

The Keys to Independence Program Educational and Social Programs for Young Adults with Epilepsy

Keeping you in the know about the Epilepsy Foundation Eastern Pennsylvania's young adults initiative!

Fall 2013

Over 1,000 Walk for Epilepsy in Summer Stroll

On Saturday June 22 over 1,000 people gathered on Forbidden Drive in Fairmount Park to participate in the EFEPA's annual Summer Stroll.

The weather was beautiful and the people were excited to be participating in such a good cause. Each participant registered and worked to raise money in support of EFEPA programs.

Amazingly, the fundraising goal of \$125,000 was reached! It was truly inspiring to see so many people out showing their support for this great community.

Our EFEPA Youth Council team also showed up and walked! It was great to see friends meeting up. There were balloons, hotdogs, and it was even covered on the news later that evening!

We can't wait for next year and hope to see you there!



Want more info?
www.efepa.org
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Check it Out!

- Summer Stroll Success
- Support Group Events
- Inaugural KEYS Seminar
- Camp Achieve Updates
- Transportation News
- Scholarship Spotlight: It's a Vet Thing!
- We Want to Hear From You!

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EFEPA online!

The EFEPA Youth Council Meets Regularly!

The EFEPA Youth Council is made up of young adults ages 16-26 who are interested in serving their communities and raising awareness of epilepsy.

These young adults are motivated to plan events and meet together to discuss the

latest news about epilepsy in their communities.

They plan together to organize events of their own as well as participate in EFEPA programs by volunteering and working with youth.

The Youth Council meets the

last Thursday of every other month.

While Youth Council participants spend time seriously planning, they meet together just to socialize and build team working skills too. We can't wait to see you there!

Young Adults, Parents Learn and Meet at Inaugural KEYS Seminar

A seminar for young adults with epilepsy and their parents was held on Saturday May 22. Held in Center City Philadelphia, the program provided two workshops for parents and one for young adults.

The young adults learned about goal setting, recognizing their strengths, and spent time networking.

The young adult attendees ranged in age from 16-20 and were able to meet and learn about their future opportunities. They all took an online self-assessment tool called the "U-Cipher" that, through some key questions and answers, was able to highlight strengths and interests.

The young adults participated in discussions about what motivates them to succeed as well as what their goals for the future are. It is so important to learn what motivates you and use that as you plan ahead!

The parent attendees were also treated to some conversation time as well as important information on the transition process.

A representative from CHOP's Young Adult Transition program shared resources and strategies with the parents that might help them know where to find information.

The parents group also heard from a guest speaker who held a group discussion about helping young adults become more independent. The parents asked some great questions and were excited to be able to meet with each other.

The inaugural KEYS Seminar was definitely a success and will be a regular occurrence in the Spring. If you have suggestions or ideas for workshop topics, please let us know. Stay tuned to EFEPAs resources for updates on upcoming programs in Spring 2014!

Young Adults Meet and Gain Experience at Camp Achieve 2013

Camp Achieve started from humble beginnings 16 years ago, as a small retreat. This year camp provided activities and support for 53 campers and 32 counselors!

Young adults in the cabins were really able to make friends and meet up with their old cabin mates from previous years. The sense of community that is felt when young people get together at camp is so great!

Young people at camp are able to stay active by participating in lots of great sports, games, swimming, and free time to just relax. This is a crucial time in the life of a young person, and knowing that the friends you made at Camp Achieve understand you is a great support. And of course we can't forget about the young

adults who helped so much with camp as counselors.

Counselors at Camp Achieve 2013 volunteered their time and skills to supervise campers and help them through a very busy daily schedule. It is not always an easy job—there are some sleepless nights and very busy days at camp. But, even with the difficult work it is still a great opportunity to learn teamwork and responsibility. We can't wait to welcome new young adults as campers or counselors next year!

You can find tons of information, pictures from past years, and registration links on our website at www.efepa.org.



November is Epilepsy Awareness Month

Just in case you didn't know, November is Epilepsy Awareness Month! It is a great chance to raise awareness not only about epilepsy, but about the programs and services of the Epilepsy Foundation Eastern PA.

The EFEPA Youth Council has been meeting regularly to discuss their plans for November. They have a goal of working in their communities and schools to have events that let people know about epilepsy, seizure first-aid, and about the programs offered by the EFEPA.

Several other young adults are talking with their colleges and schools about setting up an information table in a busy area and handing out information. Some others are

discussing how they can use facebook and Twitter to spread the word over social media.

In the past, some have really found success working in their communities. They contact local restaurants about having deals in November, local nail and hair salons about purple coloring specials. Young adults have worked together to distribute fliers and advertisements in local businesses as well.

Remember, anything you do helps raise awareness! So get some friends or family together to make

some plans to get the word out!

Purple is the color for epilepsy awareness. So wear a ribbon, bracelet, or your favorite purple clothes!

Many local businesses would love to participate by hosting events, providing coupons, or letting you hang a flier. All it takes is the courage to ask!

You can visit our website to find information on hosting fundraising events, find copies of our brochures, and even participate in our November Awareness Month

It's a Vet Thing: Meet Ebelin, the Latest Eric Burton Osberg Scholarship Recipient!

By: Ebelin Dutan

My father always told me to not let my disorder control my life, He told me to fight on because one day I would win. My name is Ebelin Dutan. I was diagnosed with epilepsy in 2007. Throughout this time I have had over 10 seizures. I've had a few seizures at home and one at my high school; it was the most dramatic experience of my life.

After that seizure I was a completely different person. What I hated the most about it was that I was clueless. I didn't know how or why this was happening and it devastated me.

Over time I reached the 2-year mark of being seizure free. When this happens the doctor can begin taking away your medication slowly, and at one point I was not taking any medicine at all. Everything was fine until one day I relapsed. Again I was put on medication though this time around I didn't feel as clueless.

I know why I relapsed and it made me feel more in control. So from then on I promised myself that I would never lose

hope. As of today I have been seizure free and have made great progress both personally and academically. I'm a veterinary technician student at Northampton Community College.

I've just completed my first year of classes which include: Veterinary anatomy and physiology, Animal management and nutrition, Clinical pathology, Parasitology, and Introduction to veterinary technology.

In these classes we learn about the different aspects of veterinary medicine. In Parasitology we studied worms, fecal exams, and ticks. And in veterinary technology we learned about the clinic setting, important documents, organizations, and medical terminology.

This summer I also took a large animal class. It consisted of 8 weeks of hands on and lecture material. We learned about sheep, goats, and horses and how to perform physicals, restraint, administer vaccines, venipuncture, and much more. It was a great experience for me because

I've never worked with large animals before. I've only worked with small animals as a kennel technician at my local shelter.

The experiences I've gained both from work and school are priceless. It has made me realize that I want more. After I graduate from NCC, I plan on enrolling in a 4 year university that will prepare me for entry into veterinary school.

My goal is to become a veterinarian and an educator. There is so much that I wish to accomplish and I know I can achieve it. I have the determination and support I need to move forward.

Everything I've gone through has only made me stronger. Once upon a time epilepsy did control my life but now I can proudly say I am in control of it.

The Eric Burton Osberg Scholarship is awarded each year to a student with epilepsy who shows academic promise and a potential to represent the EFEPA in a positive way. We wish Ebelin the best of luck in school and in her future endeavors!



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Our mission: to lead the fight to stop seizures, find a cure and overcome challenges created by epilepsy. We choose to fulfill that mission by meeting the non-medical needs for people affected by epilepsy/ seizure disorder in order to enhance their lives and build supportive communities.



STRONGER TOGETHER



At Your Fingertips: Online Resources for Events and Information

There are always programs, conferences, and social meet-ups happening for young adults. It is important to find the information at the right place! and more. Read on and try out some of these!

- **www.efepa.org**—Of course the website for the Epilepsy Foundation Eastern PA would be full of great information! On the website you can find schedules for support groups, scholarships, conferences, and a full section just for young adults.
- **www.facebook.com/EpilepsyFoundationEasternPA** - It's facebook. It's really an incredible way to keep tons of people all over the world informed about the programs and people that make the EFEPA great. Follow along with our regular posts to know what the staff is up to, when our conferences are coming up, and what's new with our events.
- **Twitter—@EFEPA**- The amount of information and comments that are available on Twitter is huge! It is a constant stream of commentary and news, around the clock. Follow us on Twitter for up to date news and pictures.
- Find the EFEPA on Google+, LinkedIn, and Foursquare! We post regular updates, resources, and pictures from all of our events. There's no way you can miss anything if you are hooked in the EFEPA!
- Catch our artistic side on **Instagram—@EFEPA**

We Are Looking For Writers!

Are you interested in volunteering your time to write for our KEYS Newsletter? We are always accepting submissions of articles about living with epilepsy, school life, relationships, and jobs or volunteering.

If you'd like to flex your writing muscles, this is the place! If you'd like to write a story on one of our events please just ask and we might give you behind the scenes access. We want to hear your

opinions, too! Something been on your mind? We want to hear from you about what is going on in your world. Send an email to sference@efepa.org with your ideas!

