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Inspired by 'King's Speech'

by RYAN MERRIMAN

A STAMMERER has been inspired by an award-winning movie to an raise awareness about his condition and show others that help is available.



Adam Wright struggled through life with his speech disorder feeling embarrassed, cut off from the world and suffered from no self-esteem.

But the Weddington-based resident was given a new lease of life thanks to the help of The Starfish Project which taught him techniques to control his stammer.

These techniques, which are not a cure for a stutter but help people to keep it controlled, are based on Lionel Logue's methods which are now being featured in the film 'The King's Speech' starring Colin Firth and Helena Bonham Carter.

The movie, which has already won a string of awards including 'Best Actor' at the Golden Globes for Colin Firth, highlights the plight of people who are affected by a stammer.

Adam said: "It's great to see that stammering is being brought to a wider audience through the film and is raising awareness.

"But not only that, it shows people who suffer from a stammer that there is help out there and there are techniques which can be taught to help them control their speech.

"Before getting help from The Starfish Project I wouldn't have proper conversations, I avoided speaking on the phone and I couldn't go to the bar and ordered a drink or order food in a restaurant.

"School was awful and like many people with a stammer I just retreated into myself and I didn't do that well in exams either."

Everything changed for the 31-year-old after going on the three-day residential course with the not-for-profit organisation which provides free support for life back in 2008.

He went to university and trained to become a social worker and now feels more confident with his speech and talking to others.

The father of two added: "When I came back from the course I went out with my wife for a meal and just ordered everything from the drinks to all the food, I even asked for Tomato ketchup even though I didn't like it just because I could!

"The Starfish Project really helped to change things for me and it can for others as well. I try to go back regularly to make sure that I keep on top of the techniques because it is not a cure and requires commitment and hard work.

"The techniques are something that can be learned, you have to think about your breathing and make sure that you remember what to do and a refresher course helps with that.

"I heard about the scheme through a television programme, but I had heard and tried out some many "cures" over the years and nothing worked so I was sceptical.

"So I didn't contact The Starfish Project straight away, it took some time for me to make up my mind, but I'm glad I got in touch with them and went on the course as it has changed my life completely."

Anne Blight founded The Starfish Project 12 years ago to help people who stammer to learn a technique to control something that had been controlling them.

A part of the technique that is taught is based on the early pioneering methods that Lionel Logue used with King George VI and they were coupled with other modern methods.

Anyone who stammers or knows someone who does and would like more information about The Starfish Project contact 01825 767 268 or visit www.starfishproject.co.uk.