



# THAT DARN TIC



## A NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR KIDS WITH TS

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**Tyler** (14 years old)  
Eustis, Florida

I have been ticcing for almost four years now. I hate when people stare at me, especially when somebody makes fun of me. For a few years now I have been part of a long term TS study at the University of Florida in Gainesville (Go Gators!). Thanks to my doctor my medications keep most of my tics under control but I still have some. I still worry about people looking at me and thinking I am stupid or weird.

The time when I feel most comfortable is when I race my Quad (4 wheeler ATV). I race all over Florida and even though I am the youngest in the Quad-C division, I am currently 5th out of over 70 racers in the Dade City Motocross 2005 Championship Series. When I race I hardly ever tic. Best of all, I feel normal, like before I got TS.

At the racetracks where I race I am just another racer, just a lot faster than most! By the way, my race number is "13X." You might want to remember that because I am going to be as famous as Pro Motocross rider Jeremy "Twitch" Stenberg, who also has TS.

P.S. I don't have a girlfriend, but I am looking!



**Nicholas** (7 years old)  
East Rochester, New York

Hi, my name is Nicky and I found out I had Tourette Syndrome in August. I make high pitched noises, sing a lot, have times when I have to touch things, and bite my shirt at home. I also have OCD and now I'm hooked on automatic garage doors. I can't stop thinking about them and have to look at our neighbor's and our door all the time. School is hard for me because I have other learning issues also but my teacher is great and she has helped a lot. I learned to tell people I have TS. I told my entire class I have Tourette. My school psychologist lets me practice on

him and watched when I did it. He was proud of me and I was proud of myself. Now everyone knows I can't help what I sometimes do. I want everyone to know that sometimes having Tourette is hard but you can't let it stop you. God made you like this for a reason and *you are special*, no matter what. I love to sing and recently joined church choir. I'm also in Cub Scouts. I also will make my First Communion this year. See I do a lot of stuff and Tourette doesn't stop me.



**Here I am climbing a rock wall with Cub Scouts.**



**Margalit** (10 years old)  
Woodstock Valley, Connecticut

Here is a drawing of coyotes howling at the moon. Sometimes we can hear them in the woods near our home, making yapping sounds in the early morning. I

also am interested in other animals, especially amphibians (we have a pond with frogs nearby) and reptiles. I like to draw these animals as well.

At home I have a dog, Nina, and a rabbit, Monster. We used to call him "Vicious Biter Bunny," but he has become more friendly recently. In my room I have a crested gecko lizard whose name is Mustard. I have played the violin for about two years, and my father often plays the piano along with me. I enjoy reading about other kids in "That Darn Tic" and seeing what they like to do.





**Monterey** (10 years old)  
South San Francisco, California

I have had TS since I was three. On my seventh birthday, it got worse. I was ticing 24 hours a day the doctors had to put me on meds.

The hardest part about TS is that kids don't want to be friends with you. My mom and dad are my best friends. My mom is the best storyteller. I told her she should write a book. And she did! I colored the artwork on the cover. She made me the author because she said I made the book possible. She also said she will give lots of money to TSA when the book sells.



**Beth** (14 years old)  
Portsmouth, Virginia

It seems like it controls my life  
Each day is a new sacrifice  
I stay away from people's sides  
Because they ask me what's with my eye  
My left eye blinks like it should  
but my right eye hardly blinks (I wish it would)  
People think I just like to wink  
So they joke and point and ridicule me  
Thirteen and fourteen year olds are so cruel  
Especially with over 500 people at your school  
People call me Twitchy and like to mock  
They imitate me. (It's no shock)  
I try to say my eye is dry  
They don't believe me, and I don't cry  
Once I tell them it's a syndrome that can't be cured  
They just laugh and joke, I feel so hurt  
I'm all alone and that won't change  
I hate society and it's reign



**Michaela** (9 years old)  
Searcy, Arkansas

Hi! My name is Michaela. I have TS. I got diagnosed when I was 5. It's hard to concentrate in school. Sometimes I don't get done with my work. I told my class and it doesn't bother them.

I go to Liberty Christian School, so they don't make fun of me. We live in a small town so I don't know anyone with TS.

I wish I did though so I could have someone to talk with. Please pray for me. I'll pray for you. I know God made me special. I enjoy reading "That Darn Tic" because I like to know there are other kids like me.



**Cameron** (11 years old)  
Rootstown, Ohio

I'm Cameron. I would like you to know that I have Asperger's. I also have TS. My mom told me I had it in the early 4th grade. I'm in 5th grade. I like to tap my pencil in school. I also like to fidget with stuff. People sometimes make fun of me because I also make faces and I make sounds. I'm ok with having Asperger's and TS, though I have an embarrassed feeling all the time. Anyway, that's my story.



**Maya** (14 years old)  
Lexington, Massachusetts

I have Tourette Syndrome and I unicycle. Unicycling is a passion that has helped me through many hard days.

Balancing acts come naturally to me; I have pogo-sticked, walked on stilts, indo-boarded, and unicycled my way through much of my life. This strange, one-wheeled invention is

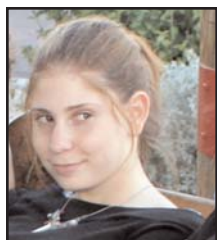
something of a metaphor of my life.

My life with Tourette is imbalanced and frustrating. I taught myself to ride a unicycle with no help at all. At first it was very hard to ride further than a few feet, and it often seemed impossible to improve. I would spend hours just getting on and falling off, over and over and over again. It took me a good four months of practicing daily to learn to just go forward, and a whole year to teach myself tricks and rough terrain riding. Now I'm very glad I didn't give up.

My most common tics are coughing and blinking. Unicycling requires total control of all my muscles, and a lot of concentration. This is exactly what Tourette's took away from me. I have no control over my tics, so I unicycle to have control and balance. I let out my energy and "imbalancedness" through my unicycling. In other words, I work towards achieving, physically, what I can't get in my life.

Now I ride on snow, ice, rough terrain and up and down hills. I can also hop, mount without support and pedal while holding the seat in front of me with my hands. I'm working on going backwards and idling. Sometimes mastering new skills seems impossible, but I know I can do it. Succeeding with these challenges proves to me that I can overcome my Tourette Syndrome.

I get a lot of stares and comments when people see me unicycle around town. Someone once asked me, "Where's your other wheel?" I said it ran away. But really, to me it's just natural. I unicycle for my soul.



**Ayla** (16 years old)  
Libertyville, Illinois

Ima puppet in disguise  
as a doll,  
Cuz a guy with evil eyes  
Makes me fall.  
Pulls my strings in all directions,  
Never stops to ask if it's okay.  
And no one sees this going on  
Behind the curtain in the day.  
But the guy with evil eyes is smart,  
Cuz he's also in disguise,  
To make me stronger.



**Corey**  
(15 years old)  
of Great Falls, Montana  
sent us this drawing, titled  
"Monster Reborn,"  
dedicated his sister,  
Whitney Lynne Whyte.



**Michael** (7 years old)  
Williamstown, New Jersey

Hello, my name is Michael, and I am  
7 years old. My friends call me names,  
but I am ok with that. My brother makes  
fun of me, but I am ok with that. too.

My friends take my stuff too, even my pencils. But I am  
myself, and that's what makes me happy, and I do not feel  
sad, I feel glad. I am writing about my TS.



**Colten** (12 years old)  
Choctaw, Oklahoma

My name is Colten and I have Tourette  
Syndrome. Tourette is a tic disorder. It  
causes me to: 1) flail my arms and legs;  
2) yell out verbally; 3) hit, kick, slap,  
and tackle people; 4) throw objects; and  
5) I can't focus occasionally.

When I have tics I get frustrated. I  
might cry, hit anything in my path, or yell and scream.  
Sometimes I do it all. This makes me feel ugly and stupid.  
It takes me a while to get calmed down. I need to be left  
alone during this time.

At home I depend a lot on my dad to help me out. He  
helps refocus my attention to the task at hand. Sometimes  
he does this by talking in a louder voice than usual. He  
also has me do physical activities such as push-ups, sit-  
ups and jumping jacks. However, there are times when it is  
better to let me have the tics to get them out of my  
system. Some of these things help me at school as well.

When you see me having these tics, it is best to just  
ignore me to the best of your ability. Staring, laughing or  
purposely drawing attention to the situation only adds to my  
frustration. This can increase my tics and can also draw my  
focus to you. If I become focused on a person, they can  
become the target. I do not like that I do this, but I can not  
control it. I hope this helps you understand more about my  
disability. Please be as respectful as you want me to be.



**Jaroby** (11 years old)  
Sacramento, California

My name is Jaroby and I have TS and ADHD. I have  
been taking my medication for a long time to help me  
control my tics and focus on my school work. At first, kids  
would make fun of my noises and stuttering which made  
me fight a lot.

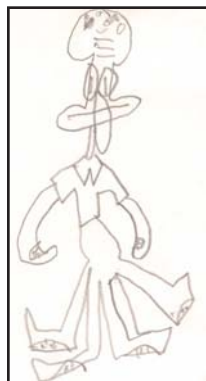
Now, every one is growing up and understands that I  
have a condition that makes me a little different. Someday  
I would like to meet some kids that have TS just like me.

Having Tourette Syndrome has never stopped me from  
doing anything I want including playing football, baseball,  
basketball and I love to draw pictures.

My mom and my family love me and praise me a lot,  
especially because I always get A's and B's in school.



**Tyler**  
(13 years old)  
of Charleston,  
South Carolina  
sent us these draw-  
ings of Squidward  
and SpongeBob  
SquarePants



**Collin** (12 years old)  
Elmira, New York

My name is Collin. I play hockey  
and my number is 18. I would like  
to be on Oprah and talk to her  
and meet her someday. This is  
my drawing called, "Resist the  
Tics."





**Ashley** (9 years old)  
Mahopac, New York

My name is Ashley, and I was diagnosed with Tourette and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder when I was 5 year old. I use to have a neck tic, and I would swing my head back and forth and I would have to go to the chiropractor four days a week. I could never fall asleep at night because my tic was so bad. I have put great effort to control some of my Tourette and OCD, and it works for most of the part. Some day I hope to be free of Tourette and OCD. I hope you enjoy this poem.

**Tourette's**

Crack,  
Swing  
Whiplash,  
Chiropractor.  
Neck throbbing with pain!  
I'm going insane!  
Hurting myself,  
But I don't try to.  
I can't relax!  
I scream and shout!  
I cry and pout!  
Can't stand it anymore,  
This tic is so painful!  
Help me somebody.



**Brad** (14 years old)  
Lansing, Illinois

Hi! My name is Brad and I have TS, ADD and OCD. It is very difficult to live with these disorders. Some of my teachers sent me to the dean's office because my tics are out of control. They say things like "Stop making those noises!" or, "I know you are only doing that for attention." I try to stay calm when it happens, but my conscience tells me to punch them; but I know not to.

Only a minority in my school know the truth about TS. They believe that in every case of TS the person with Tourette will shout out swear words in the middle of the sentence (obviously this is not true because scarcely any occurrences of TS are the same). They argue with me about what Tourette is, but they have no clue what it really is.

Thank you for listening to my story. I hope some day there will be a cure for TS, ADD and OCD.



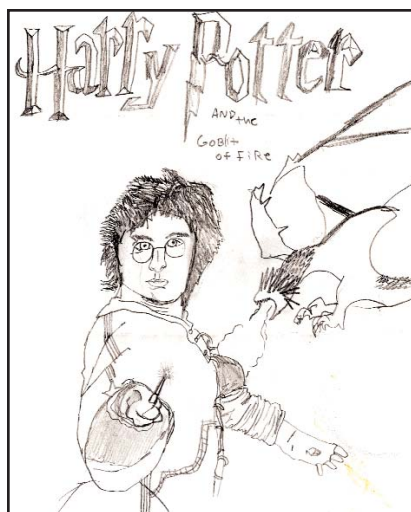
**Christopher** (11 years old)  
Naperville, Illinois

Hi! My name is Christopher. I am 11 years old and I have Tourette Syndrome. Some examples of my tics are screeching, squinting and stretching my jaw up and down. I have a psychologist named Dr. Terri who helps me a lot with my Tourette Syndrome. When I go to her office she usually asks me to rate my tics from 1-10. Then we have a board game that teaches you ways to relax. Every year Dr. Terri comes in to speak to my class about Tourette Syndrome.

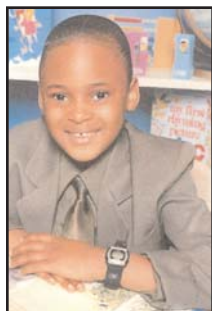
Last year in fourth grade I had a teacher who had a huge affect on my life. Her name was Mrs. Fitzgerald. When I started ticcing in class she would say that I could go get a drink or even go to the back of the room and read to calm me down. She was the kind of person who does not care if someone was different; she liked me for who I was as a person. Even though Mrs. Fitzgerald was nice, there are some teachers that just do not understand Tourette Syndrome. That's right. Ladies and gentlemen, it's time to introduce: substitute teachers! It's not that subs are mean, they just do not understand that I can't help it. When I start ticcing, the sub tells me to stop it. Good thing I have friends because they stick up for me. When the sub finally realizes that he is outnumbered, he lets me do what I have to do.

Last summer I went to a camp with kids with tics. It was the best experience of my life! I met a friend named Eli, who I still keep in touch with and got to do a lot of things like boating, hiking and playing games. Every meal was always something delicious. I am so going there next year!

I do not mind having Tourette, even though there are bad things about it, but I try to think of good things and remember that I am just a normal person with disabilities. There are a lot of famous people with tics and hopefully I will become famous, too.



**Joshua**  
(13 years old) of  
Pasadena, Texas  
drew this picture of  
Harry Potter



**Marques** (9 years old)  
Flushing, New York

### Just My Swing and I

My favorite swing is by the gate at the playground near where I live. I love to swing because when I do it *is just my swing and I*.

I like to swing because it is fun. When I swing it feels like I am flying.

One time when I was swinging, I saw a plane flying by. I saw a plain fly because I was swinging high. It felt like I could touch the plain because I was swinging so high.

I also like to swing because it gets rid of the man inside of me. The man's first name is Tourette and his last name is Syndrome. They should call him, Tourette I-hate-you. He makes me get tics. When I swing high on my favorite swing the man inside of me comes out. He does not like to have fun like me. When I swing I am having fun and my tics go away.

I get frustrated and mad when someone else swings on my favorite swing and then the man inside me comes back. When that happens I just do something else in the park. And when I see them get off my favorite swing, I run back to it.

I cannot wait until my mom takes me back to my favorite swing at the playground near where I live. Then it will be just my swing and I.



**Victoria** (10 years old)  
Garrett, Indiana

This drawing is about how my friend Crystal asked me about my tics. I did not know at first but I soon learned that I do not do it on purpose. I cannot control them. I was glad to find I'm not the only one with TS.



**Matt** (12 years old)  
Ft. Wiright, Kentucky

I decided to write to you because at my last visit with Dr. Gilbert at Children's Hospital, he suggested that I share my accomplishments with other children who have Tourette. I never thought that my life would be inspirational to other children, but maybe I do have something to share.

I have had tics since I was in the 3rd grade. I didn't know what was going on with my body, but knew that something was happening. At first the kids in my class would call me a liar when I would tell them that I could not stop what I was doing. My parents hired someone to talk to the children in my class about tics, and they understood after that. It was a real hard thing at first, but I decided that I was not going to allow my tics to stop me from doing the things that I loved.

I love to play baseball. I am the catcher on my team at school and love this sport. I tic while I am catching, but it does not stop me from being the best catcher that I can be. I repel down mountain sides at the Red River Gorge, and love to be outside. I took scuba diving lessons at 10 years old. I passed the written test, did my check out drive, and became one of the youngest Certified Scuba Divers at 10 years of age. I have to do this and don't even think about my tics when I am doing it.

I joined my middle school football team. It was a lot of hard work, but I decided that I didn't love the game. I am glad that I tried football, but know that baseball is the sport that I love. I love to build and fix things. I built a model rail road table in our basement. I have always loved trains, and felt that I could wire the table all by myself. I have added mountains, streams, roadways, a little town, a train yard, and trees. It is really cool, and I was so proud of this accomplishment. I did it by myself. I was successful, and now I am ready to add another 8x12 addition to my train table. Now that I know how to wire the table, I am going to make my next table a digitally controlled train table. Model railroading is the hobby that relaxes me, and this is really important when you have Tourette Syndrome.

Having Tourette Syndrome is not as hard as it used to be. I do not look at my tics as being bad anymore. I will not allow my tics to stop me from succeeding. I will continue to search and do the things that I love. I hope that you look for what you love to do also, and do not let your tics get in the way of your dream, either.

### Did You Know...

That you can read this issue (and all past issues of *That Darn Tic* ) on the TSA website? Just go to [www.tsa-usa.org](http://www.tsa-usa.org) and click on the For Young People section on the left hand menu.



**Andrew** (11 years old)  
Hendersonville, North Carolina

Hi! My name is Andy, and I have TS. I first found out about it when I was about 4 years old, and the doctor told me I had it. Since then, I have had many, many more kinds of tics that include verbal tics, joint tics and

movement tics. TS is hard to live with because people make fun of you, treat you differently and look at you kind of funny. The only thing you can do about this is to educate them and pray for them. If this doesn't help, then that's their problem, not yours!



**Steven** (16 years old)  
Marlboro, New Jersey



Drawing is one of my favorite hobbies. My tics interfere with it so it takes me a bit longer than most people to finish.

**Gollum from "The Lord of the Rings"**  
by **Steven Lindenbaum**

## That Darn Tic

*That Darn Tic* is TSA's newsletter by and for children up to 17 years old.

All submissions will be edited for length, grammar and content. Please don't send us your only copy. Drawings, photos and cartoons reproduce best when they are black and white on white paper. We may alter the size to fit the art on our pages. We will publish as many as we can fit—so send us your best and we'll do the rest! Submissions for the next issue are due by June 1, 2006.

Please send your short stories, poems, essays, drawings, riddles, cartoons and jokes to:

**TSA**  
**That Darn Tic**  
**42-40 Bell Boulevard, Suite 205**  
**Bayside, NY 11361**

or e-mail: [tracy.flynn@tsa-usa.org](mailto:tracy.flynn@tsa-usa.org)

The next *That Darn Tic* issue will be coming your way soon!



**tourette syndrome association, inc.**

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**Tourette  
Syndrome  
Awareness Month is  
May 15 to June 15**

**Help spread the word  
about TS!**