



# PA-TSA Newsletter

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 1

The PA Tourette Syndrome Alliance is a non-profit organization that promotes awareness and acceptance, provides education, and assists families, schools and communities while advocating for individuals with TS.

## Great Things are Happening!

**13th Annual TS Family Camp**  
(Black Rock Retreat, Quarryville)

**June 7-9, 2019**  
featuring our keynote speaker:  
**Susan Connors**

Private rooms for each family!



**Highmark Walk  
for a Healthy Community**

(Pittsburgh) **May 11**  
(Harrisburg) **May 18**  
(Lehigh Valley) **June 1**

**Register Now!**



**TS Awareness  
at the Capital**

(Harrisburg)

**Wed. May 8th**



To find out more about upcoming events  
make sure you are on our email list  
by registering for free!



PA Tourette Syndrome Alliance, Inc.  
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 or 717-337-1134  
[www.patsainc.org](http://www.patsainc.org)

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## Volunteer Opportunities:

**We need you!** Anyone can join our volunteer programs at any time. Recorded trainings are available for most positions. To start the process, just let us know what program you might be interested in by completing a volunteer application online or requesting one from Sara Woolf at [saraw@patsainc.org](mailto:saraw@patsainc.org).

- **Committee Member** — Volunteer your time to help a committee provide guidance and work to assist PA-TSA. Public Relations, Fundraising, Legislative and Camp & Retreat are all recruiting more members for these conference call meetings.
- **Speaker's Bureau** — trained volunteers who can provide trainings for educators, peers and other community members.
- **Youth Advocate Program** — youth ages 12-25 who have trained and have materials to do an information board, bulletin board and give a basic training on TS.
- **Support Group Leader** — start a local support group in your area.
- **Event Volunteers** —
  - Walk with us in the **Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community** to raise funds and awareness for Tourette Syndrome. Some even join to Walk 4 Camp to raise funds to offset their own registration fees!
  - **Day at the Capital** — Attend with us to talk with Legislators about funding for Tourette Syndrome. Your story helps them understand the struggles and how PA-TSA services help.
  - **TS Family Camp and Retreat** — A variety of volunteer positions are needed at Camp and Retreat, some of which are paid Camp Counselor positions. Help in a large or small way!
  - **Pumpkin Run** — Help by registering, raising funds and/or helping at the event.

### Disclaimer

This newsletter is published two times a year. Opinions expressed in this publication reflect the views of its editor and contributors. They are not necessarily the views of the PA Tourette Syndrome Alliance (PA-TSA).

While we will attempt to respond to all mail, we are not able to answer medical questions.

The PA-TSA, Inc. does not endorse products, services, or manufacturers. Such names appear only as information for our members. PA-TSA assumes no liability whatsoever for information about the use of any product or service mentioned.

Support group leaders and individual volunteers who have agreed to accept telephone calls concerning Tourette Syndrome are knowledgeable about TS. However, their comments reflect their personal background with TS and do not necessarily reflect the views of the PA Tourette Syndrome Alliance.

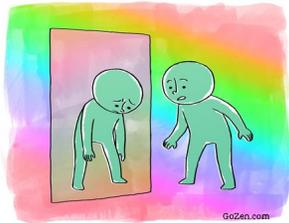
# Forget Positive Thinking! Try this to Curb Anxiety

April 17, 2016 by [Renee Jain](#)

*"I didn't get invited to Julie's party... I'm such a loser."*

*"I missed the bus... nothing ever goes my way."*

*"My science teacher wants to see me... I must be in trouble."*



These are the thoughts of a high school student named James. You wouldn't know it from his thoughts, but

James is actually pretty popular and gets decent grades. Unfortunately, in the face of adversity, James makes a common error; he falls into what I like to call "thought holes." Thought holes, or cognitive distortions, are skewed perceptions of reality. They are negative interpretations of a situation based on poor assumptions. For James, thought holes cause intense emotional distress.

Here's the thing, all kids blow things out of proportion or jump to conclusions at times, but consistently distorting reality is not innocuous. [Studies](#) show self-defeating thoughts (i.e., "I'm a loser") can trigger self-defeating emotions (i.e., pain, anxiety, malaise) that, in turn, cause self-defeating actions (i.e., acting out, skipping school). Left unchecked, this tendency can also lead to more severe conditions, such as depression and anxiety.

Fortunately, in a few steps, we can teach teens how to fill in their thought holes. It's time to ditch the idea of positive thinking and introduce the tool of accurate thinking. The lesson begins with an understanding of what causes inaccurate thinking in the first place.

## We Create Our Own (Often Distorted) Reality

One person walks down a busy street and notices graffiti on the wall, dirt on the pavement and a couple fighting. Another person walks down the same street and notices a refreshing breeze, an ice cream cart and a smile from a stranger. We each absorb select scenes in our environment through which we interpret a situation. In essence, we create our own reality by that to which we give attention.

Why don't we just interpret situations based on all of the information? It's not possible; there are simply too many stimuli to process. In fact, the subconscious mind can absorb 20 million bits of information through the five senses in a mere second. Data is then filtered down so that the conscious mind focuses on only 7 to 40 bits. This is a mental shortcut. Shortcuts keep us sane by preventing sensory overload. Shortcuts help us judge situations quickly. Shortcuts also, however, leave us vulnerable to errors in perception. Because we perceive reality based on a tiny sliver of information, if that information is unbalanced (e.g., ignores the positive and focuses on the negative), we are left with a skewed perception of reality, or a thought hole.

## Eight Common Thought Holes

Not only are we susceptible to errors in thinking, but we also tend to make the same errors over and over again. Seminal work by psychologist Aaron Beck, often referred to as the father of cognitive therapy, and his former student, David Burns, uncovered several common thought holes as seen below.

1. **Jumping to conclusions:** judging a situation based on assumptions as opposed to definitive facts
2. **Mental filtering:** paying attention to the negative details in a situation while ignoring the positive
3. **Magnifying:** magnifying negative aspects in a situation
4. **Minimizing:** minimizing positive aspects in a situation
5. **Personalizing:** assuming the blame for problems even when you are not primarily responsible
6. **Externalizing:** pushing the blame for problems onto others even when you are primarily responsible
7. **Overgeneralizing:** concluding that one bad incident will lead to a repeated pattern of defeat
8. **Emotional reasoning:** assuming your negative emotions translate into reality, or confusing feelings with facts

## Going from Distorted Thinking to Accurate Thinking

Once teens understand why they fall into thought holes and that several common ones

exist, they are ready to start filling them in by trying a method we developed called the 3Cs:

- **Check** for common thought holes
- **Collect** evidence to paint an accurate picture
- **Challenge** the original thoughts

Let's run through the 3Cs using James as an example. James was recently asked by his science teacher to chat after class. He immediately thought, "I must be in trouble," and began to feel distressed. Using the 3Cs, James should first *check* to see if he had fallen into one of the common thought holes. Based on the list above, it seems he jumped to a conclusion.

James's next step is to *collect* as much data or evidence as possible to create a more accurate picture of the situation. His evidence may look something like the following statements:

*"I usually get good grades in science class."*

*"Teachers sometimes ask you to chat after class when something is wrong."*

*"I've never been in trouble before."*

*"The science teacher didn't seem upset when he asked me to chat."*

With all the evidence at hand, James can now *challenge* his original thought. The best (and most entertaining) way to do this is for James to have a debate with himself. On one side is the James who believes he is in big trouble with his science teacher; on the other side is the James who believes that nothing is really wrong. James could use the evidence he collected to duke it out with himself! In the end, this type of self-disputation increases accurate thinking and improves emotional well-being.

Let's teach our teens that thoughts, even distorted ones, affect their emotional well-being. Let's teach them to forget positive thinking and try **accurate thinking** instead. Above all, let's teach our teens that they have the power to choose their thoughts.

As the pioneering psychologist and philosopher, William James, once said, "The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another."

For more unique anxiety relief techniques for tweens and teens, learn about the online program at <https://gozen.com/allprograms/>.

**Q & A with Volunteer:**

# Stephanie Disson

I found PATSA early in 2014 and was so impressed with their mission, the people that work there, and the volunteers, which is why I signed up quickly. I've been an active member since. I started volunteering for the Public Relations and Fundraising committee. I volunteered for different activities at camp and working information booths at functions around Pittsburgh. In 2017, I was elected to the Board of Directors. Eventually, I would like to put more time into volunteering for PATSA. Once my little ones get older I will have more time to help.

I was inspired to volunteer for PATSA for my son. I was diagnosed with Tourette syndrome when I was a child and there was very little information available. At the time, this was just something you didn't speak of. When my son was diagnosed at the age of 8, I became invested in learning everything that I could about TS. When I found PATSA they gave me so much additional information and other families to connect with... and 5 years later I'm still learning. I have met so many families that have had similar stories. It's wonderful to volunteer for an organization that brings so many families together.

My favorite PA-TSA event is retreat, we had activities that we participated in as a family. It was nice to have that time away to work together on activities. We really

enjoy family camp as well. It's great to feel open and honest and not judged. Having time to communicate with other parents and kids that understand completely and are accepting of the different struggles.

I want to encourage others to volunteer for PATSA. A huge part of PATSA is made up of the volunteers. Being a volunteer is incredibly rewarding. I am honored to be part of an organization that is able to touch so many families. It's really a wonderful feeling. The more you learn and are able to teach others the better it is for those that are affected by TS.

PATSA has grown tremendously, and is still growing. I wish I had numbers to give, but I've watched the amount of people that we touch grow. Because of the people that work at PATSA and especially those that volunteer we are able to visit many more schools and different community organizations to educate others about Tourette syndrome than when I joined in 2014.

As part of the fundraising committee, we hope to have one, maybe two, successful fundraising events in Southwestern PA in 2019. Fundraising is a very important part of PATSA, raising money for the organization allows us to be able to educate and advocate for many more families and communities.

## Give Support...Get Support

We have local support groups in several areas of the Commonwealth, along with an online support group on Facebook that is available 24/7! If you are interested in starting a support group or helping with an existing support group please contact our Outreach & Volunteer Administrator Sara Woolf at [saraw@patsainc.org](mailto:saraw@patsainc.org).

# PA-TSA Trainings

The following school districts and communities have received FREE trainings on Tourette Syndrome from PA-TSA July 1 – December 31, 2018!

### **Educator Trainings:**

- Charmichaels Area SD, Greene County
- Summit School of the Poconos, Monroe County
- East Stroudsburg SD (2), Monroe County
- Pleasant Valley SD (2), Monroe County
- Hamilton Elem, County
- Pocono Mountain SD (2), Monroe County
- North Penn SD, Montgomery County
- Wissahickon SD, Montgomery County
- Waynesboro SD, Franklin County
- Springfield SD, Delaware County
- Bristol Township SD, Bucks County

### **Peer Trainings:**

- Summit School of the Poconos (3), Monroe County
- Haverford Township SD, Delaware County
- Hamilton Elem, County
- East Stroudsburg SD, Monroe County
- Pennsbury SD, Bucks County
- Conewago Valley SD, Adams County
- Pleasant Valley SD, Monroe County
- Owen J. Roberts SD (3), Chester County
- West Mifflin SD (2), Allegheny County
- Pocono Mountain SD (4), Monroe County
- Bristol Township SD, Bucks County

### **Medical Related Trainings:**

- York College Student Nurses, York County

**For more information on available trainings refer to [www.patsainc.org](http://www.patsainc.org) or contact us at 1-800-990-3300 for help in scheduling your training!**

## *Donations In Loving Memory:*

### **J. Jason**

By Jerome Lewkowicz

### **Edward Lacy**

By Eileen & Thomas

Concannon

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### **Jay Geyer**

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### **Benjamin Gross**

By Annette Gross

### **Zach Harris**

By Lori Harris

### **Steven Hill**

By Thomas Walter

### **McLoughlin Family**

By Evelyn Ankers

### **Jack Morgan**

By Dennis Morgan

# TS Family Retreat 2018

Retreat moved to the Pittsburgh Area this year at Camp Kon O Kwee Spencer. It was a fun, action packed day for all! Look for information about Retreat 2018 at the same camp, but overnight this time!



# Pumpkin Run 2018

Sunday October 28th

Run for Tourette Syndrome Awareness

T-Shirt

Sponsors:



Alex, Joy, Tristan, Hayden & Jocelyn van Ruler

## Our Fundraising Teams

- \*Game Changers
- \*Team Gavin
- \*Tyson Martin
- \*Team Jack Morgan
- \*The Van Rulers
- \*Chicks with Tics
- \*Team Toots



# Click It!

Brad Cohen accepting Parkway Alumni Association Hall of Fame Award !

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEuzqzeEiXk>



Brad Cohen is a motivational speaker and Educator living with Tourette Syndrome. He grew up enduring the pressures of both children and adults misunderstanding his Tourette's. He had to rise above the bullies, stares, yelling, and mistreatment on his way to becoming the man he is today. He inspires children and adults by the way he teaches and shows that differences are something of which to be proud! He has written a book entitled "Front of the Class" where he shares more of his experiences growing up. This book was also made into a movie with the same title. He gives selflessly with his dedication to the TS community through his foundation (Brad Cohen Tourette Foundation), Camp Twitch & Shout, and through education. Brad Cohen spoke words of inspiration during this video; while accepting the Parkway Alumni Association Hall of Fame Award.

## Sponsor PA-TSA Family Camp!



**Include your name on the back of the event t-shirt for \$100, your logo on the back for \$250 or choose higher levels for more rewards!**

**Send your sponsorship form to**

**PA-TSA at P.O. Box 148, McSherrystown, PA 17344**

**Or sponsor online at:**

**<https://www.trailblz.info/patourettealliance/eventcomplete.aspx?eventid=15>**

All Sponsors receive recognition in program, on website, and in upcoming newsletter that reaches 6,000+ addresses.

**Yes, I would like to sponsor TS Family Camp at the following level:**

**Platinum Keynote Sponsor \$1000**     **Gold Sponsor \$500**     **Silver Sponsor \$250**  
 **Bronze Sponsor \$100**     **In-kind Sponsor for Silent Auction/Snacks/Beverages**

My donation is enclosed    **OR**     Bill my credit card  
 Visa     Master Card     Discover     American Express

Credit card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV#: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Best Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name/Recognition Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

All contributions are tax deductible in accordance with I.R.S Section 501 (c) (3). The official registration and financial information for PA-TSA, Inc. may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll-free within PA 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

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**Acknowledgement of Thanks**

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GRANTS

**Brad Cohen Tourette Foundation**

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**Marc Schmidt—Waffles 4 Tourette**

**Bedford Moose Lodge No. 480**

**Becky Nuttal**

**New Oxford Social & Athletic Club**

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**Laurie & Brian McGarrity**

**Heather Digiacomo (fundraiser from**

**Patty John**

**Derek Sevcik**

**Your generosity is greatly appreciated!**

(If we have missed anyone, please contact PA-TSA and your name will be mentioned in our next newsletter.)