



New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome
AND ASSOCIATED DISORDERS

*Collaborative Partnerships
for the Tourette Syndrome Community*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dare To Dream Student Leadership Conference will offer valuable breakout sessions for attendees

Conference will take place May 21 at Rutgers and is open to New Jersey students with Tourette Syndrome or associated disorders in grades 6-12

The first Dare to Dream Student Leadership Conference to target the community of New Jersey high school students living with neurological conditions such as Tourette Syndrome, OCD, ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome and other associated disorders is less than a month away!

Hundreds of Garden State students in grades 6 to 12 are expected to descend upon Rutgers University's Busch Campus in Piscataway for the conference, which will take place **Monday, May 21**. The New Jersey Office of Special Education is partnering with the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome & Associated Disorders (NJCTS) to develop this unique opportunity for students in transition to focus on the importance of student self-advocacy and leadership.

The conference will feature presentations from students and adults with neurological disorders who have demonstrated exemplary self-advocacy and leadership skills. Additionally, the conference program includes a variety of concurrent breakout sessions that provide attendees insight into the transition process and skills to cultivate self-advocacy. Students also will participate in peer-led workshops, including goal-setting, self-discovery, student self-advocacy and planning for the future.

There will be several topics from which students will choose for the breakout sessions, including:

- **“Rights & Responsibilities of Students in Post-Secondary Education,”** presented by the Office for Civil Rights. This is for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- **“College Survival 101,”** presented by Rutgers University's College Support Program. This is for students who are on the autism spectrum.
- **“Learn, Do, Earn,”** presented by the New Jersey Family Support Center. This is for students who want to learn valuable skills for acquiring the job they want out of high school.

- **“Operation: Autism Speaks Awareness and School-wide Inclusion,”** presented by Linwood Middle School.
- **“Big Dreamers: Setting Realistic Short-Term Goals,”** presented by Piscataway High School.
- **“How a Positive Attitude Influences Your Life and Achieving Your Goals,”** presented by Northern Valley Regional High School.
- **“Self-Advocacy, Not Just in the Future ... Now!”** presented by students from The Newgrange School. This is for students looking for guidance on how to socialize with friends.

“These breakout sessions represent an excellent opportunity for students of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to come together and learn more about how to best equip themselves for a successful future,” said Melissa Fowler, M.A., M.Ed, NJCTS’ Education Outreach Consultant. “There is something here for everyone, and I wholeheartedly believe each student who attends these session will be armed with further knowledge about life they both want and need.”

More information on signing up for the conference is available by calling NJCTS at 908-575-7350 or Bob Haugh of the New Jersey Department of Education at 609-633-6431, or by visiting <http://njcts.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/DareToDreamConference2012.pdf>. Melissa Fowler also may be contacted by e-mailing mfowler@njcts.org.

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*New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders, Inc.
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