



New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome
AND ASSOCIATED DISORDERS

*Collaborative Partnerships
for the Tourette Syndrome Community*

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South Plainfield teenager Tommy Licato reads “Emily’s Tic” and talks about TS to kids at local library

*Evening reading came on the heels of a New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome
Patient-Centered Medical Education training at Goryeb Children’s Hospital in Morristown*

SOUTH PLAINFIELD – August 15 was a busy day for 13-year-old Tommy Licato. In the morning, he joined the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome & Associated Disorders (NJCTS) for a Patient-Centered Medical Education training at Goryeb Children’s Hospital in Morristown.

In the evening, he headed back to his hometown to take part in a reading to kids of “Emily’s Tic,” an illustrated children’s book written by teenager Emily Fleischman that details her own struggles with TS as a child and adolescent. It was a whirlwind day, but Licato couldn’t have been more thrilled with how the events went.

“At Goryeb, the presentation was well-received by the doctors. They had a few questions about things like suppression of tics, and I talked about how being cold or going to the pool makes me tic more. It’s not a pleasant feeling to have tics, and the best way to help a patient as much as possible is to relate what they’re going through,” said Licato, who described his day-to-day experience living with Tourette Syndrome at school, at home and in their communities to group of more than 30 pediatric residents at Goryeb. “Doctors can be (new) to the experience because they’ve only read it in a book.”



Photo courtesy of the Licato family

**Tommy Licato, 13, of South Plainfield reads “Emily’s Tic” to kids
on August 15 at the South Plainfield Public Library.**

At the library, things didn't exactly go as planned – Licato was supposed to read from the book himself, but the librarians thought it would be better received coming from an adult – but he made the most of the opportunity, answering questions and talking about his life experiences. He even got to do a little storytelling, reading the kids a poem about bats.

“After I was done talking, I asked if anyone had questions. They did, but the questions were just about bats. So I worked with that and told them that another student in my class once said that I should be caged like a bat because of my tics,” Licato said. “There were parents who are teachers there, and they thought it was great that I could put things at level that the kids could understand.”

Licato is part of NJCTS' Youth Advocate Program, which trains teenagers to speak at Patient-Centered Medical Education trainings at hospitals around New Jersey. Over the past 18 months, the Center has facilitated trainings at Goryeb twice, Saint Peter's University Hospital in New Brunswick, Jersey Shore Medical Center in Neptune and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick.

Trainings also have been schedule for August 30 at JFK Medical Center in Edison and Jersey Shore Medical Center, as well as Newark Beth Israel Medical Center in Newark on October 24 and Cooper University Hospital in Camden on November 7. More information about this program is available by calling 908-575-7350 or by visiting www.njcts.org.

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*New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders, Inc.
Collaborative partnerships for the TS community.*