



# EPIGRAM



Epilepsy Association of Calgary

July 2006

Volume 11, Issue 2

To support independence, quality of life, and community participation for people with, and affected by, epilepsy.

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## CALLING 1-866-EPILEPSY

If you live outside the Calgary and Red Deer local calling areas, you can reach us at no cost to yourself at our toll free number to ensure that support, information, and answers to your questions are just a telephone call away.

If you live within the Calgary calling area, please call us at **230-2764**.

If you live within the Red Deer calling area, please call us at **358-3358**.

## Back to School

**Carla Archer, R.S.W.**

**Public Education Coordinator**



It's never easy to get our kids prepared for going back to school. Waking up early, hurriedly getting ready and rushing off to make it to school on time is often challenging after a relaxing summer. Harder yet is dealing with the mixed emotions some children feel about starting or going back to school. Among these emotions is the excitement of seeing friends and making new ones, but there is also anxiety about who the teacher will be and will the child be in class with friends. All these feelings are fairly common, but when a condition such as epilepsy is factored in, children and parents dealing with this issue can be even more apprehensive about facing a new school year. Often parents wonder how the teacher and students will react to their child's seizures should he/she have one at school. Will classmates tease, be fearful of or ignore the child with epilepsy?

However, there are ways to prepare the staff and students so they will be ready in case a seizure does occur at school.

Having a plan and guidelines in place is very important to help staff feel more ready to handle a seizure. This plan may include details such as frequency, average length, severity, description of actions and procedures to follow during and after the seizures. This will help teachers to feel more prepared and know what is expected of them. We also recommend that the staff record the seizures, describing what took place before, during and after the seizure (recording forms are available from the Epilepsy Association of Calgary). This is helpful to parents, physicians and the child to be able to pinpoint any triggers or changes in seizure activity. For example, if the child seems to have seizures after hearing about pop quizzes, we might see that stress and anxiety may be a trigger. Noting this as a trigger the parents, student, parent, and teacher can all work together to decide how best to handle the situation. This may include giving advanced notice to the student or implementing relaxation techniques to follow when anxiety starts building.

To further prepare staff or to educate classmates you can have an education session at your child's school which can be arranged by

Continued on page 2...

## Wild Rose Grant Awarded to EAC

We are very pleased to announce that the Epilepsy Association of Calgary is the recipient of a Wild Rose Grant! The grant will be used to expand our volunteer program over the next two years and we couldn't be more delighted! It also means that Melanie Burnell will carry on in the position of Volunteer Coordinator. She has thoroughly enjoyed getting to know our volunteers over the past year and is looking forward to doing more "great things" with our dedicated team in the months ahead.



## Popular Television Soap Character Diagnosed with Epilepsy

The popular daytime soap opera *The Young and the Restless* ran a storyline in July, in which the character, Victor, is diagnosed with epilepsy. Global Television stations from across the country agreed to air the Canadian Epilepsy Alliance public services announcements to help increase awareness for the viewers.

Thank you, Global Television!

Back to School  
Continued from page 1...

calling the Epilepsy Association of Calgary. We offer age appropriate education sessions at no cost. During these sessions the children are taught what epilepsy is, its causes, treatments, seizure recognition, and how to assist someone if they are having a seizure. Learning is facilitated through videos, crafts/games and open discussion. The sessions are often introduced as a health unit and children with epilepsy are not singled out. Education promotes acceptance so that if your child does have a seizure at school there will be an environment of compassion rather than one of fear and misunderstanding.

We also have a kit available for teachers, "The Epilepsy School Kit", which has many helpful guidelines and information for schools and teachers, including a format for properly recording a seizure. You or your child's teachers are welcome to call us to request a copy.

For more information, to request a copy of "The Epilepsy School Kit", or to arrange an education session, please call Carla at 230-2764.

Please note that we are able to provide The Epilepsy School Kit to teachers in Calgary and Central Alberta thanks to the help of the Rotary Club of Calgary Olympic, the Rotary Club of Calgary Centennial, the Rotary Club of Calgary Heritage Park, and Telus (Central Alberta) Employees.

## Volunteer News

### Mac's Convenience Store Fundraising & Awareness Campaign Update

#### Team Work Makes the Dream Work

At the beginning of April, we started placing coin donation cans at over 70 Mac's Convenience Stores in Calgary and Central Alberta. We were given permission to place the cans during the months of April, May and June. We have been assisted by an "army of volunteers" who have been picking up and monitoring the cans. At this writing, the campaign is nearing an end and we look forward to seeing how much money has been raised! We'll keep you posted on the progress. THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HAS HELPED!!!! Applause, Bravo! We could never have done this without you!

"Two Flippers Up" (that's the penguin equivalent of two thumbs up) to:

- Our four new volunteers who recently completed an agency orientation... and endured my bad jokes! Welcome Ken Dowler, Heather Mohn, Bill Melathopolous, and Cory Hyatt.
- George Waite, Lena Allen, Cory Hyatt, Bill Melathopolous, Donna Bernrether, Monique McPherson, Rob Stephenson, Karen Pedersen, Pam Atkinson, and Lyn and Roy Swanberg for all the help they have given with so many activities in the past few months!

#### Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Lyn and Roy Swanberg** for being nominated for Volunteer Calgary's Heart of Calgary Award. Lyn and Roy put their heart AND soul into supporting and participating in the work of the Epilepsy Association of Calgary (EAC) for the last 40 years! They have done WHATEVER IS NEEDED of them to help our agency thrive. There's hardly anything they *haven't* done... except get paid! Lyn and Roy were nominated for all they've done for our community and because they inspire others to do great things... from their hearts!

### The Stars Shine Bright at EAC!



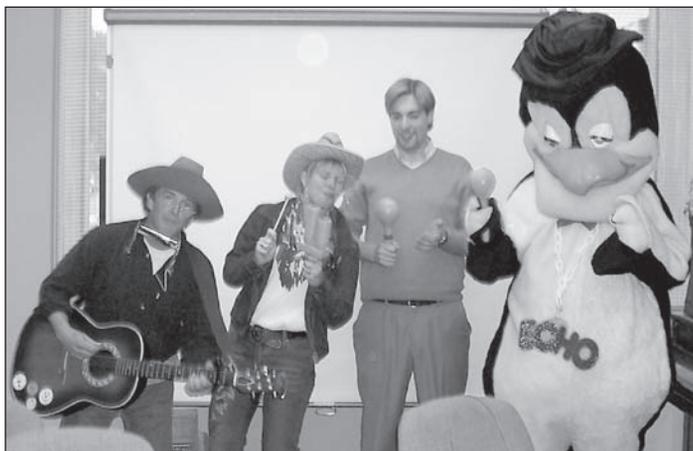
At the AGM on June 13, 2006 – we recognized three of our very own shining stars – volunteers who have really worked to make a difference in the lives of those affected by epilepsy. Thank you all for casting your bright light over our universe – you are all truly extraordinary! A huge thanks to:

**Pam Atkinson**  
**Lena Allen**  
**Bill Melathopolous**

We were also joined by our very own "Barenaked Neurons" (see photos below and across the page) who entertained us with some very humorous songs. Thanks to Monique McPherson, Martin Bell, Rob Stephenson, Donna Bernrether, and Kathy Rao; and to Melanie for helping them out! And if that wasn't entertaining enough, Rich Stephens, the guitar playing, singing cowboy, had everyone singing along! What fun! Thank you Rich!



*The Barenaked Neurons, accompanied by singing cowboy Rich Stephens*



Everyone got in on the act, including our lovable penguin mascot, ECHO and Graham Thomas from our office – giving a whole new meaning to “other job duties”!



The Jazzy Penguin is set to return on **November 28th** of 2006!

Once again the event will feature the Johnny Summers Quintet and promises to be an entertaining evening designed to promote fun and enjoyment, as well as a “FUNd-

raising” in support of EAC. There will be a 50/50 draw, silent auction, food and dancing. Tickets will be available from our offices soon.

We are looking for items for the silent auction and door prizes. Please give Kathy a call (230-2764) if you can help out. We are thrilled to announce that SPARTAN CONTROLS and SMITH BROS. FLOORS have come on as a co-sponsors this year – and wish to share our delight and thanks to them for agreeing to support this event!

## 211 - Your Connection to Community Services

**Do you need help finding local community services?** At 211, trained staff assess your situation and recommend the best community, government or human services to meet your needs.

Dial 2-1-1 for information about:

- parenting and childcare
- support for seniors
- emotional and mental health
- family recreation and social programs
- any other human services in Calgary

211 free, confidential, multilingual (150 languages) and available 24 hours a day. For more information, dial 2-1-1 or visit [www.211calgary.ca](http://www.211calgary.ca).

## Board of Directors 2005 – 2006

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The staff and Board of Directors of the Epilepsy Association of Calgary extend heartfelt thanks to all our donors, members, and volunteers for support of our Calgary and Central Alberta offices.

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# EPILEPSY ASSOCIATION OF CALGARY



## Epilepsy Discussion/Support Group Meetings

**Wednesdays - 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

At the Epilepsy Association of Calgary  
4112 – 4 St NW, Calgary AB

**Sept. 13, 2006 – Oct. 11, 2006 – Nov. 8, 2006**

For more information contact Janice at 230-2764  
or email at [epilepsy.jshaw@telusplanet.net](mailto:epilepsy.jshaw@telusplanet.net)

## Taking Control of Your Wellness Skills Development Program

On-going registration is available for this program based on the work of Joel Reiter, MD., Donna Andrews, and Charlotte Janis, who developed a book and program, "Taking Control of Your Epilepsy". Taking Control of Your Wellness Skills Development is a holistic health approach that considers the entire individual including the physiological, psychological, and interpersonal, dimensions of the person. The program provides a variety of skills and tools that help participants learn to minimize the negative impact of epilepsy their life, while enhancing an overall sense of wellness. The program consists of weekly individual sessions over 12 to 15 weeks. **If 2006 is the year you'd like to make some positive changes in your life, then this could be the program for you!** For more information, contact Janice at 230-2764.

## Upcoming Information Sessions

### Demystifying the Effects of Seizures

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Braxton Suffield**

**Wednesday, September 20, 2006**

Dr. Braxton Suffield is a clinical neuropsychologist. His assessment and rehabilitation practices are focused on helping people with brain injury lead productive and fulfilling lives. He also teaches and does research on this topic. In this session, Dr. Suffield will explore the effects of seizures on the brain – before, during, and after the seizure. He will also provide insight on why many people do not remember their seizures – and some of the things that happen between – the seizure and the stretcher. He will also discuss implications for employment. It promises to be a very interesting session.

### Communication and Conflict Resolution

**Guest Speaker: Hazel Orpen, Housing Advocate, Community Housing Support Program**

**Wednesday, October 18, 2006**

Do you...

- Avoid speaking in difficult situations to avoid conflict?
- Understand communication and conflict styles?
- Want to feel comfortable communicating with others?

At this workshop you will learn how to SAY WHAT YOU NEED and HEAR WHAT OTHERS NEED in order to help build trusting relationships.

**All Sessions will be held at the Epilepsy Association of Calgary, 4112 – 4 Street NW, Calgary, Alberta.**

**Anyone with or concerned with epilepsy (parents, friends, spouses, peers) are welcome to attend these sessions.**

**Check our website for additional sessions and updates ([www.epilepsycalgary.com](http://www.epilepsycalgary.com))**

**For more information contact Janice at 230-2764, 1-866-EPILEPSY, or email at [epilepsy.jshaw@telusplanet.net](mailto:epilepsy.jshaw@telusplanet.net).**

## IN NEED OF MEETING SPACE?

**Location: 4112 – 4th Street NW, Calgary, Alberta**

We can help! We have meeting space available at reasonable rates and flexible access. To view or book meeting facilities, please call Lynda at 230-2764. We can accommodate groups of five to 35. Our meeting space has the following amenities:

- Kitchen facilities (some restrictions apply)
- TV/VCR
- Whiteboard
- Overhead Projector
- On-site parking (evenings and weekends only)
- Street parking nearby (week days)
- Half day or Evening rates - \$50.00
- Full day rate - \$100.00
- Coffee – additional charge
- 25% price reduction on bookings of five to seven consecutive days



## Upcoming Epilepsy Discussion/ Support Groups

Thursdays from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

at the Epilepsy Association of Calgary – CENTRAL ALBERTA OFFICE  
#303, 4822 – 50th Street, Red Deer AB

Sept. 7, 2006 – Oct. 5, 2006 – Nov. 2, 2006

Check our web-site ([www.epilepsycalgary.com](http://www.epilepsycalgary.com) – Central Alberta Link) for updates.

We are currently seeking space in which to hold information sessions and support and information meetings. If you know of something accessible and inexpensive – please contact Krista at 358-3358 or 1-866-EPILEPSY; e-mail: [epilepsy.kanderson@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.kanderson@telus.net).

## Teen Program for Central Alberta Teens Living with Epilepsy

A small group of young people affected by epilepsy began meeting last fall. If you are a young person living with epilepsy, and would like to learn more about the opportunity to meet others who share your concerns – the group would love to meet you. There are no meeting dates scheduled at this time; however, if you are interested, contact us and we will let you know when and where the next gathering will be held. This group is interested not only in meeting and supporting one another, but in looking for ways they can contribute to creating understanding about epilepsy.

For more information contact Krista at 358-3358, 1-866-EPILEPSY, or email: [epilepsy.kanderson@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.kanderson@telus.net).

### Today, choose to...

*love... rather than hate.*

*smile... rather than frown.*

*build... rather than destroy.*

*persevere... rather than quit.*

*praise... rather than gossip.*

*Author unknown*



## WANTED

Donated items for our upcoming activities including our raffles (Calgary & Central Alberta), silent auction, and other special events. If you have access to an item that would make a great prize and help the association raise funds, we want to hear from you!

In Calgary – contact Kathy at 230-2764

In Central Alberta – contact Krista – 358-3358

Or use the toll free number – 1-866 - EPILEPSY

## Laughing Allowed...

Humour sometimes helps us with the everyday stresses of our condition... and so we bring you the following jokes about Epilepsy written by former EAC Humour Class graduates (taken from our September 2001 Epigram):

### Top Five List of Why People With Epilepsy Make the Perfect Corporate Professional:

- #5 They are driven.
- #4 Brainstorming is a big part of their lives.
- #3 Blackouts never bother them.
- #2 They know how to handle drugs well.

And the #1 Reason Why People With Epilepsy Make the Perfect Corporate Professional is... They often "seize" when opportunities knock!

**Challenge:** I know we have some very funny people amongst us... and we'd like to hear your funny jokes and stories.

To submit your jokes or funny stories:

- Email Melanie at [epilepsy.mburnell@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.mburnell@telus.net)
- Mail them to Epilepsy Association of Calgary  
4112 4th Street N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2K 1A2
- Or just call Melanie at 230-2764. She'd love to hear from you!

Joke/stories don't have to be about epilepsy... but it would be great if they are! Just keep it clean, and don't attack or ridicule others.

Keep laughing and smiling!

# CANINE CORNER



## Update on Seizure Dogs

The question of how one can obtain access to information, or access to a trained seizure dog, has not been an easy one to answer. Some organizations have moved or folded faster than you can say "Seizure Dogs"! We'd like to thank Isa Milman of the Victoria Epilepsy Centre who recently updated and shared this information with epilepsy organizations across the country.

**Key Companions** - a non-profit organization in Ontario that trains seizure dogs for people throughout Canada. Key Companions advises those interested to contact them first in order to determine if a seizure dog would be beneficial. If so, a puppy is obtained that will be raised in the person's home or, if needed, by a surrogate family. At age 14-18 months, the dog is delivered to a special trainer for six months of intensive training, after which the trainer and dog return to the family for 10-14 days of training with the recipient. There is always need for follow-up. Once completed, the dog is certified. The entire process, from first phone call to dog placement, is approximately 20-24 months. Total cost is approximately \$12,000-\$14,000. Key Companions urges and assists clients to work with service organizations in order to obtain funding. They have trained over 50 dogs for people with epilepsy and/or other disabilities. They do not have a website, but can be contacted as follows:

190 Martha Crescent  
Bolton, Ontario, L7E 4X1  
Telephone: (905) 857-9547 • Email: fur4all@rogers.com

**Special Skills Dogs of Canada** - CVC (Canine Visions with a Cause) also trains seizure dogs. This is a project of the Lions Foundation in Oakville, Ontario. You must apply and be considered a candidate in great need of a service dog before you will be accepted into the program. Candidates don't pay for the dog, but selection as a candidate may be difficult, and the wait may be long. Contact information for this service is:

P.O. Box 907 Oakville, Ontario, L6J 5E8  
Telephone: (905) 842-2891

**Canines with a Cause** - an Ottawa-based organization. There is a long waiting list for a dog. You can contact them or visit their website for more information:

### Canines with a Cause

Telephone: (613) 721-4145  
Email: cwac2004@hotmail.com  
Website: www.canineswithacause.org

**Pacific Assistive Dogs Society (PADS)** - based in Vancouver, trains vision, hearing and disability dogs. At the moment, the waiting list is too long to consider training seizure service dogs. There is a Calgary

based trainer; however, EAC has not been successful in reaching him – probably due to the limited resources and great demand. PADS is unaware of any other organization in BC or Alberta that is currently training seizure service dogs. We'll keep you posted if things should change with PADS.

**Westcoast A.C.C.E.S.S.** - Powell River, BC. No longer trains seizure service dogs, but has established a means of having a 'self-trained' dog judged by any Canadian Kennel Club judge for level 10 behavior - the highest level of obedience - as well as other special skills that would be required of a service dog. Once tested, the dog is certified by the BC Attorney General's office, allowing the dog to function as a service dog in public. This credential must be renewed annually. If anyone is interested in this opportunity, additional enquiries about Alberta certification would need to be made. Anne Seale of West Coast ACCESS will do telephone consults with the dog trainer. She can be contacted at: (604) 485-6062.

We were also informed by Isa that there is movement to form a Canadian organization of service dog trainers to create a unified voice and clearing house of information. We'll keep you posted if such an organization should come about. To date, information has changed quickly, and is often difficult to access. This would certainly make information access easier. Please be advised, it is subject to change! We'll do our best to keep as much current information as possible.



## Barney the Dog On a "Fur-Raising" Mission for Epilepsy

Yes... this is a "fluff" story... literally!

"Barney", the really cute, fluffy little dog from the Epilepsy Association of Calgary education

month poster, knows first hand about seizures - because he has epilepsy. He's not alone. Epilepsy is found in all breeds and mixed breeds of dogs. The prevalence of epilepsy in the general dog population has been estimated at 0.5 to 5.7%. Approximately 2% of humans have Epilepsy. That's about 20,000 Calgarians... or enough people to fill the Saddledome!

Barney (in consultation with "his human") decided to shave his fur to help raise awareness and funds for epilepsy and the Epilepsy Association of Calgary.

This "fur-raising event" was organized by Associations Plus Inc. (where Barney's human works.) The actual fur-shaving took place on July 4th, 2006 and raised \$675. It also attracted some media attention, resulting in a few awareness-raising articles! Way to go, Barney!



After his 'close shave'...

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all those who have supported our work and who share our commitment towards the promotion of independence and quality of life for those affected by epilepsy. To the many "unsung heroes" who have contributed, but don't wish their names published – our heartfelt thanks to you as well. You know who you are!

### Donor names are only published in the print version of the Epigram

Many thanks to the United Way of Calgary Donors who designated \$3833.11 to EAC since our last Epigram.

**A HUGE THANKS to Comedy Monday Night Comics...** who raised \$1765.00 for the Vilma Moore Dubber Memorial Fund at the Epilepsy Association at the, "So, You Think You're Funny?" event held on May 15, 2006 at Dicken's Pub. In addition to raising funds, comics who performed were taped for a CBC summer radio series. Thanks to all who supported this event!



We recognize our donors in our quarterly newsletter and our members and donors in our Annual Report. These documents are shared with members, funders, program participants, and others in the community who are interested in our work. In accordance with Privacy Legislation: **if you do not wish to have your name published**, please call us at 230-2764 or indicate your wishes in the form below and send it to us by fax or mail to the Epilepsy Association of Calgary, 4112 – 4 Street NW, Calgary AB T2K 1A2.

**I do not wish to have my name published in the Annual Report or Epigram Newsletter.**

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### NEWSLETTER DISCLAIMER

*Material contained in this newsletter concerning epilepsy, research, treatment, and patient experiences is solely for information purposes. Each individual's experiences of epilepsy are different. Please consult your physician for medical advice. Articles published in the Epigram newsletter do not necessarily represent the official policies or endorsements of the Association and its members.*

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Email: [epilepsy.calgary@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.calgary@telus.net)  
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# MEMBER/DONOR FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- Annual Membership.....\$20.00  
(January to December 2006)
- Life Membership..... \$200.00
- Donation amount.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Total.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment method:

- Cheque       Money Order
- Credit card       Visa       MasterCard

Credit card number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

Pre-Authorized Credit Card Payment Program for Donations Only:

- Yes, I prefer to make a monthly donation that will help support the programs and services of the association year-round.
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month, beginning on the 15th day of each month until otherwise notified.

A tax-deductible receipt will be issued for charitable registration number 11890 0778 RR001.

## A WORD ABOUT PRIVACY

The Epilepsy Association of Calgary respects your privacy. As such, we do not share, sell, rent, or trade our membership lists, donor lists, volunteer lists, or participant lists with any outside organizations. Personal information provided in the context of program participation is never shared without your written consent, unless there is a legal or ethical obligation to do so. Information you provide us is used to deliver services, keep you informed about agency activities and opportunities, fund-raising initiatives and events, volunteer opportunities.

**If you no longer wish to receive some or all of the information we provide, you can contact us by telephone, fax, or e-mail, and we will remove your name from any or all of contact lists in accordance with your wishes.**

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4112 - 4 Street NW  
Calgary, Alberta T2K 1A2  
Email: epilepsy.calgary@telus.net



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