



NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome AND ASSOCIATED DISORDERS, INC.

50 Division Street, Suite 205 Somerville, NJ 08876 908-575-7350 www.njcts.org

For Immediate Release

October is National Bullying Prevention Month

*The NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome joins the movement to prevent bullying,
expanding its Youth Advocate Program*

SOMERVILLE, NJ— This October, schools and organizations all across the country are observing National Bullying Prevention Month. All students should feel safe in school and have the opportunity to grow and thrive, academically and socially, and through its Youth Advocate program, the NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders (NJCTS) is taking special steps to prevent bullying.



NJCTS Youth Advocate Mike Hayden presents to the Cresskill school district. Photo by Thomas E. Franklin, *The Record*.

NJCTS Youth Advocate presentations inform youth about Tourette Syndrome (TS)—a misunderstood and misdiagnosed disorder that affects 1 in 100 school-aged children who are often the targets of bullying. Advocates are 13- to 18-years-old and either have a TS diagnosis or live with a sibling or family member with TS. In addition to providing an overview of the neurological disorder, the Advocates promote understanding and tolerance, and deliver a strong anti-bullying message. The presentations have grown to include a discussion of the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship.

“NJCTS has long been and continues to be one of the most important organizations addressing childhood bullying in NJ schools,” said Dr. Stuart Green, Director of NJ Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention and Associate Director of Overlook Family Medicine. “Their innovative youth advocacy program provides a much-needed service. The program empowers and gives voice to youth with TS, shines a light on a commonly misunderstood and stigmatized condition, and helps NJ youth and their teachers strengthen their empathy for those who are vulnerable and targeted. The NJCTS Youth Advocates are heroes for an important cause – they deserve our recognition and support.”

In recognition of the efforts to improve school climate and reduce rates of bullying, NJCTS regularly coordinates Youth Advocate presentations in schools and community groups, reaching thousands of

students throughout New Jersey. Since the program's launch in 2009, NJCTS Youth Advocates have conducted more than 250 presentations, raising awareness and increasing sensitivity and understanding.

“Our Youth Advocates foster understanding, sensitivity, and tolerance of TS while displacing the myths and stereotypes that are often associated with this misunderstood and misdiagnosed disorder,” said NJCTS Executive Director Faith W. Rice. “By educating others, we hope that each new generation will grow up with a better understanding of TS, making biases a thing of the past.”

During National Bullying Prevention Month, NJCTS will be training a new “class” of Advocates on Saturday, October 24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Morris County Library, 30 East Hanover Ave., Whippany, NJ 07981.

For more information or to attend the training, please contact Gina Maria Jones, M.Ed, NJCTS Education Outreach Coordinator, at gjones@njcts.org or 908-575-7350.

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*NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome & Associated Disorders, Inc.
Collaborative partnerships for the Tourette Syndrome community*