

Epilepsy Foundation Launches National Campaign to Raise Epilepsy Awareness

Washington, D.C., October 22, 2009– The Epilepsy Foundation joins the social networking phenomenon to raise awareness and educate people about epilepsy. *Talk About It!*, this year's National Epilepsy Awareness Month theme, will empower people with epilepsy to dispel myths and encourage the public to better understand the condition.

During November, the Epilepsy Foundation is using social networking Web sites like Facebook, Twitter, and the Foundation's own eCommunities to educate people about epilepsy and demonstrate the power of personal stories. Parents, friends, family and caregivers are encouraged to talk about epilepsy by "tweeting" about what epilepsy means to them, updating their status on Facebook with a message about epilepsy or creating a 60-second video sharing their personal story of epilepsy.

"I want to share my feelings on being considered different because I have epilepsy. I enjoy being called different, not because I have epilepsy, but because I AM different in many other ways," said Sara-Elizabeth Clark, a 14 year-old epilepsy advocate. "That's what makes me who I am." Epilepsy is the third most common neurological disorder in the United States and affects nearly 3 million Americans (and 50 million people world-wide). Despite its prevalence, the condition is often overlooked and misunderstood.

"We're encouraging everyone affected by seizures to share some aspect of their story during National Epilepsy Awareness Month," said Eric R. Hargis, president and CEO of the Epilepsy Foundation. "Talking about epilepsy will empower those impacted by the condition to speak out without shame."

The Web site TalkAboutIt.org is a collaboration between Greg Grunberg (star of NBC's *Heroes* and the father of a child with epilepsy) and the Epilepsy Foundation. The site is devoted to educating the public about seizures and epilepsy on behalf of those who are coping with the condition. Hollywood celebrities such as Jennifer Garner, John Mayer, Hayden Panettiere and a host of other stars from television,

film and music have joined Grunberg in the effort to get people talking about the condition.

In 1969, November was declared National Epilepsy Awareness Month as a part of a nationwide epilepsy public education campaign. Since that date, the observance has been recognized in most years by a White House message from the President. In 2003, the U.S. Congress passed a formal resolution declaring November as National Epilepsy Awareness Month.

The Epilepsy Foundation's nationwide network of affiliates is coordinating events around the country to get people talking about epilepsy. National Epilepsy Awareness Month activities include:

- November 1, Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan Washington is hosting a health, wellness and beauty event to raise awareness of epilepsy.
- November 5, Epilepsy Foundation Southern Wisconsin is hosting a gala.
- November 7, Epilepsy Foundation of Chicago is coordinating a series of "at-home" dinner parties called Talk About it @ Dinner to raise awareness and funds.
- November 10, Epilepsy Foundation of Alabama is holding a conference to educate employers about epilepsy.
- Throughout November, Epilepsy Foundation of Rochester is hosting a series of education seminars for parents, family members and caregivers of individuals with epilepsy.
- November 21, Epilepsy Foundation of Northern California is sponsoring, Taking Charge of Epilepsy Conference to educate people on issues that affect those with epilepsy.

"National Epilepsy Awareness Month is an opportunity to take advantage of the many new social network technologies so that more people will understand what epilepsy is, what challenges come with having this condition, and how people can come together to raise awareness and find a cure.," Hargis continued. "Then, the lives of nearly 3 million Americans will have changed for the better. This is our goal."

For more about the epilepsy Foundation or National Epilepsy Awareness Month activities, visit www.EpilepsyFoundation.org or call 800-331-1000.

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