

Tourette Syndrome Alliance hopes grant gives new start

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BY Jess Haines

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After recent downsizing and the closing of their Gettysburg office, the Pa. Tourette Syndrome Alliance is hoping to "refresh" their organization with an application for a \$10,000 grant.

The Pepsi Refresh Project offers grants to organizations and people who want to "refresh the world" with new ideas and programs. After a successful proposal submission last month, the Tourette Syndrome Alliance is now competing with several hundred other ideas to win the \$10,000.

"We will use the \$10,000 grant to do a 30-minute video on Tourette Syndrome and our organization to help promote understanding and acceptance of those with Tourette Syndrome in our teacher and peer trainings," said Sherrie Sponseller, administrator of the Pa. Tourette Syndrome Alliance. "We will also do several public service announcements that will then be distributed across Pennsylvania."

The McSherrystown-based organization found the Pepsi Refresh Project while voting for a sister organization in 2010.

"We decided to look into the program," said Sponseller. "We tried several times last year to get selected for voting, but it did not happen until this month."

Sponseller explained that grants administered through the Pepsi Refresh Project are dependent on votes, with visitors to the project website allowed to vote once per day for submitted projects.

"We must be in the top 15 in the \$10,000 category to win," continued Sponseller. Voting continues through the end of December.

The Pa. Tourette Syndrome Alliance's project is located at www.refresheverything.com/acceptme. Text message voting is also available, with more information on how to do that available at the project website.

Sponseller encouraged the local community to go online to vote. "Donations are not the only way to help a nonprofit," she pointed out.

However, the Alliance continues to accept monetary donations by mail at P.O. Box 148, McSherrystown, Pa., 17344 or at www.patsainc.org. Sponseller said volunteers are also needed for fundraisers and other duties.

Additionally, after closing their office in 2011, Sponseller said their office space is for rent, and the organization has a vehicle for sale.

The grant, however, will allow the Alliance to continue to raise awareness and acceptance of Tourette's Syndrome.

"We really need people voting to help us get this grant!" Sponseller said.