

# TSA Youth Ambassadors On the Move



*Chris Maus hugging his cousin after accepting his "Yes I Can Award"*

**Chris Maus** won a national 'Yes I Can! Award' for self-advocacy from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Chris was one of 26 extraordinary children and teens to receive 'Yes I Can! Awards' at a ceremony in National Harbor, Maryland in April. His application for the award included letters of recommendation from his former principal, the band director from his school and U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu. Chris met the Louisiana senator when he visited Washington D.C. during his TSA YA training. The senator was very impressed by Chris' eloquence.

"As a Youth Ambassador for TSA, Chris spoke with perseverance and courage that is rare at such a young age. When I visited with Chris, it was clear that he had overcome the adversity that stood in his way in order to put his passion for this cause first," Senator Landrieu said.

The "Yes I Can! Awards" are given every year to young people who have demonstrated with outstanding accomplishments that they are not held back by disabilities.

**Emily Fleischman** of New Jersey was very busy in November. She manned the NJCTS booth at the MetroWest ABLE Fair and made a presentation at the Oradell Public School before 26 6th grade students. Emily fielded many questions about TS and her anti-bullying message. She also took charge of preventing other students from bullying an autistic student. After a successful TSA YA presentation, the principal of Temple Avodat Shalom asked Emily

Fleischman to 'shadow' an autistic student during a two-day YJCC program and make sure that she was not bullied for being different.

**Tanner Hutchison** of Ohio was nominated for the WCPO Channel 9 Student of the Week award. This honor is given to students who contribute to both their school and community. Tanner was nominated by teachers who were impressed by the courage he demonstrates during his TSA YA presentations. He was featured on the local news broadcast on February 7. Tanner spoke before 100 6th grade students and six teachers at Twenhofel Middle School in Independence, Kentucky. Tanner also addressed three psychology classes at Milford High School in Milford, Ohio. Tanner impressed these sophomores, juniors and seniors, who sent him 100 thank you letters, encouraging him to continue to speak out about TS.

**Jordan Bernstein** of Florida visited the 1st grade class of Kaleb Schimming at Discovery Key Elementary School in Lake Worth, Florida. Jordan helped Kaleb's classmates understand TS and inspired the first grader to read his own story from "That Darn Tic" out loud to the class. The 20 students and two teachers participated. Jordan also joined forces with Nathaniel Ray for as co-presenters during the TSA Florida Family Weekend. They talked about the TSA YA program and shared memories of the training.

**Nathaniel Ray** made a presentation to his 9th grade Learning Strategy Class at Timer Creek High School in Orlando, Florida. He had decided it was time to educate his peers and put an end to the teasing. He also spoke to a class of 3rd graders at English Estates Elementary School in Casselberry, Florida. He helped Justin, a member of the local support group, explain his TS and to answer his classmates' questions.

**Peter Sarac** of Delaware discussed participating in a TSA Trip to the Hill before an audience of 45 kids and parents in Elkton, Maryland. ■