

FEBRUARY 2021

# BRAINwave Bulletin

The Calgary Epilepsy Association bi-annual newsletter



## History Of Purple Day (March 26th)

In 2008, a Canadian girl named Cassidy Megan wanted to get people talking about epilepsy. As someone living with the condition, she knew firsthand there were too many myths and too many people with epilepsy who felt alone. Can you believe she was just *nine years old* when she started it?

## Let's Talk Purple

Emily Dixon

Purple: it's not just a colour – it's a conversation starter. A symbol of our collective devotion to promoting epilepsy awareness in Calgary as well as the world. The goal of Purple Day (March 26th) is to increase general public awareness, to reduce the social stigma endured by many individuals with the condition, and to empower individuals living with epilepsy to take action in their communities.

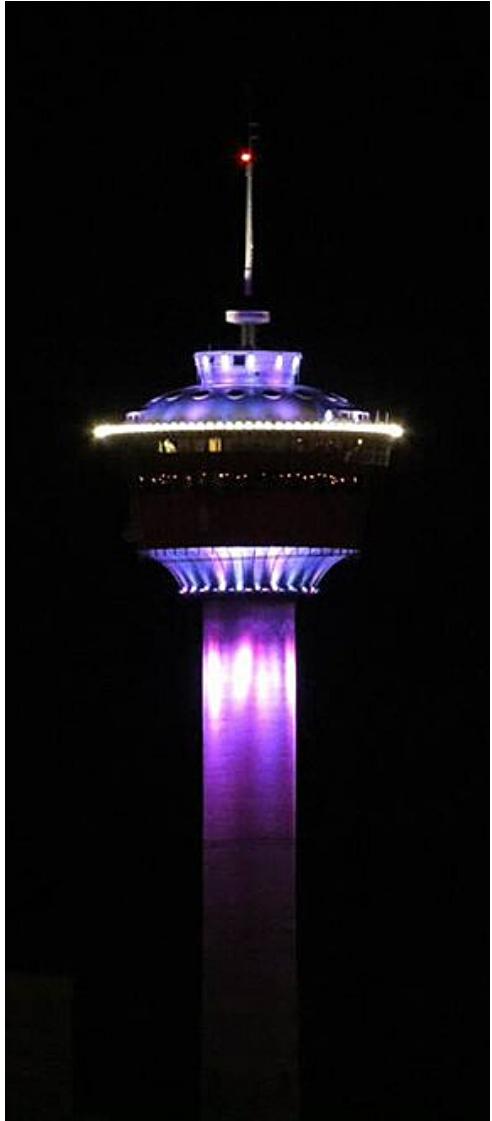
***This year Purple day will be a little different, but one thing that hasn't changed is you can still make a huge impact!***

Our income has been heavily impacted during the coronavirus pandemic and it's now more important than ever that we keep the conversation about epilepsy going.

## Did You Know?

- In Canada, March is celebrated as Epilepsy Awareness Month, unlike the United States where it is celebrated in November.
- Lavender is the international colour for epilepsy





## How Can You Help?

- Decorate yourself in purple; whether through clothing, accessories, face paint, makeup, and/or nail polish and post it on social media with the #EACyyC and #ShineLightOnEpilepsy
- Tell your community about purple day and Epilepsy Awareness Month
- Share how epilepsy has affected your life with 5 new people or more!

## Third Party Fundraiser Ideas

- Collect pledges to dye your hair purple
- Hold a purple outfit day with your school or workplace
- Hold a COVID-19 Compliant walk-a-thon or read-a-thon
- Host virtual purple themed trivia night

*We have plenty more suggestions for how you can create your own fundraiser, feel free to reach out!*

Through holding a virtual event, liking and sharing our posts on social media, or organizing a COVID compliant event, you can be a community leader whose support helps to maintain our services, research and programs. It's only with your donations that we can continue to offer these amenities throughout 2021 and beyond.

Every March, the city of Calgary and Red Deer are set aglow in a sea of purple lights. This is one of the ways the Epilepsy Association of Calgary tries to raise awareness of epilepsy. In 2021, let's all enjoy the lights and join the conversation about epilepsy. We need you to challenge myths and promote awareness alongside us.

### Where to See the Lights:

In Calgary, watch for the Purple Lightings at Calgary Tower, Peace Bridge, Reconciliation Bridge and TELUS Spark! In Lethbridge City Hall will be lite up!

**Don't forget to take a photo and tag us!**



@epilepsyassociationofcalgary



@epilepsycalgary



## Progress Report: Service Gaps Update 2021

What's new with you? We have been working on gathering information on how we can and could continue to innovate.

Specifically, we have been assessing the level and ease of use of current programming as well as identifying emerging programming trends. Through surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews we have learned a lot, and we can't wait to try some new things!

We are exceedingly grateful to those of you who took the time to participate and provide us with feedback. Please know your input has been invaluable throughout this process. These information gathering initiatives are expected to conclude in the Spring of 2021 and the results will be published on our website.

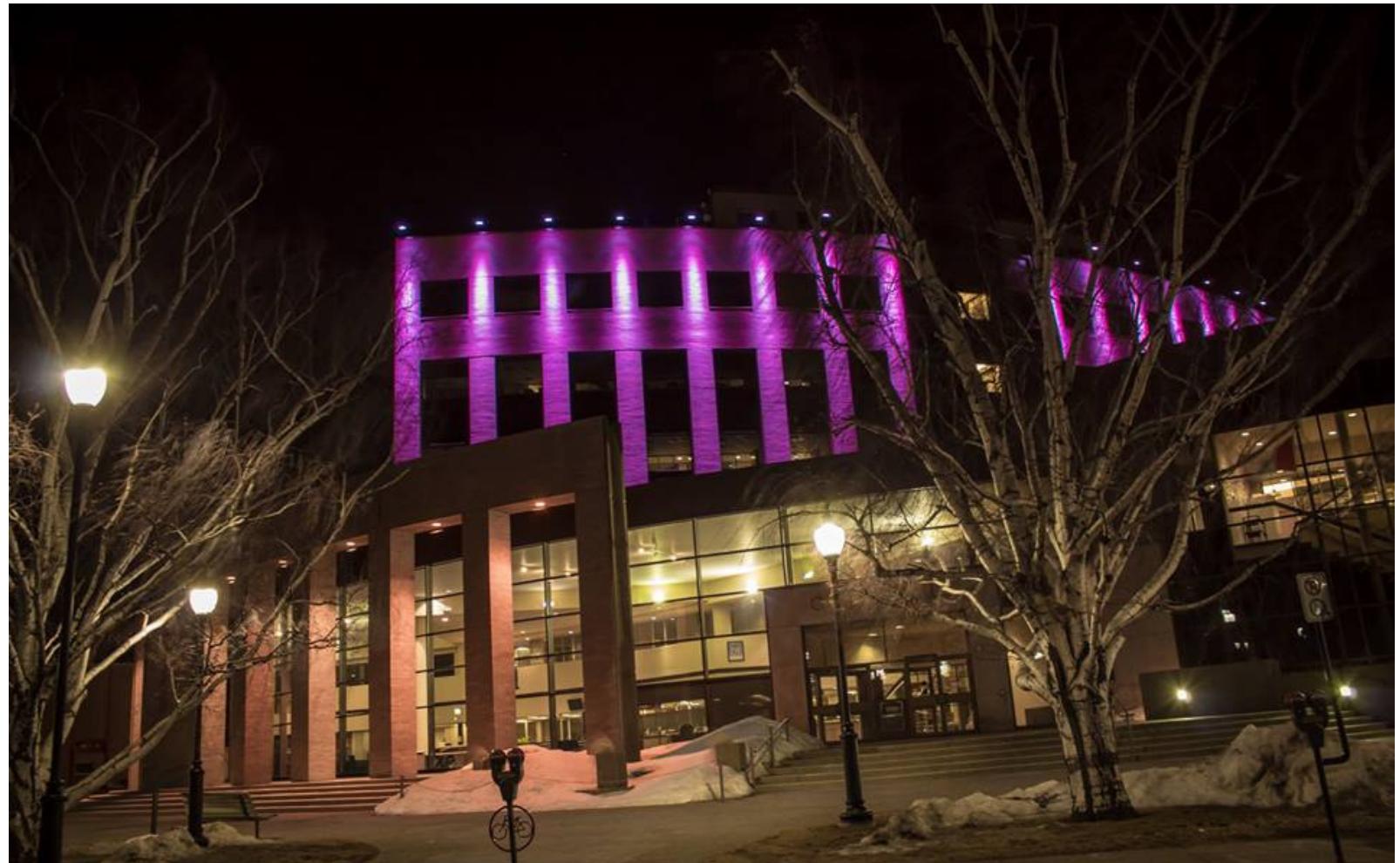
The data we gathered has uncovered some emerging themes regarding what the community would like to see improved.

Firstly, stigma and discrimination continue to be pervasive in the community, verified by both people living with epilepsy and the community at large.

Many have concurrent mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, obsessive activities, emotional/psychological distress and difficulty sleeping. There is continued unemployment and underemployment. Most voiced a need for more supports in the community like transportation for adults who cannot drive, safe childcare for children with epilepsy and more counselling options for those experiencing grief, trauma or stress related to diagnosis, and disease management.

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## **Big Thanks to our Community, For Your Continued Support!**

The opportunity to connect by newsletter also means we get a chance to thank you for your ongoing support and to tell you how very much you mean to us. Whether you are a volunteer, a donor, a member, or someone who has used the services of Epilepsy Calgary in the past, we are thinking about you.

The Staff and Board of Epilepsy Association of Calgary wishes you a happy and healthy 2021, despite these times of continuing uncertainty.

If there is anything we can do to help you or someone living with epilepsy that you care about, please do not hesitate to be in touch. We are here for you.

### **Epilepsy Population of Alberta**

- There is approximately 20,000 Calgarians and 4,000 Central Albertans who have epilepsy

### **Make Your Contribution Today**

We can help you set up either a one time donation or a recurring one.

Your donation to the Epilepsy Association of Calgary will help improve the lives of Albertans living with epilepsy.

**DONATE TODAY - TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**