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## **Fear no longer binds John's tongue in knots**

UNTIL recently John Turnbull couldn't say his own name. He had never read his two children a book and his biggest fear was talking to people. Until now. John has just returned from Melbourne where he completed the McGuire Program, a four-day intensive course run by recovering stutterers. It has been designed to help stutterers improve their delivery of speech and to build the confidence to speak.

John's stutter developed when he was five and since then he has struggled to survive in a world which is dependent on talking. "My stutter affected everything that I did in life, whether it was playing sport, making friends, or attending a family gathering," he said. "I was very much alone and too frightened to approach anybody for help." John hid behind others, asking his partner or children to speak on his behalf.

His father Harvey saw a story about the program on A Current Affair and tracked down the necessary information for John, who later agreed to give it a go. Four months on, John arrived in Melbourne on the Spirit of Tasmania and walked in the rain for almost three hours to his destination in the CBD because he was too frightened to speak with a taxi driver or for ask directions.

Day one of the course was the most daunting but as it progressed, so did John's speech. On the final day, John faced his fears and addressed a room of more than 100 people, and even managed to crack a joke or two. "It felt fantastic. Totally unbelievable. I was riding the biggest high and have been ever since," he said.

"The reason I did this was for myself (but) the main reason why I wanted to do this was to return home and read them (children) a book." John hasn't stopped reading his children books since he returned and he now feels more comfortable talking with complete strangers. He is making it his mission to spread the word. "I just want people to be aware that there is help available and it really does work," he said. "It is such a relief to have the confidence to approach people and talk to them normally."

For more information contact John on 0439 207 569 or visit [www.beyondstuttering.com.au](http://www.beyondstuttering.com.au) for more information on the McGuire Program.

Another alternative is to contact a speech pathologist, a trained professional in the field of stuttering.

— ELIZA GREY\*