

FIXIT

Support for people living with Tourette's

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Tourette Syndrome isn't something most of us know a lot about. Since TS strikes children, an estimated 28,000 children of every race and ethnic group, the Tourette Syndrome Association of New Jersey is trying to increase awareness of this frequently misunderstood, inherited neurological disorder.

Here are some basic facts about TS that you may not know. The behavior that has been sensationalized as a part of TS - cursing and uttering obscenities and ethnic slurs - is a symptom that manifests in fewer than 15 percent of people who suffer from TS. The most common symptoms are motor tics (jerks of the body and head as well as rapid blinking of the eyes) and vocal tics (sniffing, tongue clicking and yelping). The onset of TS is before the age of 18 and begins to show in many children, more in boys than girls, at ages 6 and 7.

Currently, there is no cure for TS, and a majority of people who have it are not so severely affected that they need medication, and even then, there is no specific drug that treats Tourette's specifically, though there are medications that may help control its symptoms. Also, people with TS may have associated conditions such as attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity or obsessive compulsive disorder.

Thanks to the nonprofit TSANJ, in the interest of creating better awareness of TS, the Secaucus Public Library at 1379 Paterson Plank Road is one of 30 libraries in the state to receive informational and inspirational books and a documentary DVD by HBO Family called "I Have Tourette's But Tourette's Doesn't Have Me."

Faith Rice, executive director of TSANJ, has emphasized that Tourette Syndrome is more widespread than people realize, so there is a significant need for education and support.

"This is all part of our overall mission to create awareness, educate the public and provide support to those dealing with Tourette Syndrome," stated Rice. "The hope is that through these books, parents and children affected by TS can learn more about the disorder, and 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."

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

FIXIT is your troubleshooter at The Jersey Journal. Write to FIXIT, c/o The Jersey Journal, 30 Journal Square, Jersey City, NJ 07306, or e-mail journalfixit@yahoo.com.