

THAT DARN TIC

A NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR



KIDS WITH TS



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Zachary Hollis, 12 years old, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, is one of our new editors

Hi, my name is Zak Hollis and I am 12 years old. I am in the 6th grade. Right now I am in a school in an OCD treatment program so I am not attending regular Junior High at this time. I hope to be able to go there soon.

My favorite hobby is collecting rocks, minerals and fossils. I live in New Mexico and this is a great place to collect these items. I also collect old Volkswagen models (only the bugs).

I enjoy tennis and swimming when I have the time.

I have two sisters and two brothers.

I was first diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome and OCD when I was 8 years old.



This drawing, entitled *Face of a Girl*, was sent to us by *Kyle Bachelder*, 15 years old, of Clinton, Iowa.



Micah Smith, 12 years old of Beverly Hills, California is our other new editor

My name is Micah Smith and I'm a 7th Grader at Turning Point School in Los Angeles, California. I really like my school because the classes are small and the teachers and kids are nice.

I'm on the football and basketball teams at school and during vacation I like to go snowboarding and scuba diving.

Animals are very important to me. I have two cats, named Millie and Shrek, and a dog named Dewey. I'd have more animals at home but my parents won't let me. They did let me donate a python, named Ssspot, a scorpion and a praying mantis to my school.

I also have a ten-year-old sister, named Mallory who's nice. I was diagnosed with TS the summer before I started 4th Grade. Sometimes my tics are bad and sometimes they are okay.

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



LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Ashley Hollander, 13 years old

Dear Editor,

From all these stories your newsletter put in, I have realized my TS is not that bad. For this, I am very grateful. So, thank you very much for letting me realize how lucky I really am. I just have a minor case.

I also wanted to say as minor the case is, people still ask and stare.

I am very grateful my parents have been so supportive through all of this.

Sometimes I have good days and sometimes not so good days. I always remember I am special and unique.

Behind These Eyes

by Cole Yarborough, 13 years old

Behind these eyes you'll never see
The real true and wholesome me.
I go to school each and every day
Just like any kid I work and play.
Most kids notice my blinking eyes
But they never look at my true inside.



My peers stare and _____ make fun of me
But they will never see who they think they see.
My world starts spinning around and around
Then it hits me with a pound.
I'm a seventh grader just like you
I hope you can take me for who I am not what I do.

My Life is Like a Roller Coaster Ride

by Hannah Goldman, Age 11

My life is like a roller coaster ride.
When I was born, my cart went up the pulley.
My parents cared, loved, and nurtured me.
But as my cart reached the top,
I felt the nose of my cart drop
And it fell steeply down to the side.
My doctor told me as I fell,
That my life was going very well
And turned to write some notes
That I had been diagnosed
With Tourettes Syndrome.

As the wind rushed through my hair

Going down that dive,
I became quiet and sad.
Sad enough to scare
My mother was quite worried
And put me on some meds
That made me very tired
And put me right to bed.



As my cart twisted _____ and turned

And drove me fast uphill
And then my mommy found it.
She found just the pill.
As my cart went up the ride,
I saw a drop a'swiftly coming.
And though I tried and tried,
The cart would not turn or nothin'.

It came like a bomb,
Fast and big and truly messed things up.
For when I saw my tests,
The only thing I really saw
Were big red Ds and Fs.

And as my cart keeps going,
I can't help but knowing
That things won't stop going
Down and down and down!

Poem by Andrew Nesbitt

Age 10, Coppell, Texas

Every day I go to school,
I sound like a wild swimming pool.
I always make those twitches and noises
And those are not my choices.
Sometimes I say things I don't really mean,
On this, my teachers are not very keen.
Sometime when I go out in public,
Everyone stairs like I'm a bear.
I pray every day that my TS will go away,
So the next day will be sunny - not gray.





Jim Eisenreich signing autographs for children at the TSA National Conference



U.S. Marine Corps Color Guard displaying their colors at beginning of Conference

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM PUT ON BY TSA 2002 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

by *Zachary Hollis*

The Children's Program put on by national TSA for the 2002 Conference was extremely fun. We had a Halloween Party the first night we arrived. We had a piñata; we decorated cookies and I met tons of new kids. They all had Tourette - just like I do.

The next day the fun really began! We went swimming and had lots of fun with arts and crafts projects. We went on a fun hike. Jim Eisenreich, a famous baseball player with Tourette, spent time with us kids and we all got autographs. He was really cool. The kids' program went to the Capitol Children's Museum. There was a Brain Teasers Room at the museum and all kinds of fun games and activities.

Most of the time we ate with our parents and we could have as many sodas as we wanted!

One night there was a performance by a famous jazz musician named Michael Wolff. Everybody met and listened to Michael Wolff's band. He signed CDs and everybody had a really good time.

There was a huge fancy banquet the last night of our trip. Everybody was really dressed up and the food was great.

The staff that spent time with the kids were really nice. They talked with us, watched movies with us and ate popcorn. I think all of the kids had lots of fun with the activities and meeting other kids just like themselves.

I hope to go to the national TSA Conference in 2004.

A letter from *D'arcy Finnegan*,
10 years old, of Largo, Florida

My name is D'arcy and I have known that I have Tourette Syndrome since I was about 7. At first I was pretty scared, but now that I have had it for over three years, it doesn't bother me so much. It doesn't stop me from doing things, like playing soccer, which I have done since I was two and a half years old. I am in my school chorus, and I think I am pretty good at singing.

I go to lots of tournaments with my soccer team. They are called Strictly Soccer and we are ranked ninth in the whole country, and we are first in Florida. Sometimes I have a problem with kids on the other side; they can be a bit mean to me. But we always beat them, so it makes me feel better.

My friends at soccer and school are pretty good about my tics and my teachers always help me out. Sometimes, when my tics aren't bad, my friends ask me if I still have Tourette Syndrome; they don't really understand that it comes and goes.

My mom, dad, and sister are all fine with me. They know what it is like for me, and mom and dad are mostly worried about me getting school work done and helping me explain to new people about TS. Everyone in our family and all our close friends just ignore my tics.

It's nice to know that people can still do great things even with TS, and I think the goalie for MetroStars is cool. I hope that I can be famous in sports one day and other kids with TS can learn that it is OK to be like me and still do good.

Advice from The Tic Advisor The Tic Advisor Tackles Summer Tics

Dear Tic Advisor:

Everybody at school knows about my TS and they're pretty cool about it. But every summer I have to start all over again and explain my tics to a new group of kids. Last summer I was "the TS kid" and not Jon, who happens to have TS, like I am at school. How can I explain TS without it being the only thing that everybody knows about me. I'm a great swimmer. I'm a good guy. I'd really like to be just Jon and not "Jon the TS Kid."



Dear TS Kid:

This can be tricky. You want the new kids you're meeting to get the facts about TS -- so they won't be confused by your tics or think it's contagious -- but you have to be Joe Cool -- or Jon Cool -- when you talk about it. If you explain TS as a small thing in your life (even if it feels like a huge thing) the other kids will pick up on it not being important. They'll accept it as part of you, but not the whole thing. Give them the facts they need and answer their questions, but don't say anything more. This is not an easy thing to do, but it's worth a try. Then go out and win the first swimming relay race so they can start calling you "Jon the Fish!"

**INTERVIEW WITH SUSAN A. CONNERS
NATIONAL TSA'S EDUCATION SPECIALIST**

Q: Do you think kids accept kids with tics?

A: I think that it's a problem when they don't understand TS and tics. This is true for adults, also. Most kids have never heard of Tourette Syndrome so they tend to be afraid of or make fun of kids with tics. Once it's explained to them that TS is just another disorder that some people get, they are OK with it. I go into a lot of classes to talk to other kids in the class about TS and once everyone understands the disorder and that the child with TS cannot help the things they are doing, they're OK with it and the fear and teasing stops. I didn't know what I had until I was 36 years old, so I wasn't able to tell other kids what the problem was. Now I just tell them and it really helps. The Tourette Syndrome Association has a program that is great to explain to classmates about TS.

Q: When you see kids with tics do you find yourself picking up their tics?

A: Yes, sometimes that happens. As most of you may know, TS is suggestible. You always seem to need to

imitate other people's tics. The good news is that those tics don't usually last for more than a day or so. I find the benefit of meeting and getting to know other people with TS far outweighs a few tics that I may pick up for a day or so.

Q: Have you ever been embarrassed about your tics?

A: Yes, I have to admit that there are many times that I am embarrassed by my tics. I especially hate new situations where people don't know me. The secret is to always explain to people what you have in a nice way and even more importantly not to let them know that you are embarrassed and upset at their reaction to your tics.

Just the other day I was on an airplane and we were stuck sitting on the runway for over two hours. I was ticing a lot and could see that the man sitting next to me was getting upset and uncomfortable with my tics. So I simply said to him, "I'm sorry, but I have Tourette Syndrome. It's a neurological disorder that causes me to have movements and noises that I can't control. If you want to find a new seat, I'll understand." He turned to me and thanked me for telling him and proceeded to ask me lots of questions about Tourette. It helped pass the time, he did not move away and I felt more comfortable.



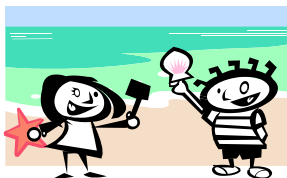
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If you have a question for the Tic Advisor or would like to send in an article, drawing and/or a poem for the next newsletter, please send to:

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HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!