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Libraries receive books, DVDs about Tourette's

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SOMERVILLE -- As part of its ongoing efforts to broaden awareness about Tourette Syndrome across the state, the Tourette Syndrome Association of New Jersey recently gifted books and an HBO documentary DVD to 30 public libraries.

The Mercer County Library received a gift of 11 titles to choose from and one DVD, titled "I Have Tourette's But Tourette's Doesn't Have Me," by HBO Family. The books, all of which discuss the challenges of dealing with Tourette Syndrome, vary from informational formats for parents and children, inspirational true stories of overcoming the challenges of Tourette's, to fictional accounts of characters facing hardships due, at least in-part, to living with Tourette's.

"This is all part of our overall mission to create awareness, educate the public and provide support to those dealing with Tourette Syndrome," said Faith Rice, executive director of TSANJ Inc. "We represent the estimated one in 200 New Jersey residents, mostly schoolchildren, who show signs of Tourette Syndrome. That adds up to around 28,000 individuals. The fact is, Tourette's is much more widespread than people realize and recent studies have shown the incidence of the disorder is on the rise."

Tourette Syndrome (TS) is an inherited, neurological disorder characterized by repeated involuntary movements and uncontrollable vocal (phonic) sounds called tics.

"The hope is that through these books, parents and children affected by TS can learn more about the disorder, feel comfort in knowing that there are others who share the same burden and have come up with interesting ways to move on with life," Rice said.

Library systems in Mercer, Burlington, Hunterdon, Monmouth and Somerset counties were among those that received the gift packages.

In addition, TSANJ's library outreach program has distributed TS awareness posters and bookmarks to libraries throughout the state. TSANJ's overall awareness program also includes an advertising segment which will reach out to all New Jerseyans through radio, bus cards, and billboards. The message, "Maybe it's not just some nervous habit. Maybe it's a neurological disorder, Maybe it's TS" is designed to inform the public that people exhibiting unusual behaviors may have Tourette Syndrome and that there is help available. All promotions prominently feature the TS Helpline phone number.

The program is funded by TSANJ in part through a grant from the state Department of Health and Senior Services.

For more information, call (908) 575-7350 or visit (www.tsanj.org).