



New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome
AND ASSOCIATED DISORDERS

*Collaborative Partnerships
for the Tourette Syndrome Community*

908.575.7350

50 Division Street • Somerville, NJ 08876 • www.njcts.org • info@njcts.org • FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alan B. Shepard Elementary School Learns About Tourette Syndrome

NJCTS Youth Advocates teach elementary students at Abilities Fair

OLD BRIDGE, NJ- It begins in elementary school. The average onset of Tourette Syndrome (TS) symptoms, a neurological disorder characterized by involuntary movements or sounds known as tics, begins at age 7.

"Many kids with TS report feelings of isolation and bullying- they're trying to cope with uncontrollable, sometimes frightening physical symptoms, and don't know how to explain it to their friends and peers," said Faith W. Rice, executive director of the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders, Inc (NJCTS).

TS is frequently accompanied by ADHD, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, depression and learning disabilities. As many as 1 in 100 school-age children show signs of TS, yet there is stigma attached to the disorder because of exaggerated media portrayals.

Recognizing the need for understanding among children with TS, their friends and classmates- NJCTS delivers peer in-service trainings at schools across New Jersey. NJCTS Youth Advocates, specially trained teens with TS, visit schools to educate younger children about acceptance, self-empowerment and anti-bullying.

"While our Youth Advocates are there on behalf of a student with TS, their message benefits all students- regardless of whether or not they're struggling with TS, ADHD, a mental health issues, a learning disorder or not." said NJCTS Education Outreach Coordinator Gina Jones, M.Ed.

NJCTS Youth Advocates Ally Abad of North Brunswick and Tommy Licato of South Plainfield joined Jones for an Awareness Fair at Alan B. Shepard Elementary School in Old Bridge where they introduced 255 K-5 students to TS and a message of cooperation.



NJCTS Youth Advocate Ally Abad of North Brunswick, introduces students at Alan B. Shepard Elementary School to Tourette Syndrome



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"The students asked questions and seemed very compassionate and excited to learn," said Jones, "It was great."

NJCTS delivers faculty in-services, led by master's level educators with personal knowledge of TS; peer in-service presentations led by Youth Advocates; expert clinician-led hospital grand rounds and a variety of conferences and community events. These presentations are made upon request by calling 908-575-7350. To learn more about Tourette Syndrome and the work of NJCTS, visit www.njcts.org.



NJCTS Youth Advocate Tommy Licato, of South Plainfield, talks about acceptance with students at Alan B. Shepard Elementary School's Abilities Day in Old Bridge

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