



THAT DARN TIC



A NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR KIDS WITH TS

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Yael (11 years old)
Berkeley, California

My name is Yael, and I have Tourette Syndrome. I have a pretty mild case, but it's still a part of my life. When I was around 7 years old, I had to continuously stretch out my hands and toes, which proved difficult when I was wearing shoes. For as long as I can remember, my left eye has ticced with me hardly noticing. People have asked me "why are you winking at me?" or "why are you blinking so much?" and each time, I patiently explain about TS.

Once, when I was in third grade, my mom came into my class and we told a story explaining TS. I wanted to show the other kids what I had (even though the story was very simple), and what it was like to have TS.

At the moment, my TS has stopped, but it comes and goes as it pleases. Around three years ago, I had about four different tics, some of them overlapping with each other. Now, I have none.

Every few months, I read "That Darn Tic," and every time I feel a connection with the kids in it. I think, "hey, that's just like me," and I am very grateful for a place where kids with TS can tell the world about what it's like. Thank you, Tourette Syndrome Association!



Eva Catherine (15 years old)
Millbrook, Alabama

My TS controls me now.
My TS controls me how?
It has effect on my body,
but that will not stop me.

I will take full control of my tics,
and I will come out just fine.

Because I am made in God's full image,
and he loves me just the way I am,
even if I do make a funny sound.

Jacob (9 years old)
Woodstock, Connecticut

Hello, my name is Jacob. I like to go to gym class, and I also like to go geocaching, where you try to find a box with lots of things in it hidden in the forest. At home I like to draw, read and play Game Boy. Doing magic is also a hobby of mine. I love to go camping with my family and go walking. I get to ride on my bike when I go camping, and we also have campfires. I don't like bees, though.

I am really good at finding things through my binoculars, and the other day I was only a few feet away from a woodcock. That is a type of bird with a very long beak and it comes out in the evening in the spring. When someone gets too close, he flutters away, and if you stand really still, he'll come back to the same position he was before.

I have two dogs, four birds and one hamster and they can be very hard to take care of. Playing with my dog Baxter makes me feel happy. He's a good boy.

I don't know what I want to be when I grow up, but I think I would like to make electronics.

Having TS sometimes makes me feel bad, because it is embarrassing to tic in front of so many people. Kids don't make fun of me because of my Tourette, but listening and paying attention at school is really hard for me.

Someday I want to be my mom's assistant puppeteer. I want to help her and then it will help me get an allowance, too.



This is a picture of me with two of my mom's puppets, Bugsy and Frizz.



Darius (DJ - Majesty)
(12 years old)
West Palm Beach, Florida

TS Think It Got Me

TS think it got me, but it don't.
I'm in school sometimes I flunk.

I ask the Lord when I'm going to get off my medication.
He says, "Wait," you have to be patient.

I play an instrument, I play the drums,
I thank the Lord he made my mom.

When I'm at school I have my TS
But I know I'm the best!

My hobbies are drums, rapping, dancing and DJ-ing.
Sometimes when I'm in the shower I like to sing.

My teachers love me and I stay busy.
Sometimes when I'm in the sun I get dizzy.
I don't like my TS but I have to deal with it.
I love myself and everybody else.



Aaron (15 years old)
Pawleys Island, South Carolina

Having Tourette Syndrome is not so bad for me now that I am in my teenage years. I am 15 and believe my tics are starting to decrease slowly but surely.

It helps that my family and friends accept it because I can tic all I want in front of them and they don't care.

I used to have tics much worse than I do now, but they were not as bad as a lot of people's. The

medicine I am currently taking lessens my tics during the school day so I can let them out at home after school. I just let my tics happen when they need to, and educate the people around me. After people understand TS, they can accept it. It makes life easier for them and especially for me. It helps to know others my age have TS, too. I went to Washington, DC for the TSA National Conference and met some new friends. Greg, Mike and Mike are cool, so I can call them or IM them if I want. The conference was great.

My tics don't stop me from doing what I love. I am a fencer and I have become pretty good at it. In my first tournament, I won first place competing against fencers age 14 and under. Now that I am 15, I fence against adults. I recently came in third place in a tournament fencing against all adults. I also play the trumpet in the school band and am in the marching band.

My TS doesn't slow me down anymore, so don't let it slow you down either. It's just part of us and we are all special.

Megan (11 years old) from Placentia, California,
drew this picture of a Puritan Village.



Zach (15 years old)
San Ramon, California

I am 15 years old, completing my freshman year of high school in the San Francisco Bay Area. My passion is acting. Currently, I am in a local theater production called "The Devil's Due." This summer I will be participating in "West Side Story." I also have been competing in Odyssey of the Mind, a creative problem-solving competition, for the past five years. My team has been fortunate enough to go to the state level four times and the world competition twice. My team is like an extended family. In my free time I like to play football, basketball, video games and swim with my friends. Having TS can make some social situations difficult, but I never let it stop me from pursuing my dreams. My friends understand TS and accept me for who I am.

My Curse

I fight back and try to break free
I can't escape it's hold on me
this dreaded curse which rips my soul
It's so much worse than any know
the terrible pain that I much fear
I can't escape, I have to bear
Otherwise I may go mad
my sanity is close to had
This horrid thing consumes my life
my friends do help relieve the strife
But in the end it's I who must face
this terrible trap in every place
I don't know, I may succeed
If only I could somehow lead
A life without the cruel disease
someday I may just be relieved
Against all odds I still have hope
with all the pain I never mope
It's clear as crystal don't you see
I have Tourette, but it doesn't have me.

Jared (12 years old)
McGraw, New York

A tic is a tic - you can't stop it or ignore it – it's a life lesson until it leaves and it never leaves even how much you try it won't leave. People make fun of you just because you spin or turn. My teacher made me sit in detention just because I made a tic. I had to sit alone. She always yelled at me. My friends told on me because I was doing something to annoy them but I wasn't, I was just doing my tic. This happens to me through the whole fifth grade until I went to sixth grade and got a new teacher. But I still sometimes get told on just because I have a tic.

Tic Tic

- Flinching and Turning, Spinning and Yelling, Bending and Staring
- Jumping and Running, Bouncing and Bothering
- Annoying and Startling
- Scary and Funny
- Confusing and Hurting



Brandon (16 years old)
San Diego, California

Writing, it's one of my escapes. The perfect orderliness of language satisfies my obsessions and compulsions while my creativity is interrupted by an eye twitch, a jerking of the finger, a tightening of the arm. Small in comparison to some

and I am grateful that my Tourette Syndrome is not worse than it sometimes gets. But it is enough. I assure you, it is plenty to feel.

I was first diagnosed with TS in the later stages of fourth grade. In fifth grade I had made the decision to inform my classmates about, well, the weird motions and noises (albeit quiet ones) that I was doing. With the help of my therapist and a wonderful teacher, they were taught. Fast forward to now. People still remember enough of that talk; namely, they remember the name. Tourette Syndrome. My school is a small one, and I have a close relationship with my classmates, some of whom I've known for over ten years. That probably helps some...but they have been understanding since 5th grade through to today and probably will for many years beyond. It's saddening to hear of schools where kids make fun of other kids because the other kids are different. If they know why the other people are different (as they did for me), they will suddenly realize that it isn't right to be making fun of the different kid – all of them, not just the one moving funny and making funny noises. It is really nice to know that someone whom you don't know very well will be there for you, instead of one of those against you.

More about me, to give you an idea of who I am. I can't draw. I can't sing. I can't act. I can write. I can look at something...and then take a step back and look at it again,

and see just how beautiful it is. I can see things differently. What I can do is what TS and OCD has given me; the ability to look at something just a bit different than most because most haven't had to deal with their eyes zipping around, most haven't had to deal with pain in their hands from swollen knuckles, and so on. Most people haven't had to do all that. I'm special. Neener-neener, so there. I take a certain amount of pride in the fact that I'm different because if we were all the same, it would be a rather boring place.

"I seem to have lost my intended meaning somewhere along the way... however: "If something is worth doing, it is worth doing badly." – John Craven. And this was certainly worth doing.



Kevin (10 years old)
Thomaston, Connecticut

Hi, my name is Kevin and I have Tourette Syndrome. Kids always make fun of me at school. They say, "Kevin, why do you do that?" or "Kevin, are you sick? I think you should go see the nurse." It irritates me very much.

When I was in third grade, my teacher asked me if I wanted a person to come in and explain to kids what TS is and why I do my tics, but I was afraid. Except then, when I went to fourth grade, I had the worst year of my life because I didn't have the person come in and explain why I do my tics. Finally, I decided that it was the only way to stop the kids from teasing me and now I tell them why I do it.

I love to read and write. My writing teacher thinks I'm very good at writing. One time, we were writing a Halloween story, and my teacher thought it was so good that she read it to the whole entire fifth grade. I write stories on my computer all the time. My best story is probably "The Perfect Life."



Cameron (14 years old)
Rome, Georgia

What's up? My name is Cameron and I have tics, TS and ADHD. I love to draw; it relaxes me. When I tic everybody usually stares at me. I also have a problem

stuttering. When I stutter some people laugh at me, and that hurts my feelings and most of the time people make fun of me when I twitch my head. But I always get over it. That's my story.

This is a picture of a fire-breathing dragon being attacked by army force jets.





Laine (14 years old)
Fort Plain, New York

I'm an artist. A pretty good one, too. When I'm in school a lot of my classmates admire my drawings. I have OCD, ADHD, tics and TS. Most of my habits are face squinching, mouth gaping and screeching "like a monkey." My teachers like to help me out a lot. They're always there for me, and so is my family. My brother doesn't understand though. He yells at me a lot and thinks I'm always there to annoy him. But thanks to Mr. Ardnt and Ms. Gordon (my school teachers) they are always there to help me and make life better for me. Thanks a lot.



Kady (11 years old)
White Sulphur Springs, Montana

Hi everyone! My name is Kady and I was told that I had TS in second grade. It was really hard to deal with, but I am learning to understand more about it all the time. I am now in the 5th grade. I don't let TS stop me from doing what I want. I love to act and play sports and hope to become famous. I know that I won't let TS stop me from reaching my goals.

I have not told my class yet, but I did read them some of your stories and that is a step for me. I am still afraid they wouldn't understand and might make fun of me.

I have four cats and their names are Kiara, Shy, Buster and Franky and three dogs named Annabelle, Bernie and Sam. Do you watch American idol? I do and Chris Daughtry was my fave idol for 2006.

I am from a small town in Montana and I don't know anyone with TS and would like too. I would like a pen pal who understands having TS.



Dylan (13 years old)
Reno, Nevada

I'm in seventh grade and I've had many tics over the time I've had TS. I've just recently developed a tic where I roll my eyes back in my head and jerk my neck (which is really scaring people.) At least there's one person who understands me now, who also has TS. He sits in front of me in English Class, and we've started to develop each other's tics. He's already come down with my throat clearing tic, and so far I've only managed to have the sides of my eyes and mouth twitch like he does. He is the first person in my life that I've ever met that also has TS, so it's kind of nice to know people that have the same problem as me. We're not exactly good friends, and he didn't believe that I actually had TS until I showed him my Medical ID card.



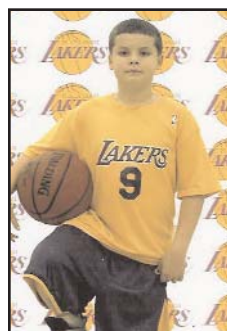
Robert (9 years old)
Troy, Illinois

My name is Robert and I have some tics. One is blinking and one is crossing my fingers. When I am ticcing I feel tired and feel like I'm going crazy. My tics started when I was 7. I used to clap my hands and make a "hiccup" sound. I have TS and OCD and I am in the third grade. School is ok. I really like PE the best.

The medicine I take I think helps a little. Typing stuff on the computer is fun because my handwriting is really messy.

I live with my mom, dad and younger sister. We have a dog named Parish. He has black fur and is pretty big.

My favorite thing to do is soccer. I also like baseball, basketball, football and cooking. Here's a picture of me making a pie. When I grow up I want to be a cop.



Jesse (10 years old)
Virginia Beach, Virginia

My teacher had us write a letter to an author who inspired us. This is my letter to Louis Sachar who wrote the book "Holes."

Dear Mr. Louis Sachar:

Spinning, spinning and spinning.

I was getting tangled up in your book. Your book "Holes" inspired me to look

at myself in a different way. I used to think my life was boring for some reason.

Like that kid in your book, Stanley, I always thought I had bad luck because I had Tourette Syndrome. I'm just a normal kid though, because it isn't severe at all. I didn't tell many people because some people were kind enough not to ask about it. I know Stanley's luck changed at the end of the book, and that's actually what inspired me.

It was like my luck suddenly just changed. Shortly after I read your book my mom introduced me to a magazine that was for and by kids with TS. I saw that there were many others who also had TS. That's when I saw that I really wasn't unlucky. That's when I saw that my TS wasn't that bad at all.

I really wish I could say that I did not have TS. But I can't say that because I do have TS. I can't wait until the day that it goes away later in my life when I'm a little bit older. If I had even one percent of a choice then I would choose not to have TS. It can be a horrible thing if it's too severe. My friend has TS but I'm not going to mention his name because he may be embarrassed. That is exactly how I was changed.

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 For Young People on the left hand menu.



Nathaniel (10 years old)
Orlando, Florida

"If I could change something about myself, it would be not having Tourette Syndrome (which is a disorder). Tourette bothers me because I have to jerk my head, also say things I don't really mean. Tourette Syndrome is very frustrating. Sometimes it bothers me so bad I can't

go to sleep. This one time this substitute teacher came, and didn't understand Tourette, which made me have a bad day.

So you're probably asking how I feel. Sometimes my Tourette's bothers me so bad my face turns red as a radish. I even feel like I could kill myself (just for example). I can't control Tourette Syndrome, it's just something I was born with. I don't want to have Tourette Syndrome, but I have to deal with it.

If I didn't have Tourette Syndrome, I would be a happy camper. Also, I would sleep better. And last but not least, I would not have trouble with a substitute.

If I could change something it would be not having Tourette Syndrome. What would you like to change about yourself? Think about it. Write a story about it if you want."



Daniel (12 years old)
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

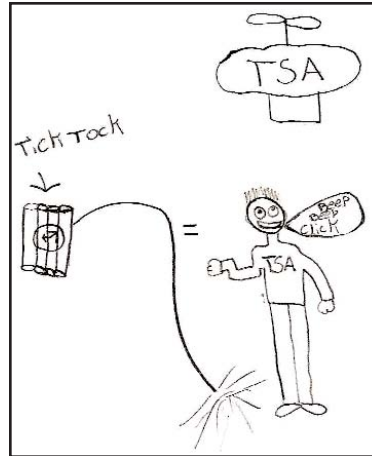
Hi! My name is Daniel. I have written in once before, but I always read the issues.

I just thought up "Tips for Tics" about, say, three minutes ago. To be a part of "Tips for Tics," just write in with a tip for kids to use to get through

problems, like in school with teachers or bullies. Make sure you have "Tips for Tics" written somewhere and include a description of how to use the tip.

My first tip is to get teachers on your side. Do this by, at the beginning of the school year, telling your teachers about the TS and what to expect. You should probably have a parent do this. My mom always writes a letter at the beginning of the year to all of my teachers, the principals, and people who take care of me at after-school programs and in sports. She explains all about my TS, how it affects me, and what they might see. She also talks to them and keeps in touch with them all year long to see how everything is going. It really has helped us the last two years. That way, the teachers understand about the TS from the beginning and seem to be a little bit more understanding and willing to help. They also know that mom is involved with me, my work, and my TS.

Well, that's my tip! Now it's your turn.



Austin
(12 years old)
of Mastic, New York
sent us this drawing
expressing that people
with Tourette Syndrome
are exactly like a stick of
dynamite, just
waiting to go off and tic.



Ian (10 years old)
Los Angeles, California

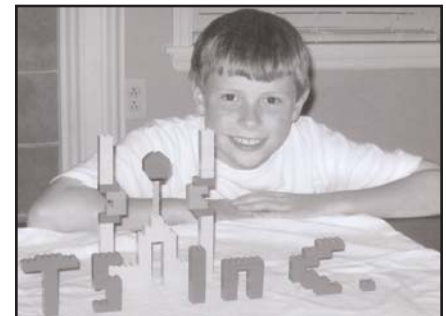
I'll do anything I can do
I can even tie my shoes
I can play piano and basketball
Just watch me, I can do it all
I can go to restaurants, too
I can also do things with you
But there is one thing I can't do
I can't do everything like you
But I just want you to see
I'll try to be anything I can be
"I have Tourette's but Tourette's
doesn't have me"



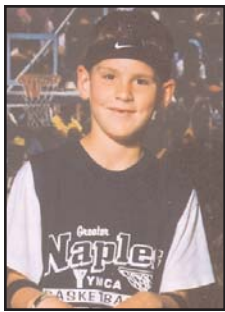
Connor (9 years old)
Havelock, North Carolina

I was diagnosed with TS in March of 2005. One of my favorite hobbies is building Legos. Here is a picture of me and one of my creations.

One of my tics is a short, high pitched yelp. This may sound weird, but a few of my other tics are throwing pencils, not being able to paint and not being able to hold shoes.



I have a great friend named James. We both like the same toys: BIONICLES. He does not care that I have TS. He is my friend and I am his friend and it will be that way for a long time.



Jason (13 years old)
Naples, Florida

Hey! My name is Jason. I would say ever since I was 10 years old I've had TS. I'm not complaining, but after a while it gets pretty annoying, whether it's my cough or body twitching. The cool thing is nobody normally ever cares or notices.

Now I play a lot of sports, mostly basketball, but whenever I step on the court I never seem to have a problem. I'm not sure why but it happens. Tourette's to me is like basketball opponents – you can't shake them but you can take them.



Danae (12 years old)
Tacoma, Washington

Hi! My name is Danae and I am 12 years old and I have Tourette Syndrome. My mom homeschools me and my twin sister, but she doesn't have TS. My great great grandma and my nephew both have TS. I guess it runs in the family. I was diagnosed with TS when I was 8 years old. Well, that's my story!

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 September 1, 2006.

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

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



tourette syndrome association, inc.

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You are never too young to make a difference! One teenager joined TEAM TSA and raised more than \$4,000 to help us get One Lap Closer To A Cure!

For more information, visit:
tsa-usa.org/about_tsa/marathon.html

Here's how it works: you ask people to sponsor you in one of our events and the donations benefit TSA. Several events have short kids' races, 5K or half marathon. Event locations include Chicago, Maui, Long Beach and Los Angeles, California, Washington D.C., Walt Disney World, Kentucky and Alaska.