

TSA-NYHV YOUTH AMBASSADORS: PEER EDUCATORS

Youth Ambassadors (YAs) are young people trained to speak to their peers about Tourette Syndrome (TS) at schools, sports leagues, scout troops, after-school programs, camps and a host of other venues.

YAs are teens with TS and their siblings, friends, and classmates (ages 13 through 17), who are committed to promoting awareness of TS. They are formally trained in public speaking and in conducting peer-to-peer presentations. YAs are paired with an adult (generally a parent or guardian) who assists with programming, scheduling and other arrangements for this community outreach effort.

YAs foster understanding, sensitivity and tolerance of TS and its symptoms. They dispel the myths and stereotypes that are frequently associated with this often misunderstood and misdiagnosed neurological disorder. By educating kids their own age and younger, YAs ensure that their generation will grow up with a better understanding of TS — hopefully making biases and bullying a thing of the past.

TSA-NYHV Youth Ambassadors are available to make presentations during school hours. Our YAs have presented to peers in numerous elementary, middle and high schools in Westchester, Putnam, Orange and Rockland Counties, including among others:

- Academy of Holy Angels
- Bedford Village Elementary School
- Brewster School District
- Clarkstown School District
- Edgemont Middle School
- Greenwood Lake Elementary School
- Lakeland Copper Beech Middle School
- Mahopac Fulmer Road Elementary School
- White Plains Elementary School Health Fair

“Bravo! The presentation was head on! All students must see and hear the powerful messages that these young people present! They brought me to tears! They are an inspiration!”

– Tracy Mecca, Assistant Principal, Lakeland Copper Beech Middle School, Yorktown Heights, NY



**HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUTH AMBASSADORS
CREATE A WORLD BUILT ON UNDERSTANDING
AND ACCEPTANCE OF DIFFERENCES?**

**Schedule a free 30-40 minute presentation given
by a Youth Ambassador by contacting TSA-NYHV.**

Email: info@tsa-nyhv.org or Call: 914-378-5025

TSA-NYHV YOUTH AMBASSADORS: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Youth Ambassadors also meet with politicians, appear in the media, and assist with fundraising and awareness-raising campaigns. Many of our YAs also participate in the TSA-NYHV **“Buddy Program”** – pairing tweens and teens who have TS (ages 12-18) with younger children who have TS (ages 5-11) to provide support and friendship.



HISTORY OF THE YOUTH AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The TSA Youth Ambassador Program was founded in 2005 by a child with TS and her family. Listening to her mom giving a presentation about TS to teachers, Jennifer Zwilling realized that kids needed to learn about the disorder too and that kids with TS could be empowered to be effective peer educators. Over 150 teens from across the nation have attended Youth Ambassador training sessions in Washington, D.C. More have been trained by YAs in the field. This ever-expanding group of trained teens is committed to spreading public awareness about TS.

WHAT IS TOURETTE SYNDROME?

Tourette Syndrome (TS) is an inherited life-long neurological disorder that affects children in all racial and ethnic groups. The symptoms are rapid, repeated, and involuntary movements and vocalizations referred to as tics. The current estimate is that 3 to 6 children out of 1000 are likely to be affected by TS. Children and adults with TS are just as smart as other people, yet they often endure stigma and isolation as a result of this frequently misunderstood and misdiagnosed disorder.

TS is no one's fault. Kids should not be punished for tics that they cannot control. TS is often, but not always, associated with other disorders that can impact on kids' lives both in and out of school. Kids who have tics should be seen by a medical professional familiar with TS and other movement disorders. Although there are medical treatments that can help alleviate some TS symptoms, so far there is no cure.

One of the most important things we can do for children with Tourette Syndrome is to educate the people they encounter each day to promote greater awareness, sensitivity and understanding.

For more information on TS:
Tourette Syndrome Association, Inc.

www.tsa-usa.org



Tourette Syndrome Association NY Hudson Valley Chapter

Mission Statement:

- To provide service, information and support to people with TS and their families.
- To educate medical and educational professionals in order to increase their understanding of TS.
- To promote a greater understanding of TS in the community at large.

www.tsa-nyhv.org

Youth Ambassadors

*Teens Providing
Education and
Spreading Awareness
About Tourette
Syndrome*



Tourette Syndrome Association New York Hudson Valley Chapter

Serving Westchester, Putnam,
Orange, and Rockland Counties

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