

## Poem

You weren't like other children,  
And God was well aware,  
You'd need a caring family,  
With love enough to share.

And so He sent you to us,  
And much to our surprise,  
You haven't been a challenge,  
But a blessing in disguise.

Your winning smiles and laughter,  
The pleasure you impart,  
Far outweigh your special needs,  
And melt the coldest heart.

We're proud that we've been chosen,  
To help you learn and grow,  
The joy that you have brought us,  
Is more than you can know.

A precious gift from Heaven,  
A treasure from above,  
A child who's taught us many things,  
But most of all - Real Love.

-Sharon Harris



## this issue

Release and An Taoiseach **P.1**

Release Rathfarnham Opens **P.2**

Workshop for Teachers and SNAs **P.3**

Results from our Research **P.4**

## Release Lobbies for Reform of Speech and Language Services

In today's current economic climate, our government are looking at ways to maximise efficiencies, productivity and minimising costs. We are very proud to say An Taoiseach Brian Cowen is fully supportive of the Release programme and along with Minister for Health and Children Mary Harney, TD are looking at ways to get Release implemented in the Health Service Executive. It is very important that ours isn't the only voice that is heard. Please write to your elected officials and HSE representatives today.

We have been getting a lot of positive notice from the HSE over recent months, and believe it is down to you, Release parents, for expressing your support of Release. Please write to:

James O'Grady  
National Manager Disability Services  
32-33 Catherine St  
Limerick

Laverne McGuinness  
National Director of Primary, Community and Continuing Care  
Stewards Hospital  
Dublin 8

Release will continue try to use our influence, both through the media and politically to convince Minister for Education, Batt O'Keefe TD to reinstate and indeed drastically improve services to all children in Ireland who have a learning disability. But ours is only one voice. You can make a difference.

**Register today for  
the April—July  
2009 Session**

**Please write to our elected government officials and tell them what continuous speech and language therapy means to you and your child:**

An Taoiseach Brian Cowen, T.D.  
Department of An Taoiseach  
Government Buildings  
Upper Merrion Street  
Dublin 2

Minister for Education and Science  
Batt O'Keefe, T.D.  
Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1

Junior Minister for Mental Health and Disabilities  
John Maloney, T.D.  
Dept of Health and Children  
Hawkins House  
Dublin 2

## FUNDRAISING IDEAS



Get Fit, Have Fun, and Raise money for your child's Release Speech and Language Therapy

2009 Flora Mini-Marathon – Bank Holiday, 1 June 2009

[www.womensminimarathon.ie](http://www.womensminimarathon.ie)

Every year, women (and some beautifully looking “feMALES” turn out for this 10k “race”. It costs only €22 for those who want the timing chip and €15 for those who do not need or want it.

As an accepted Flora Mini-Marathon Charity, get your friends, family and co-workers to join or sponsor your marathon effort. All of the money you raise will be directly used to provide speech and language therapy sessions for your child. **We have a Sponsor Letter and Donation Card for your use available online at [www.release.ie/news](http://www.release.ie/news)**

**Entry Process:** All participants must enter online at [www.florawomensminimathon.ie](http://www.florawomensminimathon.ie) from 27th February 2009. (On-line entries will incur an extra €1 Bank processing charge).



Release is excited to announce the successful opening of the Release Rathfarnham Centre. Almost 20 people came out over New Years weekend to help paint, pack and move all of the classroom tools necessary to start a new centre. It was a massive undertaking, and one which we're really proud of.

Brenda Donoghue of RTE's Mooney Show came by to officially launch the programme and completed an amazing 20 minute segment on The Mooney Show which highlighted our programme, but more importantly, told the story of Release families.

A million thank-yous to Brenda for her time and complete understanding of what Release is trying to achieve, to Niamh Lyons, FD PR for spreading the word, and to our brilliant parents, Margaret Shanley, and Ann Finnegan, and their beautiful daughters, Ruth and Muireann .

Thank you also for the donated paint at Cloonan's Hardware, Tullamore and a new carpet from Gary Nevins, Tullamore.

## Release Rathfarnham Opens

**Front Row:** Ruth Shanley, Muireann Finnegan Hyland, Tara Cunningham  
**Second Row:** Margaret Shanley, Ann Finnegan, Brenda, Jennifer Grundulis



**Collette O'Sullivan, Clare Mulvaney, Tara Cunningham, Tim Griffiths and Christina Voytko workin' it.**

## April—July Session, Registration Now Open

Registration is now open in both Rathfarnham and Dollymount Release Centres.

The 13-week Session runs from 20 April—25 July. The pre insurance and tax relief cost of the session is €975 payable on the first day of class.

**Private Health Insurance Holders -Post Refund Max. Cost €492**

If you have private health insurance, this cost is reduced to €615.

A further 20% can then be taken in to account for the Med 1, **bringing the cost for 13 weeks down to €492.**

**No Private Insurance? Don't forget the Med1 Form!**

**Post Refund Cost €780.**

Every person in the State are eligible for 20% tax back on all fees paid out for speech and language therapy by a qualified SLT. All Release SLT's are IASLT certified and therefore you can receive 20% back.

**After Med 1 tax back, this 13-week session will cost you €780.**

Please remember you can fundraise these costs. Visit [www.release.ie/news](http://www.release.ie/news).

# Workshop for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants Announced

Release Communication Intervention has a primary focus on enabling parents and caregivers to enhance their child's communication skills in the home and in their daily life. Outside the home environment however, most children spend a majority of their time in school.

Children with communication impairments often have difficulty accessing the language of the curriculum or may have behavioural difficulties linked to their communication problems which further impact on their ability to learn.

For example, a child who has difficulty pronouncing certain sounds may act out as a result of not being understood by his peers or his teachers. However, this child is not 'bold'; they are merely frustrated as others in their environment cannot understand what they are trying to say.

Similarly, a child with comprehension difficulties may not be able to follow a teacher's instructions as they cannot understand and process the language being used. In these cases, if the underlying communication impairment was understood and could be catered for, these children would be more able to take part in class and continue to learn and progress with their peers.

**Email**  
[annamcleod@release.ie](mailto:annamcleod@release.ie)  
**or call 01.493.9921**  
**to register your interest.**

While many children with communication impairments need specific input from a speech and language therapist, there are usually a variety of activities and approaches that a teacher or SNA can use in the classroom to help a child with communication needs to meet their full potential.

Therefore, I have developed a workshop focusing on practical activities and approaches to working with the child with communication needs, specifically for classroom teachers, learning support teachers, SNAs, resource teachers and other education professionals. It is hoped that through this workshop these individuals will gain the knowledge, understanding and confidence to better support the child with communication difficulties in school.

The workshop will address typical communication development, specific communication impairments (such as Autism Spectrum Disorders, verbal dyspraxia and so on), when to refer to a speech and language therapist, practical approaches which can be used in the classroom and more.

**Thank you,**  
**Anna McLeod, B Sc. Clin Lang,**  
**Acting Senior Speech and Language Therapist**

## FUNDRAISING IDEAS cont.



**OR, Let Someone Else Get Fit, and You Raise the Money**

**Tara Cunningham's cousin, Matt Mitchell (former University of Arkansas great) is training for the Escape From Alcatraz Triathlon.**

**[www.escapefromalcatraztriathlon.com](http://www.escapefromalcatraztriathlon.com)**

The 2009 Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon will take place on June 14, 2009 at 8:00am. Matt will be running for Release, and all Release families and friends can raise money for each mile / or leg of the triathlon he achieves.

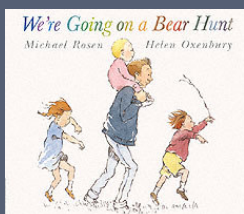
Only 2000 qualify for this Triathlon—it is hotly contested. The Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon includes a 1.5 mile swim from Alcatraz Island in the San Francisco Bay. The race continues with an 18 mile bike ride out the Golden Gate Park, and concludes with an 8 mile run through the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The finish is at The Marina Green.

**Better him than us! Thanks Matt!!!**

Sponsorship Cards are available online at [www.release.ie/news](http://www.release.ie/news)

## Jenny's Picks

**"We're Going On A Bear Hunt" By Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury**



Follow the family's excitement as they wade through the grass, splash through the river and squelch through the mud in search of the bear. What a surprise awaits in the cave on the other side of the dark forest. A fantastic book for teaching anticipation and actions!

**"Let's Be Polite" by P.K. Hallinan**

Featuring rhyming verse and illustrations, this work shows youngsters how to be polite and use good manners. Suitable for ages 3 to 7 years, it adopts an approach that helps teach children the importance of good manners at home, at school, and in general.



# Preliminary Results from the Research are Here...!

In 2008, 69 children and their parents agreed to participate in a clinical trial for the Release methodology. Denis O'Brien and another anonymous donor funded scholarships for every student in order to ensure all socio-economic backgrounds could participate.

They agreed to enroll with the Release programme for 20 weeks, be involved in pre and post assessments, complete the homework, and not to receive any outside speech and language therapy.

Preliminary results show that in less than 6 months, the research indicates a significant decrease in parental stress levels with 96% of children increasing their communication ability in excess of 11 ½ months and 74% of children improving at least one severity level (e.g. from severe to moderate, moderate to mild etc).

## In comparison:

- The George Washington University case study involved nine children receiving weekly, intensive 1:1 speech and language therapy. The GWU students showed 78% improved to a less severity level; however, one of the nine received speech and language therapy two days a week.

- 16 children in the Release control group had previous assessments with the Health Service Executive. Children participating in the

Release programme far exceeded the outcomes achieved through the speech and language therapy provided through the HSE.

- 15 Release students maintained or improved at least one severity level, with one child regressing.
- 16 HSE students either maintained or regressed.

We will be putting this information up on our website in the upcoming months once the final peer review has taken place.

Release will be presenting our findings at the ASHA Conference 2009 in New Orleans, attended by 12,000 speech and language therapists from around the globe.

**Together, we have proved without a doubt, when you involve families in continuous, weekly one hour therapy the children make significant strides in their communication abilities!**

Thank you to all the families who participated and did the work, and Congratulations to Dr Brassell, Jennifer Grundulis, Christina Voytko and Anna McLeod whose hard work produced the results!

## The Real Cost to You for Release

Release is a **not for profit** service provider, with all speech and language therapists validated by the Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists.

Therefore all costs for your child's Release speech and language therapy can be put against your Med 1 Form (available on [www.release.ie/prereg](http://www.release.ie/prereg))

### Private Health Care

If you have private health care, combined with your Med 1, the costs for an hour of Release falls from €75 to €36.

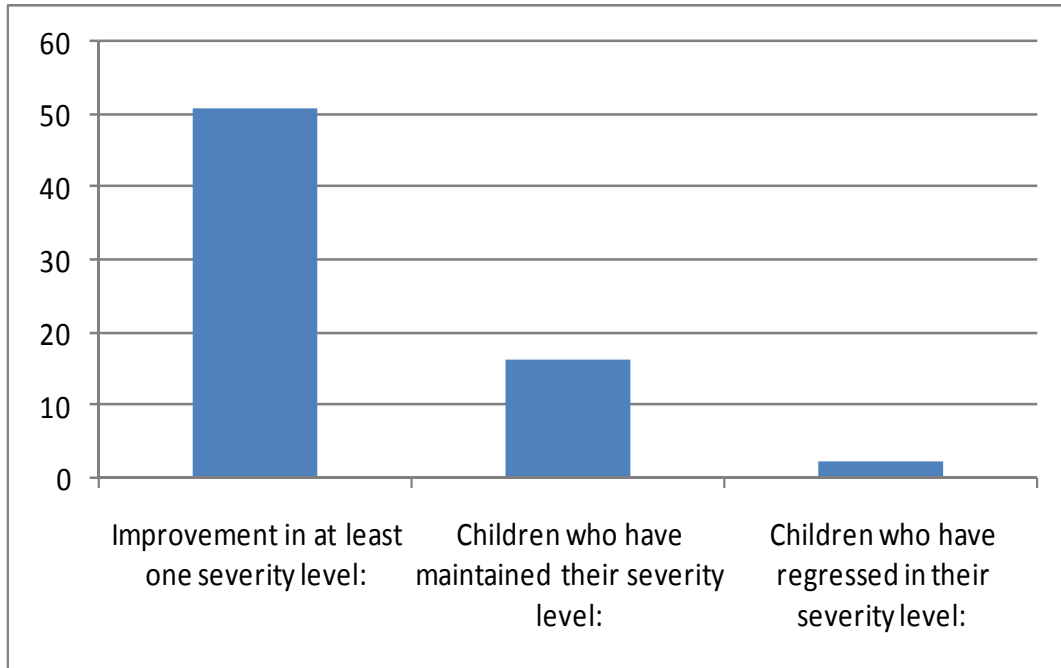
If you don't have private health care, or you have used up your maximum visits (minimum 12), the cost for an hour of Release falls from €75 to €59 per hour.

**Don't forget, you can fundraise to pay for your child's Release speech and language therapy sessions!**

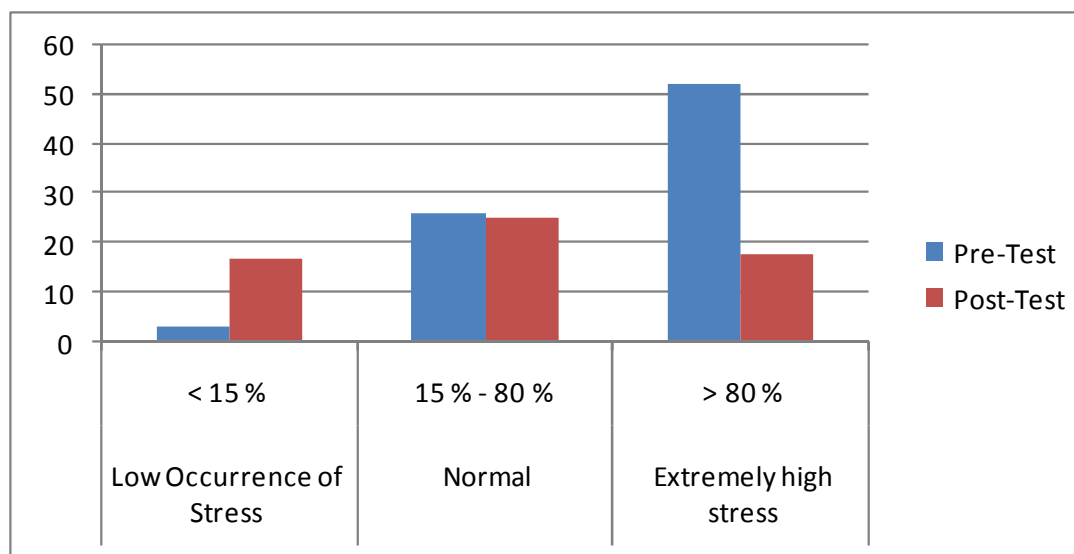
Description	Cost from Release	-	Minus Private Health Care	-	Minus 21% MED 1 Form	=	Total Cost with all deductions
<b>Assessment</b>	€350	-	€30 - €40	-	€64	=	€256
<b>Class Per Hour</b>	€75	-	€30 - €40 (x 12)	-	€9	=	€36
<b>8 Hour Workshop</b>	€1250 + travel Approx €50 per person (25 people)	-	€30 - €40	-	€4	=	€16
<b>Basic SLT Supervision</b>	€150 per hour + travel			-		=	€150 per hour + travel

# Preliminary Research Results Continues

## Final Results of the 69 Children Participating



## Parent Stress Index showing Significant Decrease in Stress Levels after 20 Weeks



## FUNDRAISING SUCCESS STORIES

We have heard some great stories these past few months from families who have raised enough money to pay for their child's Release speech and language therapy for a year!

One of our favourite events was run by Margaret Shanley, pictured on page 2, with her friends and family. They held a fundraising night out in a local pub in Mullingar.

Margret's husband and his best mate did the honourable thing and raised money getting their legs waxed.

They also held an auction, and a pub quiz.

Everyone had a great night out and even the local paper got in on the action!

Remember you friends and family will be more than happy to help you help your child. Have a good time while you take the pressure off your family during the pre-boom era we are all living in. :)

We constantly update our website with information to help parents get the resources they need.

**MED 1 Form**—get your 20% tax back, download the interactive form at [www.release.ie/prereg](http://www.release.ie/prereg).

**Sponsorship Cards and Letter**—download the sponsorship card from [www.release.ie/news](http://www.release.ie/news)

### The Release Blog

Don't forget to participate in our blog. <http://www.release.ie/blog>

### Watch our Video

The Release team and the Levin family tell their story.  
[www.release.ie](http://www.release.ie)

## Summer Graduate Speech and Language Therapist Interns



**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**  
A private university in the public service

Release is happy to announce this summer's graduate student internships!

Jennifer Wnorowski and Michelle Stich are both studying for their masters degree in speech and language therapy at New York University and we are thrilled to have them with us this May and June!

Both Jennifer and Michelle are working to become full time SLT's and with that need as much experience as they can get. They will be based out of our Dollymount Centre and will be available for short term, individual and group speech therapy at a reduced rate.

Contact Jennifer Grundulis at 01-493-9921 or [jennifergrundulis@release.ie](mailto:jennifergrundulis@release.ie) if you'd like your child to have the opportunity to work with one of these talented speech and language therapists.

### REFER A FRIEND AND GET €100 OFF YOUR NEXT SESSION

Refer a friend to Release, and if they pay for and are able to attend a full session, you will get €100 off your session fees.

98% of our Release families are referred by other families, so this is our way of thanking you for referring us!

Make sure your friend mentions your name before they are put into a class, so we can ensure you get your proper credit.

Call 01.493.9921 for more information.

### Release Communication Ltd

Release Rathfarnham  
Ballyroan Crescent  
Rathfarnham  
Dublin 16

Tel / Fax:  
+353.(0)1.493.9921

[info@release.ie](mailto:info@release.ie)  
<http://www.release.ie>  
<http://www.ammado.com/nonprofit/release>

Registered in Ireland  
No. 379007

Directors  
T Cunningham

Release Dollymount  
St Gabriel's Rd  
Dollymount  
Dublin 3

Tel:  
+353.(0)1.853.1578  
Fax:  
+353.(0)1.853.1579

Registered Office  
11 Ashley Court  
Tullamore  
Co. Offaly

Tel / Fax:  
+353.(0)1.493.9921