

## Special Interest Articles:

- Epilepsy Awareness Month
- Scissors for Seizures
- Pancake Breakfast



## Epilepsy Ottawa-Carleton

Volunteer Editors:  
Dorothy Thompson  
Lynn Andrews  
Rebecca Wolfe

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## Epilepsy Awareness Month

March is Epilepsy Awareness Month, and this year a number of events were held to increase our visibility in our community. In promoting Epilepsy Awareness Month, the Mayor of the City of Ottawa proclaimed March to be Epilepsy Month in Ottawa and the *Ottawa Citizen* also published several ads for epilepsy awareness, and specifically Purple Day, during the month of March.

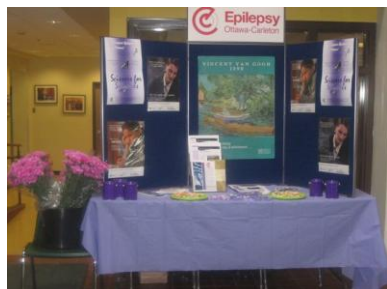
An epilepsy awareness and fundraising event took place in Metcalfe on March 20, 2009. Donna Allen and Betty Johnson, through the Order of the Eastern Star, organized the Ham and Bean Supper and Euchre Night. Kevin Drysdale gave our "Seizure Smart" educational presentation to the group, assisted by Lise-Marie Andrews, Mallory Allen, and Jen Rama, who shared their personal stories of their experiences and challenges with epilepsy.

Trish Boire, an employee of TD Canada Trust, held an epilepsy awareness day at the Billings Bridge branch.



Trish Boire and co-workers at TD Canada Trust

Shae Timmins, a student at Elmwood School, gave a presentation on epilepsy to the student body. Shae and her mother Lori also sold purple carnations and raised \$279.00 for our organization.



Epilepsy awareness at Elmwood School



Peter Andrews speaking at Bean Supper



Bean supper attendees



Promoting awareness at bean supper and euchre night



Shae Timmins (3<sup>rd</sup> from right) and classmates

## Scissors for Seizures

Our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual "Scissors for Seizures" fundraising event was held on Sunday, April 5, 2009 at **Elite Image Hair and Spa** and at **Hair Junkies** on Laurier Avenue.



Elite Image staff

In addition to the stylish cuts given at both salons, there was a 50/50 draw, silent auction items, prize draws, a barbecue, and sandwiches and fruit trays.



Hair Junkies staff

This was a wonderful event that resulted in just over \$10,000 raised for Epilepsy Ottawa-Carleton.

A special thanks to Ann and Khodar Abdel-Hussein and Fadi and Lee-Anne Assaad and their staff who donated their time and hair cutting expertise! Sincere thanks also to our generous supporters for their prize donations.



EOC President Peter Andrews with 50/50 winner Bruno Carlone



Prizes at Hair Junkies

## Pancake Breakfast

On February 24, 2009 the staff and students at **St. Joseph's High School** in Barrhaven hosted their annual pancake breakfast for epilepsy.

The event was a big success and raised over \$3,200 in support of our programs and services.

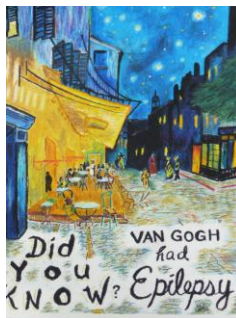


Pancake breakfast at St. Joseph's High School

In addition to the general logistics of organizing this event, students in science, health, and marketing also learned about and became more aware of epilepsy and seizure disorders.

The art department held a poster competition based on the theme **Famous People with Epilepsy**. Wallack's donated prizes of art materials for the winners of the poster contest.

In addition to the staff and students, EOC would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of Sue and Rick Farrah to this event.



A winning poster



Winning artists for poster competition

## Mousa Abdel-Hussein Memorial Award

Epilepsy Ottawa-Carleton established this award in 2007, and it is given to a graduating student who has contributed to and supported multiculturalism at **St. Patrick High School** and the surrounding community.

The recipient of this year's award was **Carmela Spartico** at St. Patrick's High School graduation held in June.

## Other Epilepsy Awareness Events

Karen Fisher had an information table at the Almonte Hospital during Nurses Week in May, and raised \$200.00 for Epilepsy Ottawa-Carleton.

Epilepsy Ottawa-Carleton also participated at the Vista Centre's Brain Injury Awareness Day on June 22, 2009.

## International News

### Special Soccer Event for Epilepsy

The International League against Epilepsy (ILAE) in collaboration with the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) is pleased to announce a special event at the semi-final matches of the UEFA European Under-21 Championship Final Tournament. The showcased soccer matches took place on June 26, 2009 at Goteborg and Helsingborg, Sweden.

The event consisted of two short matches played by teams made up mostly of players with epilepsy from European countries. The main purpose was to emphasize that persons with epilepsy are entitled to and able to live a normal life and to engage fully in social and sports activities and to perform just as well as people without epilepsy.



### Creative Sparks

For centuries there has been an important connection between art and epilepsy, both in the representation of the condition through art and literature, and as depicted in the artistic endeavours of persons with epilepsy. This community of artists with epilepsy uses their artistic talents as a way of describing their epilepsy, the sensation of having a seizure, or how their lives are affected by epilepsy.

[www.creativesparks-ep.com](http://www.creativesparks-ep.com) is a new website devoted to works created by persons with epilepsy.

### Ambassadors for Epilepsy

**Dr. Warren Blume**, Professor Emeritus at the University of Western Ontario and Co-founder of the Canadian League against Epilepsy, has been awarded the *Ambassador for Epilepsy* award by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League against Epilepsy (ILAE). Dr. Blume is also Past President of the American Clinical Neurophysiology Society.



Dr. Warren Blume

The Award recognizes outstanding personal contributions to activities that advance the cause of epilepsy. The Award carries no monetary value but it does reflect international peer recognition and it is given for the lifetime of the recipient.

## Employment News



The **Canadian Society for Social Development (CSSD)** is working to provide Internet-based entrepreneurial training and web design training for persons experiencing barriers to employment, including people with disabilities. If you have an interest in becoming self employed, have some basic computer skills, find it difficult to work outside your home, are unable to attend regular training programs, and have a desire to learn and strive for your own independence, please see the [CSSD website](http://www.cssd-web.org) for more information.



The **Canadian Abilities Foundation** has partnered with the Workopolis NicheNetwork in launching a new online job board [www.jobs.abilities.ca](http://www.jobs.abilities.ca).

This will help job seekers reach employers that value diversity, equity, and accessibility. Visit [www.jobs.abilities.ca](http://www.jobs.abilities.ca) now to add your resume or post a job.



The **Ontario March of Dimes** provides employment services to help people with disabilities develop employment plans, prepare for work, overcome employment barriers, and return to the workforce, through contractual agreements and partnerships with the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), Ontario Works (OW), and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSD).

The Ontario March of Dimes is located at:  
2249 Carling Ave., Suite 200  
Ottawa, ON K2B 7E9  
Phone: (613) 596-7999  
[www.marchofdimes.ca](http://www.marchofdimes.ca)

## Young Adult Support Group

This group of young adults, aged 18-30, meets for an informal gathering at 6:00 p.m. on the last Wednesday of each month at the EOC office on Bronson Avenue.

For young adults who are living with epilepsy, it's an opportunity to talk about their personal experiences with other people who can relate to their situation. It's not all about epilepsy; rather, it's a chance to get together with other people who are having similar experiences and just hang out.

Dates for the next support group meetings are:

August 26, 2009  
September 30, 2009  
October 28, 2009  
November 25, 2009

For more information, please contact Epilepsy Ottawa-Carleton at [info@epilepsyottawa.ca](mailto:info@epilepsyottawa.ca) or call 613-594-9255.



## Young Adult Support Group

**It's not all about epilepsy – it's an opportunity to meet and hang out with other people who are sharing similar experiences.**

## Public Information Meetings

In February a public information meeting was held, with the topic **Epilepsy after High School: Disability Services at Algonquin College and Carleton University.**

Learning Specialists and Disability Advisors Louise Legault, from Algonquin College, and Somi Tam, from Carleton University, provided a good overview of the services they offer to students with a disability such as epilepsy. Unfortunately, due to the bus strike, we had a very poor turnout.

Students with epilepsy attending Carleton University should self-identify to the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (613-520-6608) to discuss individual needs for accommodation and support services early each term, prior to the start of your academic program at Carleton.

Students with epilepsy attending Algonquin College should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities (613-727-4723, ext. 7683).

## Seizure Smart Presentations

**Learning the three “R”s of epilepsy: Recognize, Respond and Respect**

We have recently given our “Seizure Smart” presentation to the following groups:

Order of the Eastern Star, Calumet Island  
Metcalfe – Epilepsy Awareness & Euchre Night  
École Pierre Elliot Trudeau

Coming Up in September:

Public Health Nurses – School Age Health Program



Volunteer Kevin Drysdale presenting at Metcalfe Epilepsy Awareness Night

## Income Tax Update – Service Animals

Medical expense changes for the 2008 federal income tax return provide that you can claim amounts paid to purchase, care for, and maintain a service animal specially trained to assist an individual who is severely affected by autism or epilepsy.

Reasonable travel expenses incurred for the individual to attend a school, institution, or other place that trains the individual in the handling of the service animal are also eligible. See Guide RC4064, Medical and Disability Related Information, at: [www.cra-arc.gc.ca](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca)

## Anti-Seizure Drugs May Raise Cardiovascular Risks

Two of the most commonly prescribed anti-seizure medications – phenytoin (Dilantin) and carbamazepine (Tegretol) – may raise patients' risks of cardiovascular disease (CVD), according to study findings published online in the *Annals of Neurology*.

In the study, 34 epilepsy patients taking either phenytoin or carbamazepine were taken off these medications and instead given one of two newer anti-seizure drugs, lamotrigine (Lamictal) or levetiracetam (Keppra). Six weeks after the patients' medications were changed, their levels of total cholesterol, non-HDL ("bad") cholesterol, triglycerides, and C-reactive protein (CRP), a marker for systemic inflammation, all declined significantly.

The study authors say that, while further investigation is needed, their findings may help physicians choose medications for epilepsy patients, especially those who have a known risk or family history of CVD. The results also have implications for patients who are prescribed phenytoin or carbamazepine for "off-label" use to treat conditions such as bipolar disorder, trigeminal neuralgia (facial nerve pain), depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and restless legs syndrome.

Source: Women's Health Advisor, May 2009

## Epilepsy and Driving Restrictions

One of the most difficult restrictions for people living with seizure conditions is not being able to drive. If you live in Ontario and have epilepsy, you may not drive if you:

- Experience uncontrollable seizures;
- Have had seizures in the past 12 months;
- Are presently taking anti-seizure medication that causes drowsiness or poor muscle control;
- Require medication to prevent seizures but persistently drink alcohol to excess, or do not comply with a physician's anti-seizure medication recommendations.

*The Highway Traffic Act* is enforced by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO). Section 203 of the Act requires that all legally qualified medical practitioners must report to the Registrar of Motor Vehicles the name, address, and clinical condition of any patient sixteen years or older who is suffering from a medical condition that may make it dangerous for the person to operate a motor vehicle.

The Canadian Medical Association published the "Physician's Guide to Driver Examination" to assist physicians in determining which conditions may make it dangerous to drive safely. The Guide is available at: [www.cma.ca/index](http://www.cma.ca/index).

Under section 10 of the guide, people with epilepsy may drive any class of vehicle if they have been seizure-free for a period up to five years on a commercial license, with or without anti-convulsive medication. For holders of a "G" class license, people with epilepsy may drive if they have been seizure free for a lesser period. The MTO requires that you submit a "satisfactory medical report" from your doctor that clearly states that you are no longer a risk to drive and that your medical condition is under control. For further information, contact 1-800-268-1481.

Source: Epilepsy and the Law, Epilepsy Ontario



## Epilepsy Ottawa-Carleton

Suite 207  
211 Bronson Avenue  
Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5

PHONE:  
(613) 594-9255  
Toll Free: 1-866-374-5377

FAX:  
(613) 594-4971

E-MAIL:  
[info@epilepsyottawa.ca](mailto:info@epilepsyottawa.ca)

WEB:  
[www.epilepsyottawa.ca](http://www.epilepsyottawa.ca)

### DISCLAIMER

Material contained in this newsletter concerning epilepsy research, treatment, patient experiences, and summaries of speakers' topics is solely for informational purposes.

Please consult your Family Doctor/Neurologist for medical advice.

## Epilepsy Awareness Bracelets

Epilepsy Lavender Bracelets are available at the EOC office and at our public information meetings for \$3 each. The lavender colour symbolizes the feeling of isolation and seclusion that people living with epilepsy and seizure disorder often experience.

Together we can end this isolation!

**Wear a bracelet to show your support!**

### EOC Volunteers Needed!

Two or three volunteers are needed to help with the monthly Public Information Meetings. Duties would include welcoming members, introducing the speakers, setting up the meeting room (arranging chairs, tables, snacks, etc.), staffing the registration table, and more.

For our Social Committee, volunteers are needed to plan and organize two yearly EOC social events – the December Christmas party and the June Social and Volunteer Recognition event.

A commitment of time (three hours) on the specific meeting dates is required. The meetings are held on the first non-holiday Monday of each month, except for January, July, and August.

Please let us know if you can help by contacting us at 613-594-9255 or [info@epilepsyottawa.ca](mailto:info@epilepsyottawa.ca).

### E-mail Addresses

To help keep administrative costs to a minimum, we request that you consider providing our office with your e-mail address.

This will allow us to provide you with electronic copies of the newsletter and allow us to also provide you with timely information regarding upcoming events, etc.

EOC respects your privacy and will not share your e-mail address with third parties.

### Donations

EOC has registered with **Canada Helps** ([www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org)), a secure credit card processing service, to process donations to Epilepsy Ottawa-Carleton. You can donate any amount or sign up for a monthly donation plan. An instant tax receipt from Canada Helps will be emailed to you. A list of donors will be made available to our organization.

You may access Canada Helps through our own website at [www.epilepsyottawa.ca](http://www.epilepsyottawa.ca).

### Gift Acknowledgment

Epilepsy Ottawa-Carleton would like to acknowledge the support of the **F.K. Morrow Foundation** for their monetary gift of \$3,000. Their gift is truly appreciated and will be used to support the office administration.

F.K. Morrow  
Foundation

### Wedding Donations

Congratulations to **Jeff and Danielle** who were married on June 20, 2009!

In lieu of wedding favours for their guests, Jeff and Danielle chose a special way to say "Thank you" for sharing their wedding day by making donations in their honour to Epilepsy Ottawa-Carleton.

We sincerely appreciate the gesture, and we wish Jeff and Danielle much happiness in their life together!