



THAT DARN TIC



A NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR KIDS WITH TS

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Daniel Hale (10 years old)
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

I don't like my TS because I know I might get called weird. When people call me weird I have a good come back like "Thank You!" I like to see their shocked faces. My TS was ruining my life before I was diagnosed. I've always been called names like "Cat Boy" because I made cat sounds.

It doesn't really bother me now. I'm used to it. My TS is not the end of the world for me, and it shouldn't be for you either.



Jesse Larson (12 years old)
Bismarck, North Dakota

I have pretty severe TS, especially facial tics, but I seem to live through it. I want to tell you a little story. I was with my friend Andrew at a Boy Scout meeting when this kid was making fun of me. At first it was alright but then it got to be kind of annoying. So I went up to him and said "You want something to look at? Well here..." I made a whole bunch of stupid faces at him. There was a good pay-off because he stopped making fun of me.

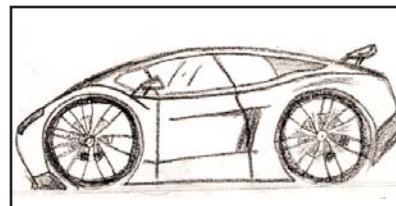
Now I don't do this usually because most people just don't understand TS. I don't like it when people make fun of me and I bet that you don't either. Now some people will think you are dumb but I think of myself just the same as everybody else.

You just have to remember that you are not dumb, but the people that make fun of you are.



Brianna Laws (8 years old)
Rochelle, Illinois

Sometimes people make fun of me because of my tics. My skin feels like spiders are crawling on it, but my mom checks and nothing is there. Doctors found this when I was five. I have another problem too, but we don't know what it is yet. I'm getting tired of being like this, sometimes I don't think clearly, and I get in a lot of bad moods. I don't have OCD and I am not bipolar. I've been to five special doctors, and will be starting a sixth one in August. No physical tests have been done yet. I'm tired of medicines, too. It can be frustrating at school. I even went to a special place where I couldn't go home for eight days. It helped me get on a schedule but it didn't help my problem. My mom and dad keep trying to find it and I'm glad for that. My brother is four years old and I love him, and he loves me too. But sometimes he gets mad at me when I have tics and thinks it's being mean when I make the faces I make. When I grow up I want to maybe be a doctor to help people with TS and stuff. My mom works with kids with behavior problems and she loves her job.



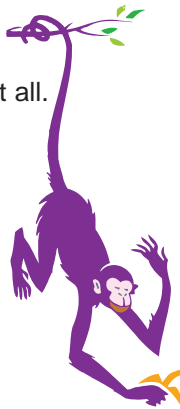
Patterson Ford (11 years old) of Goodlettsville, Tennessee sent us this drawing of a car. Above is a picture of Patterson with his sister, Morgan



Michael Malconian (11 years old)
of
Los Angeles, California
sent us the following poem:

Monkey

In the dense jungle
I see a monkey
That sees me
It swings like a vine
And jumps like a ball
I don't want to leave this place at all.
It's wood-brown fur
And agility
Clearly casts a spell on me.
A spell of beauty and grace
I'll never forget its face.
This five-armed beast
From tree to tree
Flew through the air
With the greatest of ease.
It seems to like me
But I'm not sure.
I feed it a banana.
It snatched it and eats it
I think I'll name it Hannah.
I like her and better yet
I'll take her home.
She'll be my pet.



Adam Smith (12 years old)
Suffern, New York

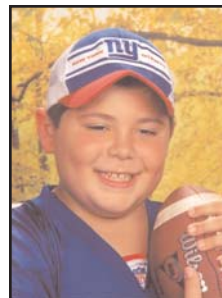
I live with my parents and 14 year old sister, Lauren. Here is my story. "Shaking, shaking, shaking," stop it said my mom. That's how it began. It was December, 2001 and my dad was in Atlantic City.

"Something is wrong with Adam," said my mom to my dad on the phone. My parents took me to the doctor. He called it a tic disorder. I was referred to a neurologist who I see every six months now.

But I'm not the only one who has problems. There was a boy in the waiting room who had epilepsy. Kids in school always ask me why I twitch. I usually tell them that I cannot help it. I've been to a Tourette's meeting in Queens, New York where I met kids that do different tics. Not all Tourette's is twitching. It can make you behave badly, (which I do sometimes). But I still am able to make my middle school honor roll, play baseball, street hockey, ski and play basketball. Maybe someday, my Tourette's will be cured.



Brycen Leatherwood (11 years old)
of
Cosby, Tennessee
sent us this drawing



Nick Vecci (10 years old)
Croton-On-Hudson, New York

Besides writing poems, I also like to play football, basketball (my team came in first place in our division this year), and roller hockey. I enjoy riding my electric scooter, playing video games and my favorite subject in school is Social Studies. I have a brown belt in Karate and hope to get my black belt in two years. My Tourette Syndrome is mild and the medication I take helps a lot. Most of my friends don't even know I have it.

I wrote this poem in my language arts class this year. Everyone liked it so much I was chosen to read it to the Advisory Board at our local library and now it is being published in a book called "A Celebration of Young Poets." I hope you like it too!

The Voice

The voice inside me is silent.
The voice inside me is a mystery
that can't be solved.
The voice inside me
is not a voice at all.

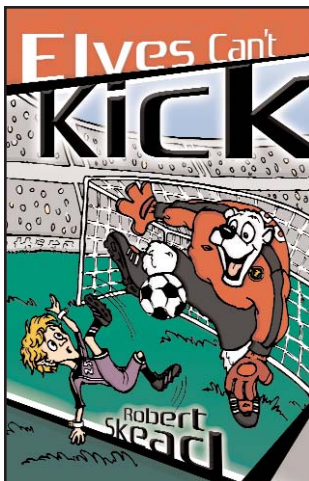
It is not common sense.
It is not instinct.
It is not a voice at all.

It is a simple and small feeling.

Manchester United Goalkeeper Tim Howard Inspiration for Children's Book, "Elves Can't Kick"

When children's author Robert Skead first met soccer goalkeeper Tim Howard, he never anticipated a children's book would someday be the result of their friendship. This friendship soon prompted Skead to be inspired to expand his elves-sports book series ("Elves Can't Dunk" and "Elves Can't Tackle") to include soccer and a character named "Howard."

In his new book, "Elves Can't Kick," Sebastian the elf and his friends Holly the elf and Ralphie the polar bear are on a secret mission to get back Mrs. Claus's baking recipes, stolen by the world-renowned Domestic Diva Bertha Hayworth, who is jealous of Mrs. Claus's sudden success in the Christmas treats business. In the process, Sebastian and the gang help teach a losing soccer team, owned by Hayworth, the recipe for winning- teamwork, and impart an important lesson that stealing is wrong to "Big Bertha."



"My mom always said I was a character. Now I really am one," said Tim Howard, who has Tourette Syndrome and is goalkeeper for Manchester United of England's Premiere League. "The story made me laugh out loud. The goalie character is obviously fiction; I don't think I will develop a habit of accidentally colliding with goalposts. The main character is also described as handsome. That part must be related to me," he jokingly said. "Elves Can't Kick is a fun story, and an entertaining read for soccer fans of all ages, especially young readers," Tim said.



Chaya Sara Twersky (10 years old)
Lawrence, New York

All About Me

Hi! I'm Sara and I have TS. It is very hard for me to control myself, but I handle it anyway. Even though I look silly when I tic, I still have many friends. I take a lot of medicine and see many doctors. I wish and hope my TS will go away soon.



Emily Cromwell (10 years old)
Warrenton, Virginia

Why Me?

Paige just woke up on a sunny Monday morning. First, she straightened her pillows three times, then she checked under her bed four times to see if everything looked perfect.

When Paige was done with her daily check-up, she walked down the stairs, but she had to count them three times. Finally, Paige was downstairs sitting at the kitchen table waiting for her breakfast. "Here you go Paige, scrambled eggs and toast with jelly," Paige's mom said. Anything that she ate could not be touching, or she wouldn't eat it.

When it was time for school, Paige looked down at her hand holding her lunchbox. Even though she saw it was there, she didn't believe it was there. "Mom, is my lunchbox in my hand?" "Sure it is honey, can't you see it?" my mom asked.

As the school day went by with kids teasing Paige and asking why she did something, Paige got really angry. So when Paige got home, she asked her mom, "Why me, why do I have to have Tourette's?" Her mom said that Tourette's is a very special part of her and that it's what makes her, her.

As weeks and months went by, Paige started to understand that having Tourette's wasn't such a bad thing after all. She still had to tie her shoelaces twice, check her pillow for lint, and everything else. But, she started to love herself more and more and she even asked herself, "Why did I say "Why me? I'm wonderful the way I am!"

Author's Note: As I have gotten older, I have noticed that having Tourette's is very challenging and tough, but Tourette's is what makes me, me.

This story is dedicated to my mom, Kristi, and my dad, James, for always encouraging me to be myself, and my brother Myles, and my sister, Paige for always having my back.





Olivia Guardino (9 years old)
Bayonne, New Jersey

I was diagnosed with TS a year and a half ago. It is hard for me sometimes because I do not like other people looking at me if my tics start but sometimes it doesn't bother me at all. I have a really good doctor who helps me and a good family who loves me very much and they taught me that I am just like everyone else but "extra special."

I like to listen to music. I like Kelly Osbourne and Bruce Springsteen. I like to ice skate and I even belong to the figure skating club in my hometown. I like to write stories, even though my handwriting isn't very good because of my tics, I still try my best. I go to a nice school and this summer I will be in a musical show called "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." There are summer shows for kids of all ages who live in my town to perform in. I also did "Bye Bye Birdie" and I was a munchkin in "The Wizard Of Oz."

I hope someday everyone can learn about TS and know that just because kids like me may do things different, we are still kids and like the same things and like to be treated the same as everyone else. It is hard for kids like me to stop their tics sometimes and people need to sometimes be nicer and understand not everyone is the same.



Jordan Gonzalez (10 years old)
Hackensack, New Jersey

Hi, my name is Jordan. I am a 10 year old in the 4th grade. I was diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome when I was in the 2nd grade. My Tourette's started with tics in my arms and legs and my doctor thought it was from all the sports I play.

After I started making noises, they sent me to a new doctor who told me I had Tourette Syndrome.

In the beginning a lot of kids made fun of me and copied my tics. I still get made fun of by kids who don't know me, but my friends are real cool about it. I take my medicine at night and in the morning before school, to help control my tics. Sometimes I have trouble paying attention in school because the medicine makes me tired. By the end of the day I have trouble sitting still and need to tell myself to relax.

Having Tourette Syndrome has not stopped me from doing the things I love. I play on two baseball teams, I also play football, soccer and basketball and I am starting boxing this month. I have to work extra hard at school and my mom and dad help me with homework and I do get A's and B's.

Having Tourette Syndrome is hard but my mom, dad, grams, Uncle Jeff, Uncle Brett and Cousin Toni understand and help me as much as they can. It means a lot to me.



Lily Leviton (7 years old)
New York, New York

My name is Lily and I have TS, OCD and ADHD. I take a lot of medications that help me. I hate my Tourette's but I'm a very good person. My dad

does not understand me but he loves me anyway. I do not know any other children like me with TS, but I hope I will meet some soon.

(The drawing says, "This is me hitting my brain telling it to stop making snaps.")



Ryan Hoffman (11 years old)
Boise, Idaho

Hi! My name is Ryan and I have TS and OCD Sensory Integration issues. I was diagnosed when I was seven. Ever since then, there have been good times and bad times, but I have gotten through them with the help of teachers, friends and my parents. Lately, I've developed a tic where I roll my eyes like saying, "whatever." It's really annoying, especially when I try to read a book or give a speech, but it will go away sooner or later.

I enjoy playing the piano, spending time with friends, and singing, dancing and listening to music. I even qualified for my school's talent show. I am singing "She Will Be Loved" by Maroon 5. I'm the kind of kid who nobody notices at first, but then gets up there and does something cool.

I've learned that, no matter who you are, you can always make a difference in what you think and in what other people think. I hope they find a cure for TS soon!



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 and click on the "For Young People" section on the left hand menu.



Cady Carlson (13 years old)
Tulsa, Oklahoma

My Ticky Life

I have had TS since I was 4 and I have Tourette related OCD. I used to hate life. I was unbearably miserable and had only a few friends. My social life was terrible and I always had compulsions to tell people I knew I couldn't trust my secrets. I had been boy crazy and was really stressed. Like most people with TS, whenever I got stressed, my tics would get worse. At times I could barely walk or talk. Most people didn't understand and all of the clinics I went to were no help at all.

My mother has researched TS for so long, sometimes I thought (and still do) she knew more than most of the doctors. Anyway, I was constantly made fun of and I was very aggressive and physical. I used to take dance, acting, gymnastics, and singing. Even though I loved it I had to give it up because I could not concentrate in school. I felt like nobody liked me and that drove me into a deep depression.

Even though I always have had good grades, I felt like I was doing badly in school. I had gotten into many fights and I have always been argumentative. I used to think that I was stupid and retarded and because of that, I didn't have a boyfriend (it seemed like everyone had one but me...) which caused me to sink down farther into depression. Once I got into sixth grade I had more friends but I still hated life. Even though I was and still am very religious, I tried to pull off the Goth look (which made people think I was even weirder). That didn't work out how I planned.

I eventually got on better medicine and took up Tae-Kwon-Do. I am currently a purple belt (the sixth belt up). Taking martial arts has made me feel more in control of my body and mind. I am much more obedient and can make friends easily. I feel like I am normal (well, as normal as anyone can be at 13) and liked. I have a lot of friends. While I get along with both genders, I seem to gravitate more towards the guys. Most of the girls I know are cruel, but fun. I seem to identify with guys better and boys always seemed comfortable around me. They know they can ask me anything and say anything in front of me. While I don't have a boyfriend, I still have at least 13 boys who are my close friends. I can tell them anything and they don't care about my TS. While they don't completely understand what's wrong with me, they don't care and they treat me as if I'm one of them.

I've learned to be more understanding of the less educated people on TS and I'm doing extremely well socially. I made straight A's last semester and got accepted into the National Junior Honor Society. No longer am I considered the school freak with no friends; I am considered a well rounded non cliquy person. All groups accept me for who I am and don't try to change me.

Andrew Huang (10 years old)
Tallahassee, Florida

My name is Andrew and I have TS, ADHD, OCD, and bipolar disorder. I have had depression throughout my life, but I have learned to live with it. I take a lot of medicine in the morning and at night.

I got taken out of school in November because I was out of control. Now I am home schooled, and I am starting to feel better. When I was in school people made fun of my tics and laughed at me. Once I think my teacher sent me on an errand so she could tell the class not to bother me. They didn't laugh at me as much after that.

I am a black belt in Tae-Kwon-Do. I have been doing it for four years. The people there don't laugh at me, so I feel more relaxed and have fun. I like to play football and basketball. I like to draw and read, too.

I started having tics when I was 7, but my parents and I didn't know what it was until I was 9. My tics were really bad then, but now they're better because I take medicine. I had to try a lot of medicines before I found one that worked. Only a few people know I have Tourette Syndrome. One thing I've learned is to ignore people that make fun of my tics.



TSA National Conference Youth and Teen Program

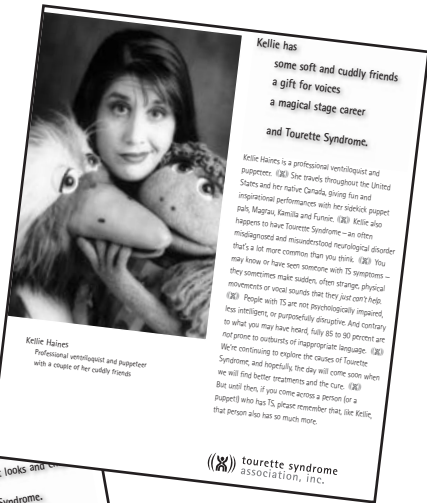
There will be both a Youth Program and a Teen Program offered at the TSA National Conference in Alexandria, Virginia April 6, 7 and 8, 2006. The Youth Program will be for children ages 8 through twelve and will include field trips to the Capitol Children's Hands-on Museum and a private Historical Landmark Site-Seeing Tour. Additionally there will be rap group discussions, swimming, videos, games and other activities.

The Teen Program will be for young people ages 13 through 16 and will include a Teen Peer Ambassador Program Presentation, teen topic workshops, rap group discussions and a private Historical Landmark Site-Seeing Tour.

Parents must be TSA members and must stay on the hotel premises at all times during the hours of the Youth and Teen Programs. A limited number of partial and/or full scholarships will be available. You may e-mail TSA to request a copy of the scholarship application to ts@tsa-usa.org.

These are terrific programs and the registration is limited so be certain you apply early as it is first come, first served.

**Announcing two
new TSA print ads
featuring
Kellie Haines and
Casey Roberts
Dunham!**



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That Darn Tic

That Darn Tic is TSA's newsletter by and for children up to 15 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 October 22, 2005.

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

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



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stars of the
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"I Have Tourette's But
Tourette's Doesn't Have Me"**