

A Message From Your Editors:

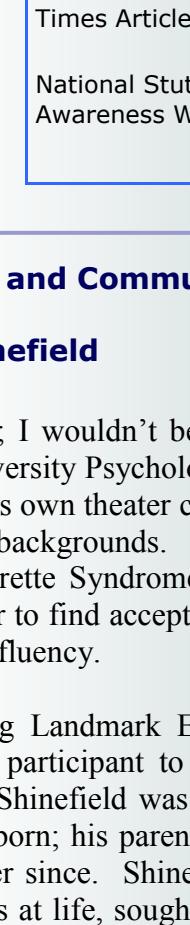
Volume 1, Issue II, December

Welcome to the second issue of SPAU@Stern!

We have received an overwhelming response to our first issue and are very excited to publish our second edition of SPAU@Stern!

This special issue is unique in that all of its articles shed light on a prevalent but often misunderstood speech disorder: stuttering. Since Oct 22nd was designated as International Stuttering Awareness Day, we would like to dedicate this edition of SPAU@Stern to expressing the voices and issues of those who stutter. Included in this edition is a film review of Dr. Phil and Uri Schneider's most recent documentary, "Going With the Flow: A Guide to Transcending Stuttering," an interview with a YU student, a review of a New York Times editorial, an overview of Stuttering Awareness Week and an article highlighting a famous politician who stutters. We hope that you enjoy learning new perspectives on stuttering as much as we have!

With warm regards,
Davina Simhaee & Chani Markel



Davina Simhaee Chani Markel
Founder, Editor Co-Founder & Layout

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Theater Company to Encourage Confidence and Communication in Those Who Stutter: An Interview with David Shinefield

By: Chaya Sapper



"Handicaps are the greatest gifts; I wouldn't be the same person without them," says Yeshiva University Psychology Major, David Shinefield. Shinefield is starting his own theater company to help people who stutter of all ages and backgrounds. Shinefield, who both stutters and suffers from Tourette Syndrome, seeks to create a safe haven for people who stutter to find acceptance while also work on techniques to increase their fluency.

Shinefield came up with this idea when taking Landmark Education's "Curriculum for Living" course, which requires each participant to develop a community project to make the world a better place. Shinefield was connected with Landmark Education courses long before he was born; his parents met at a similar education course and have continued going ever since. Shinefield, who says that Landmark Education has shaped how he looks at life, sought to implement its philosophy – to "work on yourself so that you can bring joy and enlightenment to the whole world" – and is currently working hard to turn it into reality.

When Shinefield first entered Yeshiva University, he joined the Drama Club and acted in two Yeshiva University performances. He found the experience liberating and realized that while acting he did not stutter. Acting, like certain stuttering control techniques, requires individuals to practice their lines to the point where they can read them in their minds before voicing them; this technique, in addition to speaking slowly, has been known to help people who stutter speak fluently. Famous actors James Earl Jones and Nicholas Brendon struggled with stuttering before or during their acting careers. As a fellow actor and person who stutters, Shinefield admired these famous actors and thought to himself that if they can become famous actors after such challenges, then perhaps others can also use acting to help them speak fluently. Shinefield hopes to get in contact with Jones and Brendon to further pursue his goal of developing a theater company for people who stutter.

Shinefield is currently in contact with Taro Alexander, the founder and producer of Our Time Theater Company, a New York-based program and camp that strives to improve the lives of children who stutter through the arts. Alexander is in e-mail correspondence with Shinefield and has stated that he is willing help Shinefield's efforts. Shinefield is also in contact with A.R.T / New York (Alliance of Resident Theaters), a service and advocacy organization that assists theater companies in theater management, funding and technical assistance. While the advocate from A.R.T views Shinefield's efforts positively and hopes to assist him in his efforts, he believes that it might take a few years before Shinefield's idea is up and running.

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While it is unclear who is right and wrong in this situation, an important lesson we can learn is the importance of educating both students and teachers about stuttering and its impact on the classroom. Perhaps if Philip and his professor had been given the tools to understand one another's point of view, they could have come to a quiet, yet satisfactory understanding. It is important for teachers to understand what it means to be a person who stutters and to be sensitive to their students' needs. Professors have a right to limit class discussion time, but should not be singling out individual students to do so. At the same time, students who stutter should be given the tools to appropriately and effectively advocate for themselves. Raising his hand incessantly during a class when the professor said she would not be taking questions did little to help Philip's cause, but engaging in mature, informative discussion may have gone a long way for both himself and future students who stutter.

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