

# Mother thankful for school helping son with Tourette's Classmates, staff educated on disorder as student excels

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justin strawser/Staff Photo Kasey Grohowski, 13, seen here with his mother, Shana Neidig, of East Cameron Township, was diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome last year.

On this Thanksgiving holiday, one local mother is thankful for how her son, who suffers from Tourette syndrome, is treated by the staff at Mount Carmel Area School District.

"They have really gone over and above; they've been so helpful," Shana Neidig said about the treatment of her son, 13-year-old Kasey Grohowski, a distinguished honor roll student and talented athlete.

The school's efforts have included an assembly for seventh- and eighth-grade students on Oct. 31 explaining Tourette's, followed by a two-hour presentation for

faculty, said interim high school principal and curriculum coordinator Lisa Varano. Sherrie Sponseller, administrator/advocate for the Pennsylvania Tourette Association, was the trainer.

Kasey was diagnosed last year with the neurological disorder and exhibits both coprolalia, in which he involuntarily swears or says vulgar words, and echolalia, in which he involuntarily repeats words or sounds of other people.

He exhibited these characteristics when he was younger, but it has worsened for Kasey in the last three years. Neidig, who lives in East Cameron Township, said the onset of puberty can intensify it, but it may lessen with age.

The involuntary motions and words aren't painful, but headaches can be caused by head twitches, Kasey said.

There is no cure, and Neidig and Kasey's father, Kazimir Grohowski, of Mount Carmel, have chosen not to use medication, fearing the resulting sedation.

"I don't want that in any way, shape or form," his mother said.

When he turns 18, Neidig said the decision to take medication is up to Kasey, but he isn't planning on it either right now.

"I don't want to. From what I hear from mom and dad, it might make me slower," he said.

Kasey participates in cross country, basketball, football and, his personal favorite sport, baseball. Over the summer, he played a game for Anthracite Steam Fire Company, where he struck out 13 batters.

"He's awesome, and I'm not saying it because he's my son," Neidig said, her motherly pride apparent.

Because of his condition, the coaches and district athletic director must inform the other team and referees before the games.

"Every time I go there, they've been very helpful and understanding, and do everything they can to help," Neidig said.

Not bullied, but some teasing

Although he hasn't been bullied, Kasey said he has occasionally been teased.

"They make noises to imitate and mock me. I tell them I have Tourette's and sometimes they understand and stop. There are people who say I fake it, and I try to make them understand," he said.

Varano said the junior high students know Kasey and haven't had a need for any one-on-one training.

"Bringing the Tourette alliance in was a way to educate students who weren't aware of the issues. We haven't had a problem," she said. "He feels very comfortable with his classmates."

It's important to educate any and all children about the disorder, Varano added.

"We live in a time and area where we deal on a daily basis with students with different circumstances and backgrounds," she said. "We had to educate ourselves, and we needed to make sure everyone has an understanding of the syndrome."

Earlier this year, Neidig conducted a walk to raise awareness about Tourette Syndrome. Her long-range plans include forming a support group and holding another walk next year with more people.

"If no one else wants to, I'll do it by myself. It brought a lot of awareness," she said.

According to the National Tourette Syndrome Association, the disorder often goes undiagnosed, therefore no exact figure can be given, but authoritative estimates indicate that some 200,000 in the United States are known to have the disorder.

Read more: <http://newsitem.com/news/mother-thankful-for-school-helping-son-with-tourette-s-classmates-staff-educated-on-disorder-as-student-excels-1.1238086#ixzz1fCex6shj>