to write you and update you on how well I have been doing: both with speech and in life.

Life: I've been pretty good. I think it has been six months since we last met and all has been sell. I'm not running cross country this year because I am leading my school's FCA/FCS (Fellowship of Christian Athletes/Students). This program is in most schools across the U.S. At FCA, I get to speak in front of 60-75 students and teachers weekly!

Some other school stuff is going well, also. I'm in Honors and AP classes and I am doing alright in them. I also got my first two jobs! I referee soccer. On the weekends I have this really awesome job selling Ralph Lauren and Lacoste products! Yeah, pretty tight! I'll definitely have to give you the website if you're interested.

Stuttering (or lack there of): since we last met, I have had to give numerous speeches.

- 1) Back in May I had to give a business presentation for my Entrepreneurism class. This presentation was in front of 50 students, two teachers, two college professors, as well as two CEO's of companies! Needless to say I was quite nervous but I pulled through it, did an excellent job talking, and scored a 100 on the presentation!
- 2) Being one of the most talkative people at church I have been given the task of going up to new people and striking up conversations. That is pretty cool because meeting people and saying my name used to be the hardest!*
- 3) I have lost track of the oral presentations I have given for assorted projects at school.
- 4) My dad and I went to Berry College for a Men's Church retreat. I got to share my testimony (which included stuttering in my life) in front of 70 adults; most of whom I had never met.
- 5) Perhaps my proudest speech accomplishment was about two weeks ago. I was running for class president (again).** This time I had to give a speech in front of the entire senior class. My junior class has 753 kids- the biggest number in the entire history of the school. The speech went well- no stuttering. You would have been proud, Coach Tim! I spoke off the top of my head. It keeps getting better. I won! I am president of my graduation class of 2010.

Just think that a mere five years ago, when I was in 6th grade, I could barely do a speech in front of 20 people. Tomorrow I will be speaking in front of 200-400 people for FCA. Isn't this insane? So excited!

Well, Coach Tim, I just wanted to share this all with you and see how you are doing. I hope all is well. I am still looking at colleges to be a speech pathologist.

Sincerely,

Matt Pulford- a used to be stutterer. 10/08

Addendum by Tim

Somebody tell me where to start. This is a story of a young man with great family support. This is a family of faith and conviction.

*Matt came to me in 6th grade. He already had seven years of previous speech therapy for stuttering. When he would attempt to say any word beginning with /m/ (i.e., Matt) his head would thrust up and down as he blocked. For any SLPs reading this, Matt was 67% disfluent (syllables stuttered). I still have his initial video tape.

** One week before Matt came to me (6th grade) he had attempted to run for class office. His stuttering was so profound that a teacher asked him to sit back down. You can imagine that I worked with his parents to educate his school! One year later he was class president- in 7th grade.

I'm sure you get the picture that even when his stuttering was profound, Matt spoke up (unless silenced).

I remember telling Matt the story of Moses in Exodus 4:10. Moses reportedly stuttered and let his brother, Aaron, speak for him. God selected Moses to lead the people from Egypt. I asked Matt: "Who was Moses that was more important than stuttering? And, who are you that is more important than stuttering?" Now we know.

Having the opportunity to work with families like Matt's is as much of a blessing to me as his victory is to him.

Does anyone reading this hope Matt becomes a speech-language pathologist?