

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

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## Back to School with Epilepsy

By Michelle Kwan BSW, RSW  
Support Coordinator

Realizing summer is over and it's time to go back to school is always rough for kids and teens. No more late nights watching movies and eating ice cream; it's time to get back in to a routine and prepare for homework and early mornings.

Going back to school for kids and teens living with epilepsy can be especially difficult. For kids headed to school for the first time, to kids and teens headed to new schools and higher grades, each comes with their own set of challenges. From teachers and classmates who don't understand epilepsy, to the impact seizures can have upon attention spans, energy levels and learning, to the feelings of isolation and exclusion that comes with "being different", each child will go through some sort of school struggles. However with some preparation and education, you can help get your child's school year off to a great start.

As a parent, it is a good idea for you to do some preparation before school starts. Get in contact with your child's principal, teachers, bus drivers and other school support staff to ask for a meeting to discuss your child's needs. While some teachers have experience with epilepsy in the classroom, many others do not. It is important to educate teachers on your child's epilepsy – be very specific and don't over generalize epilepsy and seizures. Stress that each child's epilepsy and seizures

are unique to them, and so are the needs they have and the supports they may require. Bring along information on epilepsy (our School Kits were created especially for teachers!) Create a seizure plan unique to your child. Include emergency numbers, notes about the kinds of seizures your child experiences, what first aid and support to provide before, during and after a seizure, as well as information about when a seizure might become an emergency. Provide teachers, bus drivers and school nurses with this seizure plan so that they will be prepared in case of an emergency.

Often times, when new teachers and classmates don't know a lot about

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**...when new teachers and classmates don't know a lot about epilepsy and seizures, misunderstandings can quickly occur...**  
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epilepsy and seizures, misunderstandings can quickly occur. When teachers aren't prepared to work with epilepsy in the classroom, this can lead to the child feeling isolated and excluded; when classmates are unaware of what epilepsy is, bullying and teasing often become issues. To help combat these situations, work with your child to help them understand their epilepsy, seizures and medications. The more aware they are, the more comfortable they will be explaining their epilepsy to their classmates, friends and teachers. They can be the best source of knowledge about epilepsy to their classmates, and are great at explaining epilepsy in "kid-friendly" terms and in a way their classmates are more likely to understand.

Continued on page 2...

## 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.

From within Calgary calling area please call: **403-230-2764**

From within Red Deer calling area, please call: **403-358-3358**



## We're Going Topless!

The "Bare Naked Noggins Head Shave for Epilepsy" will be taking place on Thursday November 7 2012 from 12 noon

to 1:00 p.m. at Bankers Hall. This year, our event emcee, is comedian, Lori Gibbs, Human Antidepressant. Celebrity shavers will include: The Calgary Firefighters Burn Treatment Society Calendar Reps, the Patti Falconer Pageant winners, and members of Calgary Police Services. For every noggin shaved, we'll also be donating \$100 to the United Way of Calgary - one more great reason to get involved!

Sign up and pledge information are available on our website and in our office. Help cheer our noggins on through your pledges! We are also looking for pledge prizes, gift bag items, and sponsors to ensure the day is as amazing as our noggins! Everyone is welcome to join us on November 7, so mark your calendars...



Lori Gibbs, Comedian

If you can help, please contact us!

Questions? Please call Kathy (403) 230-2764 or [kathyf@epilepsycalgary.com](mailto:kathyf@epilepsycalgary.com). To become a noggin, or pledge one, visit our website: [epilepsycalgary.com](http://epilepsycalgary.com)



## Alberta Recovers

We have never seen anything like the flooding that took place in June of 2013. We know that many people connected to the Epilepsy Association of Calgary were impacted quite dramatically. It is our sincere hope that those affected are on the road to recovery, although it will likely be a long and painful journey. Our thanks and applause go out to all those people who stepped up to help, including the Calgary Police, Firefighters, Paramedics, City of Calgary, and most importantly, the thousands of volunteers who provided support in so many ways and to so many people!

If you are still in need of assistance, be sure to visit: <http://alberta.ca/Recoveryinformation.cfm> This site contains the latest news about Alberta Government services and supports available to those affected. If the Epilepsy Association can provide additional information and about community services available or any additional support, we're here to help. Don't hesitate to call us at (403) 230-2764.

Wishing you and yours well as our communities work together to rebuild and recover from the damage, disruption, and trauma caused by the June floods in Calgary and Southern Alberta.

Continued from page 1...

Helping your child feel comfortable in explaining their epilepsy will go a long way in helping them to feel as though they belong in school, that they aren't that different from everyone else, and will help to boost their self-esteem, self confidence and self worth.

Sometimes, seizures and epilepsy can create learning challenges for students. Oftentimes, large parts of lessons can be forgotten, days of school are missed, and it can be very difficult to catch up on homework and assignments. There are some academic accommodations that can be arranged with your child's school to help mitigate some of these challenges. From simple accommodations such as extra time to write tests or complete projects, to having a support staff member sit with them and review lessons and homework. More complex learning needs can be assisted through an Individualized Program Plan (IPP). This is a collaborative plan between parents, teachers and students that helps to create a plan for academic success unique to each student's needs and abilities. Sometimes, simple accommodations are necessary and other times an IPP may be what's needed. Discuss your child's specific needs with their teachers and make a plan to work together to ensure your child's success. Keep a communication journal in your child's backpack and use the journal to get information between parents and teachers. Building a positive relationship from the start of the year will help all of you to be on the same page and can eliminate misunderstandings.

Going back to school is always a busy and stressful time for both parents and kids. Start to plan for back to school a couple weeks in advance, and check in with your kids to see if anything is worrying them about going back to school. Keep those communication lines open and with a little preparation and patience, you and your kids can get the school year started off on the right foot.

For more information on our Public Education programs, School Kits for Teachers, or other printed materials and resources on epilepsy, please contact Elizabeth Bertram, Public Education Coordinator at (403) 230-2764 or [at:education@epilepsycalgary.com](mailto:at:education@epilepsycalgary.com) If you have questions, or need support, contact Michele Chefurka (403) 230-2764 or [at: michele@epilepsycalgary.com](mailto:at: michele@epilepsycalgary.com).

## Belief in "Possibilities" and the Heroes Among Us...

It's the time of year when the United Way of Calgary and the United Way of Central Alberta renew their massive efforts to make a difference in the community with the launch of their annual fund-raising campaigns. The campaigns are grounded in a belief that our communities can be better for all citizens and that the heroes among us are a key ingredient to the campaign success. The Epilepsy Association of Calgary benefits greatly from the efforts of thousands of everyday heroes in both Calgary and Central Alberta, whose time, effort, and donations help make our programs possible - and that's worth celebrating!

To volunteer, donate, and help make a difference, visit:

United Way of Calgary and area:

<http://www.calgaryunitedway.org/>



United Way of Calgary and area:

<http://www.calgaryunitedway.org/>



## Three Cheers!

**To Spectra Energy** for the donation of laptop computers. These will be of great help in our efforts to educate the community about epilepsy in both Calgary and Central Alberta.



**To the Community Initiatives Program – Government of Alberta.** EAC received a \$40,000 grant that will help fund our programs in Calgary & Central Alberta in 2013 and 2013.

**To the Community Spirit Program – Government of Alberta.** EAC received a \$15,000 grant to help fund programs in 2013. This grant is based on donations made to us by individual donors. This was the final time this grant will be offered and we thank everyone who has donated to EAC for helping make these funds possible!



**To Participants of the Scotiabank Charity Challenge –** we also extend our sincere thanks! \$1500 was raised by participants through pledges made for the various events. Way to go! This was EAC's first time as an official charity and we're



certain that things can only get better in the future. The next event will be held in June of 2014 and we'll share information about the Charity Challenge as it becomes available.

## Chocolate Penguins Now Available While Supplies Last

– If you're looking for a hostess gift, staff appreciation gift, or stocking stuffer this holiday season, our solid chocolate penguins may be just what you need. These are hand made by Olivier's Candies (1909) exclusively for EAC. Available in dark or milk chocolate, each one weighs 175gms and sell for \$8.00 each. Proceeds help fund programs in Calgary and Central Alberta. Call our office to order yours (403) 230-2764.



## The United Way of Central Alberta –

who came to our rescue with a grant to replace our ailing office computer. It is greatly appreciated!

## Comings and Goings

In June we said good-bye to our Office Administrator, Kristy Johnson, who left to welcome a new child into the world. We're thrilled to advise that "Avery" made her entrance into the world early in July and is doing well. Congratulations to Kristy and her family! We were very fortunate that Cathy Rooke joined our team in June, and will manage our office over the coming year. Cathy is capable and approachable and we're delighted to have her with us. Welcome Cathy!



## Upcoming Information Sessions

### Working with Your Healthcare Team

Tuesday, October 10, 2013 - 7:00 – 9:30pm

Presenter: Michelle Kwan, BSW, RSW, Support Coordinator

Do you find it difficult to communicate with your doctors? Are you leaving each appointment feeling confused, frustrated and with more questions than answers? You are the best source of information about you, and this workshop will provide you with strategies and resources for making the most of your appointments, and becoming an integral part of your healthcare team. This workshop will be helpful for adults living with epilepsy, as well as parents of children and teenagers living with epilepsy. Some hot topics we will cover include: how to work cooperatively with your doctor, getting a second opinion, how to deal with different ideas regarding treatments, as well as how to best communicate with doctors. All are welcome to join us to gain valuable information and insight into this often difficult subject.

## Taking Control of Your Wellness Skills Development Program

If you'd like to make some positive changes in your life, this could be the program for you! On-going 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 all of you - the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual. The program provides a variety of skills and tools that helps you learn to minimize the negative impact of epilepsy in your life, while enhancing your overall sense of wellness. The program consists of weekly individual sessions over 12 to 15 weeks. Contact the Support Coordinator for more information.

## No question is too big or small!

If you would like more information on the programs above or any of our Support Program services, or if you would like to be added to our advance contact/reminder list, please contact Michelle Kwan at (403) 230-2764 or by e-mail at: michelle@epilepsycalgary.com.

## From the Support Program

**The Parent Network** provides a place where parents of children with epilepsy can come together to share their concerns with one another, learn from each other, and support each other. If you are a parent, guardian, or care giver to a child with epilepsy, please join us!

**Face to Face Support and Discussion Groups** - a great way to meet with, and learn from others who understand your experiences. Primarily oriented to adults, but everyone is welcome.

All groups and information sessions are held at the Epilepsy Association of Calgary - 4112 - 4th St. N.W. If you have any questions about our groups, don't hesitate to contact Michelle Kwan, Support Coordinator, at: (403) 230-2764 or by e-mail: michelle@epilepsycalgary.com

### The Parents Network 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Upcoming dates:

- Thursday October 24, 2013
- Thursday November 28, 2013
- Thursday January 16, 2014
- Thursday February 20, 2014
- Thursday March 13, 2014
- Thursday April 24, 2014
- Thursday May 29, 2014

### Face to Face Groups 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Upcoming dates:

- Thursday October 17, 2013
- Thursday November 21, 2013
- Thursday January 9, 2014
- Thursday March 6, 2014
- Thursday May 15, 2014
- NEW! Saturday Mornings**  
11:00 am to 1:00 pm
- Saturday February 8, 2014
- Saturday April 19, 2014



## Tis the Season!

A Seasonal Celebration for Adults and Young Adults (13 & Up)

Wednesday December 4, 2013 – 6:00 p.m.

Join us for holiday food, fun, and cheer!

Please RSVP to Cathy NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 2, 2012

info@epilepsycalgary.com

(403) 230-2764



## Just for Kids

A Special Celebration for the Little Ones (Up to 12 years)

Saturday - December 7, 2013 - 1:00 p.m.

Please RSVP to Cathy NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 4, 2013

info@epilepsycalgary.com

(403) 230-2764

## Upcoming Information Session

### Zentangle for Beginners

Wednesday, November 6, 2013 – 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Presenter: Vivian Williamson

Join us for a fun and relaxing introduction to Zentangle - a form of art therapy. The purpose of art therapy is that it helps in the expression of thoughts and feelings into images that may be difficult to verbalize. It provides a focus on relaxation, inspiration, and a return to fundamental creative talents. Why dwell on the limitations of epilepsy when you can explore your strengths, creativity, talents, and capabilities - and have some fun doing it!

## 70 for 7 Mission Accomplished!

Congratulations to Matt Sproule of Lacombe, Alberta who finished his seven day ride for epilepsy on June 26, 2013. Even a flood didn't stop Matt from going the distance for epilepsy, although it necessitated a route change originally planned from Sweet Grass Montana to Lacombe. Instead he rode in the Lacombe area for the duration of the ride during what was a stormy and very wet week in Alberta. To Matt, we offer our sincere thanks for an AMAZING effort to make a difference for those living with epilepsy. You are one in a million and we are humbled by your efforts! To the family and friends who supported you in your journey, we also extend our thanks, as well as to those that supported you through their pledges. THANK YOU MATT!



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Matt at the end of his journey, and with his brothers and sister. The ride was inspired by Matt's brother, who lives with epilepsy. In all, Matt raised \$3000 for the Central Alberta Office - now that's heart!  
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## From the Support Program

**Face to Face Support and Discussion Groups** are a great way to meet with, and learn from others who understand your experiences. Groups are held on the second Wednesday of the month from **5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** at the Epilepsy Association of Calgary – CENTRAL ALBERTA OFFICE, 4811 - 48th Street, Red Deer Alberta.

Upcoming dates:

- October 9, 2013
- November 13, 2013
- January 15, 2014
- February 19, 2014
- March 19, 2014
- April 16, 2014
- May 21, 2014

*Calling All Parents! We've heard that there are parents in the Central Alberta Region who would be interested in attending a Parent Network Meeting. If there is enough interest we will schedule a session. Please let Norma know if this is of interest to you!*

## Have questions? Need to talk to someone? Would you like to volunteer?

If you would like more information on the programs above or any of our CENTRAL ALBERTA services, or if you would like to be added to our advance contact/reminder list, please contact Norma Klassen at 403-358-3358 or by e-mail at: normak@epilepsycalgary.com.

## We're Having a Party - We Hope You'll Join Us!

Wednesday December 11, 2013 – 6:00 p.m.

Food and refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP to Norma NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 5, 2013

normak@epilepsycalgary.com

(403) 358-3358



## 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  
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## CALLING 1-866-EPILEPSY

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From within Calgary calling area please call: 403-230-2764

From within Red Deer calling area, please call: 403-358-3358

**Reminder - Annual Memberships  
expire December 31. Don't forget  
to renew yours!**



## Board of Directors 2013 - 2014

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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**

kathyf@epilepsycalgary.com

**Cathy Rooke, Office Administrator**

info@epilepsycalgary.com

**Michelle Kwan, Support Coordinator**

michelle@epilepsycalgary.com

**Elizabeth Bertram, Public Education  
Coordinator**

education@epilepsycalgary.com

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volunteer@epilepsycalgary.com

**General Mail Box**

info@epilepsycalgary.com

**Central Alberta Office - Red Deer**

**Norma Klassen, Program Coordinator**

normak@epilepsycalgary.com

**General Mail Box**

centralabinfo@epilepsycalgary.com



**Our sincere thanks** to everyone who has donated to EAC since our last newsletter.

You truly do have hearts of gold!

To those kind hearted donors who have contributed but don't wish to have their names published we extend our sincere thanks to you as well! You know who you are!

The following contributions have been received since our last Epigram Newsletter:

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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 403-230-2764 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 \_\_\_\_\_



Alberta Culture



# MEMBER/DONOR FORM

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- Annual Membership.....\$20.00  
(January to December 2013)
- Life Membership.....\$200.00
- Donation amount .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Total .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment method:

- Cheque       Money Order
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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.**

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

**Epilepsy Association of Calgary**  
4112 - 4 Street NW  
Calgary, Alberta T2K 1A2  
Email: info@epilepsycalgary.com



To ensure your Epigram Newsletter always reaches you, please contact us with address changes as soon as possible.