

REPORT CARDS on TOURETTE SYNDROME and EDUCATION

It's time to go back to school again and take a serious look at the way students with Tourette Syndrome are treated. School is, in many ways, the perfect opportunity to gauge how things have changed—or haven't—in the lives of people with TS. By comparing the "bad old days" when TS was a complete mystery and teachers routinely punished students for uncontrollable behaviors to today, when most people have heard of TS, we can note how far we've come and determine how far we still have to go.

1 Report Card 1: The Bad Old Days — "F"

When TS was often misunderstood or undiagnosed, teachers simply treated TS-related symptoms as purposeful misbehavior. Drumming fingers were taped to desktops, verbal outbursts were met with trips to the principal's office and the minor tics and twitches that an informed person can easily ignore were often viewed as disruptive acting out. It isn't surprising that some students did poorly or dropped out entirely. However, there are many people in the TSA family who survived, and even excelled, under difficult circumstances.

Surviving and Sometimes Thriving Under Tough Conditions

Peter Hollenbeck, Ph.D., Professor and Associate Head of Biological Sciences at Purdue University and the new co-chair of the TSA Scientific Advisory Board, is one such individual. He was not diagnosed until he was an adult. His look back is enlightening:

"My experience was both better and worse than most mild-to-moderate kids with TS now. I learned to navigate the system successfully with only a tiny bit of knowledge among my teachers about why I was twitching. Some teachers were helpful, most were neutral, a few were a bit mean

or unfair. I learned not to take things personally. I learned that if you are small and skinny, with a huge scar on your neck and have tics, you have to be kind, dependable and charming in order to get anywhere. This was no small lesson."

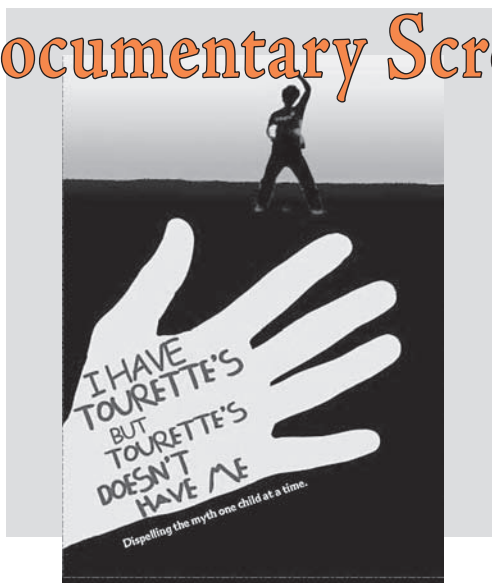
Professor Hollenbeck had a supportive family and was academically gifted. Other adults who attended school in the 40s, 50s, 60s and 70s—during the eras before general awareness and legally mandated accommodations—found refuge in sports or the arts. They learned, as Professor Hollenbeck did, to make the best of a bad situation and focused on their abilities and achievements.

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ONE SPECIAL NIGHT 1,000+ TS Documentary Screening Parties

On November 12th, HBO will premiere *I Have Tourette's but Tourette's Doesn't Have Me*. TSA has been intimately involved in every aspect of the production of this very important documentary and we hope that you'll help us share it with as many people as possible.

The film dispels many of the common myths about TS by letting children tell their own stories. It is moving, informative and insightful. It's also an excellent starting point for candid discussions with friends, family, neighbors and everyone who can have an impact on the lives of children



with TS. Our goal is to have at least 1,000 screening parties the night of the premiere. We hope that you'll host one of them.

Who should you invite? Your child's classmates and teachers; scout troop members and leaders; the soccer team and coaches; the karate class; the PTA; the neighbors; or your extended family—watching this movie as a group is a wonderful opportunity to answer questions that your friends may have been afraid to ask and will expand the circle of people who understand TS.

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