



THE STARS OF ISTAR 2020



 UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE

istar.ualberta.ca

MESSAGE FROM THE

Clinic Director



It is my pleasure to share inspirational stories about the transformative work that ISTAR clinicians, clients, foundation members, donors and volunteers have achieved in **The Stars of ISTAR 2020** magazine.

This year has been both tremendously successful and filled with extreme challenges. We have been faced with the global coronavirus pandemic, as well as dealing with massive budget cuts to the University of Alberta. Our resilience and dedication to our work has not wavered and we were able to tap into our creativity in order to continue to provide our clients with the effective and quality therapy that they deserve.

ISTAR's clinicians quickly pivoted efforts from seeing clients in person to working remotely and providing virtual care. We were able to deliver our intensive and refresher programs using distance technology, and we have started a research study on the efficacy of this approach. We look forward to being able to meet with our clients, donors and volunteers in person again soon. But until then, we will continue to be with you virtually.

I couldn't be more proud of and thankful for our wonderful team that has worked so very hard this year. Also, a big thank-you to our clients for being flexible and understanding during these challenging times.

Please enjoy reading these stories of inspiration. I wish you all good health and happiness.

Sincerely,

Holly Lomheim, MSLP, R.SLP, S-LP (C)

Clinic Director

THE STARS OF ISTAR 2020

Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR)

Suite 1500, College Plaza, 8215-112 Street
Edmonton, AB

T: 780-492-2619 | E: istar@ualberta.ca

**Managing Editor, Copy Editor
and Designer**

Amanda Anderson

Writers

Amanda Anderson

Kate Dawson

Photography

Iconium Inc.

Other photos supplied

Artwork

Courtesy of Canva

MESSAGE FROM THE

Foundation Chair



I am happy to have the privilege of serving as the current chair of the board of directors for the Foundation of ISTAR, a not-for-profit society established to assist the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR) in achieving its mission. I assumed the role of chair earlier this year following Michael Niven's exemplary service to the foundation.

In the past two years, the foundation has successfully co-hosted several public fundraising and awareness-building events with and in support of ISTAR. Our most recent event in late 2019 netted almost \$13,000 in financial benefit for ISTAR. Proceeds came largely from ticket sales and a small

silent auction, as well as personal donations from each of our incredibly committed board members.

The foundation is comprised of the following board members: **Julia Boberg**, Director; **Lars Christensen**, Director; **Anwar Haq**, Director; **Nicholas Henger**, Director and Alberta Elks Foundation Representative; **Erin Johnson**, Director; **Shamez Kassam**, Director; **Nazir Kassamali**, Treasurer; **Michael Niven**, Vice-Chair; and **Craig Pilgrim**, Chair.

2020 has been a year of change. Indeed, the world has changed, but so has the means by which we as a Foundation are able to support the life-altering work of ISTAR. Both our capability and our opportunities to assist ISTAR have been severely hampered by the global coronavirus pandemic.

Bringing large groups of strangers together, united in their desire to support ISTAR, is no longer an option. The inability to gather precludes the majority of situations and opportunities available to the foundation in order to advance the world-renowned work of ISTAR. However, just like those who serve ISTAR, we too are a resourceful and determined group and we will persevere.

As we transition from an unexpected 2020 into an uncertain 2021, I ask you to continue to support ISTAR and the foundation. As we say, '**Every voice matters.**' The next voice you help could be the voice that changes history.

Sincerely,

Craig Pilgrim

Chair, Foundation of ISTAR

TO US, *every* VOICE MATTERS

Imagine not being able to talk on the phone, order your favourite food or say your own name.

For over 300,000 Canadians, this is a reality. Individuals who are stuttering or are experiencing communication challenges struggle to use their voices every day.

But ISTAR can help!

The Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR) offers specialized treatment to children, teens and adults who stutter. In addition, we conduct research into stuttering, offer advanced specialized training for speech-language pathology students and clinicians, and promote public awareness of stuttering and its treatment.

We are committed to ensuring that people who stutter are aware of the treatment options and that they have an opportunity to receive the treatment they need.

For more information about all of ISTAR's programs, including stuttering treatment, communication improvement, accent modification and more, visit istar.ualberta.ca.



Clients range in age from

2 TO 82,
and more than
4,000

clients have been impacted to date.

PROGRAMS



Stuttering Therapy, Communication Improvement Program (CIP), Accent Modification, Teasing and Bullying (TAB), Virtual Care, Virtual Reality and more.



Two offices:

EDMONTON
CALGARY

UAlberta speech therapy clinic offering virtual appointments during COVID-19

The Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research has been helping clients receive crucial therapy amid in-person treatment restrictions

By Amanda Anderson



Speech-language pathologists at the University of Alberta are helping stutterers receive therapy by offering appointments they can attend from the comfort of their own homes.

The Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR) has been using telehealth video technologies to reach clients in rural and outside communities for some time, but the clinic is seeing an uptick in virtual appointments amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our virtual platform promoted the continuity of therapy for clients initially seen in person who then decided to transfer to virtual care at the start of the pandemic to continue to reach their goals," said Ashley Saunders, speech-language pathologist at ISTAR. "It also helped us to support clients to connect with us and each other to practice skills at the start of the pandemic, since they could not connect face-to-face due to the imposed social restrictions."

Lezlie Naka's son Kaden, 12, is one client who has already benefitted from the remote therapy.

"Kaden has had trouble with his speech from an early age," explained Naka. "We were able to start therapy so quickly by choosing virtual appointments. If we had to wait for the COVID-19 restrictions to be lifted for in-person appointments, this would have delayed his therapy process."

The Naka family, who currently live in Saskatchewan, turned to ISTAR after exhausting all of the resources Kaden's school had to offer. The severity of his stutter was starting to impact his school work and his relationships with his peers. They knew they needed to find a solution right away.

"He was made fun of almost daily—they would imitate his stutter. There were moments where they would tell him to 'just stop talking.' He was coming home upset, discouraged and frustrated, which was

starting to affect his confidence and participation in the classroom. We just knew we had to give this program a shot, even there was only a small chance of improvement."

After a month of seeing his therapist, Ashley, his speech has improved significantly.

"I remember moments where Kaden could barely get a sentence out," said Naka. "Now, there really aren't any words to describe how drastically his speech has changed. He speaks more confidently; he lets his sense of humour shine through—we could not be happier with the results.

For anyone else who might be looking to improve their speech, Saunders says their virtual appointments are available to those in rural communities who may not be able to make the trek to Edmonton or Calgary, and will still be an option even after the COVID restrictions have lifted.

"Virtual therapy allows us to access clients living in rural communities who may have less access to care than someone who is living in a major city. We have provided services to a school community for many years now, and I would estimate that almost a quarter of the clients we see are from rural communities," said Saunders.

"I would definitely recommend this program to anyone considering speech therapy," said Naka. "This has proven to be extremely effective, just as effective as in-person therapy, and we could not be happier with the results we received—in the comfort of our own home, too! Not having to travel has definitely helped our family financially."

For more information about ISTAR's speech therapy sessions, including virtual and telehealth programming, visit istar.ualberta.ca.

“I knew that one day I would work here”: How one clinician landed her dream job with ISTAR

The Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research has been helping clients receive crucial therapy amid in-person treatment restrictions

By Kate Dawson



Bethany Hartman was “ecstatic, grateful and excited” to become the new clinician at the ISTAR satellite office in Calgary. She joined the team as a clinician only a year ago, but knew she wanted to work at ISTAR long before then.

Hartman discovered ISTAR while she was completing an undergraduate degree at the University of Alberta. She had always been interested in fluency disorders and was thrilled at the possibility of gaining hands-on clinical experience working with them as a practicum student. Hartman knew that if she was accepted into the master of speech-language pathology program, she wanted to complete a placement with ISTAR.

A few years later, she got the chance to do just that.

During her student placement with ISTAR, Hartman was impressed by each staff member's commitment to excellence in both assessment and treatment. She recalls how everything they did was rooted in research and clinical expertise, and knew her experience as a practicum student was going to be invaluable.

“The focused, constructive feedback I received each day exponentially increased my clinical skills, improving my ability to be a conscientious clinician rooted in research and sensitive to individual client needs. I couldn't believe how much I learned in such a short time.”

After finishing the practicum and graduating from her program in June 2017, Hartman stayed close, living and working in Cochrane. She knew her time with ISTAR was not yet at its end.

After seeing a job at the Calgary satellite office become available, she jumped at the chance to apply,

and her dream of working at ISTAR soon came true.

Since then, Hartman has been providing speech and language assessments and therapy for kids, teens and adults who stutter or have other communication challenges. She also helps manage the office, supervises her administrative staff and engages with the Calgary community through her social media and public events.

"My favourite thing about working at ISTAR is the opportunity to work with so many hard-working colleagues and clients. The other staff are welcoming, supportive and always striving for excellence. The clients themselves are so courageous. I am blessed to be a part of their fluency journey - it is one of the most rewarding jobs I have ever had."

Grateful to have achieved her goal, Hartman now focuses her energy on her clients to ensure they have the best possible experience in the clinic.

"Working at ISTAR has created a defined sense of purpose for me as a speech-language pathologist. I go to work each day excited to help my clients become the best communicators they can be."

“It was a game-changer for me”: Long-time donor’s early experiences inspire him to keep giving back

Darrel Ellenwood’s early participation in research sparked a 20-year relationship as an ISTAR donor and volunteer

By Kate Dawson



Darrel Ellenwood is a self-described “low-key retired guy” whose journey with the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR) began long before the organization even existed.

In the 1970s, Ellenwood was a participant in one of the early intensive research clinics run by ISTAR Founder Einer Boberg. During this time, he gained the tools he needed as a stutterer to improve his speech with treatment by completing various tasks including experiments that required him to cold-call businesses and talk to strangers on the street. He remembers the research clinic as being very intense, but credits it with his ability to have a successful career and family.

“It was a game-changer for me,” says Ellenwood. “It improved my life tremendously.”

That experience sparked his desire to help others like himself. He discovered the newly founded ISTAR while reading the newspaper and immediately wanted to contribute to the organization in whatever way he could.

Ellenwood says he donates because he wants everyone who needs ISTAR’s services to be able to access them. He believes the work ISTAR does is important because increasing social demands make it more difficult for people with a stutter to participate in everyday activities.

While he admits he thinks it sounds cliché to want to “give back,” Ellenwood keeps donating because he knows how difficult living with a severe stutter can be.

“Being able to function with a reasonably good job and a family was an amazing thing for me. To be able to help somebody who is in what seems like an impossible situation, I’m just more than happy to try and help.”

As a volunteer, he can see the direct benefit of his contributions at work.

"I think students being able to go through these clinics is just so valuable. It's just obvious the benefit of it. I wish I could add more."

When asked about his involvement as a volunteer, Ellenwood said, "I'm really interested in working with people who have a severe stutter. They're the people I'm interested in because that used to be me. I hope I can serve as a source of inspiration, demonstrating that improvement is possible."

Ellenwood believes that the work ISTAR does is now more important than ever. If you were to ask him why someone should donate to ISTAR, he would reply, "It's probably the best money that you could ever spend. I know stuttering is a small group of people, but the help is just so valuable."

GIVE THE *gift* OF A *voice*

Imagine not being able to order a meal or talk on the phone. Imagine knowing there's help for your stutter, but you can't afford it. Unfortunately, there are many individuals who are not able to attend ISTAR clinics and workshops for this simple reason.

But you can help!

When you donate to ISTAR, you become a passionate supporter committed to helping people with communication challenges find their voices.

DONATE ONLINE: istar.ualberta.ca

CONTACT: John Voyer, Assistant Dean, Development
780-248-5718 | jvoyer@ualberta.ca

Tax receipts will be issued from the University of Alberta for donations over \$20.

Thank you for your gift!

Gifts can be made online at uabgive.ca/donate or by completing this form.

1. Your contact information:

Name _____ Home address _____

City _____ Prov. _____ Postal code _____

Email _____ Cellphone _____

I'm a U of A Donor Staff Alumnus/a _____ (Year of Graduation / faculty / School) _____

2. Please specify the fund you would like to support:

Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR) _____

(SC: ISEDM, AL: 16224) _____

Undesignated donations will be allocated to the University of Alberta's University Fund. Donations made to endowment funds are invested in perpetuity. Investment earnings are used to advance the specific purposes of the fund.

3. Please specify your pledge amount:

One-time/Immediate gift

\$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

Monthly gift*

\$5 \$10 \$25 Other \$ _____

Ongoing OR Number of payments _____

4. Payment method:

One-time gift by cheque to: University of Alberta

Recurring bank withdrawal (void cheque required)

Credit card (monthly gift, one-time gift)

VISA MasterCard American Express Union Pay

Name on card _____

If corporate card, company name _____

Credit card # _____

Expiry _____

5. Memorial/Tribute gift (optional):

My gift is in honour/ memory of:

Full name _____

If in memory of, name of the next of kin (if known) _____

Address of honouree/next of kin (if known) _____

The University of Alberta will send a notification of your gift to the honouree or next of kin, providing your name and address. The amount of your gift will not be included. If you do not want to notify the honouree or next of kin, please check the box below:

Please do not provide notification of my tribute gift.

6. Donor recognition (optional):

The University of Alberta may produce materials that publicly recognize and celebrate donors. If you do not wish to have your gift publicly recognized, choose one of the following:

Do not publish name or amount — make this gift anonymous

Publish name but not amount

7. I would like more information on (optional):

Establishing a named scholarship or bursary

Donating securities

Remembering the University of Alberta in my will

I have already included the University of Alberta in my will, but had not previously informed you.

8. I have reviewed the information on this form and confirm it is accurate.

Signature _____ Date _____

*The University will begin charging payments in the next payment cycle. Recurring bank withdrawals will be processed on the first business day of the month; recurring credit card payments will be processed on the 20th day of the month. These can be cancelled at any time by calling us at 780-492-7587.

The personal information requested on this form is collected under the authority of Section 33(c) of the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and will be protected under Part 2 of that *Act*. It will be used for the purpose of alumni engagement and philanthropic activities. Questions concerning the collection, use or disclosure of this information should be directed to the FOIP Liaison Officer, Office of Advancement, University of Alberta, 3-501 Enterprise Square, 10230 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T5J 4P6, (780) 492-7400. Charitable Registration #10810 2831 RR0001.



ISTAR clinician researching better treatments for clients with concussions

After nearly 20 years with the clinic, researcher finds there's more to learn from clients experiencing communication difficulties after a concussion

By Kate Dawson

While working as a speech-language pathologist at the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR), Jessica Harasym O'Byrne made an important observation.

"I found there was little research on the topic of acquired stuttering and other post-concussion communication difficulties, and it can be difficult for these individuals to find the help they need," explained Harasym O'Byrne. "I decided to pursue a PhD in rehabilitation science to learn more about how concussions can affect communication and how speech-language pathologists can help."

Harasym O'Byrne is now a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Alberta. Through her research, she will learn from patients and their family members about what it's like to live with post-concussion communication difficulties.

"Concussions can affect thinking, speaking, understanding, reading, writing and the ability to relate to others. Even small changes in these areas can have a significant impact on daily activities."

Her research will also explore how speech-language pathologists can improve clients' participation in school, work, family and community activities. She plans to incorporate her findings in the clinic.

"The study findings have the potential to shape practice, assessment and treatment programs for teens and adults who are recovering from concussions," explained Harasym O'Byrne. "The more we learn about how communication can be affected by a concussion from participants and families, the better equipped we will be to help our clients adapt their daily schedules and return to meaningful activities."

Harasym O'Byrne has long been passionate about helping ISTAR clients meet their goals. Before

becoming an ISTAR clinician in 2008, Jessica was involved with the institute as a volunteer and an undergraduate research assistant. Now, she is the clinical chair of the Elks and Royal Purple Fund for Children, which provides financial assistance to children with hearing and speech disorders.

"I always wanted to be involved in helping people meet their goals and get the most out of talking and communicating with others. When I began working at ISTAR as an undergraduate research assistant, I was captivated by the stories that clients would tell about their stuttering experiences," she said. "I saw how tirelessly clients worked on practicing new fluency skills and challenging thoughts, feelings and attitudes while engaging in transfer activities. It is a thrill to follow our clients' progress—in some cases, from preschool to high school—and to hear about their successes along the way."

Harasym O'Byrne is also thankful for the connections she has made at ISTAR, which help guide her work and research.

"I am so grateful for the support and encouragement of my ISTAR colleagues and clients! I can always count on them to cheer me on, and to remind me how important our treatment and research programs are to our clients and their families."

Student undergoes unexpected transformation during time at stuttering institute

Spenser Day sought out her own kind of experience at ISTAR after witnessing client and student-clinician success

By Kate Dawson



While searching for volunteer opportunities during her undergraduate degree, Spenser Day (née Halfyard) discovered the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research (ISTAR) at her first Organization of Alberta Students in Speech (OASIS) conference. Time spent at ISTAR ignited Day's passion for fluency disorders and inspired her to seek out additional opportunities with the organization.

One such opportunity turned out to be a position as ISTAR's summer student research assistant. In June, while completing her second year of a Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology in the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Alberta, Day took what she learned as a volunteer and applied it to a clinical setting during a four-week practicum.

"I chose a placement at ISTAR because I wanted to be able to assist individuals with fluency disorders and advocate for them throughout my career," she explained.

Day is passionate about strengthening the confidence and autonomy of clients. She deliberately puts herself in the shoes of ISTAR clients by imagining what treatment is like from their point of view. In doing so, she was also inspired to take what she had witnessed in the clients at the clinic and direct it towards herself.

"Through my past experience with ISTAR, I was able to witness the significant transformation that the clients and the student clinicians experienced through the summer intensive programs. I also wanted that experience for myself."

In terms of what the future holds, Day envisions herself working as an advocate or researcher for family-centred care.

She plans to incorporate as many supportive people as possible into the clinical practice for each of her clients.

Following her experiences as a volunteer, research assistant and practicum student, Day is thankful for the role ISTAR played in shaping her interests and career goals.

"ISTAR has been a huge component of my personal and professional growth as a future speech-language pathologist. Working with the clinicians and clients at ISTAR has time and time again reaffirmed my decision to enter the field of speech-language pathology," she said.

"I am so thankful for the opportunities I have been given through ISTAR, and I strongly encourage students interested in or on the path to becoming future speech-language pathologists to inquire about volunteering or completing a placement with the organization. The ISTAR clinicians have become important mentors and examples of the type of clinician I want to be, and the clients have inspired me to stay focused, work hard and be compassionate."

2019-2020



AT A GLANCE



ISTAR welcomed speech-language pathologist **Bethany Hartman** to the Calgary clinic in July 2019.

12 students completed clinical placements: 6 from University of Alberta, 3 from University of Toronto, 2 from Western University, and 1 practising speech-language pathologist.

FUNDRAISING

October 2019 Mayfield Dinner Theatre "**Million Dollar Quartet**" inaugural fundraising event raised \$12,313 for client support.

\$362,804.97 was donated to support stuttering research and treatment.

433 clients received treatment: 424 Canadians and 9 international.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

- **Elks & Royal Purple Fund for Children Deborah Kully Scholarship:** Spenser Halfyard, University of Alberta, \$2,000 offered through SAC-OAC
- **Deborah Kully Scholarship in Stuttering Treatment and Research:** Jessica Harasym O'Byrne, University of Alberta, \$5,000 at the PhD level
- **Deborah Kully/Alberta Elks Foundation Scholarship in Stuttering Treatment and Research:** Emma Haynes & Morgan Piggott, University of Toronto, \$2,000 each
- **Dr. Einer Boberg/Alberta Elks Foundation Memorial Graduate Award in Stuttering Treatment and Research:** Danielle Fonseca, master's level at ISTAR, \$1,500

WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING

- Two-day Lidcombe training in Kelowna, BC
- Two-day basic Comprehensive Stuttering Program training
- A webinar on the Comprehensive Stuttering Program for Speech Audiology Canada
- Innovative practice session on "A retrospective comparison of the Camperdown Program and the Comprehensive Stuttering Program" at ACSLPA Conference

Programs

AT A GLANCE

STUTTERING THERAPY

More than 30 years of research and experience underlie our therapy approach. First published as the Comprehensive Stuttering Program in 1985, the program is continually evaluated and improved. Results of treatment are very positive and rigorous studies evaluating long-term outcomes have been published in scientific journals.

COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Communication Improvement Program (CIP) offers a treatment option for people wanting to improve their communication abilities. The program shares facilities and staff with ISTAR, with which it is affiliated. Since its inception, CIP has helped clients of all ages with widely differing needs develop the communication skills that are so important to social and educational success.

VIRTUAL CARE

If you are not able to travel to Edmonton or Calgary and stay for a complete therapy program, we can help. Using video conference systems, such as Telehealth, Zoom and Skype, we have been able to provide therapy to many people who live outside of Edmonton and Calgary. Virtual care is a viable alternative to in-person sessions for those with communication challenges.

Visit istar.ualberta.ca for more information about all of our programs and services.

THE STARS OF ISTAR 2020



 UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE

istar.ualberta.ca