

CHAPTER **NSSLIA**
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
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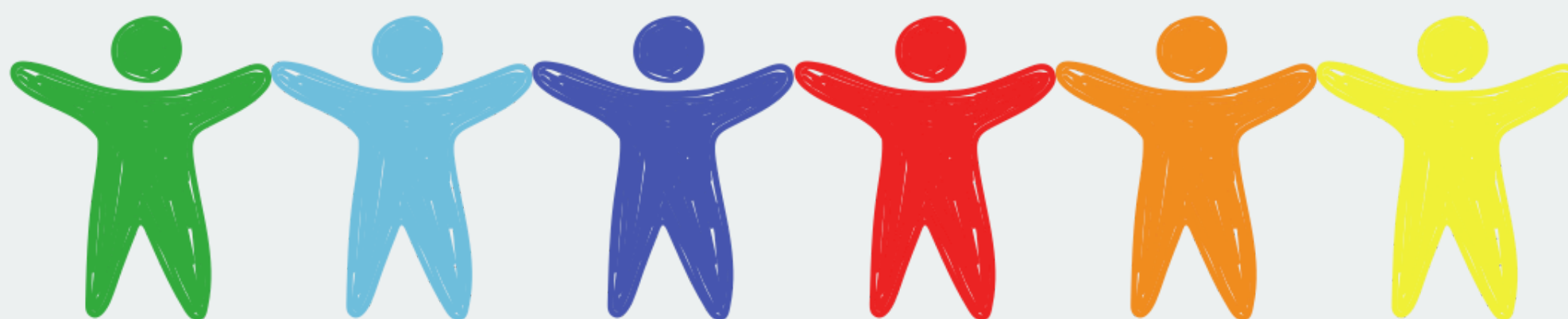


APRIL
NEWSLETTER

2026

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Autism Awareness Month

About

Autism Awareness Month is observed each April. The month was first established in the 1970s, by Dr. Bernard Rimland as a part of his organization, the Autism Society of America. Dr. Rimland co-founded this organization in 1965 along with Dr. Ruth C. Sullivan.

The idea of Autism Awareness month is to increase public understanding of autism while promoting acceptance, inclusion, and support for people with autism.

In recent years, there has been a shift from “awareness” to “acceptance.” While awareness is knowing of autism, acceptance implies that extra step: when you include someone with autism in the community.

In addition to Autism Awareness/Acceptance month in the United States, April 2 is also World Autism Awareness Day worldwide. This was established by the United Nations in 2007.



Notable Figures/Influencers within the Autism Space

Greta Thunberg



is a 23-year-old environmental activist from Sweden. She is autistic and refers to her autism as a “superpower” that has motivated her advocacy work because “there are no grey areas when it comes to climate change.” As a teenager, Thunberg began what was initially a solo strike outside the Swedish parliament that later inspired a much larger global campaign. Her activism eventually led to the world-wide movement #FridaysforFuture strikes – where thousands of students skipped school on Fridays to protest against climate change. She has since also spoken directly to world leaders at the UN Climate Action Summit and travelled on a 15-day journey by a wind and solar-powered boat from Plymouth, UK, to New York, USA. In March of 2019, she inspired the Global Strike for Climate in which over 1.6 million people participated. Despite her young age, Greta continues to be a champion for the environment (National Geographic Kids, n.d.).

Temple Grandin



is an early advocate for Autism awareness and the humane treatment of livestock. Diagnosed with Autism as a young child in the 1950s, Grandin’s parents went against the practice of institutionalization and opted to keep her at home in order to focus on early intervention aimed at improving her communication and social skills. Against all odds, she became a pioneer in the field of livestock handling while also raising awareness for Autism. Her innovative work includes but is not limited to designing humane livestock handling and slaughtering facilities, creating an evaluation technique used to assess how successful humans are at reducing stress for animals in meatpacking plants, public speaking on the topics of autism and animal welfare and authoring numerous books on these subjects. Grandin has shared that her autism and work in animal welfare are inextricably linked. She describes her brain as a “video library,” that allows her to solve visual puzzles leading to her ability to empathize with animals who also “think in pictures.” Grandin continues to raise awareness about autism and animal welfare (Herman, 2019).

Jason Arday



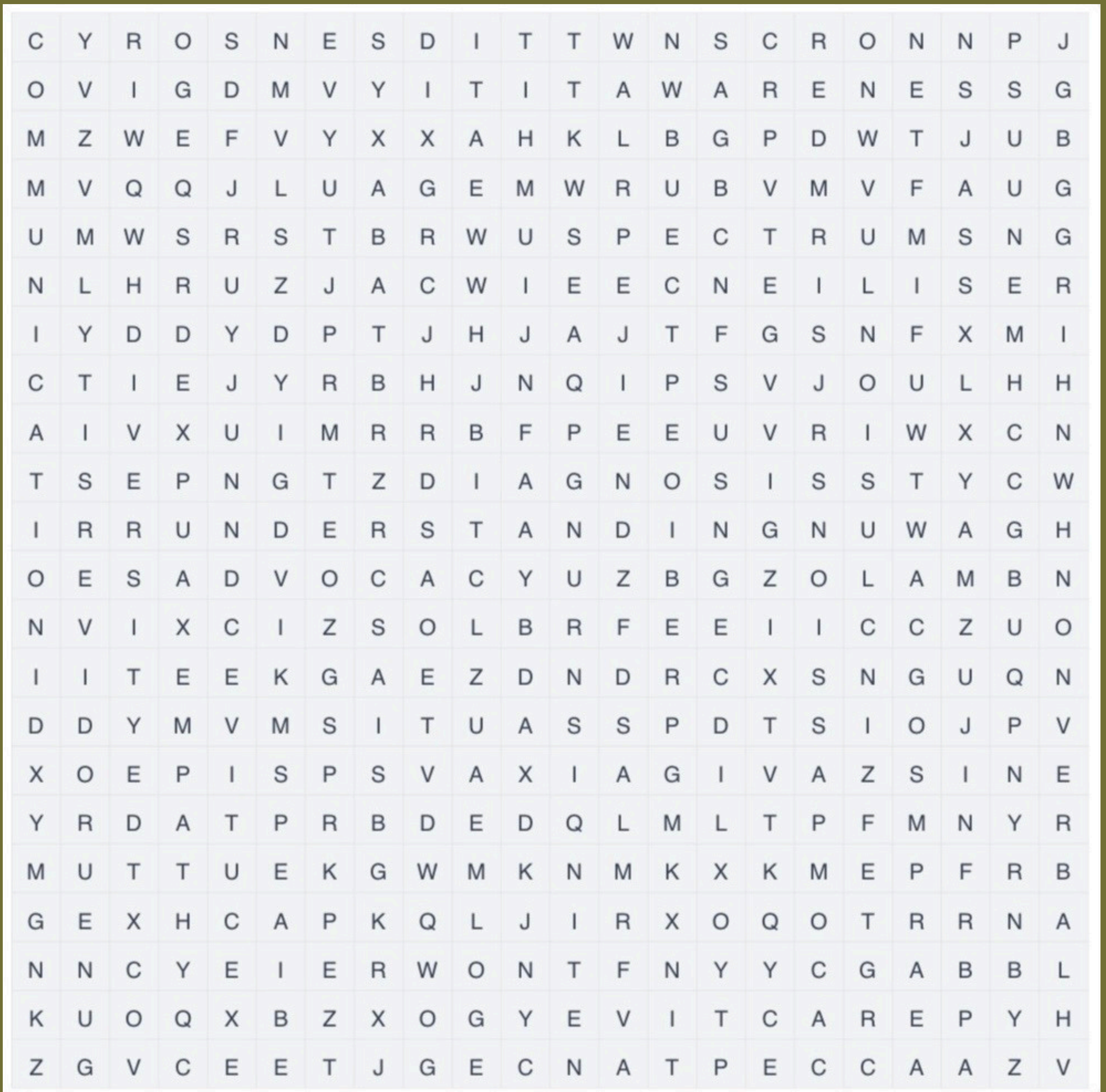
is the youngest person of color ever appointed as professor at the University of Cambridge. What makes his story so unique is the severity of challenges he experienced with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Arday did not speak until he was 11 and read or write until he was 18. Despite his delays with speech and literacy, he was greatly supported by parents, close friends, and his tutor Sandro Sandri. Arday went on to achieve multiple degrees which includes two masters and a PhD in Education. With little practical training, Arday found being an academic very difficult, but he continued to dedicate endless hours towards his goals. He treated the harsh criticism and rejection he experienced through the peer review process as a learning experience that motivated him to do better. Arday’s current work is focused on highlighting the experiences of minority and neurodiverse students in academics to improve accessibility and inclusivity (University of Cambridge, n.d.).



Myths vs Facts about Autism

Myth	Fact
<p>Autism is a mental illness.</p>	<p>Autism is a neurodevelopmental condition that is also known as autism spectrum disorder. The term "spectrum" in autism spectrum disorder refers to the wide range of symptoms that presents uniquely for each case.</p>
<p>There is one single cause for autism.</p>	<p>Research does not attribute one single cause to autism. There could potentially be a complex mix of multiple causes related to genetics, biology and environment.</p>
<p>Autism is caused by vaccines.</p>	<p>Large epidemiological studies did not find a link between the MMR vaccine and autism. Additionally, 16 large population-based studies have found no link between autism and thimerosal, a preservative commonly used in other childhood vaccines.</p>
<p>Autism can be cured.</p>	<p>There is no cure for autism spectrum disorder but having early intervention can make a big difference for a child diagnosed with autism.</p>
<p>Only boys get autism.</p>	<p>While past statistics have shown boys as 4x more likely to be diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, researchers are learning that autism symptoms present differently in girls and women which can lead to under diagnosis.</p>
<p>Autistic children aren't social.</p>	<p>Each case of autism is highly unique. While some children may have challenges being social others may not.</p>

Autism Acceptance Word Search



Word Bank

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| AUTISM | SENSORY | DIAGNOSIS | NONVERBAL |
| AWARENESS | COMMUNICATION | THERAPY | COMPASSION |
| ACCEPTANCE | INCLUSION | STIMMING | RESILIENCE |
| NEURODIVERSITY | EMPATHY | EXECUTIVE | DIVERSITY |
| SPECTRUM | ADVOCACY | HYPERACTIVE | UNDERSTANDING |

Submit through the participation form to receive 10 NSSLHA points

World Voice Day - April 16



The History

World Voice Day was established on April 16th to increase awareness about the importance of the voice and raise awareness about voice disorders. The celebration started in Brazil in 1999 and became recognized by the American Academy of Otolaryngology - head and neck surgery in 2002.

The Mission

The theme for 2026 is Caring for our Voices! Our voices allow us to communicate with others, express emotions, participate in school, work, and social life. They also play an important part in art and culture. Raising awareness is essential as it supports early diagnosis, best treatment practices, and encourages funding for ongoing research.

What you can do!

Dysphonia.org is hosting a variety of events to raise awareness for voice disorders. These include:

- Writing a Haiku to email voice@dysphonia.org or post on social media using #WVD
- Posting World Voice Day images on your social media!

Miley Cyrus and Her Beloved Polyp



01 Reinke's Edema

Reinke's Edema is a disorder of the vocal folds in which the superficial lamina propria, also known as Reinke's space, is chronically swollen (Jones & Song, 2023). In Reinke's edema, the vocal folds have a greater mass than they should, resulting in a slower rate of vibration, and therefore, a lower fundamental frequency. Reinke's edema results in a deepening tone and progressive hoarseness as the vocal folds fatigue from their hefty volume (Jones & Song, 2023).

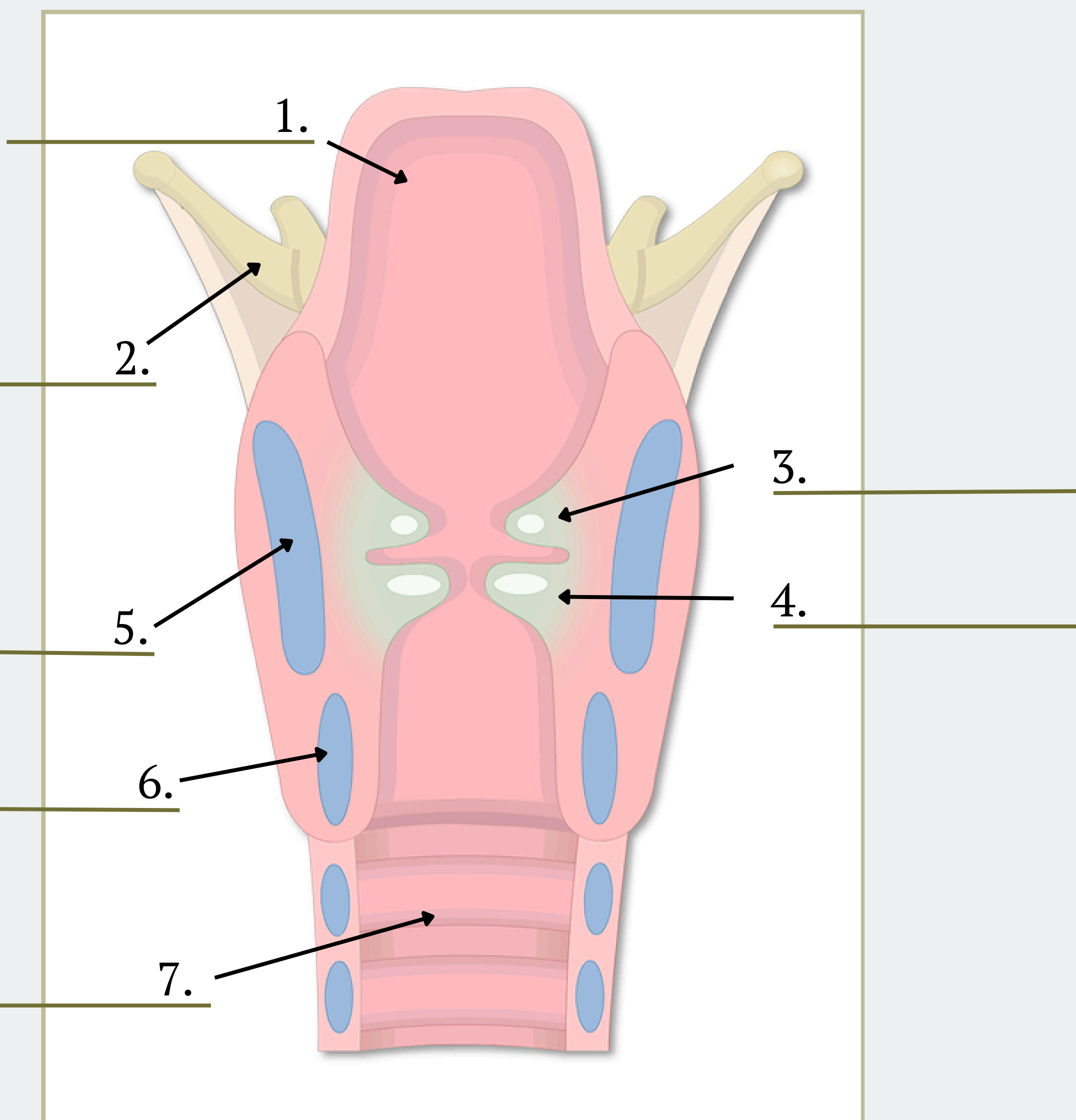
02 Miley's Unique Sound

Miley Cyrus was diagnosed with Reinke's edema in 2019. Along with an increased vocal fold mass, Miley also has a large polyp on one vocal fold, adding to the mass which deepens her fundamental frequency. The low, hoarse "texture" that creates Miley's unique sound is due to the polyp interfering with her mucosal wave. The polyp also bumps into her healthy vocal fold, which causes further hoarseness, from damage.

03 Mixed Blessing

In a 2025 interview with Apple Music's Zane Lowe, Miley discusses her decision to keep her polyp, rather than surgically remove it, for fear of losing her unique sound. Miley acknowledges that the condition is "extremely difficult to perform with" and has been considering filming an intimate concert in hopes of reducing the amount of shows required for tour. Though the condition puts some strain on her life as a touring artist, Miley treasures her unique vocal quality, referring to it as a "blessing of a condition that I live with." Let's hope the benefits continue to outweigh the risks!

Label the Laryngeal Vestibule



Label Bank

Epiglottis

False fold

Hyoid bone

Trachea

Vocal fold

Cricoid cartilage

Thyroid cartilage

Submit through the participation form to receive 10 NSSLHA points



SLP Influencers



@drericaellis_cccslp

Our own Dr. Ellis keeping us updated with all things speech, student, advocacy, scholarship and NSSHLA related.

@unlearnwithme.theslp

The account of SLP Jackie Rodríguez. "Loves to talk about race, ethnicity & speech pathology. This is a social justice space."



@mrsspeechiep

The account of SLP Andi Putt, a Neuro-affirming SLP specializing in the intersection of SLP and Autism.



@bondarspeechapraxia

The account of SLP Alanna Bondar, specializing in Childhood Apraxia of Speech.



@glottisgoddess

The account of SLP Juliana Schlaen, bilingual CF Speech Pathologist serving ENT clinics across Miami. Voice, Swallow & Upper Airway

@classlab_kelly

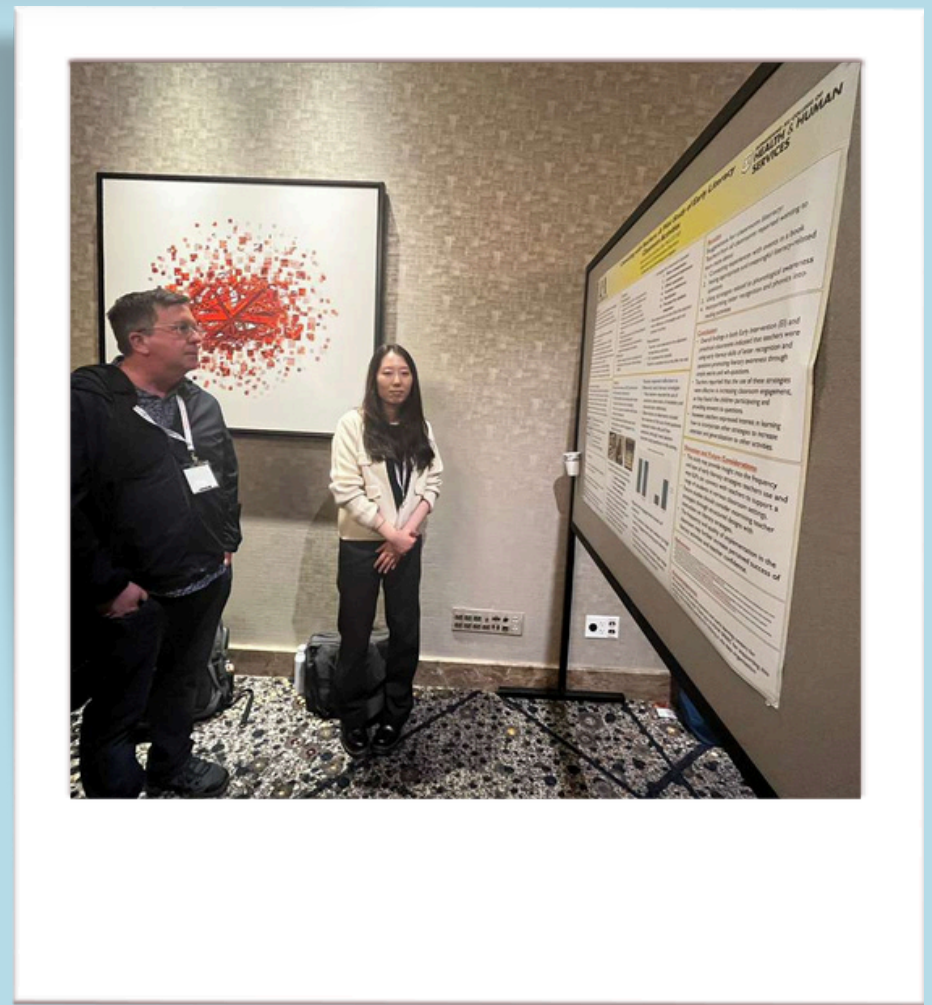
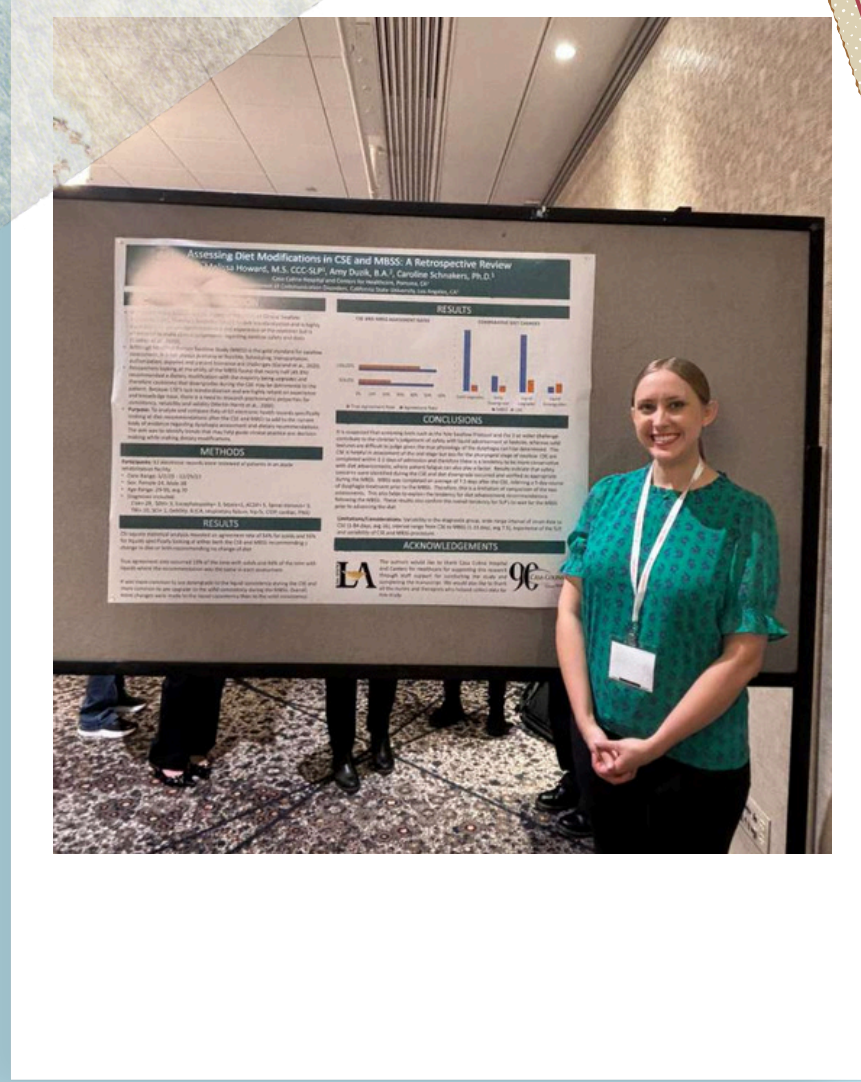
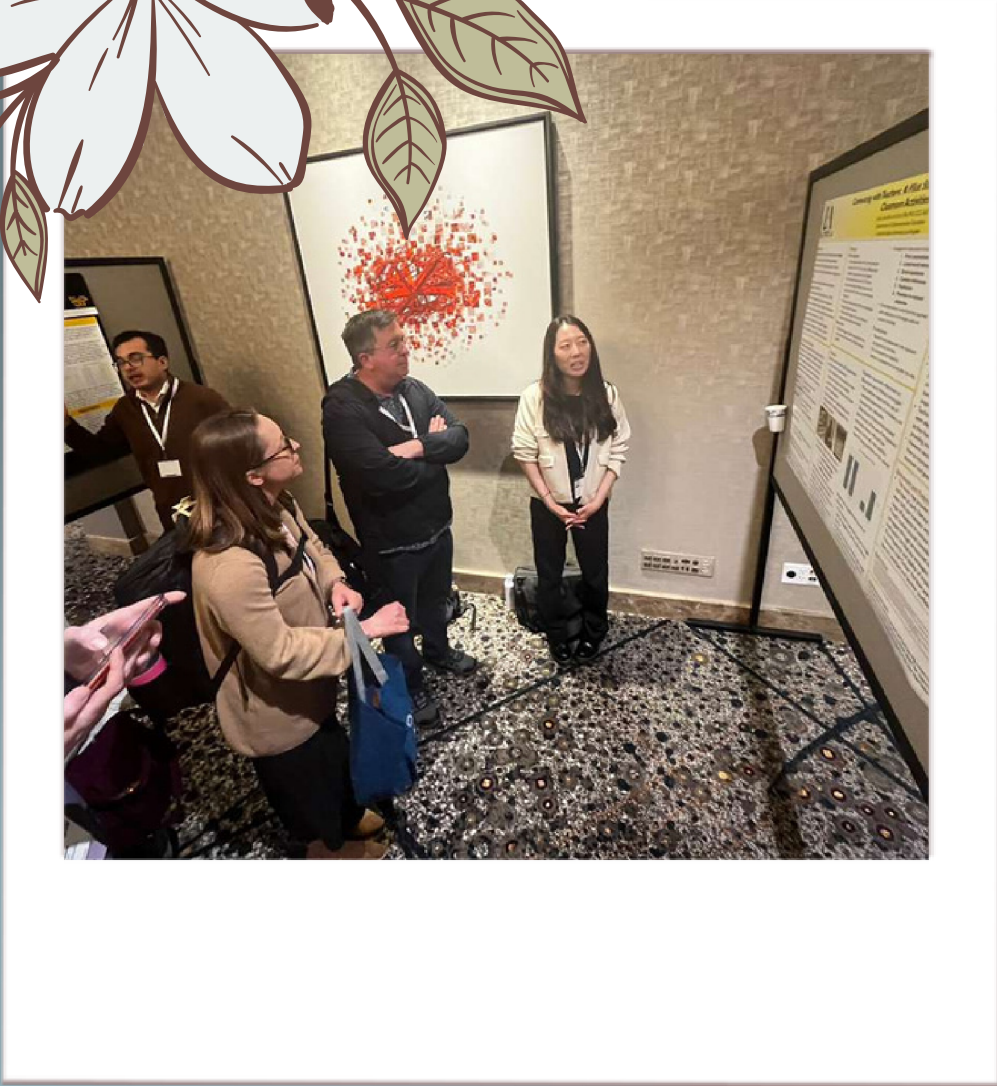
The account of Dr. Kelly Farquharson, PhD, CCC-SLP. The director of the Children's Literacy and Speech Sound lab.



@speechdude

The account of SLP Chris Wenger, neurodivergent speech therapist. Neuroaffirming tips & strategies.

*NSSHLA and CSULA COMD is not endorsing any specific person or business.



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