



# EPIGRAM



Epilepsy Association of Calgary

October 2009

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

## INSIDE:

Back to School –  
Opening the Doors to  
Understanding

November is Epilepsy  
Month

The Adventures of  
Crashman!

Epilepsy Association  
of Calgary Events

Central Alberta Office  
Events

Volunteer Corner

Donors

## 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 **430-230-2764**.

If you live within the Red Deer calling area, please call us at **430-358-3358**.

## We're Going Topless... Again!



Head Shave – RAZING Awareness for Epilepsy

The Bare Naked Noggins will be “razing” awareness and funds for epilepsy in the main retail atrium at Bankers Hall on **Thursday November 19, noon – 1:00 pm**. Once again, we are lucky to have the good looking and entertaining Matt O’Neill from Jack FM to Emcee. We’re looking for courageous participants to shave their heads at this year’s event, as well as people to pledge them. There will be great prizes for the Bare Naked Noggins, as well as pledge prizes for the top donors. All are welcome to attend on November 19 – we hope you’ll join us at Bankers Hall to cheer on our amazing Noggins!

### QUOTES FROM LAST YEAR:

*“As a lifelong epilepsy patient, my heart swells and my tears well every time I think of Emily and all the brave participants, who bared their noggins for this often forgotten and misunderstood cause. These people are heroes in my eyes.”* Michelle Campbell, mother of Bare Naked Noggin participant, Emily

*“As a past participant, I can say that this is an awesome event for a great cause; and losing your hair is very liberating. (honest!)”* Melanie Goldsworthy, Bare Naked Noggin Participant, 2008

Register, get pledge sheets, and find more information at:  
[www.epilepsycalgary.com/bnn](http://www.epilepsycalgary.com/bnn)

If you’d like to “take it off” for epilepsy, if you’d like to pledge one of our courageous noggins, or if you would like to help, pledge, be a sponsor, know a sponsor... Please contact us!!!

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# Back to School – Opening the Doors to Understanding

*When a child has epilepsy, informed teachers and school personnel are essential to the physical and emotional well-being of that child. Understanding the condition of epilepsy benefits everyone.*



- School personnel will be alerted to the signs of seizure activity that may have gone unnoticed by others
  - Seizure activity will not be mislabeled as a behavioral issue
  - The teacher will be able to respond calmly and effectively to a seizure
  - The occurrence of a seizure will not be disruptive and frightening to the class
  - The teacher will be able to create, by an attitude of calm and acceptance, a favorable social climate for the child that will foster positive self esteem and prevent isolation of that child
  - Awareness of possible educational problems will encourage early intervention strategies to help the child with epilepsy reach his or her academic potential
  - The child who has epilepsy will be encouraged to participate in all school activities, avoiding social exclusion
  - The teacher's observation and reporting of any changes in the child will help parents work more effectively with the child's physician to control seizures
  - Children who have epilepsy will not be underestimated
- dazed behavior
  - unusual sleepiness or irritability upon waking
  - head nodding
  - rapid blinking of eyes or twitching of the face or mouth
  - frequent complaints that things look, sound, taste, smell, or feel "funny"
  - clusters of jackknife movements by babies
  - clusters of grabbing movements with both arms by babies lying on their backs
  - sudden stomach pain followed by confusion or sleepiness
  - repeated movements that look out of place or unnatural
  - frequent stumbling or unusual clumsiness
  - sudden repeated episodes of fear for no apparent reason
  - involuntary jerking of an arm or leg

Recognizing seizure activity in children is very important. Many children have been diagnosed and successfully treated because of an alert teacher. Children whose seizures go unnoticed may face additional problems such as:

- **learning disabilities** - As brief blackouts make it difficult to follow instructions and impede learning at school. Seizures may also affect other skills involved in learning, such as memory.
- **behavior problems** - As the child experiences feelings that are difficult to communicate and may act out.
- **social problems** - Because the child, his family, and others do not understand the cause and nature of the child's unusual actions and behavior.
- **safety risks** - Because a sudden loss of awareness, or muscle tone, in certain situations can lead to serious injury.

Seizure activity in children can mimic normal behavior. The **hidden signs of possible** seizures in children include:

- short attention blackouts or staring spells that look like daydreaming, but during which the child does not respond to direct attempts to gain his attention
- sudden falls for no reason
- lack of response for brief periods

Teachers may be the first to notice possible seizure activity in children. However, observing a single instance of any of these behaviors does not necessarily mean that the child has a seizure disorder. It could be caused by a number of other things. On the other hand, if the teacher sees a pattern of this behavior it should be followed up. Only a doctor can diagnose epilepsy. Therefore, the teacher's role would be to tell the parents what has been observed and suggest that they discuss these episodes with the child's physician. It may be appropriate to explain to the parents that these episodes seem to be interfering with the child's performance at school. A number of children will stop having seizures as they become adults, but their whole life can be disrupted if their school days are disturbed.

The needs of children with epilepsy will vary greatly. Most children with epilepsy can remain in the regular classroom because their range of intelligence, ability, and achievement is the same as that of the general student population. Some children with epilepsy will need special education programs, just as some children without epilepsy need special programs. The attitude of the school staff will set the tone as to how well a child with epilepsy is accepted at school. Staff and teachers who are understanding, calm, and supportive, create an accepting environment in which a child with epilepsy can thrive.

Seizures represent only one aspect of that child's life. However,  
*Continued on page 3...*

# November is Epilepsy Education Month

Summer is winding down as of this writing, and we are turning our attention to Epilepsy Education Month in November. We will be promoting Epilepsy Awareness and Education in Calgary and Central Alberta throughout the month by:

- Distributing posters
- Media announcements
- Mayor's proclamations
- Electronic sign messages
- Public displays and events (including the Bare Naked Noggins Head Shave on November 19, 2009)
- Community education sessions about epilepsy

If you'd like a poster, information, an education session for your classroom, work place, youth group, or any group you are a part of, please contact Jill Smith (Calgary) at (403) 230-2764 or [epilepsy.jsmith@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.jsmith@telus.net) or Krista Way (Central Alberta) (403) 358-3358 or [epilepsy.kway@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.kway@telus.net)

**Three Cheers to:** Charlotte Henderson and Erin Charlton of Fairview Junior High School. In June they raised approximately \$1200 for EAC through a school head shave, which they also spear headed and helped organize. These are two amazing young women and we wish them much success in their academic and community endeavors! THANK YOU!

**Comings and Goings:** This summer we said goodbye to Janice Shaw who has been our Support Coordinator for the past several years. We know she'll be missed and we know you join us in wishing her well in her future endeavors! As of this writing we are searching for her replacement, and we'll let you know as soon as we do, who it will be.



*Continued from page 2...*

there can be a tendency to focus on problems associated with seizures and this can result in losing sight of the whole child; the child then becomes defined by his or her seizures. Sometimes this can be subtle, such as applying the label epileptic instead of the description person with epilepsy. It is important for the child's well-being to be valued as a person, someone who is capable, and someone who, like all children, has strengths as well as challenges.

The Epilepsy Association of Calgary is available to work with parents, teachers, and students to help ensure that epilepsy does not prevent a child with epilepsy of achieving all they're capable of. We can provide in-person education for teaching professionals, students, and others in the school environment, and can provide a copy of *"Opening the Door to Understanding - The Epilepsy School Kit"* to your child's teacher. To request an education session and obtain a copy of this valuable resource please contact:

Calgary – Jill Smith, Public Education Coordinator  
(403) 230-2764 or 1-866-EPILEPSY

Central Alberta – Krista Way, Program Coordinator  
(403) 358-3358 or 1-866-EPILEPSY

\* Cost to mail is \$5.00 per copy



## The Adventures of CRASHMAN!

**EAC's resident Superhero is ready for ACTION.** He wants to share his "edutaining" play with your school to combat misinformation about epilepsy. The play chronicles Bill's real life experiences after being diagnosed with epilepsy as a youngster. Bill became an actor and uses his talents to reach young people living with a seizure disorder. His story inspires kids of all ages to see the lighter side of their struggles and challenges them to **"BE YOUR OWN HERO!"** Bill has been getting rave reviews from everyone who has seen him. Even people who aren't directly affected report a better understanding of epilepsy and how to overcome barriers in life. **Bill knows how to reach audiences and his skills as an actor shine as he re-enacts his experiences...** you'll laugh, you'll cry; but you won't soon forget Crashman!

**The play is suitable for youth aged 12 to 15 years of age – but is available to any organization or group that wants to be amazed by Crashman. For information CONTACT JILL at (403) 230-2764.**

## EPILEPSY ASSOCIATION OF CALGARY



### Epilepsy Discussion/Support Group Meetings

**Wednesdays from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm**

at the Epilepsy Association of Calgary

4112 – 4 Street NW, Calgary AB

**October 14, 2009**

**November 18, 2009**

**December 9, 2009 – Christmas Party at EAC –  
All welcome; details (below)**

Support and discussion groups are a great way to meet others who understand your experiences and enhance coping through sharing and learning from one another. For more information contact Janice at 403-230-2764 or email at [epilepsy.jshaw@telusplanet.net](mailto:epilepsy.jshaw@telusplanet.net).



### **Christmas Cheer Celebration - Calgary**

**Wednesday December 9, 2009 – 6:00 to 9:00 pm**

All Welcome – Plan to join us for some holiday cheer! Fun, food, and refreshments provided by us – the holiday cheer – we leave to you! The party will be held at 4112 – 4th Street NW, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

**PLEASE RSVP TO KRISTY BY DECEMBER 7, 2009** to ensure that we have food and refreshments for all. She can be reached at 403-230-2764 or by e-mail at: [epilepsy.kjohnson@telusplanet.net](mailto:epilepsy.kjohnson@telusplanet.net)

*Your educational moment for today:*

**What is the difference between  
Bird Flu and Swine Flu?**

*For bird flu you need tweetment and for  
swine flu you need oinkment!*

## Upcoming Information Sessions

**Wednesday, October 28, 2009**

**Naturally Good Health Clinic  
Presenter – Rebecca Sagan, BSc ND**

Rebecca will be talking to us about naturopathic medicine, nutrition and diet, and how it can help people cope with their epilepsy. Please plan to join us.

**Wednesday, November 25, 2009**

**Budgeting and Start Smart - Money Management Fundamentals  
Presenter – Rennais Gayle, Momentum**

Learn how to manage and save your money and take control of your finances. This is part one of a workshop series which will be scheduled in the New Year if there is sufficient interest – and it should be informative!

**All sessions (except where noted) 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 403-230-2764,  
1-866-EPILEPSY, or email at [epilepsy.jshaw@telusplanet.net](mailto:epilepsy.jshaw@telusplanet.net).**

## Taking Control of Your Wellness Skills Development Program

Ongoing registration is available for this program based on the work of Joel Reiter, MD., Donna Andrews, and Charlotte Janis, "Taking Control of Your Epilepsy". Taking Control of Your Wellness Skills Development is a holistic health approach that considers the entire 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 you'd like to make some positive changes in your life, this could be the program for you! For more information, contact Janice at 230-2764, or by email at [epilepsy.jshaw@telusplanet.net](mailto:epilepsy.jshaw@telusplanet.net).

## CENTRAL ALBERTA OFFICE



### Upcoming Epilepsy Discussion/ Support Groups

Thursdays from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
at the Epilepsy Association of Calgary  
CENTRAL ALBERTA OFFICE  
#303, 4822 – 50th Street, Red Deer AB

**October 8, 2009**

**November 12, 2009**

**Christmas Party December 1, 2009**  
(see details below)

**PLEASE NOTE: The Parson's Clinic Doors are now locked at 6:00 p.m. Please call ahead to let us know you are coming – and especially let us know if you will be delayed. We don't want you locked out!**

### Upcoming Information Session

**Thursday, October 29, 2009 – 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm**  
**Coping with Anxiety and Epilepsy**  
**Presenter – Sophie Macrodimitris, PhD, RPsych, Calgary**  
**Epilepsy Programme Psychologist**

**Red Deer Public Library – Downtown Branch, Waskasoo Room**

We all have times when we find ourselves in the throws of anxiety. Whether it is triggered by public speaking, having a medical procedure done, or meeting new people, anxiety is a part of all our lives. The focus of the session will be on learning practical skills to make anxiety work FOR you rather than against you. Throughout the session, we will discuss some of the unique issues that contribute to anxiety in people who have seizures. Don't miss this informative session!

Please let Krista know if you're attending (403) 358-3358 or [epilepsy.kway@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.kway@telus.net).

### Christmas Party – Tuesday, December 1, 2009

**6:30 to 8:30 pm at the Bower Kin Community Centre**  
**85 Boyce Street – Red Deer, Alberta**

Bring your skates and/or sleds to enjoy some outdoor fun!  
All are welcome! Food and refreshments provided.

To RSVP or for more information, contact Krista at (403) 358-3358 or 1-866-EPILEPSY; e-mail: [epilepsy.kway@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.kway@telus.net). Please advise her of the number coming **no later than November 26, 2009**.



## AVAILABLE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

**Proceeds help support our work  
in Calgary & Central Alberta!**

### Chocolate Penguins

ECHO the Chocolate Penguin is now available for pre-order. They make GREAT hostess gifts, stocking stuffers, recognition items for staff, and delicious treats for any occasion. These hand made penguins are made especially for the Epilepsy Association by local candy maker, Olivier's. This is the gift that really does give twice! Each penguin costs \$8.00. Available in milk and dark chocolate the LAST DAY TO ORDER IS DECEMBER 4, 2009. You can purchase penguins from our offices while supplies last. We'll be in touch to arrange pick-up of your order at our Calgary or Central Alberta Office.

### Drug Intervention Fact Sheet Update

The Epilepsy Association of Calgary has just updated its Drug Intervention Fact Sheet. A huge thank you to Leeyong Khil, the pharmacist who helped us review it and make sure it was all accurate! Leeyong works at the Shopper's Drug Mart at 5628 – 4 Street NW. It's because of all the help that we get from our community that we can accomplish all we do. Thanks Leeyong and Shopper's Drug Mart!

### United Way – Working Hard to Make Our Communities GREAT

United Way Campaigns are up and running this year in Calgary and Central Alberta. These organizations have a big job ahead of them, raising much needed funds to support the community at a time when many have felt the economic crunch of the past year. Thanks to the amazing spirit of the dedicated volunteers and staff in Calgary and Central Alberta – we're sure they'll meet with great success. To reach their campaign goals however they need "U" more than ever! Programs in Calgary and Central Alberta benefit from the efforts of these amazing organizations. Let's show our S PPORT!

In Calgary, visit the United Way website at:  
[www.calgaryunitedway.org/](http://www.calgaryunitedway.org/)

In Central Alberta: [www.caunitedway.ca](http://www.caunitedway.ca).



**Dream  
BIG**

# Volunteer Corner

We've had another successful year of collecting coins at Calgary and area Mac's Convenience Stores over the months of March, April and May.

The grand total is finally in and it is – drum roll please – **\$1,739.69!**

Other fun and “edutaining” events and fundraisers volunteers helped with:

- Raising \$300 and awareness at Sobeys, London Towne
- Mascot Soccer at the August 1st Stampeders game.  
Go ECHO Go!!!!

Wow! Was that fun!!! And we've got it all on video! Popcorn and showing to be announced.

- BBQ at Sobeys, Forest Lawn
- Grand Opening BBQ at M & M Meats, Silver Springs
- City of Calgary Wellness Fair

A BIG THANK YOU to all of you who helped with the above! We couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you also to all of you who submitted your volunteer feedback forms. Congratulations to Marg Trotman who won two Heritage Park Passes worth \$64 for submitting hers. We hope you enjoyed the Park and Rides!

## Upcoming Events:

- Monday, October 5 & Tuesday, October 6 – Display at Bankers Hall
- Sunday, October 25 – Display at Sobeys, Forest Lawn
- Tuesday, November 3 & Wednesday, November 4 – Display at Bankers Hall
- January 13 & 14, 2010 – Casino – Don't be left out! Applications will be available in our office and on our website very soon.

## Volunteer Orientation – October 1, 2009 from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm.

If you or one of your family members would like to be an official EAC volunteer, meet other volunteers and learn more about epilepsy and EAC, please attend our Volunteer Orientation on Thursday evening, October 1st, 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm. Melanie is hosting... and promises to make it fun!

With Epilepsy Education Month set for November, we'll have other volunteer opportunities scheduled soon. For information on how you can do GREAT things with us, contact:

**Melanie:** (403) 230-2764 or [epilepsy.mburnell@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.mburnell@telus.net) (CALGARY)

**Krista:** (403) 358-3358 or [epilepsy.kway@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.kway@telus.net) (CENTRAL ALBERTA)

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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.**

**Kathy Fyfe, Executive Director**  
[epilepsy.kfyfe@telusplanet.net](mailto:epilepsy.kfyfe@telusplanet.net)

**Kristy Johnson, Office Administrator**  
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**Melanie Grace Burnell, Manager of Volunteers**  
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[epilepsy.jsmith@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.jsmith@telus.net)

**General Mail Box**  
[epilepsy.calgary@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.calgary@telus.net)

**Central Alberta Office – Red Deer**  
**Krista Way, Program Coordinator**  
[epilepsy.kway@telus.net](mailto:epilepsy.kway@telus.net)



**TOGETHER  
WE ARE MAKING  
A DIFFERENCE**

**Our sincere thanks** to everyone who has donated to EAC since our last newsletter. Your contributions are GREATLY appreciated! We also have many “unsung” heros in our midst – donors who have contributed but prefer to remain anonymous. We extend our heartfelt thanks to you as well! The following contributions have been received since our last *Epigram* Newsletter:

## Donor names are not published in the online version of *Epigram*

Many thanks to the **United Way of Calgary Donors** who designated **\$4,682.01** EAC since our last *Epigram*.



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 430-230-2764 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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# MEMBER/DONOR FORM

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

- Annual Membership.....\$20.00  
(January to December 2009)
- 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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