



New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome
AND ASSOCIATED DISORDERS

*Collaborative Partnerships
for the Tourette Syndrome Community*

908.575.7350

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

District 7 families tell Congressman Leonard Lance about their Tourette Syndrome experiences

*The New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome & Associated Disorders partnered
with the Congressman for a roundtable discussion April 19 at the Mountainside Public Library*

MOUNTAINSIDE – United States Congressman Leonard Lance (R-NJ7) long has been a supporter of the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome & Associated Disorders (NJCTS) and the Garden State’s TS community.

In each of the past two years, Congressman Lance has signed on as a co-sponsor to fellow Congressman Albio Sires’ (D-NJ8) [Collaborative Academic Research Efforts \(CARE\) for Tourette Syndrome Act.](#) And last year, Congressman Lance met with several families from District 7 at the [Somerville Public Library](#) to discuss that legislation and its importance as part of NJCTS’ first roundtable discussion on TS.

That meeting was such a thorough success that NJCTS and Congressman Lance conducted another roundtable discussion on April 19 at the Mountainside Public Library, meeting with families from in and around District 7 who have first-hand experience dealing with Tourette Syndrome and its associated neurological disorders. Each of the families in attendance thanked Congressman Lance for [touting the CARE for TS Act](#), but Congressman Lance was quick to shift the plaudits elsewhere.

“The New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome should be given credit for taking the lead in this, Faith and Congressman Sires in particular,” Congressman Lance said, referring initially to NJCTS Executive Director Faith W. Rice. “I hope this bi-partisan legislation can be given wider support. It is very helpful and educational to meet with all of you, and I admire the courage of all of you – particularly the young people. It’s always good to put a face to a cause.”



Photo by NJCTS

From left, Jill Pavel and Cory Singer of South Plainfield, Congressman Leonard Lance, Anne Burke of Summit, Josh Klapper and Susan Klapper of Scotch Plains, NJCTS Executive Director Faith W. Rice and Thomas Burke of Summit took part in a roundtable discussion April 19 at Mountainside Public Library.

The three youth in attendance – Josh Klapper, Thomas Burke and Cory Singer – all had an opportunity to paint a picture for Congressman Lance of what it is like to live with Tourette or personally experience its effects in the life of a friend or family member.

Singer, a senior at South Plainfield High School and a budding musician who on May 5 will make his television debut on Bravo Media's ["The Kandi Factory,"](#) was adamant that more education is needed in schools – something NJCTS offers on a regular basis.

"Students and teachers usually have no idea what TS is. We need to give more education about Tourette Syndrome and what it is, especially to the teachers," said Singer, 18, who attended the roundtable with his mother, Jill Pavel. "Teachers say, 'Whenever you have the tics, leave the classroom.' That's wrong. And awareness is key to fixing it. People with TS should never be ashamed of who they are. We are who we are, and our flaws are what make us good. With the help of this organization (NJCTS), we can get the word out there."



Photo by NJCTS

Klapper, a sixth-grader at Terrill Middle School in Scotch Plains, was excited to tell the Congressman about the popular HBO TS documentary "I Have Tourette, But Tourette Doesn't Have Me."

During the roundtable discussion, the District 7 constituents detailed their experiences with Tourette Syndrome to Congressman Lance, who is a noted TS supporter and has signed on as a co-sponsor to the Collaborative Academic Research Efforts for Tourette Syndrome Act.

"I didn't know much about TS at first, but after I saw that movie, I saw how many people were like me, and I started to understand it," said Klapper, who along with his mother Susan, also informed the Congressman about his [fifth-grade Tourette service project](#) with which NJCTS assisted. Congressman Lance was impressed with Klapper, noting: "You are very courageous, Josh, and you should be very proud."

Burke, a junior at Seton Hall Prep in South Orange who hails from Summit, doesn't have Tourette himself, but his 13-year-old brother has autism and his work at a karate studio for special-needs children frequently brings him into contact with kids who have TS and associated disorders.

"Many of the kids I work with have severe autism, OCD, ADHD and a few have Tourette. I've learned a lot from being here today about what Tourette is," said Burke, 16, who was joined at the roundtable by his mother, Anne. "It's become something that's pretty important to me. Tourette Syndrome is just something you see on TV or just hear about. It's real, and kids you encounter in everyday life have it. And they're no different than you or me."

Congressman Lance implored the boys, their mothers and the rest of the TS community to do their part in getting the word out there about Tourette, saying: “A greater awareness of issues like this is of interest and need to the larger community. What can you do? Writing op-ed pieces to the newspaper are good idea. They can help educate the public better on these issues. The most persuasive arguments come from a parent advocate or a young person who is an advocate themselves.”

Also in attendance at the roundtable was Borough of Mountainside Councilman Glenn Mortimer. Tourette Syndrome is a misunderstood, misdiagnosed, inherited neurological disorder that affects 1 in 100 children. More information about TS is available by visiting www.njcts.org.

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*New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders, Inc.
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