

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!

Mall and a Movie Meet-Up...Part 2!

On Saturday March 23 twelve young adults met up at the Plymouth Meeting Mall to see a movie and grab some lunch. It was a great turnout!

They met at the movie theater and saw *The Croods*...in 3D. It was a really cool experience.

After the movie, they walked over to the mall food court and ate lunch. A few chose pizza, but a big crowd went for the Chik-fil-a!

They had a great time socializing around the table and some people met up for the very first time. They were able to catch up since the last time they met up and new folks were introduced around to the group.

A few of the young adults traveled from up to two hours away to join up! It was a great chance to meet up with old friends from Camp Achieve or meet up with the group for the very first time.



Spring 2013

Want more info?
www.efepa.org
sference@efepa.org

Check it Out!

- Mall and a Movie Meet-Up...Part 2
- Youth Council Meetings
- Planning for Camp Achieve
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Upcoming Conferences
- Young Adult Contributors!

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EFEPa online!

EFEPa Youth Council Meets to Plan Projects

The EFEPa Youth Council is made up of young adults ages 16-26. They met last month at the Foundation offices to discuss plans for the next year.

They talked about forming a team for the Summer Stroll in June, making t-shirts, and their

Purple Day activities. They are active and interested in raising awareness in the community.

Blair spoke about her experience celebrating Purple Day at her school and said it was a success! Mike also handed out information on his college

campus and said that he was able to speak with lots of students interested in epilepsy.

The Youth Council will meet on the last Thursday of each month and will offer a Google Hangout video call option for those that are unable to travel.

Planning Begins for Camp Achieve 2013, August 18-23

Camp Achieve is a week-long summer camp for children and teens with epilepsy ages 8-17. It is always a great time and campers and staff alike always look forward to it!

Campers enjoy all of the fun summer camp activities like canoeing, cookouts, softball, soccer, swimming at the pool, and art.

EFEPA staff always seeks volunteers at Camp Achieve for those that are over 17. All of the counselors at Camp Achieve are volunteers, and it is a tough but rewarding job!

Counselors are required to supervise all of their campers and make sure that they are participating in the activities. They also have the important responsibility of

keeping everyone safe by working with EFEPA medical staff each day.

If young adults have an interest in working with children, planning activities, learning teamwork skills, and gaining volunteer experience, this could be the opportunity for them!

Camper applications are available on the EFEPA website. You can find lots more info on Camp Achieve at www.efepa.org! Save the Date if you think Camp Achieve is for you!



Volunteer Opportunities Abound!

This Spring, there will be plenty of opportunities to volunteer for the EFEPA.

Several volunteers have attended local 5k running events and helped event staff hand out t-shirts, water, and cheer on runners!

There are also opportunities at the EFEPA offices. Volunteers are needed for various office tasks like mailings, database management, and managing our resources

room. If a young adult has a particular interest, EFEPA staff tries to find similar opportunities.

Volunteers are also needed at upcoming events like Spring conferences and Summer Stroll.

A volunteer application can be found on the EFEPA website.

Volunteers are paid in six figures... S-M-I-L-E-S.
~Gayla LeMaire



Keys to Independence Program to Offer Insights and Resources

On Saturday May 18, the Keys to Independence Program will offer an educational seminar for young adults ages 16-22 and their parents.

This seminar will cover topics like employment, personal strengths, community resources, and networking. It will be a good opportunity to meet other young adults with epilepsy and learn about their experiences.

Parents and caregivers are also invited to attend. There will be separate workshops just for them that focus on how to find resources online and in the community that will help them prepare for their child's transition into more independence.

This can be a unique time for both the young adult with epilepsy as well as their family. It is very important that they get started planning and researching the process of increasing independence early.

What: Keys to Independence Educational Seminar

Who: Young Adults (16-22) with epilepsy and their parents/caregivers

When: Saturday May 18 11am-4pm

Where: EFEPA Offices
919 Walnut St. Philadelphia, PA

Why: Networking, Skill Building

The Career Corner: Nailing the Interview

Dress Professionally-

If you aren't sure of what to wear, you can never go wrong with professional dress. If you need help deciding, you can always go online and search "professional dress" and look through the images.

Be honest in your answers-

Before your interview, be sure to practice your answers to some general interview questions. Think and respond honestly to the questions; no interviewer wants to hear lies or fake answers. Be confident in yourself and your answers will show it.

Smile!

Research has shown that just smiling can improve your mood, even if you are actually feeling angry or sad! So put on a great smile, and be happy and thankful for the opportunity to interview.

Bring a resume-

A nice resume is often your ticket in the door. Bring extra copies to the interview in case your interviewer or any other staff person wants to review it. It is a

summary of your accomplishments and something you've worked hard to create. Be proud of it and give it to anyone who'll take it!

Use a firm handshake-

A firm handshake is a way to let your interviewer know you are confident in yourself. Take some time to practice with a friend!



A Teenager's Life with Epilepsy

Blair Hagelgans

My name is Blair Hagelgans. I am 16 and was diagnosed with epilepsy in 2009. I suffer from Partial Complex Seizures. I have had two brain surgeries at Miami Children's Hospital in 2011 and April 2012. Since then I have been seizure free. However, the surgery resulted in the loss of my left peripheral vision in both eyes. This was expected, but worth the risk to be seizure free. I also suffer from multiple other medical disorders, so finding out that I also had epilepsy was heart breaking. All I could think was why? **My life already consisted of doctors, hospitals and surgeries, and people know me as the girl with the medical conditions, so why does there have to be something else wrong with me?** So here is how I have dealt with my epilepsy at a young age.

Being 16, in high school, and having epilepsy is challenging. Explaining my conditions over and over gets tiring. This is handled by a meeting of school personnel at the beginning of each year explaining my medical conditions and needs. This proves to be very helpful. People are misinformed, and do not know there are

different types of seizures. My seizures present as wandering, staring, confusion, disorientation and even talking. Most people are unaware that these are seizures and only know of Grand Mal/ convulsion seizures. Still, people's reaction remains the same. They fear seizures and don't want to be "in charge of you". They believe they have to "babysit you" just because you have epilepsy. **It's hard to be 16 and have independence when you can't ever be alone.** In school, adults follow me from class to class to make sure I'm not alone in case I have a seizure. Although I understand the reasoning behind this, it is annoying. To regain some independence I applied for a seizure alert dog so I don't need someone with me at all times. My epilepsy medication is another issue. People have said, what's the big deal, you just have to take it. But the effects of the medicine cause fatigue and memory issues. My memory has also been affected because of the seizures and my other conditions. Remembering to take my medicine twice a day, and while away, is difficult, but using a pill box makes it easier.

Epilepsy is not just seizures, its restrictions, explanations, remembering, and everyday struggles that come with it.

However, I do believe I am one of the more fortunate individuals. I have recently been able to highly improve my seizures, have supportive family and friends, and my school has been extremely flexible. Many people with epilepsy, especially young adults, are bullied in school and tormented just because they suffer from a condition they can't control. Yet misconceptions about epilepsy continue. Fortunately, I have never really been bullied in school per se, but have always had that feeling of being different and at times treated differently than others, but I never let it get me down. **I believe education is the key, and someday people will understand.** Coping for me means living life as any other "normal" teenager. To us living with epilepsy is our normal. We do not want to be pitied, just accepted. My life is a roller-coaster, but whose isn't. Educating people about epilepsy is my goal, which I have already started and I will never stop fighting.

Epilepsy Foundation Eastern Pennsylvania

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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

The Health Reporter— News You Can Use

Tiffani Upson-Lake

A healthy diet is important because it helps improve general health. It is thought to be important for lowering health risks, for example diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and obesity. A healthy diet involves consuming primary fruits, whole grains, and vegetables to satisfy caloric requirements to provide the body with essential nutrients, phytochemicals, and fiber to provide adequate water intake. A healthy diet supports energy needs and provides for human nutrients. There could be a relationship between lifestyle including food consumption and potentially lowering the risk of cancer or other chronic diseases. A healthy diet may consist mostly of whole plant food. No single food will provide all the essential nutrients that the body needs to be healthy and function efficiently. A balanced diet should contain protein fats,

carbohydrates and fiber in the form of fresh fruit and vegetables, all in the right amounts providing you with a good supply of essential amino acids, essential fatty acids, vitamins, minerals, and of course fresh drinking water. In addition the nutritional value of a person's diet depends on an overall mixture, or balance of food that was eaten over a period of time. And that is why it is important to eat healthy.

Here is a recipe that will keep you cool in the summer and eating healthy too!

Easy Fruit Salad

- 16 oz strawberries
- 1 cup honeydew melon
- 1 peach
- 2 kiwi fruit
- 1 cup Cantaloupe
- 1 cup pineapple
- 1 cup grapes
- 16 oz container of low-fat vanilla yogurt

In a large salad bowl, lightly mix together the strawberries, peach, plums, kiwi fruit, cherries, honeydew melon, cantaloupe, pineapple, and grapes until the fruit is well mixed. Serve in bowls with yogurt spooned over the top.

