

NO MORE SILENT VOICES!

BREAKING THE SILENCE OF EPILEPSY

A publication of The Epilepsy Center

Winter 2012

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“A word from the Chief Executive Officer”

2011 was a “come back” year for The Epilepsy Center. We had a full year filled with many activities. In May we hosted *Living with Epilepsy Part II*. This conference took place at Parkview Community Hospital and was facilitated by Dr. Diane Stein. Along with covering the general aspects of epilepsy she also spoke about the importance of a proper diet. Dr. Stein brought animation and excitement to a sometimes difficult topic.

September took us to Inland Regional Center located in San Bernardino. There we hosted *The Cycle of Epilepsy*. This conference was facilitated by Dr. Faisal Qazi and also covered all aspects of epilepsy. Along with Dr. Qazi’s engaging discussion on epilepsy we also had a panel of experts answering questions about driving, school, medical therapies, and more.

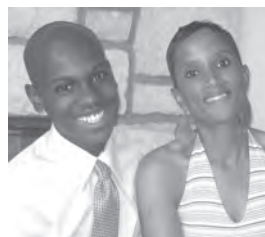
In October we hosted our annual Epilepsy Unity Walk. Our wonderful supporters walked to the music of Epic Entertainment as they raised money for our 1st weekend camp.

In November we honored National Epilepsy Awareness Month by hosting our annual Candlelight Jazz Celebration. This event took place at Mardi Gras in the City of San Bernardino. Our jazz musician Skip Johnson played his saxophone and guitar, and sang to a full house. Along with these sweet sounds we honored many of our past sponsors, speakers, and supporters. The evening was filled with reflection and appreciation of our local community’s acceptance of the epilepsy population.

There is still lots to do. We are working hard to find funding for our May Camp and encourage you to help. In 2012 we need to work harder to spread the word and break the silence of epilepsy. Join us in this quest by making copies of our event flyers and posting them in doctors’ offices, libraries, churches, etc. It will take all of us to make a difference.

Thank you all for your support

Cyberonics
IEHP
Molina Healthcare



Luana Garrison
CEO/Founder

Christopher Morris
Co-founder



Purple Day-March 26th

Purple Day was founded in 2008 by nine-year-old Cassidy Megan of Nova-Scotia, Canada. Cassidy's dream is to inform people from around the world about epilepsy.



How can you help?
On Monday, March 26th:

- Wear your purple to help promote epilepsy awareness.
- Have purple day fundraisers from selling cupcakes to pizza parties with proceeds donated to Christopher's Camp.
- Spread the word about epilepsy.



Help Cassidy and The Epilepsy Center
Break the Silence of Epilepsy.

Christopher Morris TEC's Co-Founder

2012 is a very big year for our Co-Founder, Christopher Morris. On January 16, 2012, he will turn 18 years old and on Wednesday, May 30, 2012, he will be graduating from high school. He has managed to overcome so many obstacles and grow into a respectable young man that now speaks to others about his epilepsy. As Christopher's mother I am very proud of the strides that he has made in his life. Christopher is now about to embark on a new chapter of his life. One that can be filled with fear of the unknown as well as new opportunities. Chris is ready for new challenges and invites all of you to accept his challenge. He is requesting that each of you donate to The Epilepsy Center in the month of January. No amount is too large or too small. All proceeds will go towards Christopher's Camp. Please send your donation to 6185 Magnolia Ave., #63, Riverside CA 92506.

2012 Empowerment Conference

Epilepsy Empowerment Conference will take place on Saturday, February 18, 2012 from 9:30am-3:00pm at The Arlington Avenue Church of The Nazarene, 5475 Arlington Ave., Riverside CA 92504.

Participants will have the opportunity to choose one session each hour. This conference has something for everyone. The doctors facilitating the first two sessions will be discussing the medical aspects of epilepsy. In addition, the topic of Epilepsy and Behaviors will be discussed. Participants will be given clarity on some of the behaviors such as depression and aggression that are sometimes associated with epilepsy. The question of "Is it a seizure or a behavior?" will be probed.

The second hour will cover such topics as caregiver burnout, teen issues, driving, special education and accessing community resources. We are very excited about each of these topics, especially our teen issues. Stacy Everson's session will be an eye-opening experience for our parents. She will give insight into the minds of their teenagers. Such as their fears, pain, and concerns. She will teach parents how to push pass their own insecurities and allow them to concentrate on their teenagers' needs.

The third hour will offer two sessions, We are very excited this year to have Greg Nicholson talking to us about Developing Plans for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Mr. Nicholson is an amazing advocate for those with these challenges. Disability Rights Legal Center will teach participants about their rights and how to exercise them.

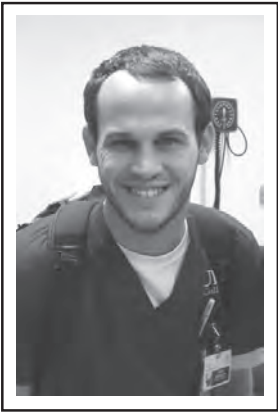
The last sessions are tailored to meet the needs of different groups. Adults, teens, and parents will have the opportunity to participate in their own round table discussion. Each session will discuss things that are critical to that particular population. These sessions will be the most interactive of all the sessions. Each session will be governed by our participants.

For the kiddos, we are offering free childcare for children from 3 months old to 12 years old. Our childcare is a kidz zone offering the opportunity to participate in many activities such as arts and crafts, video games, interactive games, and movies.

Come out and be empowered at this free conference. We welcome school staff, business owners, parents, caregivers, and all of those that are affected by epilepsy. Lunch will be provided. Participants are asked to pick their sessions prior to the conference. See enclosed flyer. Please RSVP @ 951-281-9892 or TheEpilepsyCenter@yahoo.com by Friday, February 10, 2012.

Epilepsy Unity Walk





Outstanding Citizen

In this issue of No More Silent Voices we honor Tyler McIlrath as our Outstanding Citizen. Tyler is the son of two of our former board members, Desiree and Jim McIlrath. Through his parents I met Tyler a few years ago and was very impressed by him. Recently I spoke with Tyler's mom and she was very proud of his accomplishments. When she shared them with me I knew he had to be our next Outstanding Citizen. When I spoke with Tyler to set up this interview he was eager to share his struggles and triumphs with others. On behalf of The Epilepsy Center, thank you Tyler for sharing your life with us.

Tyler is a 24 year old young man that was diagnosed with epilepsy at the age of 7 after a fall off of a swing set. He was then diagnosed with nocturnal seizures (seizures that occur during sleep), and has been on medication ever since. These medications ranged from Dilantin to Tegretol and many others in between. For the last 10 years, Tyler has been taking Carbamazepine (generic for Tegretol).

Tyler comes from a close-knit family that has a history of epilepsy. Both his father and brother have epilepsy as well as a cousin in Kentucky that is now a very successful dentist. Through all of his struggles Tyler credits his strength to his "super mom." When Tyler speaks of his mother his face lights up like a child on Christmas morning. He explained to me that his mother originally diagnosed his father in spite of denial from doctors. On several occasions he has had the opportunity to witness his mother battling for her family's health. As I was talking to Tyler I realized this is where his strength and positive outlook on life comes from.



Through the years, Tyler has been put to the test. When he was a preteen his dream was to become a firefighter. This dream was shattered by the father of a friend, who told him that he would never be hired by the fire department with a diagnosis of epilepsy on his application. This comment affected Tyler for 2 years. It was at that point that Tyler decided not to let the negativity that surrounds epilepsy bring him down.

Through diversity and challenges Tyler has set his sights on pursuing a career in the medical field. Upon graduating from high school Tyler attended and completed

training at UEI as a medical assistant. His ultimate goal is to become a physician's assistant for a neurologist. This will allow him to comfort and help those struggling with epilepsy and other neurological disorders. As a part of his path to the future, Tyler has graciously volunteered to help at our upcoming Empowerment Conference and Christopher's Camp.

As Tyler and I were parting I asked him if he had any advice for parents. With a tone of conviction and empathy, Tyler said, "Make sure your kids are aware of the seriousness of their condition. Don't hold them back from pursuing their dreams because, in so many cases of epilepsy, their self esteem is already low. It is your job to build them up."

CHRISTOPHER'S CAMP

We are so excited to officially announce our first weekend camp. Even though I had dreamed of starting a camp for the last few years I never pursued that dream. Then, less than a year ago, my son, Christopher, asked me to start a local camp for residents in the Inland Empire.

"Someday" was just not good enough for him and so he continued to ask until I said, "Yes". Because of Christopher's persistence, the name of our weekend epilepsy camp seemed obvious to our camp committee . . . "Christopher's Camp". Christopher's Camp will take place at Camp Paivika, located in Crestline California, from Friday evening, May 18, to Sunday afternoon, May 20, 2012. This camp was designed and built specifically for people with disabilities. It is fully accessible to wheelchair users and others with special needs. It is a place that welcomes all abilities. Imagine scenic mountains surrounded by majestic pines. Along with breath taking views, this camp offers state-of-the-art amenities. The contemporary lodge is equipped with fireplaces, recreation rooms, and a spacious and inviting dining hall. This camp is for all ages. Families, care facilities, and individuals are welcome. The only requirement is that someone in your group has epilepsy.

Come out and join us for a weekend full of fun and exciting activities, such as a campfire talent show, a petting zoo, arts and crafts, and much much more. If that's not enough, you will be spoiled by the delicious food prepared by Camp Paivika's chef and the warm and cozy cabins, each offering a fireplace. Christopher's Camp will give us an opportunity to meet new friends in a relaxed atmosphere without all of the concerns and frustrations that come with the diagnosis of epilepsy. We will have staff nurses, trained counselors, and countless volunteers. Come join us and find out how big dreams come true. It will be a weekend to remember. Don't miss out on the fun.

Calendar of Events

Saturday, February 18, 2012, 9:30 am to 3:00 pm Epilepsy Empowerment Conference 2012

We will be hosting our next Empowerment Conference in a new location, Church of the Nazarene, 5475 Arlington Ave., Riverside.

We will have sessions for teens, parents, and adults. Participants will have the opportunity to pick their sessions prior to the day of the conference. Get ready for a day of information, education, and empowerment.

May 18 thru May 20, 2012 Christopher's Camp

Our 1st Epilepsy Camp will take place from Friday, May 18 thru Sunday May 20, 2012. This camp is for all of those affected by epilepsy: children, parents, siblings, adults with epilepsy, and caretakers. There is no age requirement!

There will be lots of activities for our participants, such as arts and crafts, a petting area, a camp fire talent show, and so much more.

Come out and enjoy the fun. It will take place at Camp Paivika, 600 Playground Dr., Cedarpinnes Park, CA 92322. The cost of camp will be determined by the amount of funds raised prior to the camp.

Support Group

Adults and Parents of Children with Epilepsy

Our regular support group meeting provides an opportunity for adults and parents of children with epilepsy to share ideas, experiences, and information.

Come away with new friends, more knowledge about epilepsy, and resources to help you or your child succeed.

1st Friday of every month, except Feb., 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm
Carolyn E. Wylie Center, 1st floor lobby, 4164 Brockton Ave., Riverside, CA

If you plan to attend any support group meeting, please call 951-281-9892, one week prior to the meeting.



6185 Magnolia Ave., Ste. 63, Riverside, CA 92506

EPILEPSY



EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE

A free conference offering
education and empowerment
for all those affected by epilepsy.

**Saturday, February 18, 2012
9:30 am to 3:00 pm**

**Church of the Nazarene
5475 Arlington Ave., Riverside**



Join in the fun at Camp Paivika
May 18-20

Friday

Welcome & Sign-in
Cabin assignments
Dinner

Get acquainted
"Howdy Nite"

Games
Photos
Crafts

Sunday

Pancakes!
Pine Car Races
Prizes
Packup & Goodbyes

Saturday

Rise & Shine
Breakfast
Camp Photo

Speaker Group
Nature Center
Arts & Crafts
Lunch

Petting Zoo
Make Pine Cars

Free Time w/ new friends
Campfire Showcase
Teen Scene
Adult Chat