

June 4th Proclamation

One of the ways we encourage our advocates to spread awareness is to request that their mayor make a TS Awareness Day proclamation. This will involve sending an email and/or making a phone call to the Mayor's office. Often when someone succeeds in getting a proclamation declared, there is the chance to meet the mayor and have photos taken.

Event Involvement

Here at NJCTS, one of our main fundraisers is our annual walk. The NJ Walks for TS virtual walk spans the months of March through May, and is a great opportunity for the Youth Advocate to spread their wings as a leader and become a team captain!

Read Across America

This is an opportunity for advocates to make a difference in their own backyard. Most schools have guest readers for Read Across America week. The Youth Advocate would contact the person in the school coordinating the week, and sign up to be a guest reader for a class of younger children. They can share about their TS and then read a story that centers around tolerance and acceptance.

To learn more about Youth Development opportunities with NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome, please contact us:

(908) 575-7350

info@njcts.org

www.njcts.org



In 2004, NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome & Associated Disorders, Inc. (NJCTS) was established as the nation's first Center of Excellence to provide programs and services to support families, public outreach and awareness campaigns, and education for schools and healthcare professionals in every corner of the state.



Youth Development Opportunities



"Becoming a Youth Advocate for NJCTS has helped me build confidence in myself as I learn to live with my Tourette Syndrome, inspire others who live with it and educate those who don't. Now, I am a successful college student on my way to earning my degree in Early Childhood/ Special Education and Psychology. I am forever grateful for NJCTS and what they have done for me and my family." - Liane, NJCTS Youth Advocate

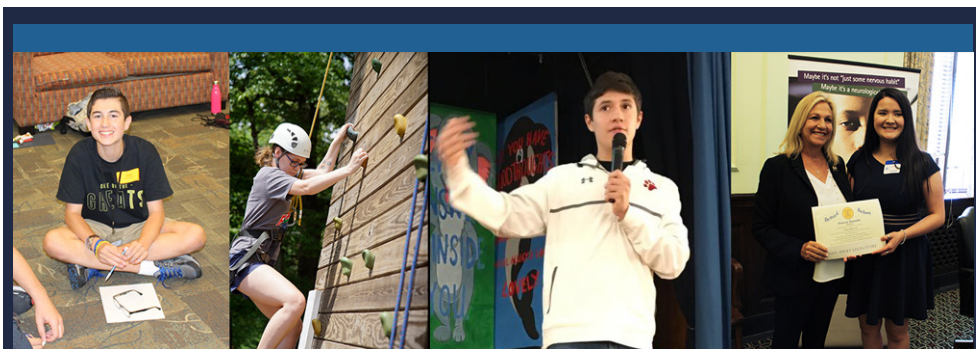


NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders
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About Tourette Syndrome:

Tourette Syndrome (TS) is an inherited, neurological disorder characterized by repeated involuntary movements and uncontrollable vocal sounds called tics. TS symptoms generally appear before the individual is 18 years old and may often be accompanied by other disorders such as ADHD, OCD and anxiety. As many as 1 in 100 individuals have shown signs of TS or other tic disorders.

TS has a high degree of stigmatization and social isolation. It is often misunderstood by the public, educators and even medical professionals. It is also misrepresented by the media.



Youth Development:

The objective of the NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome (NJCTS) Youth Development Program is to provide youth with TS a variety of opportunities, ranging from presenting to other kids to participating in mentor panels, to develop their strength, courage and confidence while embracing their differences and advocating for themselves and others. After an initial training and participating in a shadow program, the student (ages 10 to 18) becomes an NJCTS Youth Advocate.

Youth Advocate Activities

School Presentations

A large component of the Youth Advocate Program is peer presentations. Advocates present to students at schools across the state. While the presentation is informational, there is a strong anti-bullying message that promotes acceptance, tolerance, and self-advocacy.



Medical Education Presentations

Here the Youth Advocate would share briefly with medical professionals about their experiences with TS, and then be open to questions from the audience.

Dare to Dream

These NJ Department of Education conferences focus on strategies and information aimed to prepare high school students with disabilities for college and careers. As a keynote speaker, the Youth Advocate would write and present a speech about 4 minutes in length, which focuses on living with TS, the challenges they have faced and how it doesn't stop them from reaching their goals.

Legislative Testimony

At certain times throughout the year, NJCTS will meet with legislators in New Jersey regarding a number of issues. Often, a Youth Advocate will accompany someone from the office to meet and speak with the legislators and share their story.

Mentor Panels

Each year, NJCTS comes together at YMCA Camp Bernie for some family fun. Included in our activities is a mentor panel, where camp attendees have the opportunity to ask questions of our seasoned advocates. These panels are also utilized at other events including advocacy trainings.

Blogging

A chance for the Youth Advocate to share their thoughts, ideas and accomplishments, the NJCTS Teen Blog is another avenue for kids with TS to connect with one another, and to be reminded of the fact that there are others out there facing the same struggles.

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