

# So Many Ways to Bust Stereotypes!

**Bethany Hamilton** won her first surfing competition when she was just 8 years old. By the time she was a teenager, she was a well-known surfer.

Then, on October 31, 2003, her world changed. A tiger shark attacked 13-year-old Bethany when she was surfing near the Hawaiian island of Kauai. The 14-foot shark tore off most of her left arm.

Despite her injury, Bethany was determined to return to surfing. Just one month after the attack, she was back on her board. Later that year, she published her autobiography. In 2011, more people learned about Bethany's inspiring story when a successful movie—*Soul Surfer*—was made out of her first book.

By sharing her experiences, Bethany has changed the way people view female athletes and those who are differently-abled.

"People I don't even know come up to me," she writes. "I guess they see me as a symbol of courage and inspiration. One thing hasn't changed, and that's how I feel when I'm riding a wave. It's like, I'm still here."



(BETHANY HAMILTON) PHOTO BY KRISTIN SCHOLTZ/ASP VIA GETTY IMAGES  
(ELLEN OCHOA) PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA



When **Ellen Ochoa** was in high school in the early 1970s, girls were not always encouraged to succeed in math and science. But Ellen was good at those subjects, and she had a calculus teacher who encouraged her.

When she went to college, however, one of her professors told that engineering was too difficult for women. She proved that professor wrong in 1991, when she was selected by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) as the world's first Hispanic female astronaut!

Just two years later, Ellen Ochoa became the first Hispanic woman to go into space. And today, she has logged more than 1,000 hours in space!

**Mitali Perkins** grew up in California, where she often felt caught between two worlds—her traditional Bengali family and the American suburbs. She loved to read, but she had a hard time finding books that talked about people who were having experiences like hers.

As a writer, she was able to change that. Her first book, *The Not-So-Star-Spangled Life of Sunita Sen*, told the story of a California middle-schooler and her traditional Indian family.

Mitali wants to get more people challenging the stereotypes that are often associated with different cultures. "Let the stories come," she writes. "The more novels about a diversity of characters written by a diversity of authors and consumed by a diversity of readers, the better."



## Flip and trade for more ideas!

Bethany Hamilton didn't let a terrible accident affect what she could do in the sport of surfing. Ellen Ochoa didn't let someone's opinion about girls' math skills keep her from being an astronaut. Mitali Perkins didn't let the fact that she couldn't find books that reflected her cultural experiences stop her from writing her own.

What stereotypes would you like to see change so women and girls and ANYONE can try on whatever roles they want?

Trade ideas with your Junior friends! The more ideas you trade, the more ideas you'll have for your Speak Out story. Consider getting started by creating cards to share that will help others get out of the habit of using stereotypes.

- First, get a stack of blank index cards or cut small pieces of paper into squares or rectangles.
- Then, draw a picture of a person who is stereotyped on one side of the card. For example, maybe it is a girl with a speech balloon saying, "Math is hard."
- Flip the card over and on the other side, draw a picture of the stereotype BUSTED! For example, you could draw a girl with a speech balloon that says, "Math might be hard for some people, but I'm really good at it!"

For more fun, make extra copies of your cards to trade with your friends and create your own Stereotype Busting Card Pack.