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PRESS RELEASE

ASHA Names 2026 Media Champion Award Recipients

(Rockville, MD–August 11, 2026) The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) announced the recipients of **ASHA’s 2026 Media Champion Awards** today. These awards recognize media outlets, ASHA members, and others for outstanding coverage and outreach about communication disorders and the work of audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs).

“Each awardee in their own way has helped raise awareness and educate the public about communication and swallowing disorders as well as about the availability of professionals who can help address them and make significant positive differences in quality of life,” said 2026 ASHA President Linda I. Rosa-Lugo, EdD, CCC-SLP, ASHA Fellow. “What the awardees have done is so important, and their awards are well deserved. They have my gratitude and congratulations, and I look forward to honoring them at ASHA’s Convention this November.”

Join us in recognizing and congratulating ASHA’s 2026 Media Champion Awards recipients:

Associated Press (AP): For the October 30, 2025, article, “[Patients go without needed treatment after the government shutdown disrupts a telehealth program](#),” by Ali Swenson and Obed Lamy. The article included perspectives from ASHA-member speech-language pathologists on how changes in telehealth coverage affected some patients’ access to services.

Fox 5 DC: For its November 13, 2025, evening and primetime television coverage of the launch of a new interactive exhibit about stuttering at the Planet Word Museum in Washington, D.C. Fox 5 interviewed museum leaders about the exhibit’s focus on fostering a greater understanding of stuttering and providing guidance for supporting people who stutter.

Telemundo 49 Tampa: For its [October 28, 2025, segment](#) on inclusive Halloween celebrations for children with speech and language disorders. Telemundo 49 spoke with SLP Meg Morgan, MS, CCC-SLP, BSC-CL, about ways that everyone can support children with communication difficulties during trick or treating—and about other traditional Halloween activities.

Coffee With America: For their [June 1, 2026, segment](#) on ASHA’s recent national poll, which surveyed caregivers of adults with communication difficulties. *Coffee With America* interviewed ASHA President Linda I. Rosa-Lugo, EdD, CCC-SLP, ASHA Fellow, and audiologist Janice R. Trent, AuD, about [the poll’s findings](#) on communication challenges during caregiving.

KevinMD: For publishing the May 28, 2026, opinion piece by Chris Ross, PhD, CCC-SLP, titled “[Communication access is a patient safety issue](#).” Ross, who is an advisory member of ASHA’s *Communication ACCESS* initiative, wrote about her personal experience with hospitalization—and the importance of effective communication in health care settings.

Hilarity for Charity: For partnering with ASHA for multiple events that detailed how SLPs can improve daily life for individuals with dementia and for their caregivers—specifically, these three events in 2025 and 2026:



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- November 10, 2025—"Speech-Language Pathologists as Partners in Dementia Caregiving" (virtual lounge event)
- May 20, 2026—"Everyday Tips and Tricks for Improving Communication at Home With Your Loved One With Dementia" (webinar)
- July 14, 2026—"Supporting Safe and Enjoyable Mealtimes" (webinar)

[Hilarity for Charity](#) is a national nonprofit organization that aims to care for families impacted by Alzheimer's disease.

Lantern: For its [EAT texting program](#) that provides feeding guidance to families with young children. ASHA partnered with Lantern to provide caregivers of children ages 6 months to 5 years with weekly tips about feeding challenges based on guidance developed in collaboration with feeding experts. EAT marks the third texting program collaboration between ASHA and Lantern; the other two are [HEAR](#) and [TALK](#).

Becky Khayum, MS, CCC-SLP: For her participation in the following two news stories:

- AP's "[Patients go without needed treatment after the government shutdown disrupts a telehealth program](#)," where she spoke about how her practice provides critical telehealth care for patients with brain disorders
- AARP's "[Let's talk speech therapy: What caregivers need to know](#)," where she explained how SLPs help those with dementia and Parkinson's disease communicate with their care partners and eat safely

Michelle Hu, AuD, CCC-A: For her contributions to [summer guidance](#) for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Hu, who is profoundly deaf in both ears and is a cochlear implant user, provided expert advice for parents and caregivers. Additionally, Hu is active in her outreach to parents on her social media platforms.

Contributors to a New Stuttering Exhibit at Planet Word: The following recipients contributed to the development and promotion of an [interactive exhibit](#) about stuttering at the Planet Word Museum in Washington, D.C.:

- **Brooke Leiman Edwards, MA, CCC-SLP, BCS-SCF:** Leiman Edwards provided expert review for the exhibit and helped develop a video component that featured an adolescent girl who stutters.
- **Timothy Flynn, MS, CCC-SLP:** At the exhibit's launch, Flynn spoke about his experiences as a person who stutters. Local reporters and representatives from Destination DC and Downtown DC, among others, attended the launch.
- **James Panico, PhD, CCC-SLP:** Panico served as a primary author of the exhibit's content, working over a period of several months with ASHA staff on creating the exhibit.
- **Derek E. Daniels, PhD, CCC-SLP:** Daniels served as a primary author of the exhibit's content, dedicating his time and expertise across several months. Daniels also was featured in the exhibit's video component.
- **Soo-Eun Chang, PhD, CCC-SLP:** Chang was featured in the exhibit's video component discussing differences between the brains of people who stutter and those who don't. She also contributed MRI images from her research for use in the exhibit.



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About the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA)

ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for 247,000 members and affiliates who are audiologists; speech-language pathologists; speech, language, and hearing scientists; audiology and speech-language pathology assistants; and students. Audiologists specialize in preventing and assessing hearing and balance disorders as well as providing audiologic treatment, including hearing aids. Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) identify, assess, and treat speech, language, and swallowing disorders. www.asha.org

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