



# **tourette syndrome association of new jersey, inc.**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **New Jersey Libraries Receive Gift from Tourette Association**

Tourette Group Gifts Books, DVD to 30 Libraries Across State

SOMERVILLE, NJ - As part of its ongoing efforts to broaden awareness about Tourette Syndrome across the state, the Tourette Syndrome Association of New Jersey gifted books and an HBO documentary DVD, to 30 public libraries this July. Each library received a gift of eleven titles to choose from and one DVD, entitled "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 Tourettes, 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," stated Faith Rice, Executive Director of TSANJ, Inc. "We represent the estimated 1 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," added Ms. Rice. 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," remarked Rice.

The libraries which received the gift package are: Bergenfield Public Library, East Rutherford Memorial Library, Johnson Free Public Library, Palisades Park Public Library, Teaneck Public Library, Secaucus Public Library, Cumberland County Library, Morris County Library, Mt. Olive Public Library, Rockaway Borough Public Library, Florham Park Public Library, Wharton Public Library, Middlesex Public Library, MacKay Library Union County, Warren County Library, Atlantic County Library, Burlington county Library, Camden County Library, Cape May County Library,

Gloucester County Library System, Hunterdon County Library, Mercer County Library, Monmouth County Library, Ocean County Library, Paramus Public Library, Bridgewater Library, Somerset County Library, Sussex County Library, Sussex County Library, Salem Free Public Library, and the Lee Memorial Library.

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 promotion prominently feature the TS Helpline phone number. This same advertising program is offered in Spanish to reach the large multilingual segment of NJ's population. Ads are highly concentrated in urban areas, reaching those populations which may, because of language or ethnic barriers, not normally have access to TS information. It is estimated that the outreach campaign will reach 60% of New Jersey's population. The program is funded by TSANJ in part through a grant by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.

The Tourette Syndrome Association of New Jersey and its affiliate, the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome, Inc. (NJCTS), **lead the nation** in providing supportive services and programs for families living with this devastating neurological disorder. The organizations offer family support programs, medical, psychological and advocacy services for individuals with TS; public education, training for medical professionals and New Jersey's educational community; spearhead scientific research projects, such as the NJCTS and Tourette Syndrome DNA cell sharing repository, as well as a stigma and biofeedback program to assist in finding new treatments and, potentially, a cure.

Also offered is a dedicated TS clinic at Rutgers University offering New Jersey families counseling and support groups. A practicum for doctoral students to study TS, the program also develops ways to educate families and professionals on TS and its associated disorders. TSANJ completely funds this clinic, which is **the only university-based clinic of its kind in the country.**

## **BACKGROUND**

Tourette Syndrome (TS) is an inherited neurological disorder that is manifested in involuntary physical and vocal tics. Symptoms generally appear in children at ages 6-7 years, but can manifest anytime before an individual is 18 years old. TS affects people of all ethnic groups with males affected 3 to 4 times more frequently than females. It is estimated that 200,000 Americans have full blown TS and that as many as 1 in 200 show a partial expression of the disorder. Commonly, people with Tourette syndrome also have co-occurring disorders, such as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Depression.

There is no cure for TS.

Tics can range from severe verbal and physical contortions to milder tics that are barely recognizable. Sadly, Tourette's is sometimes represented by Hollywood as sudden outbursts of profanity, but in truth, that characteristic actually afflicts only about 5 percent of those identified as having the disorder. Perhaps because of this, TS sufferers are highly stigmatized, with those afflicted being shunned, misunderstood and left feeling ashamed. A horrible tragedy – since TS typically strikes individuals at the tender age of seven.

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