



**Like mother, like son:** Shari Finsilver and her son, Brett, both have essential tremor, a neurological disorder. Finsilver founded the Michigan Tremor Support Group, which meets in West Bloomfield.

## Tremor support group meets locally

By SUSAN B. TAUBER  
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Lori Booth is a professional in the medical field. She works as a medical assistant.

There was a time when she questioned whether or not she could make it in the field.

Booth, 41, of Farmington Hills, is one of 3-4 million people in the world with a neurological disorder called essential tremor.

It causes one's hands, head, legs and voice to shake when doing something, such as lifting and holding a glass of water, using a spoon for soup, or, in Booth's case, drawing blood.

Booth said she has no trouble drawing blood from patients. But sometimes she has to change the way she holds the equipment, due to shaking hands.

She's experienced the pain that comes from the general public not understanding what causes her involuntary shaking.

"I've been in a lot of embarrassing situations," said Booth, who's had essential tremor since she was a teenager. "I've had people actually ask me if I

have DT's (delirium tremens). Can you imagine that? I've had people think I'm nervous and tell me I shouldn't be when I'm not."

Booth was one of about 40 persons who attended the most recent meeting of the Michigan Tremor Support Group. It meets monthly at 7 p.m. on Thursdays at The Family Life Center room at Temple Israel, 5725 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield.

The new group welcomes anyone interested in learning more about this disorder, which can be hereditary.

### Spreading the word

Each meeting features an informative presentation. The next gathering is Aug. 23. Occupational therapist Joyce Gibbs will talk about items people with ET can use to help them perform daily tasks more easily.

"She will show things like weighted spoons, items that weigh down the wrist to control shaking, plates with rim guards so people who are shaking won't make such a mess, cups with lids and other things we can try out," said Shari Finsilver, founder of the Michigan Tremor Support Group.

Finsilver started the group as a forum for education about tremor. Her dream is for it to reach out not only to those with essential tremor but also to the

public.

"I'd like to see us get into the schools to educate children about essential tremor. I started shaking when I was just 11 years old. I became so good at deceit. I would never eat or drink in public. And as I got older and the disorder became worse, I became more and more reclusive," said the 51-year-old West Bloomfield resident. She's also an active member of the International Tremor Foundation.

She's working on planning the first Michigan Tremor Conference, which she hopes will be in the fall.

Finsilver's son, Brett Finsilver, 28, also has ET.

ET is not the same as Parkinson's disease. According to neurosurgeon Dr. Fred Jann, people with Parkinson's disease shake when they are sitting still. Those with ET shake when they are doing something.

### Therapies

There is medication that can help people with ET control their shaking.

Others, such as Finsilver and Sidney Kort of Farmington Hills, opted to try deep brain stimulation surgery, in which a medical device, the Activa System, is imbedded in the body. The Activa System works by "electrically stimulating the site in the brain, called the thala-

mus, that controls movement and muscle function," Finsilver explained.

"When the thalamus is stimulated with mild electrical signals, tremor is suppressed."

Jann performed Finsilver's and Kort's surgery. He works out of Henry Ford Hospital and William Beaumont Hospital.

Sometimes after surgery, the imbedded neurostimulator has to be adjusted.

That's what registered nurse Joanne Draggoo did for Kort after the July meeting. She brought the equipment, by Medtronic to the meeting to make Kort's adjustments.

Before doing anything, she asked him to touch his nose, then her nose. Arms shaking, he tried repeatedly. Each time he was further off the mark.

But once Draggoo adjusted his Activa System, his shaking stopped.

"It's been an incredible experience," his wife, Maxine, said about the surgery. "Nothing else helped him."

The International Tremor Foundation's phone number is (913) 341-3880. Its web site, [www.essentialtremor.org](http://www.essentialtremor.org), includes information of movement disorder specialists in the area. Shari Finsilver can be reached by calling (248) 683-2456. Her web site, [www.finsilver.com](http://www.finsilver.com), also lists several other sites with information.



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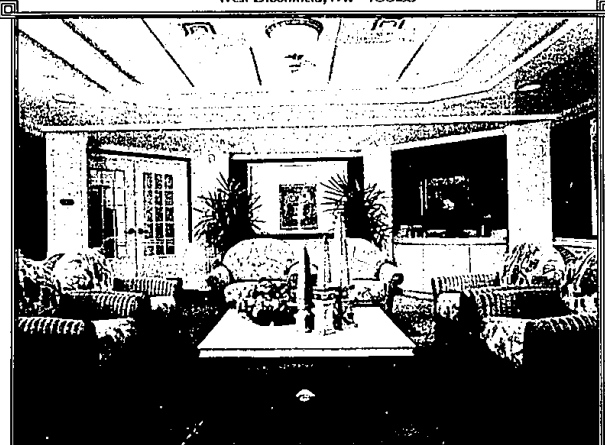


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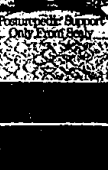
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