

IMPACT REPORT



INTRODUCTION

In 2022, we witnessed the transformative power of your generosity. Your contributions, alongside the unwavering dedication of our compassionate staff and volunteers, made a lasting impact on the lives of those living with epilepsy. The positive ripple effects of your involvement extend far and wide, touching the hearts and lives of those battling epilepsy and their loved ones. You play an invaluable role in lightening the burdens they carry, providing them with hope, support, and a sense of belonging.

As the world emerged from a period of isolation and virtual connections, Epilepsy Ottawa resumed community events in 2022. Purple Day in Byward Market was a celebration of human connection, where clients, volunteers, and staff came together in person, rekindling bonds and fostering genuine relationships within the epilepsy community. The joy of laughter, the warmth of companionship, and the absence of screens reminded us all of the beauty of shared experiences.

Epilepsy Ottawa's Seizure Smart facilitated inclusive classrooms and steadfast support for students with epilepsy. In 2022, the program experienced exponential growth, reaching more students and educators than ever before. These presentations unravel the mysteries of epilepsy, empowering attendees to assist during seizures and fostering a comprehensive understanding of when a seizure becomes a medical emergency. Seizure Smart's influence extends beyond classrooms, instilling confidence in teachers to support students with epilepsy, enabling academic and social success.

As we move forward, Epilepsy Ottawa remains resolute in our commitment to enhance the quality of life for people with epilepsy and their loved ones. Together, hand in hand, we will continue making profound differences, ensuring that no one faces the challenges of epilepsy alone.



OUR YEAR BY THE *numbers*

524
active clients

269
accessed clients
services,
including

198
attended our
support groups and
social activities

144
one-time calls and
emails

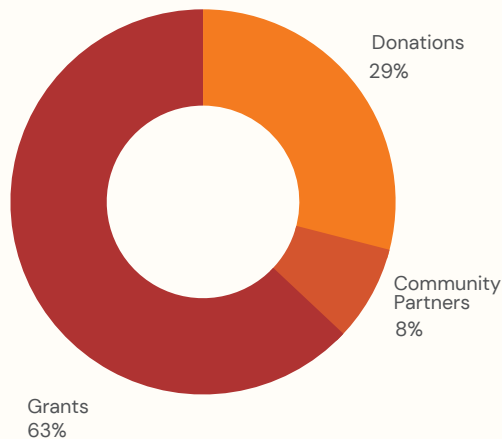


38
presentations

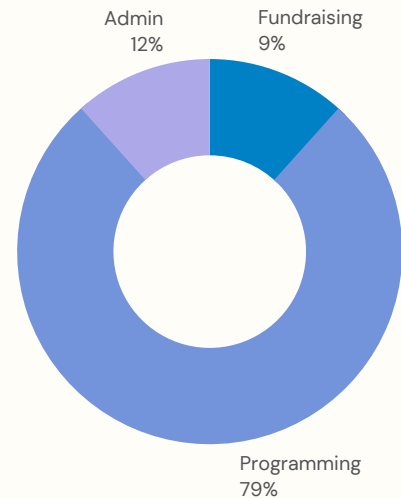
reaching:
176 teachers
653 students
40 other

That's 869 people in total, an increase of 95% compared to 2021.

2022 Sources of Revenue



2022 Operating Expenses



DON'S JOURNEY: FINDING SUPPORT AND NEW STRENGTHS



Don's resilience shines through when he talks about facing the challenges of epilepsy. He experienced a profound shift in his life after his diagnosis; he was forced into retirement, lost his driver's license, and struggled with his memory. "I wasn't the same person I was before", he recalls. He lost cherished memories like family vacations and falling in love with his wife. In the face of this deep loss, Don found the resolve to accept his circumstances and focus on treasuring the present moments.

One of the toughest challenges Don faced was navigating the shifting landscape of his emotions and its impact on his relationships with his family. Don explains, "I couldn't be the dad that could walk through a wall and help their kids. I wasn't that man anymore." He used to bottle up his emotions, but he could no longer do that. He explains, "I was told your bucket is full and it overflowed. And this is where it came out." While grappling with this new way of experiencing and reacting to the world, Don found solace in Epilepsy Ottawa.

Our UPLIFT program became a safe haven for Don to share his vulnerabilities. He admits, "It's sometimes easier to talk to others about your feelings than it is to your own family because I don't feel as vulnerable." With the help of this program, Don improved communication with his family. He now shares his feelings more openly instead of holding everything inside.

Don has a message for others struggling with epilepsy and the profound impact it has on all aspects of life: "You're not alone." Epilepsy Ottawa stands as a beacon of hope, offering crucial support, education, and understanding to individuals navigating the challenges of epilepsy. By sharing his story, Don encourages others to seek the help they need and reminds us all of the importance of community in overcoming life's toughest battles.



SANDI REGGLER: CREATING A SEIZURE SMART GENERATION

Sandi Reggler was a passionate advocate for epilepsy awareness long before she became an Epilepsy Educator. In fact, that's how she became involved with Epilepsy Ottawa after her daughter was diagnosed with epilepsy. "We wanted her classmates to learn about epilepsy and how to help if she had a seizure at school, so we contacted Epilepsy Ottawa and booked a presentation," Sandi says.

Since she joined the Epilepsy Ottawa team and began doing Seizure Smart presentations like the one her daughter's class received, her belief in the program's impact has grown. One of the most rewarding aspects of her job is seeing the students' interest and curiosity during the presentations. "The kids are very engaged, they ask questions and share ideas of how they can help someone having a seizure, what they can do," she shares with enthusiasm. She can see the students gain confidence in their ability to assist their friends with epilepsy.



Sandi enjoys educating young people about epilepsy and helping them overcome fear and stigma. "I want them to know that epilepsy is just one part of who their friend is, and that they can still do many things together," Sandi stresses, highlighting the importance of inclusion and acceptance.

As an educator and a parent, Sandi appreciates the peace of mind that Seizure Smart provides. "It makes me feel more comfortable knowing that my daughter's friends are aware of epilepsy and how to respond in case of a seizure," she says. Sandi also recognizes that education is key to preventing bullying and isolation, creating a safe and positive environment for her daughter and other children with epilepsy.

VICKI: FUNDRAISER, MENTOR, CATALYST FOR CHANGE



"When I was diagnosed with epilepsy, I felt lost and alone," Vicki shared. Epilepsy Ottawa became her guiding light, providing invaluable support through our UPLIFT program. It transformed her mindset, empowering her to reframe her thoughts and embrace a more optimistic outlook.

Inspired by the support she received, Vicki was determined to give back. Despite a postponed event due to the pandemic, she organized a birthday fundraiser for Epilepsy Ottawa on social media the following year. Surpassing her \$1,000 goal, the fundraiser raised an astonishing \$1,400, proving that every act of kindness counts.

Buoyed by the success, Vicki aimed higher this year, hoping to raise \$1,500 and spread epilepsy awareness. With contributions from friends, family, and local businesses, homemade goods and donated supplies were gathered to ensure every dollar raised would benefit the cause. These efforts paid off and Vicki surpassed her goal, raising over \$1,700!

The fundraiser took place at St. John's Lutheran Church in Arnprior and Smitty's Home Hardware in Pembroke, where Vicki's community embraced her mission wholeheartedly. Baking, preserves, plant clippings, and cupcake-shaped balloon costumes added to the vibrant atmosphere. Vicki's mother played a significant role, crafting beautiful blankets that quickly found loving homes.

During the event, Vicki had a heartfelt conversation with a woman burdened by her epilepsy diagnosis. With empathy and resources from Epilepsy Ottawa, Vicki provided support, reminding her of the power of compassion and connection.

Vicki's purpose extends beyond fundraising; she aims to be a mentor, helping others navigate epilepsy's challenges and discover their inner strength. Grateful for her own personal growth, Vicki embraces each chapter of her life and serves as an inspiration to turn adversity into purpose.

Vicki's fundraisers have become catalysts for change and hope, touching the lives of many affected by epilepsy. Her story is a testament to the difference we can make together.



BUILDING A *brighter* FUTURE

Epilepsy Ottawa is committed to continuing its mission of improving the quality of life for those living with epilepsy or seizures. We are determined to expand our impact to serve even more individuals and families in our community. However, as a non-profit organization, we rely on the generosity of donors to bring this vision to life.

Donor support has never been more critical as we continue working to overcome the challenges of the pandemic while providing essential services and support for those affected by epilepsy. Your donations drive our capacity to expand our programs, extend our reach, and provide invaluable resources and assistance to our clients.

With your support, we can educate students and educators about epilepsy, foster vibrant support groups and social events for individuals and families, and passionately advocate for greater awareness and understanding of epilepsy within our community. By backing us, you break down barriers to care, ensuring that every person in our community has access to the essential resources needed to navigate their epilepsy journey with confidence.

Thank you for being an integral part of our Epilepsy Ottawa community. Your generosity has made a profound impact and will continue to bring solace and strength to those who need it most.



OUR *vision*

Creating a community where persons affected by epilepsy or seizure disorders are empowered and supported to live life to the fullest, free of stigma and barriers.

OUR *mission*

Epilepsy Ottawa is a not-for-profit, charitable agency dedicated to improving the quality of life for those living with epilepsy or seizure disorders and those closest to them through support services, education, advocacy, and on-going public awareness.

Epilepsy Ottawa provides services to those affected by epilepsy in the Ottawa region, including the wider rural communities (Lanark County, Renfrew County, Prescott-Russell County, and Stormont Dundas & Glengarry Counties).

About 10,000 people in this area have been diagnosed with epilepsy. The effect of an epilepsy diagnosis goes beyond the individual; it impacts the entire family.



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