Breaking the Stigma - Finding Strength
Many young people suffer in shame and silence with BFRBs - but your support intervened and set a new course for one St. Louis teen.
Maddie Lapp
TLC Millenial Task Force Member
St. Louis, MO

Hi! My name is Maddie Lapp. Most of you don’t know me, but I am forever grateful to you.

I am a 16-year-old from St. Louis, Missouri. I have been to one TLC Conference. I am also a part of the TLC Millennial Task Force. My journey with these baffling disorders has made me who I am today. Although every night for the past six years I prayed to God to give me hair and take away my BFRBs, I have become thankful to have these disorders - especially when I think of all of the people that have changed my life along the way.

I have been dealing with trich for six years and derm for nine. Notice I said the words “dealing with” instead of “struggling with.” Because that whole time, I was not struggling. This is my story on how I accepted and am recovering from trich and derm.

I began picking my skin when I was seven. I remember being in class and scratching one spot on my arm that I did not like. From there, it was pretty contained for about five years. It was not until my Bat Mitzvah that it begun to spiral out of control.

My journey with trich started in seventh grade. It was April and my 13th birthday and Bat Mitzvah were approaching. Although the preparations for the event did cause me stress, it was not more than any other anxious child. I have one vague memory of the beginning of my trich. I was in my Pre-Algebra class. I was pulling the hair from the left side below my ear and near my neck. I do not remember much because I did not think anything of it. It was not an issue or something that held me back. I did not even think in my head, "I’m pulling out my hair." That never crossed my mind!

Continued on page 8

5 Things Your Support Made Possible in 2014

1. The Launch of the BFRB Precision Medicine Initiative: Collaborative, large-scale research for the first time. Thanks to you, TLC launched a major research initiative with the goal of achieving a 70% remission rate for BFRB patients within the next 7 years.

2. 116,000 People Educated About Skin Picking Disorder: Our fall outreach campaign targeted for people with skin picking disorder who did not yet know about TLC – reached over 116,000 people. This campaign’s success is ENTIRELY attributable to TLC members – funding the ads, envisioning the goal, and putting it in action.

3. 205 TLC-Trained Clinicians: Your support continues to accelerate the growth of TLC-trained clinicians across the globe! The Professional Training Institute (PTI) Class of 2014 brings the total number of clinicians who have completed the in-person or DVD training course to 205!

4. Doubled PTI Faculty: Thanks to you, the PTI Faculty doubled last year – and as a result TLC will be able to train more therapists in the best treatment practices each year. Plans are already in the works for PTIs in Los Angeles and New Jersey next year – potentially doubling the number of trained providers in the US.

5. 800 people had the opportunity to meet in person, get expert treatment information: Your gifts of time and financial support have created a growing volunteer network across the country that has enabled TLC to coordinate more workshops across the country, maintain high conference attendance, and build stronger support connections.

Changing lives and ending the isolation caused by BFRBs. Generous friends like you underwrite programs like these ----->
Without you, none of these accomplishments would have been possible!
Please give a year-end gift of support and hope today:
Call 831-457-1004 (we’d love to chat with you!) or visit trich.org.
The Trichotillomania Learning Center’s mission is to end the suffering caused by hair pulling disorder, skin picking disorder, and related body-focused repetitive behaviors.

Donations from members and friends are TLC’s largest source of support, and they are the sole reason TLC can provide help and healing to people with compulsive hair pulling and skin picking. It is people like you, giving what they are able, who make our work possible. All donations are tax deductible - please consider making a donation today!

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The information in this newsletter is not intended to provide treatment for Hair Pulling or Skin Picking Disorders. Appropriate treatment and advice should be obtained directly from a qualified and experienced doctor and/or mental health professional. The opinions expressed are those of the individual authors.

New Support Groups

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Calgary BFRB Support Group
A CBSN* Peer Support Group
All are welcome!
Next meeting date: January 9, 2015, 7:00-8:30pm
Parkdale United Church
2919 8th Ave NW
Calgary, AB
Contact Brenda Cameron for more information:
cameronbrenda@shaw.ca

*B for more Canadian support groups, visit www.canadianbfrb.org

Bakersfield- Kern County, CA

H.E.A.R.T.S. Connection*
*Help, Encourage, Advocate, Resources, Training, & Support
Support group for children and teens that pull hair, pick skin, and/or bite nails (and other body-focused repetitive behaviors). Meetings are the 3rd Thursday of every month, 6:00-7:30pm at H.E.A.R.T.S. Connection. Their Family Resource Center library has several DVDs about Trich as well as behavioral and sensory input reading materials that are available for free check-out.

If you have questions, or just want to talk, you are welcome to contact the group leaders:
Leave a message for Suzette: 800-210-7633
or email: withallourheart@yahoo.com

Meeting Location: 3101 N. Sillect Ave., #115, Bakersfield, CA 93308

Seeking Support in Seattle, WA

Mom of Trichster looking to start support group or connect with other parents in Seattle. If interested please contact Kim Haines at Kim.haines@live.com or 425-269-8478.

Online Support Groups

Behavior-specific online support groups are also available for parents, teens, kids, and adults, with trichotillomania, skin picking or nail biting (onychophagia).

To join any of these groups, visit
http://www.trich.org/treatment/resources-online.html

Want to start a support group? Email programs@trich.org for information!
Berkeley One-Day Workshop

December 13, 2014

with Joan Davidson, PhD, Litsa Tanner, MFT, and the Berkeley BFRB Support Group. Find out more at www.berkeleybfrb.eventbrite.com

Upcoming Webinars

Please check www.trich.org for upcoming webinars.

TLC’s Annual Conference

Registration is Open!

April 10-12, 2015 - Arlington, VA

Sign up now and save with Early Bird Registration! Scholarships and payment plans are available. Visit trich.org for details!

Sponsors needed! Help support the ONLY conference in the world specifically focused on hair pulling, skin picking, and related behaviors. Contact leslie@trich.org for information.

TheWigEmporium.com Offers Follea Hair

TLC Member Cheryn Salazar’s website, TheWigEmporium.com is now an official distributor of Follea Hair for Hair Loss - and one of the only providers of European Russian Hair online.

TheWigEmporium.com features Follea’s new F-Monde collection of authentic wavy human hair - a product so unique that you can straighten it at will - and then restore it back to wavy just by adding water. How? Because it is NATURAL!! Never permed or curled. TheWigEmporium.com offers free Follea Service for 1st Year! (visit our website for details). When you make a purchase, mention TLC and we will donate 10% of your order.

TheWigEmporium.com
866-324-0908

Did you know that every purchase you make from Amazon.com can support TLC?

Through the AmazonSmile program, Amazon will donate 0.5 percent of the price of your eligible purchase directly to TLC!

A half a percent isn’t much - but it adds up, costs you nothing, and is a great way to support TLC programs in addition to direct tax-deductible donations!

Clarification

In the last issue of InTouch, TLC incorrectly published credit for the development of the Comprehensive Model of Behavioral treatment of BFRBs in the article, SCAMP to Skin Picking Recovery.

Ruth Golomb, MEd (co-author of The Hair Pulling Habit and You) and Dr. Charles Mansueto developed the ComB approach in the late 1980s; Sherrie Vavrichek, LCSW, became involved a few years later when she joined them at the Behavior Therapy Center in 1990. The article omitted proper credit to Ms. Golomb.

A simple & fun way to express your gratitude!

1. cover your dining table in paper

2. leave fun pens & crayons on the table--yes, even while eating!

3. chat & draw while eating!

We did this project and I was thrilled to see just how many things the kids could think up... from toothbrushes to grateful for the beach. It was a great way to discuss and develop gratefulness as a family.”

365grateful.com
According to Harvard Health Publications, “…gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity and build strong relationships."

Sounds a lot like what you are doing every day through TLC – helping people feel more positive, creating great experiences worth remembering, improving overall health and well-being, and demonstrating to BFRB sufferers how to face adversity and maintain stronger relationships. Pretty impressive, right?

And that’s why TLC’s online community celebrated Gratitude last November. Many community members used TLC’s Facebook page to share their own stories of gratitude – about BFRBs, friends, families, and fellow members of this vibrant community that you have created. We’re so inspired - and grateful - and hope you are too!

**Natalie:** “Having trich and dermatillomania has helped me realize that how I look on the inside is way more important than how I look on the outside.”

**Jessalyn:** "Trich taught me that I’m OK just as I am!! What a blessing to realize that my family loves me no matter what!”

**Molly:** “I am thankful for [my friend] because our struggle brought us together and now I have a best friend for life.”

**Traci:** “I don’t know how I managed my emotions, parenting a daughter pulling and ingesting before becoming part of the online Facebook communities.”

“**I am so grateful for all the friends I’ve made through TLC and for all the opportunities this experience has given me!”** Mackensie - member of TLC’s Millenial Task Force, TLC guest blogger and BFRB activist.

**Nikki:** “Thank you Austin Trich Support Group, for giving me hope again that people are actually talking about the issue out there! After numerous failed attempts to contact other support groups, and learning I was unable to start one at my university health center due to ‘lack of interest,’ the Austin Trich Support Group was the first to reply to my interest in their group, and it makes me feel so good to know that there really is a group out there that cares!”

ROBERT A. EMMONS, PH.D.: STATES IN HIS BOOK "THANKS!" THAT:

."GRATITUDE IS A DEEPER, MORE COMPLEX PHENOMENON THAT PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN HUMAN HAPPINESS. GRATITUDE IS LITERALLY ONE OF THE FEW THINGS THAT CAN MEASURABLY CHANGE PEOPLES’ LIVES."
Dana Marie Flores: “I am super grateful for (TLC member and original Phoenix, AZ, support group leader) Marci Greenberg Cox..... if she decided not to do a local news story about trich.... I never would have known -- I am NOT the only skin picker in the world. Thank you for your bravery, Marci!!”

Meaghan: “I am thankful for the support I receive [for] my trichotillomania. Having this by far has made me a very strong woman.”

Sara: “I am grateful that living with trich has brought me the courage to be myself and also the ability to empathize with others in a deeper and more meaningful way.”

Christina Pearson has been the lady who made all of this possible, of course, and she will always be TLC’s backbone with her wisdom, passion, and insight.

Calla R. is my conference BFF who has always helped me cope with being away from home and is an overall wonderful woman I love seeing each year!

Dana Marie Flores is a remarkable woman who started bringing skin picking to light in the Trich- dominated community a few years ago and I admire her greatly!

Then there’s Sarah Robertson from Canadian BFRB Support Network who allows me in CBSN’s inner workings. I get to work with her and Laura Barton, author of Project Dermatillomania, whom I’ve also developed a friendship with!

Finally, the professionals who have dedicated their careers to the BFRB cause, to make life for us easier now and in the future.

Overall, I appreciate everyone who makes this community what it is. Without this support system, we are left to face the world alone without that connection that we are provided by reaching out to each other for understanding and compassion. THANK YOU!
# TLC Professional Training Institute - Class of 2014

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Keep an eye out for
details on the
2015 Professional Trainings
Coming to
New Jersey and Los Angeles!
“Three months later, I went to my first TLC conference. I still cry to this day when I think about it; because it was hands down the best three days of my entire life.” Maddie and Grace, who had just met that day, share a laugh together.

Fast forward two weeks. I was standing by my closet door. I thought to myself, "Oh, I haven't done it for about a week." It. I still thought pulling out my hair had no importance. I thought my pulling was a thing that I just did for a week or two. Soon after, I stumbled upon the TLC article titled, “50 Ways to Stop Pulling Your Hair.” The one way that I tried was the one where you were supposed sit in front of the mirror and tell yourself, “every hair belongs on my head.” Again, I thought doing that would stop this “habit.”

Fast forward -- 8th grade. I had so little hair on the left side of my head that I had to wear my hair in a ponytail for 9 months. That whole time, I knew what trich was! I had been secretly going on to TLC's website and researching my condition. On an early evening in March 2013, my mother and I were going to the grocery store. As we stepped out of the car and headed for the double doors, I was walking in front and my mother was following closely behind. A few steps in, she stopped me and was shocked to find that I had a bald patch about two inches big. At that exact moment, I broke down. After three years of hiding and constantly feeling ashamed of myself, the dreaded reality of someone noticing struck me harder than I expected.

By the time I was 15 and a sophomore in high school, I was completely bald. Imagine going home for winter break with hair, and coming back with none. Now, that was not the beginning of my being bullied and isolated for trich, but that is certainly when it began to become unbearable. Every day, I would have to take off my wig and put on my swim cap in the locker room -- in front of 30 other girls! I also had to wear a swimsuit that revealed much of my scarred back. If that was not horrifying enough, the comments that came after were. But from that experience, somehow I became stronger!
Maddie’s Story
Continued from page 8

I decided to take the first step and tell someone about my BFRBs. I told my best friend, and she was more than accepting! I was not expecting that reaction at all. After that, I felt even more motivated! But that does not mean the swim team bullying stopped. So I decided to tell my swim coach, and she also was very accepting! From there, anyone who asked me, or that was my close friend, knew what trich and derm were. Then, I also decided to take the tools I had been learning in support group for the past year seriously. That is when everything changed. I began to be proactive during my talk therapy sessions and determined to use and apply new coping skills.

Three months later, I went to my first TLC conference. I still cry when I think about it, because it was hands down the best three days of my entire life. The people I met that weekend truly changed my life! To go to that conference, I received a donor-funded scholarship. I didn’t know that TLC donors like you funded scholarship programs for kids like me! With your help, I attended the TLC conference – which led me to where I am today. Because of your help, I made new friends and gained a better understanding of how trich and picking affect me, and became a member of the TLC Millennial Task Force – where I am involved in planning how TLC can reach more young people like myself, improving the conference, and making lifelong friendships. I could not be more grateful!

After the TLC Conference, I decided I was going to do more than tell people about my BFRBs; I was not going to let their lack of understanding control me! With the help of TLC, Dr. Laura Chackes, Dr. Celeste Herleth, and my AMAZING friends, I did something that I never thought was possible: accept my BFRBs. I wore a different wig to school everyday, and some days, no wig at all! Inspired by the words of Rebecca Brown (or BeckieO as you may know her), “Baldness doesn’t scare me.”

I no longer let these behaviors control me. I am living proof that although it’s trichy, it is possible to accept BFRBs! But I know that by the end of the day, no matter what my hair and skin looks like, I will be okay.

Now, I tell anyone with the ability to give to TLC to please do so. Because, if I had not received that scholarship to attend the TLC conference, I would definitely not be where I am today. I am forever grateful for the difference that you’ve made in life – and I hope I can continue to pay your kindness forward by continuing to advocate for TLC and BFRB Awareness.

Introducing Courage Critters!
A new tool to help kids with BFRBs

Courage Critters are friendly little buddies that are tough enough to stand up to fear bullies. They also have many skills to help kids decrease BFRBs.

The Courage Critters program is a tool that parents, caregivers, teachers, doctors and children can use as a guide to decrease common childhood fears and body-focused behaviors. The Courage Critter will provide the child with comfort while the accompanying website offers a system that provides a fun and interactive program.

Developed by Dr. Renae Reinardy, a long-time professional member of TLC, the Courage Critter concept is based on her work with kids in her office - she often sent her young patients home with a little stuffed animal to help them do their therapy homework. The Courage Critters program is a way for all kids to learn strategies as they go through different life experiences.

As a Clinical Psychologist, Dr. Reinardy has seen hundreds of children struggling with fear-based and body focused conditions. Many children never have the opportunity to work with a therapist. There are many tools that caregivers can put into use that are commonly used by cognitive behavioral therapists to help children feel more comfortable. Examples of these tools are available on their website. Your Courage Critter will arrive with a special password in the back pocket to access all of the helpful pages on this site!

Learn more at www.couragecritters.com
MTV Talks Trich

Or, How TLC Got MTV Talking About Trich

Did you see the awful MTVNews.com article about trichobezoars that was posted online earlier this month? Probably not – it was only up for 24 hours, thanks to TLC and our members.

In the style of tabloid journalism, the article was full of offensive commentary and jokes about trichophagia (eating hair) and the young woman affected by this life-threatening intestinal blockage.

TLC staff saw the article and immediately took our cause to Twitter -- messaging MTV, MTV News, and the author of the offending piece: “@MTV should #Fightstigma not cause it. #trichotillomania.”

Within an hour, MTV removed the offensive piece, and the author contacted TLC with an apology and an offer to write a helpful story on trichotillomania.

Two weeks later, MTV posted the new article – and it is a big improvement!

Read the new article here >>

What’s even more amazing is that the new article features three members of TLC’s millennial task force. We couldn’t be more proud of Katherine, Nicole, and Mackensie, who came forward to share their stories. We are so proud of these young women, along with Rachel, featured in the lead photo (above). It’s so inspiring to see the bravery and pride each of these women exhibits.

And more gratitude goes out to TLC members Dr. Marla Deibler and Dr. Suzanne Mouton-Odum for giving MTV the facts and setting them straight.

While the new article has remnants of the shock-and-awe journalism that MTV is known for, we are pleased with the result and are grateful that MTV immediately corrected the situation. The new story has already reached tens of thousands – and the comments show how many people are still struggling out there - thinking they are the only ones with trichotillomania and other body-focused repetitive behaviors.

Sharing our stories makes a big difference – educating the public and providing support and hope to all of us coping with BFRBs. Please share yours at: http://www.trich.org/involved/together.html. TOGETHER we are strong!
Dear Friends,

I’m writing to you as I fly “home” with my family to Connecticut to celebrate Thanksgiving. At this moment, I’m deeply grateful for the video screens that will keep my kids glued to their seats for the next few hours. And to my husband who took the seat next to them so I could work. On a deeper level, I’m incredibly grateful for the true partnership he brings to our life together. I’m excited to share my girls with their grandparents in Connecticut. And to stand with my sister and watch all the cousins tearing around my father’s normally tranquil house.

I’m grateful every day to be doing work that matters deeply to me. And I’m inexpressibly thankful to you – the two thousand people in this world – who make this work possible. You, TLC’s members and donors, are responsible for all the progress we are able to make each year.

Without you, there wouldn’t be a website. There wouldn’t be workshops, webinars, and conferences. There wouldn’t be a genetics biobank for BFRBs at the National Institute of Mental Health. There wouldn’t be a Scientific Advisory Board ensuring that we publish accurate, trustworthy information.

Without you, no one would be training therapists how to treat BFRB disorders effectively. No one would be helping researchers find patients to participate in their BFRB studies. And certainly no one would be organizing a national research initiative to find us better treatments, faster.

Without you, who would answer the phone call of the teenager feeling hopeless and alone?

“I hope whoever is responsible for placing a star on your chart of good deeds realizes just how valuable your membership with this organization is.”

You are special. You have chosen to be a part of the solution for all of us. Thousands of people contact TLC with questions every year. Hundreds of thousands of people all over the world are visiting trich.org and finding answers and hope... yet most do not take action to support those resources, as you have. I hope whoever is responsible for placing a star on your chart of good deeds realizes just how valuable your membership with this organization is. TLC wouldn’t exist without you.

I am grateful that we are in this together – supporting each other and seeking answers for our own families, and for the children who will experience BFRBs in the future. (Possibly my own.)

So yes, you are among the things I am most thankful for.

Also, the salty bloody mary mix that’s uniquely delicious at 30,000 feet.

Love and THANKS,

Jennifer
Together, we are building the resources our community urgently needs.

Did you know that your donations support a targeted awareness campaign every fall?
This year, one skin picker’s gift of $650.00 enabled us to boost our awareness campaign with Facebook ads – together we reached 150,000 new skin pickers with information about how to find help. **Your gift to TLC has big impact!**

Did you know that more than 90,000 people visited www.trich.org last month?
TLC’s website is the place to share our stories, find a support group or therapist, join an online discussion, find local events – or a friendly hair salon – even ask questions of BFRB experts in monthly webinars. **Your gift of $100 ends isolation.**

Did you know TLC Professional Training Institute graduates report higher abstinence rates for their BFRB patients?
Clinicians also report seeing more BFRB patients and training their colleagues in BFRB treatment. **Your gift of $1,000 educates a treatment provider – bringing the best current treatments close to home.**

Did you know that TLC’s Scientific Advisory Board all stand behind the BFRB Precision Medicine Initiative?
These dedicated doctors have been responsible for the proven treatment advances that help us today – Comprehensive Behavioral Therapy (COMB), HRT, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy, NAC – and they have united to develop the BPM Initiative. **Your gift of $10,000 will help launch BFRB research on an unprecedented scale.**

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**Your Support Makes a Difference**

- **Visionaries Circle**
  - $25,000
  - $10,000
  - $5,000
  - $1,000
  - $500
  - $_____/month

- **I want to learn more about the BPM Initiative - please contact me.**
- **I would like to make a gift of stock to TLC. Please contact me.**
- **I am including TLC in my estate plans.**

My donation is in honor of: ______________________________
My name is: ____________________________________________
My phone number is: ____________________________________

Email: __________________________________________________
Street: ___________________________________________________
City: ____________________________ State: _______ Zip: ________

**Please select a payment method:**

- Check enclosed, made out to TLC (US funds only)
- Charge my credit card. Amount to be charged: __________

Card number: ___________________________ Exp. Date: _______ Security code ________
*(from the back of the card. American Express users, please provide the 4-digit number from the front of the card)*

Cardholder Name: ___________________________ Signature: ___________________________

**Thank you for your support.**

TLC is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and all contributions are tax-deductible. Our TAX ID number is 77-0266587.
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