



Become a TSA Youth Ambassador in 2012!

Tourette Syndrome Youth Ambassador Program

Leadership Training Conference Information

April 17-19, 2012

Thank you for your interest in becoming a part of the Tourette Syndrome Association's Youth Ambassador Program! We gratefully thank the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc., and The Ballard Family Foundation/Karen, Alan, and Michael Hart, for their generous contributions to this program. The TSA seeks additional financial support so that we can continue to make this important program available.

The Youth Ambassador Leadership Training Program seeks at least one youth/parent (or adult guardian) team from each TSA chapter (or at least one team per state not served by a TSA chapter) for this program. The two-day Conference for teens and their parent/adult guardian will take place April 17-19, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City Hotel in Arlington, VA. All applications must be submitted no later than **Friday, December 30, 2011**. Those teams selected to represent their area as Conference delegates will be notified by **Friday, January 20, 2012**. Unless otherwise instructed, your completed application should be submitted to your local Chapter. If you do not have a chapter or have other questions please contact the TSA Field Services office at (718) 224-2999 ext. 251 or email Sandra.holland@tsa-usa.org.

What is the Youth Ambassador Program?

From its beginnings in 2005, the TSA Youth Ambassadors Program is an ever-expanding group of teens with TS (and their siblings, friends and classmates) who speak about Tourette syndrome to their peers at school, sports leagues, scout troops, camps and after school programs. The purpose of the program is to spread tolerance of and understanding about TS. The teen and their adult parent or guardian comprise a YA Team – with the teen giving presentations and the adult helping with scheduling and other arrangements. The Youth Ambassador Program trains teens to advocate for themselves and for others and to provide their peers and younger children with accurate information by going into classrooms, schools and clubs to teach understanding, sensitivity and tolerance of TS and its symptoms while displacing the myths and stereotypes that are often attributed to and associated with this misunderstood and misdiagnosed disorder.

- Youth Ambassadors meet with politicians, appear in the media and assist with fundraising and awareness raising campaigns.
- Youth Ambassadors will find there are many personal benefits as well, such as learning to work as team members and developing increased confidence in public speaking.
- Youth Ambassadors learn skills that they will use for the rest of their lives and at the same time are helping to enlighten new generation about Tourette syndrome.

Youth Ambassador Requirements

- The Youth Ambassador must be between 13 and 17 years old
- The Youth Ambassador may or may not have a diagnosis of TS
- The Youth Ambassador must be paired with an adult who will take on the responsibility of helping with the program, schedule and outreach. These are typically teen/parent teams, however the adult does not need to be a YA's parent (could be another family member, neighbor, teacher, etc).

- Youth Ambassadors must have a clear understanding of Tourette syndrome. *You will be trained*, however you must accept responsibility to become proficient in and comfortable with speaking about Tourette syndrome
- Facility with public speaking and good written skills are required
- Good interpersonal skills and patience dealing with others is a must
- Must be a member of TSA! If you are not a member, it is very easy to become one. Please visit: <http://www.tsa-usa.org/give/give2.html#membership>

Major Responsibilities

As a Youth Ambassador Team playing a key role in increasing awareness and understanding of Tourette syndrome in your community, you should be prepared to present in various settings (for example, schools, after-school clubs, scout meetings, athletic team meetings) as needed. In addition, you may be asked to:

- Prepare short statements (written and spoken) to explain Tourette syndrome and its impact on your (or a diagnosed individual's) life
- Be interviewed by your local media
- Attend functions such as corporate breakfasts to present short speeches and chat with executives
- Write to local politicians, and possibly go to Washington DC to speak with members of Congress and their staffs.

The role varies throughout the year, and is often linked directly to major annual events. For example, a group of children and families might work with local media during Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month, May 15-June 15 of each year.

- If you are selected to come to Washington DC to be trained as your Chapter representative, you will have the additional responsibilities of:
 - *Training other YA's in your Chapter's (or Affiliated Support Group's) service area*
 - *Serving as a liaison to the National TSA*
 - *Coordinating presentation schedules (that's what we use the adult for!)*

Timing

Estimated time commitment required from each Youth Ambassador and Adult Team:

- This is flexible and highly negotiable, however YA teams are asked at minimum to commit to scheduling one full school year's worth of presentations to peers.
- We do ask that you and your family consider your availability carefully – the demand for presentations can become substantial.
- **Please note:** It is not unusual for Youth Ambassadors asked to present during school hours, as a large portion of a Youth Ambassador's role is to educate in schools during the school year.

What is the TSA Youth Ambassador Leadership Training Conference?

The TSA Youth Ambassador Leadership Training Conference is a two-day comprehensive program aimed at training exceptional teen leaders and their accompanying parent/adult guardian to become a TSA Youth Ambassador Team. The program provides support on public speaking and guidance on how to give a concise presentation on TS, plus presentation logistics, participation in TSA's annual *Trip to the Hill* (including the annual Congressional Briefing) and ice-breakers and other fun activities for participating teams.

Who should apply to attend the Leadership Training Conference?

Teens 13 – 17 years of age with or without TS may apply, so long as they are committed to the goals of the program and to helping promote better understanding of the disorder. The partnering adult does not need to be the teen's parent – they can be another responsible adult who has the consent of the parent. Participation in the Youth Ambassador Program requires a strong commitment from both the teen and the parent/adult guardian to take the time to be trained and follow through on the program's responsibilities. Youth Ambassador team members must be members of the TSA (see *Youth Ambassador Requirements* above for how to become a member).

What happens if I am approved to attend the Leadership Training Conference?

Youth Ambassador Teams selected for attending the Leadership Training Conference as delegates from their TSA Chapter (or state), will be designated as either a Funded Team or as an Additional Team.

What are the April 2012 Leadership Training Conference details?

Dates: April 17-19, 2012

Location: Hyatt Regency Crystal City Hotel, Arlington, VA

What costs are covered by TSA for Funded Teams:

- Hotel accommodations for nights of Tuesday, April 17 and Wednesday, April 18 for the YA team (additional nights at team's personal expense)
- Coach airfare for teen
- Conference-sponsored meals for YA team
- Training program materials
- Ground transportation to Capitol Hill for *Trip to the Hill*

Items that are at attendee's own expense include:

- Non-Conference-sponsored meals and/or incidental expenses
- Airfare for parent/adult guardian
- Hotel charges for any nights which are part of an extended stay

What are the costs for Additional Teams?

Additional teams which are deemed as qualified by the chapter or national TSA to serve as delegates may also attend the Conference. Costs which must be covered by the Chapter and/or the team members themselves include:

- Hotel - \$199 per night plus tax & city charges
- Leadership Training Conference Fee of \$325 per person (covers conference food and beverages, conference materials, & Trip to the Hill transportation)
- Airfare and any additional expenses for non-conference related meals and activities.

Questions? Please contact the Field Services office of TSA at (718) 224-2999 or visit www.tsa-usa.org