

# New TSA Youth Ambassador Graduate Program to Launch in 2012



*Ethan Kempner*

The TSA Youth Ambassador Program has been very successful. Teens, most with Tourette Syndrome, have made presentations before community groups, promoted awareness in local news outlets and developed unique approaches to creating environments that are more tolerant and understanding of people with TS. The program has been especially successful in elementary schools, where the Youth Ambassadors are seen as role models.

Ethan Kempner, trained in 2010 as a Youth Ambassador, is now developing a program that will address changing the attitudes toward TS in the most challenging environment — middle schools.

“The Youth Ambassador program has achieved remarkable success through its use of peer-to-peer advocacy. But the current presentation is catered towards a younger, elementary school audience. To an older audience, the themes and messages of the current presentation appear childish in their delivery. I think that a young adult is unlikely to take away the intended effect of the presentation, which is not only to inform about the details of Tourette Syndrome, but also to promote tolerance and facilitate a safer educational and social environment for kids with the condition,” Ethan said.

The new presentation would be tightly scripted, multi-media, illustrated with graphics that appeal to a more sophisticated audience and focus on themes of critical importance in the middle school years — including bullying and the positive and negative roles the media plays in shaping the image of TS.

“The social environment of middle school is notoriously difficult to navigate for children with TS or other neurological conditions, who often find themselves bullied and isolated by their insensitive peers. The presentation will inform audiences about TS, raise awareness for several co-morbid conditions, and inspire audiences to take steps towards overall bullying prevention,” Ethan explained.

The program is still in development, but Ethan is certain that it will emphasize training in public speaking and how to discuss TS in age-appropriate language. Candidates for this additional training will be drawn from the formally trained YA participants who are already adept at the original presentation.

“In middle school the stakes are high as the social environment becomes harsher. We need a carefully designed presentation that can appeal to the senses of a middle school-er and spread the message that we need to spread. This new presentation will not only inform about TS, but it will encourage kids to take active roles at the forefront of a crusade against bullying, thereby appealing to their young adult craving for maturity and leadership.” Ethan added.

The new program will kick-off sometime in 2012. □

## TSA Youth Ambassadors on the Move

**Justin Bachman** of TSA Northeast Ohio was very busy before and after his trip to Norway (see story on page 6). Justin made a presentation at the SAY Leadership Camp in Euclid, Ohio to 30 kids who are leaders in high schools in Northeast, Ohio. He spoke at St. Francis of Assisi School in Gates Mills, Ohio before 160 students in third through eighth grades and made a second presentation to 40 teachers at the school. At the St. Mary’s School in Chardon, Ohio, Justin made his presentation to 85 students and 30 members of the faculty.

**Evan Shapiro** of TSA Eastern Pennsylvania made his YA debut presentation at the September meeting of the Chapter and is now scheduling events at schools and community groups.

**Sidney Andrews** of TSA New Mexico made a presentation to 25 fifth graders at the Armijo Elementary School.

**Jordan Bernstein** of TSA Florida spoke at the annual professional development training for Head Start of West Palm Beach.

**Nathaniel Ray** of TSA Florida, addressed his new teachers at the Timber Creek High School in Orlando. His mini-presentation covered how TS affects him in the classroom and the ‘pledge’ activity.

**Gabrielle Laughlin** of TSA Northern California/Hawaii spoke to four middle school aged students with TS at the Chapter’s Annual Meeting in May, hoping to be asked to give presentations at their schools during the school year. In September, she made a presentation before a 4th Grade class at Farallone School in Montara. The audience included Danillo, a boy with TS, his mother, the teacher, two teacher’s aides and the boy’s classmates. □

## GOLFING FOR TSA



*Ray Quartararo and Dennis Squilla at the annual TSA New York Golf Classic sponsored by Jones Lang LaSalle at the Westchester Country Club on September 26.*

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