



# THAT DARN TIC



## A NEWSLETTER BY AND FOR KIDS WITH TS

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**Anthony** (10 years old)  
Selden, New York

Hi! My name is Anthony and I am in the fifth grade. I have tics. I've had my tics since I was 6 1/2 years old. I really don't like having my tics because some kids and teachers tell me to stop making noises. Or sometimes, they'll even give me the eye.

Some of my favorite games and toys calm me down, like Legos, Bionicles, video games, my Nintendo DS, and sometimes even doing math like division or multiplication problems will calm me down. My favorite game is chess.

The tics that I have include vocal tics, gulping, blinking (I almost strained my eye once), grunting and making mean and weird faces. I went to the doctor once and there was a drawing that looks like a big "U." He said that I am at the top of the U, and I might stop ticcing at the age of 12 or 13. I really hope I get over it before middle school.



**Madeline** (11 years old)  
Glen Ellyn, Illinois

Hi, my name is Madeline. I'm 11 years old and I have had Tourette Syndrome since I was three years old. I was worried about what my friends would say about Tourette Syndrome. When my friends respond back to me, they say, "Hey stop that! That annoys me." Then, I finally told my whole class



about Tourette Syndrome. Now, my friends know what Tourette Syndrome is and they don't bother me and aren't mean to me a lot anymore.

I blink and make loud sounds. Since I've had it for a while, it gets annoying a lot. Tics are easy to deal with. Sometimes my tics go away and then come back because sometimes, on special occasions, I eat foods that cause tics. TS does not bother me while I am doing homework. I like doing homework and participating in gym, art, music and other special events like birthday parties, play groups and sleepovers. My cat is really fun to play with.



**Zachary** (14 years old)  
Wheeling, West Virginia

Hi! My name is Zachary. I am 14 years old and in the 7th grade. I have many interests including school, baseball and spending time with my family. My favorite baseball player was Babe Ruth. He was a hero to his fans and really loved kids.



I think that my teachers and classmates are understanding of my tics and if someone starts to make fun of me, I have back up from those who really love me for who I am.

There is a video called, "I Have Tourette's but Tourette's Doesn't Have Me" (which you can get on the TSA website). It teaches those who do not understand what it is like to have tics. It upsets me sometimes to have this problem because sometimes my neck hurts because of my head twitch.

I hope to be a pediatrician someday and help other children with their problems. Since getting this newsletter, I read about others with TS and it helps me understand that I am not the only one.



**Ethan** (9 years old)  
Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

Hi, my name is Ethan and I have Tourette Syndrome. I just found out from a doctor a few years ago but I have had it since kindergarten and I also have ADHD and LD.

I had to go to a lot of doctors' appointments over the last couple of years and that really sucked. I had to miss a lot of school, because they were in Toronto and I live in Peterborough. But now that is all over with and I am doing really good!

In November 2005 I got sponsored by West 49, a national skateboard company in Canada. Being sponsored means that I skateboard for them in competitions. I get some free stuff, and I get a big discount on everything in the store. I love skateboarding. I have been doing it since I was 5 years old. I try to go to the skate park every day and practice. Last summer I was in several competitions and placed in each one.

In the winter of 2006, I asked my mom if we could have a skateboarding competition to raise money for TS. Together

we came up with the name, "Flip Tricks for Tourette." We have had two amazing years with the Flip Tricks event, and plan to have many more. It looks like this will be going national! Over the past two years we have had over



400 spectators, more than 75 participants in the competition, and have raised about \$5,000 for local initiatives.

I want people to know that Tourette Syndrome isn't bad, and to not to be afraid of people who have it. Sometimes my tics can be bad, but most of the time they aren't bad at all. I don't get bullied; all my friends know I have it and it doesn't bother them. Sometimes people ask me why I am doing something, but it doesn't bother me. I just tell them that I have TS. If that doesn't work, I just ignore them.

I would love to have you come and pay a visit to Peterborough someday and check out what's happening here in Canada. We have so many great people here with lots of support for this cause. And we have tons of talented skateboarders!

I hope that a lot of people come to watch or enter the competition. I want everyone to know more about TS and to donate some money so that maybe one day they can find a cure.

**Keegan** (9 years old)  
New Carlisle, OH



Here is a story I wrote for a Young Author's contest that they had at my school. I hope you all enjoy it.

### *Tourette Syndrome: My Story*

When I was 7 years old, I would make funny noises. My parents and I thought they were just habits. I had many of what are called "tics." These are a few of them: eye blinking, snorting, coughing and clearing my throat. I also have motor tics like shoulder shrugging.

I felt bad because my parents were getting angry with me because they didn't understand that I could not control what I was doing.

Finally my parents figured out what may be wrong with me. My parents took me to see a Tourette's specialist who diagnosed me with Tourette Syndrome.

I was home-schooled until the second grade. I was having trouble learning how to read. My mother asked a friend from our church to help. Though our friend did try to teach me to read, I just couldn't.

My mother decided to put me in public school so that I could get more help. My teacher was very nice. Her name is Mrs. Bracci. I also had a teacher named Mrs. Dillman. I have an IEP so that I can get the extra help that I need. I was very shy that year, but I learned a lot.

I am now in the third grade. Mrs. Dillman is still my helper teacher and my third grade teacher is Mrs. Myers. She is very nice and funny.

A boy at my school told me that I could control what I do. He does not know that I cannot control my tics any more than he could control a sneeze or hiccup. He hurt my feelings. I don't do these things on purpose. It just happens. I told my mom what the boy said and she told me to just ignore him. Now I don't worry about what people think about me. I only have to worry about what I think about myself.

You should never tease someone just because you think they are different or because they do things you think are odd. We are all different and we all do odd things sometimes.

I have really improved my reading and writing skills. I feel confident that I can be a writer when I grow up. I want to be a Christian fiction writer. I am nine years old. I have made many friends and learned a lot in spite of my Tourette's. If you would like to learn more about Tourette's, please visit this website: [www.tsa-usa.org](http://www.tsa-usa.org).

## Did You Know?

You can read this issue (and all past issues of *That Darn Tic*) on the TSA website by going to this direct link: [http://www.tsa-usa.org/Publications/ChildrensNewsletter/that\\_darn\\_tic.html](http://www.tsa-usa.org/Publications/ChildrensNewsletter/that_darn_tic.html)



**Shellz** (16 years old)  
Taft, California

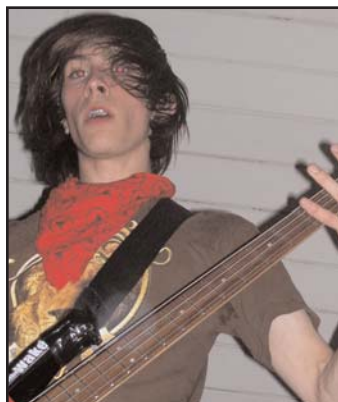
**Unbreakable**

Squawking and squirming  
Twitching and turning  
You stare at me but I have  
something you'll never understand  
So please keep poking fun  
Because I'll never cry  
No matter how hard you try...  
I'm Unbreakable



**Justinian** (17 years old)  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Hey, my name is Justinian, and I have had Tourette's since I was very young. It has taught me a ton about being accepting. Here's some advice to any young kid who has TS, ADD, ADHD or OCD (all of which I have): don't let it get you down, elementary school age kids are much less understanding than high school kids. I used to get made fun of mercilessly for my TS, but now that I'm in high school, people accept and understand all the things that go along with having TS. My tics have also gotten better as I got older. I used to lick my lips till they got cracked and raw. I also used to have a grunting tic and always had to see what things smelled and felt like, but now I only have tics when I'm really tired or nervous.



I also do many activities to keep my mind off TS. I am in plays and musicals at my school and I want to be an actor or comedian. If I were to ever get famous, I'd use my celebrity status to help people to understand Tourette's better, and be more accepting of people with it.

I also play guitar in a hardcore band called, "My Own Exodus" and a metal band, "Verge of Submission." I find that when I'm stressed, playing guitar calms me down. I used to dread telling people about my TS, but now I tell them with a smile. Dealing with TS has given me a greater view on accepting people who are different than me.

I went from the kid who everyone makes fun of to the kid who everyone is friends with. I just dealt with my "disorders," and made the best of the situation. To the people reading this who have TS, keep your head up and be strong, no matter what people say about you. I realized that once you get older, people are usually more accepting. So if someone is making fun of you at school, just think, in a few years you don't ever have to see them again. I am proud to say that I have Tourette's, but Tourette's doesn't have me.

**Lauren** (10 years old)  
Plainview, New York



Hi! My name is Lauren. I have a brother (Justin) and three cats (Joey, Cali and Shayna). I was diagnosed with Tourette's when I was 5 years old. My mom was the first one to notice me kicking my leg. She knew it was TS because she has it, too.

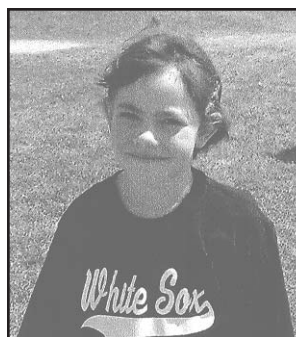
Since the fourth grade, I've been telling my class about Tourette's at the beginning of the year. Some of my tics are sniffing, kicking my legs, throwing my head back, rolling my eyes and then blinking hard, and tightening a lot of my muscles. I used to have a vocal tic a couple of months ago. I would scream with my mouth closed and it would sound like a crying puppy. A lot of times when I did it, the sound wouldn't come out so I would have to do it until I heard the sound.

I am a gymnast and I compete at level 6. I told my teammates and coaches about Tourette's and they are very understanding. Tourette's doesn't affect me too bad when I am there because I am too concentrated on my work.

I have met a lot of friends who also have Tourette's (Shoshana, Leah and Ashley). They help me know I'm not the only one in this world who has Tourette's.



**Hannah** (7 years old)  
Dayton, Nevada



Hi! My name is Hannah. I have TS. A lot of kids stare at me. I am okay with that. My best friend, Daniel, stands up for me. I have three dogs and two cats and I had another cat that died. I play baseball and soccer, too. I have a sister and a brother.

I do not take medicine and I feel good. God is helping me with my TS, so are my family and friends. Once my soccer coach yelled at me for rolling my eyes at her, but it was my TS. I felt sad. My mom told her about my TS.



**Cameron** (16 years old)  
Rome, Georgia



What Up!? I'm Cameron. I've had to live with people making fun of me all my life. But at least I've got a ton of friends who understand my disability. I'm still teaching myself how to control my tics.



**Karianne** (16 years old)  
Hawthorne, California

*Sharing My Secret*

What if one day, out of nowhere, you randomly yell out something and you cannot control it? You would think that maybe it would go away and hope it would not come back anytime soon. So you take some time to think about it and realize that you have no clue what this is and why you are doing it. Kind

of strange, huh? Well, a while later, I was diagnosed with a thing called Tourette Syndrome. I happen to have the type where I yell out random words. I have had TS for about nine years and was diagnosed in 2nd grade. I had no idea what it was and why it had to be me who had it.

When I was younger, it was a lot worse and as I got older it seems to have gotten better. I used to not be able to control the tics and not even be able to sit through class without making a noise. It was hard to get myself to go to school because other kids would make fun of me and imitate whatever I did. Whenever I would go somewhere and make a noise, everyone would turn their head and look at me like I was some kind of freak. I cannot stand people who judge other people before they even know them. If people do not understand, then why don't they take the time to stop and ask and maybe learn something new about a person? They shouldn't just stare at them and say mean things about them because they do not understand.

One thing that I will always remember, happened when I was in the 7th grade. In one of my classes we had a substitute for the day and I did one of my noises and the substitute said, "Who just made that awful noise?" No one said anything and the class went on working and then I made another noise. The sub said, "Whoever did that needs to stop!" Then, later on in the class she found out it was me who made the noise and said that I was disrupting the class and I needed to stop making annoying sounds. I told her that I had Tourette Syndrome and I could not help it. She told me that I needed to control it and not to do it anymore.

About a year passed and I was now in 8th grade and one of my teachers said that we were going to have a substitute. I didn't think much of it until I found out that it was the substitute who I had to deal with in the 7th grade. As soon as I saw her, flashbacks ran through my mind as if they were all racing against each other. So class started and went okay because by then my noises had gotten to the point where I could control them better. At the end of class, the sub asked me to stay for a second. So I did. She remembered me from the 7th grade and told me that

the reason she was mean was because she did not understand and was very sorry if she hurt my feelings in any way. So it just goes to show that people should take the time to understand more before they say something or judge a person.

If I had a choice, I actually would choose not to get rid of my TS because it is part of who I am and I would never be the same without it. Having the support that I need, I have found that TS can be fun in its own way, but it is also really frustrating. My parents are a big part of supporting me and helping me understand all about TS I have learned to make the best of it. The doctors have not found a cure for TS yet, but they have made some progress. Either way I would not change it. I embrace my TS because it is part of who I am.

I have found comfort in knowing that families and friends of people who have TS hold a huge fundraising dinner each year to raise money to find a cure. I went to this dinner for the first time last year. It was so amazing to be with people who have TS and others who actually know what it is. I sat at a table with a group of kids my age who had TS. They were there to speak at the dinner and they were nervous so it made their TS come out more. It made me realize that there really are kids out there who have the same thing I have. This year I want to share my story with everyone and hope it helps people understand more about TS.

Having TS has made me stronger and more understanding toward people with disabilities. I have been through a lot from having people tease me, to teachers getting mad at me, to being surrounded by amazing people. I have learned that no one is perfect and we need to learn to deal with whatever comes our way because we may not be able to get rid of it any time soon.



**Erica** (10 years old)  
Staten Island, New York

Hi! My name is Erica. I have Tourette Syndrome. It first started out with simple nose scrunching. But then it got worse. I have had at least six different tics, and I'm OK with that. Some people used to make fun of me and I used to get upset. But now I know that I shouldn't care. When people would mimic me, I used to look at them and wonder why they had to be so mean. Now I just ignore them or just say, "I have Tourette Syndrome and if you don't like it, too bad."

Here are all of the tics that I've had so far: nose scrunching, shoulder clicking, squeaking, head jerking, breath puffing, sticking out my tongue and clicking noises... I think that's it for now.

Sometimes having TS is hard for me, because when I am in public people look at me like they don't want to come near me. Sometimes when this happens, I tap my mom and tell her that I don't like it when people look at me like that because it makes me feel like I'm very different from them, and I'm not. It may be genetic, or not, but either way I'm as much human as everyone else.



**Landon** (10 years old)  
Dover, Florida

My name is Landon and I have Tourette's. I was diagnosed when I was four years old. Tourette's is a neurobiological disorder affecting the brain. It is not contagious so other people can't catch it like a sickness. My tics are: rapid eye blinking, head jerking, shoulder shrugging and facial grimacing. My vocal tic is squeaking like a mouse. Right

now, my tic is facial grimacing. I don't do them all at once. One affects me every couple of weeks.

There are over 200,000 people in the United States who are diagnosed with this neurological disorder. There is no cure for Tourette's. There is medication to help control the tics, but it is a guessing game. It can help some, but not everyone. Many people with TS get better, not worse, as they mature. One day I hope to beat Tourette's.



**Aaron** (13 years old)  
Austin, Arkansas

Hi! My name is Aaron. I was diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome at six or seven years old. I'm one of those people who never got used to bullies. If I get made fun of, no matter who it is, I want to scream as loud as I can and/or run out of the building just to get my feelings out. I'm in band now. I like to sing in Mayday talent shows. Mayday is a day where we have a talent show, awards ceremony, then go outside and play games, have pizza and just have fun a few days before school lets out for the summer.



I would just love to meet or be in contact with someone who has Tourette's like me. I have several friends who understand me and I'm really very thankful for them and my family. My family really understands me, including my 15 year old, about to be sweet sixteen, sister.



**Kassandra** (12 years old)  
Cicero, New York

Hey! My name is Kassandra, but all my friends, and everyone, call me Kassie. I am an average pre-teen, who goes to middle school. I was diagnosed with TS when I was about 5 or 6 years old. The tics aren't that bad, and no one at school notices them, because I learned to

control them. But my BFF notices strange things about me. It was in 5th grade, she noticed that I was clearing my throat a lot. And I had no idea what was wrong with me, either.

Ever since I was little, my parents (especially my mom) were so annoyed. My mom finally said, "Stop! You don't have a cold. There's no reason for you to be doing this!" Finally in 6th grade, when my mom was at work, she found out on the internet and from her friends at work, that I might have tics or Tourette Syndrome. As I grew a year older, the tics have become more; the blinking a lot, rolling the eyes, and also head jerking, but I know how to control it, and it's not a big deal (all the time). Well, people, that's my story! Thanks for reading! And for all the people who are reading, if I can learn to control my tics, maybe you can, too.



**Lauren Nicole** (15 years old)  
Amber, Pennsylvania

When I was diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome (along with OCD and ADD) about two years ago, I never knew what I was going to have to face. In the beginning my tics were mild, and not too noticeable, but that changed quickly. I soon learned how to hold in the "big" tics. Ya know, the ones that are loud and annoying; the ones that hurt.



I tried my hardest, and still do, to not let TS get the best of me. But that's an ongoing battle; a struggle I face each and every day. Since my diagnoses I have also been diagnosed with anxiety, stress overload, depression, migraines and some type of mood disorder. It seems every time I go the the doctors they finds something new! I also have gone through too many medications to count! My doctor has said, "We are at the bottom of the list," whatever that means.

I'm trying to take matters into my own hands and use spiritual techniques and diet to manage my TS. After all, I am the one who has to live with this for rest of my life! And that's the hard part to accept. That this is it, for the rest of my being. It's tough to grasp. But my faith and religion help me a lot. I say that this is my test from God. He knows my strength better than I and believes I can do this. So when I feel like I can't go on, which can be everyday, I think of my faith.

I just have to say that if you have TS or any other neurological disease, just keep faith, you gotta have hope through the chaos. And maybe one day these disorders will be a little less misunderstood and our journeys through this life will become a little easier.



**Jessica** (14 years old)  
Needham, Massachusetts

My name is Jess and I have Tourette Syndrome and OCD. TS has impacted my life in a positive way by making me more understanding of peoples' differences. I would like a friend with Tourette's. I have a really supportive bother and I love him a lot. I write a lot of poems to help me express myself and here is a special one I wrote.

When you have Tourette's you never feel comfortable,  
at ease  
Having a tic  
Is like an urge to sneeze  
Tourette's might not be fun  
But I know I was the chosen one  
I represent Tourette's wherever I go  
But I have to let my sad feelings now show  
Please don't stare as if I'm not aware  
I want to stop but I have no choice  
It's not like my body gives me a voice

## 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, 2008.

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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**Awareness Month!**

**Help Spread the Word!**