



New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome  
and Associated Disorders

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **EVERY WEDNESDAY IS "TS DAY" IN PEQUANNOCK TOWNSHIP**

Teen inspires Mayor Jorgensen to declare weekly commemoration in honor of the Tourette Syndrome community

Pequannock Twp, NJ- Drew Friedrich has Tourette Syndrome, and he isn't afraid to talk about it to the right people. The 16-year-old is using his experience to call attention to the thousands of children and families in New Jersey dealing with this misunderstood disorder. He found an ally in Pequannock Township Mayor Joe Jorgensen.

Tourette Syndrome is a neurological disorder characterized by involuntary motor or vocal movements known as tics. It's often accompanied by other conditions like obsessive-compulsive and attention deficit disorders, learning disabilities, anxiety, depression and rage. When properly diagnosed, TS is manageable. However, accurate diagnosis and early intervention are still difficult as many clinicians and educators still don't know the facts about early symptoms and treatment.

"I was nervous at first, but I was glad to be able to share what it's like to have Tourette with the Mayor and Town Council," said Drew, "I was proud that I was helping to raise awareness of a disorder that affects many kids in New Jersey, even some here in my hometown."

Drew is part of the Young Adult Advocate Program through the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome. The Center provides training and resources to clinicians, educators and families of children with TS. The advocacy program trains young adults to bring positive awareness and call attention to the facts about the prevalence and treatment of TS. Workshops on public speaking, self-empowerment and tolerance-building tools will be available to NJCTS members starting July 9th at Rutgers University in Piscataway.

Thanks to Drew's efforts and willingness to reach out to his local government, Mayor Joe Jorgensen issued a proclamation declaring each Wednesday TS in Pequannock Township.

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"We recognize the accomplishments of those who work to increase awareness of Tourette Syndrome and together we can break the stigma [attached to TS]," as outlined in the proclamation signed by Mayor Jorgensen.

When Drew returns to Pequannock High School in September, he can add "advocate" to his list of accomplishments. His courage may lead a child with TS to be diagnosed earlier and find resources through the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome.

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CUTLINE: NJCTS Youth Advocate Drew Friedrich and Pequannock Mayor Joe Jorgensen declare every Wednesday "TS Day" in support of the thousands of New Jersey children and families dealing with Tourette Syndrome.

*NJCTS is a collaboration among the Tourette Syndrome Association of New Jersey, Rutgers University and health professionals throughout the state.*