



*CATCH OF THE DAY – James Thrash, 10, of Clinton Township, shows off his bluegill fish while at YMCA’s Camp Bernie, Lebanon Township, over the weekend. He was there with his family as guests of the Tourette Syndrome Association of NJ.*

## 100 Families at Tourette Weekend

Lebanon Township -- More than 100 families came together recently to enjoy a weekend away from it all at YMCA’s Camp Bernie. The kids canoed, fished, rode horses, hiked, went swimming and wall climbing, enjoyed a campfire and talent show, and sang songs. The parents watched their kids having a ball and joined in most activities and met other parents, sharing stories of their kids, like all parents do.

The only difference between these families and any others is, as guests of the Tourette Syndrome Association of N.J., they all share a common bond -- each family deals with Tourette syndrome. One, two or more children in each family have been diagnosed with this inherited neurological disorder that is characterized by involuntary and uncontrollable movements and vocal sounds called tics.

The weekend was a special time for these families. It was a time to take a break from the strange looks, or rude comments of those people who just don’t understand. It was a time to be with those who "get it."

"Camp Bernie is a wonderful family experience," said Mina Nace, a mom from Flemington, who was there with her family. "It’s a time when children or adults with TS can come, hang out and be themselves. They don’t have to worry about their tics or how they are perceived. They learn that they are not alone and that there are a lot of families just like them."

Faith Rice, TSANJ executive director, added, "The most important thing for these families is to have a little down time with others who share their struggles, understand their daily challenges, and can offer advice and support."

Kimberly Solino, a mom from Bethlehem Township, attended with her family and remarked, "We have found RSANJ to be a "rock" for our family. The organization is quite remarkable. With their help, support and direction, we have been able to understand TS and get services for our child."

TSANJ and its affiliate, the N.J. Center for Tourette Syndrome Inc. support the needs of families affected by Tourette syndrome by offering family support programs, medical, psychological and advocacy services for individuals with TS; public education, training for medical professionals and New Jersey’s educational community; as well as spearheading scientific research projects, to assist in finding new treatments and, potentially, a cure.

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