

# THAT DARN TIC

## A NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR



### KIDS WITH TS



tourette syndrome association, inc.

42-40 bell boulevard

bayside, ny 11361

(718) 224-2999 **f** fax: (718) 279-9596 **f** e-mail: [ts@tsa-usa.org](mailto:ts@tsa-usa.org)

web site: [tsa-usa.org](http://tsa-usa.org)

fall/winter 2000

### TOP TIPS FOR COPING AT SCHOOL

*Inspired by Heather Thomas' Idea*

#### **Keep Your Sense of Humor**

Don't let teasing and taunting get you down. Make a joke and remember that bullies just don't understand.

#### **Learn to Explain**

Learn to explain TS in a quick sentence or two. A quick and easy explanation will stop 'em cold and put you in control of the situation. This works for teachers, coaches, bus drivers and lunchroom staff – as well as other students.

#### **Negotiate When You're Feeling Good**

Discuss TS when you're feeling good. Negotiate for a test in a separate room or a regular 'let the tics fly' break BEFORE you're feeling pressured and upset.

#### **Get the Pros Involved**

Talk to the folks at your local TSA Chapter about visiting your school. They can explain TS (OCD, ADD & ADHD) to teachers and students. You may also want to give some of the brochures that TSA has published to your teachers and friends so they understand more about what you cope with every day.

#### **Do the Things You Like To Do and You'll Make Friends**

The best friends in school are the friends that share your interests. Join a club, volunteer, become a part of something fun – sports, music, theater, student government, school paper, debate team, computer club – and you'll meet people who enjoy the same things.

*That Darn Tic* talks to **Jonny Ospa**, the seven-year-old behind *Welcome to Tourettaville*, an interactive, multi-media, musical about life with TS. *Welcome to Tourettaville* has been selected as the winner in Category I (age 21 and under) for the VSA Arts Playwright Discovery Program. Portions of the play were performed on the stage at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. on Monday, October 2, 2000.

Q. What was your motivation for writing the play?

A. I wanted to make other kids understand - help show them that they're not alone. And basically, that they're gonna be OK.

Q. What do you hope people will learn from this play?

A. If they have Tourette Syndrome, that they're not alone. And if they have don't have it, they'll learn what it is and then they can treat people with Tourette Syndrome nicer. I want people to know how it feels.

Q. What is your next project?

A. "Deer Tics," a story about a deer with TS. It'll start it as a book.



*The above Tourettaville cartoon character created by **Jacob Ospa**, Jonny's brother*

## Why Solomon Schechter School is Special

by Zachary S. Ashinoff, Editor

Hi! My name is Zachary Serber Ashinoff and I am here to discuss one of the most extraordinary topics ever mentioned. This is a topic in which we all share pride, joy, glee, glory, happiness and most important, peace. It is our school I am talking about. Not just any school though. This school is a community, a family, and a center of love and encouragement. It has a sparkling staff and student body. Solomon Schechter is a well-organized school and I am a child with almost seven years of experience as part of this school system - part of the Solomon Schechter family.

At this point in my life, I am a well-educated twelve-year-old pre-teenager. The teachers care about the students here. They are always willing to give us extra time and even time alone to work with us in order to review areas where we need a little extra help. Many of the teachers have a great sense of humor which makes it fun to be in their classes.

I have Tourette Syndrome, which means that I sometimes tic and make noises and get excited causing problems for me to sit still and concentrate. When I have trouble with my tics, Jill Schehr or one of my teachers comes to my aid discussing what I am feeling. This helps me to relieve my stress and gives me extra time to complete my work. In almost each year of school, Jill and the teachers allowed me to explain what I have and how I feel about my tics to my classmates and helped answer questions from them. Some of my classmates have been very understanding and supportive to me making me feel better.

Among the special parts of school are the special assemblies each year which celebrate our values and our wonderful history and customs as a Jewish people. Other schools do not have these assemblies. The class trips to the planetarium and other museums are also very interesting and special to me.

I feel lucky to be in this school and to be surrounded by people who care about me.

---

**We would like to hear from you and get your  
feedback and articles for the next newsletter.**

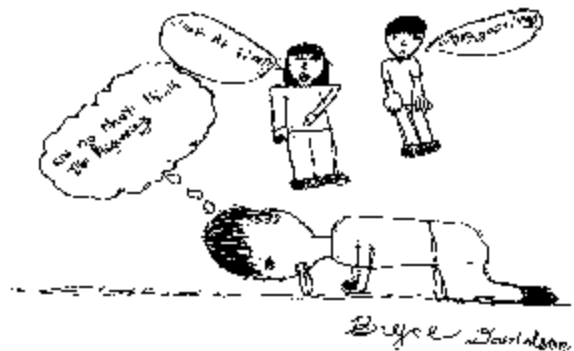
Send to:  
Zachary S. Ashinoff, Editor  
TSA  
Box 157  
Eastchester, New York 10709

---

## INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTOPHER GEORGE MARQUETTE

*That Darn Tic* talks to **Christopher George Marquette**, the young star of the motion picture, *The Tic Code*, in which he plays a jazz prodigy with TS.

- Q. Do you have Tourette Syndrome?  
A. No, I don't have TS.
- Q. How does it feel to play the role of a boy with TS?  
A. I have never had any type of syndrome or disease or anything, so it was weird to live in Miles' shoes for a while. Even though I am in a lot of other stuff -- being in other characters' places. But this character is different. He's special and he has TS, which I found to be very difficult to deal with. I mean I had no problem pretending to have TS, but when I thought about actually living with it day in and day out -- it is real difficult.
- Q. Did your feelings for people with TS change since you played this role?  
A. My feelings for people with TS did not change when I did this part because I didn't know what TS was but what did change is how I look at anyone who has any type of syndrome or disease. I feel more compassionate for them and look at how it is to be in their shoes for a change.
- Q. What do you hope kids will learn from this movie?  
A. I hope that kids become aware of this syndrome and that they know everyone with TS is just like anyone else without it. They should be treated exactly the same. I hope that they enjoy the movie and its many lessons.
- Q. What is your next project & your plans for the future?  
A. I now have a TV show for *Lifetime* called *Strong Medicine* with Janine Turner, Whoopi Goldberg and Rosa Blasi. It comes on at nine every Sunday night. I'm also am filming a role in an HBO movie called *61* directed by Billy Crystal and starring Barry Pepper.



*This drawing is by Bryce Davidson*

*Bryce is 9 years, & has had TS since 5.*

## CLASS COMPOSITION

by Keith Allan Doheny

My name is Keith Allan Doheny. I am a 13½ year old. I have TS and ADHD. TS means Tourette Syndrome. I may throw my arm out, blink a lot, jerk or I might do something abnormal to you. Please don't make fun of me. I can't control it. I also have Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. When I read, sometimes I will stutter or clear my throat a lot.

I found out that I had all this when I was ten years old. I may have it for all eternity or it might end very soon.

My hobbies are tree climbing, scuba diving, singing, catching snakes and in-line skating.

Scuba diving is pretty cool. You get to go down 40 feet and see all kinds of fish: stingrays, sharks and eels. There are groupers (another kind of fish) as long as my arms - even bigger.

I've heard the saying "What's that thing in the reef with sharp shiny teeth?" It's a moray. Stick your hand in his. I bet you will never get it back. All eels are not electric. Some are nice and some are mean.

I have an in-ground pool with a diving board. So every day I go swimming and practice my flips.

I have three pets: an iguana - her name is Igi; a cat named Baby and a dog named Randy.

Whenever I skate, I take everything out of the carport and then practice tricks and work on my skills. I can ride on toe wheels on each foot.



Dear Keith,

I understand that you, me and everyone with TS has trouble talking positively to themselves.

Sometimes you might ask yourself, "Why me?, Why me?" At that moment, you should take some time to think about all the other human beings that are blind, that are in wheel chairs, that have serious diseases, etc., and at that very moment think about you and say to yourself: "I am Keith Doheny; I have lots of talents; and I have one disability called Tourette Syndrome. Just one disability. Should that make me fail in life? Is that a reason to ask myself "Why me?, Why me?" When you think about all the other people in the world - when you think about it, TS is probably the first on the list if you had to have any disability. Trust me: It makes you smarter. Everybody asks themselves "Why me?, Why me?" You, if you can help it, don't have to do that and you, if you can help it, instead of worrying, make life fun and smile even when you are in the dumps. Just remember: We are together! Good luck in life!

## LETTER TO TSA

by Amanda Hendrickson

Dear TSA,

My name is Amanda Hendrickson from Louisville, Kentucky. I'm writing a "That Darn Tic" article because I thought that it would be a good way to let others know how bad my brother and I were and are still teased for having Tourette Syndrome.

Growing up with this disorder was rough because I couldn't control my actions. If I had to hit something or blurt out unnecessary words, I couldn't stop it. I would just have to let it take its course. The worst part about it is not only having it myself but seeing my little brother grow up with it. Now I'm only 13, but with all the pain and teasing I went through, it's just hard to see him go through it.

Other kids just don't understand why we do these things. I would come home crying because the kids were so mean. One way or another, my mom would know I was home. If I wasn't crying, I was ticcing. I was diagnosed with TS when I was five. Through the ages of seven to ten, I was fully hit with it. Those years were the worst years of my life. I would blink constantly, make squeaky noises, jerk my head and grab at myself.

As I got older, the tics slowly went away. Now you can't tell I have it just by looking at me. I still make noises but not as much. I'm constantly telling my brother not to let anyone put him down because if you give in to them, then they're gonna keep teasing you. If you have respect for yourself, you won't let those words put you down because GOD made you the way you are and he wanted you to have TS so you should be proud of it.

People still tease me but all they're doing is hurting themselves because I don't let it get to me anymore. My momma told me "Sticks and Stones may break my bones but Words will never Hurt Me." I have a family who cares and loves me so much that they knew what I was going through. They, at one point, were going through it, too. My momma, pappy and my little brother all have TS so they knew how much it hurt. I am a normal kid and I do normal things and I love hangin' with my friends and the fact that I have TS does not bother me one bit.

So for all you younger kids with TS, remember don't let anybody put you down; be proud of who you are!

A special thank you to GATE Pharmaceuticals for its generous contribution to this publication

## LETTER FROM SARA HIRSCH

My name is Sara and I am 9½. I want to help kids learn about Tourette Syndrome. When people don't know, they sometimes tease me. That's why I tell them about it. But instead of teaching one person at a time, every year I teach my class with a video and let them ask me questions. I hope I will make enough money to donate to the TSA by selling lemonade.

---

### I'm Different

by Matt Gerhard

I'm a child with Tourette,  
 Some people think I'm a threat.  
 I may be twitching or I could be itching,  
 I could be shouting, yet then again,  
 I could be pouting.  
 Sometimes I am compliant,  
 And other times I may be defiant.  
 But please show care and help me if you dare.

---

*That Darn Tic* was written by and for children with TS. The opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the national Tourette Syndrome Association.

---

## POETRY CONTEST

*That Darn Tic* is sponsoring a contest for young poets (ages 7 to 16). The poems, which can be on any subject, will be judged for originality and literary style by the editors of *That Darn Tic*. The two best poems will appear in the next issue. The two winners will also receive a Certificate of Achievement. Poems should be no longer than one half of a typewritten page. Please do not send your only copy as we will not be able to return submissions to the contest. GOOD LUCK!!

---

### POETRY CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_

—

No. & Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: Editor, Box 157, Eastchester, NY 10709

by January 31, 2001

---