



New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome
AND ASSOCIATED DISORDERS

*Collaborations and Partnerships
for the Tourette Syndrome Community*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tourette Syndrome families sing praises about value of annual NJCTS family retreat weekend

This year's eighth annual event will take place June 8-10

PORT MURRAY, N.J. – A perfect mixture of fun, education and advocacy has been the name of the game for the past seven years during the annual New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome & Associated Disorders (NJCTS) family retreat weekend at picturesque Hunterdon County's YMCA Camp Bernie.

Children and teenagers with Tourette Syndrome and their families have had plenty of reasons to flock to the retreat – activities such as archery, canoeing, campfires, talent shows, arts & crafts, etc. – and there are even more for this year's retreat, to take place **June 8-10, 2012**.

The eighth installment of the NJCTS family retreat weekend will feature a chance to meet other families who “get it” when it comes to Tourette, the opportunity to make new friends who understand what their peers are going through and time for listening to experts, therapists, support group leaders and volunteers talk about various subjects pertaining to TS.

“This weekend is an invaluable experience that we wouldn't miss for the world,” said Melissa Kuperman, who brought her family to the retreat weekend in 2011. “There's nothing that compares to being with all those families that truly understand what it's like to have and live with Tourette Syndrome. It means so much to my children to have one weekend when they're not different and for us to have those moments of camaraderie with other parents.”

NJCTS' first family retreat weekend was in 2005, but special-needs camps got their start in the 1970s, for children with cerebral palsy and cancer. These camps go beyond recreation to teach children about their illness or disorder in ways they might never have experienced.



Photo courtesy of Tracey Lederman

"How do you live well with a chronic condition? I believe in part, the power of being amongst your peers normalizes the experience," Sandra Cushner-Weinstein, a social worker at Children's National Medical Center, said in a past interview with The Associated Press.

Through a grant from Hoop-A-Paluzza, Inc., this year's Camp Bernie experience is as affordable as ever. Registration is open now, and we encourage you to sign up your family today by visiting the [Family Retreat Weekend](#) page on our website. The deadline for registration is **May 11**, but families such as the Wilsons aren't wasting any time getting booked for Bernie after signing up just two weeks in advance last year.

"The weekend was a true blessing! I have never been anywhere else in 17 years for an entire weekend where I felt as calm, relaxed and peaceful for all of us as a family. There was a comfort and freedom I hadn't experienced anywhere else," said Sandy Yeatts-Wilson, who has a 17-year-old daughter with Tourette Syndrome. "The retreat for me is a place to be yourself. A calm, safe, peaceful relaxing environment to let your hair down and have good, clean family fun."

Tracy Lederman, whose family also attended the family retreat weekend for the first time last year, couldn't agree more with the assessments of Melissa Kuperman and Sandy Yeatts-Wilson. The retreat weekend was an enormous boon to her family.

"We walked into the weekend alone, struggling mostly in silence with a disease that is incredibly complex and challenging," Lederman said. "And we left camp on Sunday as part of a family – the NJCTS family, the parents, educators, therapists – all who know and care for one another, and a year later, they continue to reach out to us with support and understanding. The family retreat weekend is on our calendar now permanently."

More information about the family retreat weekend is available by calling 908-575-7350 or by visiting www.njcts.org. For further testimony about the family retreat weekend from the Ledermans, please visit our [TSParentsOnline](#) blog.

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