



## New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders

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For Immediate Release

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### **Teen Emily Fleischman answers questions about TS from Roosevelt School students**

*2010 New Jersey National Youth Ambassador for Tourette Syndrome leads  
peer-to-peer in-service program with a self-designed power-point presentation*

RIVER EDGE, N.J. – River Dell High School student Emily Fleischman is no stranger to the limelight. In 2010, she won the opportunity to head to Washington, D.C. as New Jersey’s National Youth Ambassador representative for the Tourette Syndrome Association. And since then, she has led several peer-to-peer in-service presentations for elementary school students around North Jersey.

So when fifth- and sixth-graders from the Roosevelt School in River Edge tossed some tough questions about Tourette Syndrome her way during her latest peer-to-peer in-service effort on Dec. 15, Fleischman didn’t feel any pressure. She knew she was doing the kids, and the TS community in general, a great service.

“I just want to get the message out there that people with Tourette Syndrome are normal, shouldn’t be bullied and should be treated like everyone else,” Fleischman, 17, told the wide-eyed group of students numbering about 140. “Should we ever bully someone? No.”



**Teenager Emily Fleischman delivers a peer-to-peer in-service presentation about Tourette Syndrome to fifth- and sixth-grade students Dec. 15 at Roosevelt School in River Edge, N.J.**

Fleischman, who used a colorful, easy-to-read power-point presentation to get across the various messages about TS, fielded nearly 20 questions from the students. Some were fairly simple to answer, while others could have thrown Fleischman for a loop. But she was prepared and deftly answered every query. Here are a few of the questions posed by the kids:

- How old you were you when you first had Tourette Syndrome?
- Where did you get it from?
- Have you been made fun of for it?
- When do you get it most?
- What is the difference between Tourette and tics?

- How do you control it?
- Does it hurt to hold it in?
- Were you born with it?
- If another family member has it, can I get it?
- Who are your role models?

Fleischman didn't hesitate on any answer, sometimes referring to her power-point presentation, while other times recalling answers from memory. To the girl who asked if she had been made fun of, Fleischman said yes, but was quick to reiterate to the kids that no one should ever be bullied. In fact, one of her power-point slides read, "We should NEVER MAKE FUN of people because of their differences, especially when it's something that they CANNOT CONTROL. People with TS are just the same as all of you."

To the boy who wondered about the difference between Tourette and tics, Fleischman noted that Tourette Syndrome is the neurological disorder that affects as many as 1 in 100 people, while tics are a movement or sound the body makes that someone with TS can't control. She listed examples of the different types of tics: simple and complex motor tics, and simple and complex vocal tics.

The kids were hanging on her every word, but they weren't the only ones in attendance learning something new. Many of the teachers were seen paying very close attention. One, Lisa Pitingolo, marveled at the depth and breadth of Fleischman's presentation.

"The presentation was terrific. I found it to be especially effective because it was delivered by a 'peer,' rather than an adult," Pitingolo said. "Emily spoke to the students on a level that they could understand, made them feel comfortable and eager to learn more and ask questions. She is quite a remarkable young lady."

More information about Fleischman's presentation, as well as peer-to-peer in-service opportunities available through the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome, are available by calling 908-575-7350 or by visiting [www.njcts.org](http://www.njcts.org). Read more about Fleischman's accomplishments on the Teens4TS blog at [www.njcts.org/teens4ts](http://www.njcts.org/teens4ts).

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