

In this issue:

- Back to School
- Scholarship Applications
- Christmas Campaign
- Zach Rowe Horseshoe Tournament
- Spotlight
- Resources

## *Epilepsy News*

is printed quarterly by:

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## Back to School with Epilepsy

\* If your child has epilepsy pass this page along to their teacher or contact us at info@epilepsynl.com for a full copy of our guide: "The Student with Epilepsy: A Teacher's Guide".

Students with epilepsy have the same range of intelligence as other students and often epilepsy itself has no effect on intelligence or ability. However, students with epilepsy do have a higher rate of learning problems and difficulty in school as well as a lower level of achievement.

Seizures can have a profound cognitive impact on a child, and this can lead to a lot of frustration for the student, their family, and teacher. The challenges can be great, however there are things that teachers can do to make things better. Some of the most prevalent challenges to learning and behaviour as well as suggestions to minimize or overcome them follow.

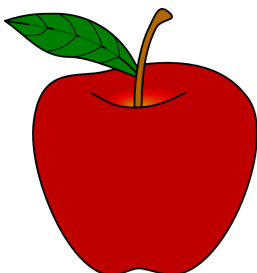
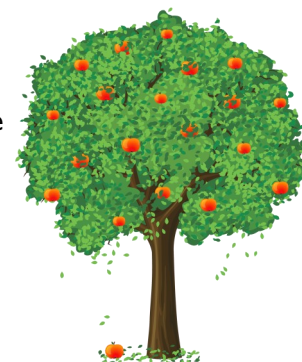
**-Anxiety:** The unpredictability of seizures and sensitized or overprotective relationships with parents and other care giving adults can result in anxiety in a student. This may affect initiative, interaction and independence in the classroom. If a teacher is calm, effective and understanding in dealing with seizures this may help to alleviate a great deal of the anxiety. Enabling the understanding and awareness of understanding other students and staff can also help take the pressure off and create a supportive learning and social environment.

**-Absenteeism:** Seizures, medical tests and treatment may result in a student missing more class time than is typical resulting in lost instruction, gaps in continuity, and less understanding of the subject by the student. Teachers can assist by assuring all missed class work is available, through the teacher directly or a classmate. Also, a willingness by the teacher to be available for additional assistance if required can be very helpful.

**- Seizures:** The actual process of having a seizure may affect learning significantly. For example, students experiencing absence seizures throughout the day will have their learning experience continuously disrupted. Memory can also be affected, potentially resulting in further learning challenges. Assigning a buddy to the student who can answer questions and explain what was missed will provide both emotional and academic support to the student.

Providing visual and written instructions and/or repeating verbal instructions can also assist.

Teachers are one of the primary role models and influences for children as they grow up. A positive attitude and understanding that a student with epilepsy can achieve just as much as any other student is very important. The impact a teacher has can be enormous and the attitude you have will be conveyed to other teachers and students, helping to raise awareness and promote an environment of inclusion and acceptance.



## Epilepsy NL Scholarships

Each year Epilepsy NL offers different scholarships to its members. The deadline is November 1st and we encourage all members to apply if they qualify.

### Zach Rowe Memorial Scholarship

The Zach Rowe Memorial Scholarship, valued at \$1000 is awarded to a student with epilepsy currently in, or about to enter, their first year of Post Secondary studies. It honours Zach Rowe, recipient of an ENL scholarship in 2006, who passed away as a result of a seizure in 2009. He was 21 years old. We would like to extend our thanks to Zach's family for their events and fundraising initiatives, which support this scholarship.



\*In 2016 we had dual winners of the Zach Rowe Memorial Scholarship! Pictured are Tanner Hann of Kippens receiving his scholarship from Board Member Bernie Larkin and Karen Grainger of St. John's receiving her scholarship from Executive Director Gail Dempsey.

### Board of Directors

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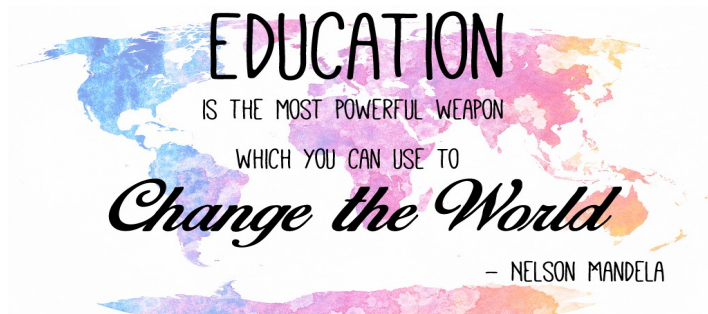
### Jim Hierlihy Memorial Scholarship

The Jim Hierlihy Memorial Scholarship, valued at \$1000, is awarded to a mature student with epilepsy who has taken the initiative to return to studies to advance in their present job or train for a new career. It honours one of ENL's incredible volunteers, Jim Hierlihy, who was on the Executive of the ENL support group in Gander and a great supporter of all those living with seizures.

### Epilepsy NL Family Scholarship

The Epilepsy NL Family Scholarship, valued at \$1000 is awarded to a student who has a family member diagnosed with epilepsy, and currently in, or about to enter, their first year of Post Secondary studies.

\*For more information, or to apply, please visit: [www.epilepsynl.com](http://www.epilepsynl.com)  
Or contact us: (709) 722-0502



## Thank You: Christmas Campaign

We would like to give our many thanks to everyone who has previously participated in our Christmas Campaign. Our Christmas Campaign allowed businesses, family, friends or community centres to spread some cheer by displaying their messages of love and holiday greetings on our LED screen located on Kenmount Road.

This year's Christmas Campaign is just around the corner, and for a \$50.00 tax deductible donation to Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador we would like to thank you publicly, over 50 times, on our full colour digital display. Thirty-seven thousand vehicles drive past our LED sign every 24 hours and your greeting will run a minimum of 50 times over Christmas and Boxing Day. Your donation will be used to provide programs and services on behalf of the more than 10,000 men, women and children living with epilepsy in Newfoundland and Labrador.

\*To reserve a spot, or to learn more, please contact us by November 31st by emailing [info@epilepsynl.com](mailto:info@epilepsynl.com). Space is limited and will be reserved on a first come first served basis.



## Thank You: Zach Rowe Labour Day Horseshoe Tournament

We would like to thank all involved in the annual Zach Rowe Labour Day Horseshoe Tournament. The family of Zach Rowe welcomed friends and supporters to a fun-filled weekend in support of the Zach Rowe Memorial Scholarship through Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador. This annual scholarship, valued at \$1000, is awarded to a deserving student who has been diagnosed with epilepsy to help with their post-secondary studies.

In 2006 Zach himself was awarded one of ENL's scholarships for his own post-secondary studies, and in his application he wrote: "I have never let my disability stop me from having a normal life. All of this just makes me more determined." In 2010 Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador was honoured to introduce the Zach Rowe Memorial Scholarship, awarded each year to other students facing similar challenges with seizures.

This year the Horseshoe Tournament was a great success, with many people, live music and great food. A sincere thank you to all involved!



## Update to Seizure Classifications

The International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) is continuously working to provide classification schemes that assist in developing a common language with which the global epilepsy community can effectively communicate. The updated terminology also contributes to developing adapted treatments for each condition. In March of 2017 the ILAE released updates to the classification of the epilepsies, and the updated terminology for focal seizures is found below.



### Focal Seizures (previously called Partial seizures)

Focal seizures start in a particular site, or 'focus', within one brain hemisphere. The location of the seizure activity in the brain will determine what the seizure will look or feel like.

### Focal Aware seizures (previously called Simple Partial seizures)

During this type of seizure, a person will be alert, aware of everything that is happening, and able to have a conversation with others. People often refer to this seizure as an aura if they experience things that are not visible to others such as an unusual feeling.

### Focal Impaired Awareness seizure (previously Complex Partial seizures)

This type of focal seizure causes a change in awareness or in thinking abilities. During a focal impaired awareness seizure, a person may have trouble communicating or understanding language. Healthcare providers call these behaviours "automatisms". Some people wander during a focal impaired awareness seizure.

\*Reference ILAE Classification of the Epilepsies 2017



## I would like to help in the fight against Epilepsy

- ☐ I have made a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I would like to become a member of Epilepsy NL and my membership fee of \$5 is included
- ☐ I would like to volunteer (we need volunteers throughout the province)

Name:	Email:
Address:	
Phone:	Would you prefer email or postage?

If you would prefer to pay by credit card, please complete the following:

Account #	Type of card	Expiry Date
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Please clip and mail this form to Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador— 351 Kenmount Rd. St. John's, NL A1B 3P9 or you can email all your information to [info@epilepsynl.com](mailto:info@epilepsynl.com) to save on postage. You can also submit your form online ([www.epilepsynl.com](http://www.epilepsynl.com)) and make a payment through the DONATE button. Please make a note that the \$5 is for a membership and email your mailing address etc. to [info@epilepsynl.com](mailto:info@epilepsynl.com)

Sudoku Solution:

6	5	2	8	1	4	3	9	7
9	3	1	7	5	6	8	4	2
4	8	9	2	3	6	1	5	7
8	2	9	3	7	4	1	5	6
5	1	6	2	8	9	7	4	3
7	4	3	5	6	1	9	2	8
2	9	5	4	3	8	7	6	1
3	6	4	1	7	5	2	8	9
1	8	7	6	9	2	5	3	4



## Previously Loved Clothes and Things

Located at 351 Kenmount Road in St. John's, Previously Loved Clothes and Things is a thrift store owned and operated by Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador. With clothing, footwear, furniture, books, cookware, collector's items and more there is something for everyone, and shopping at Previously Loved Clothes and Things helps provide services and resources to the more than 10,000 people living with epilepsy in Newfoundland and Labrador. Did we mention that because we are a charity you never pay tax, and 100% of the proceeds go directly back into ENL? Unique items, great prices and giving back to your community? It's a win-win! Do you have a donation to make? Drop it off to our store or call 709-722-5571 to arrange a pickup.



## Disclaimer

The materials contained in the *Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador Newsletter* are to provide general information about epilepsy to the public. The information presented is not intended as medical or legal advice. Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador, its employees, board members, medical advisers, volunteers, agents and sponsors do not assume responsibility for inaccuracies or omissions or for the consequences from the use of the information obtained in this newsletter. Epilepsy Newfoundland and Labrador is not liable for any outcome or damages resulting from information in either a direct or indirect form. We recognize that each individual's experience of epilepsy is different. Consult your physician and/or neurologist with any questions you may have.

### Attention:

**People with epilepsy should never discontinue anti-seizure medications or make changes in activities unless advised to do so by an attending physician.**

## Share Your Story

Our website has a great photo gallery for you, your family and friends to share all of your great memories. Do you have a story you would like to share about your accomplishments or experience with epilepsy? We would love to hear them!

Social media is covered in pictures of people holding signs displaying the amount of time they have been seizure-free.

Here at ENL, we want to celebrate with you and show your great accomplishments.

We also want to tell your stories— how do you find travelling? Being a parent? Working or not working?

-How is your life without driving or how is your memory?

-How do you find people react to your disorder?

-How do you not let epilepsy run your life? Do you run marathons? Go hiking? Have you done something lately that you never thought you would do?

Let's share these stories with one another and help end the stigma associated with epilepsy and seizures.

**Send us your story! Submit it online: [www.epilepsynl.com](http://www.epilepsynl.com) Or email us: [info@epilepsynl.com](mailto:info@epilepsynl.com)**



## Spotlight On: Dancer Devin Larsen

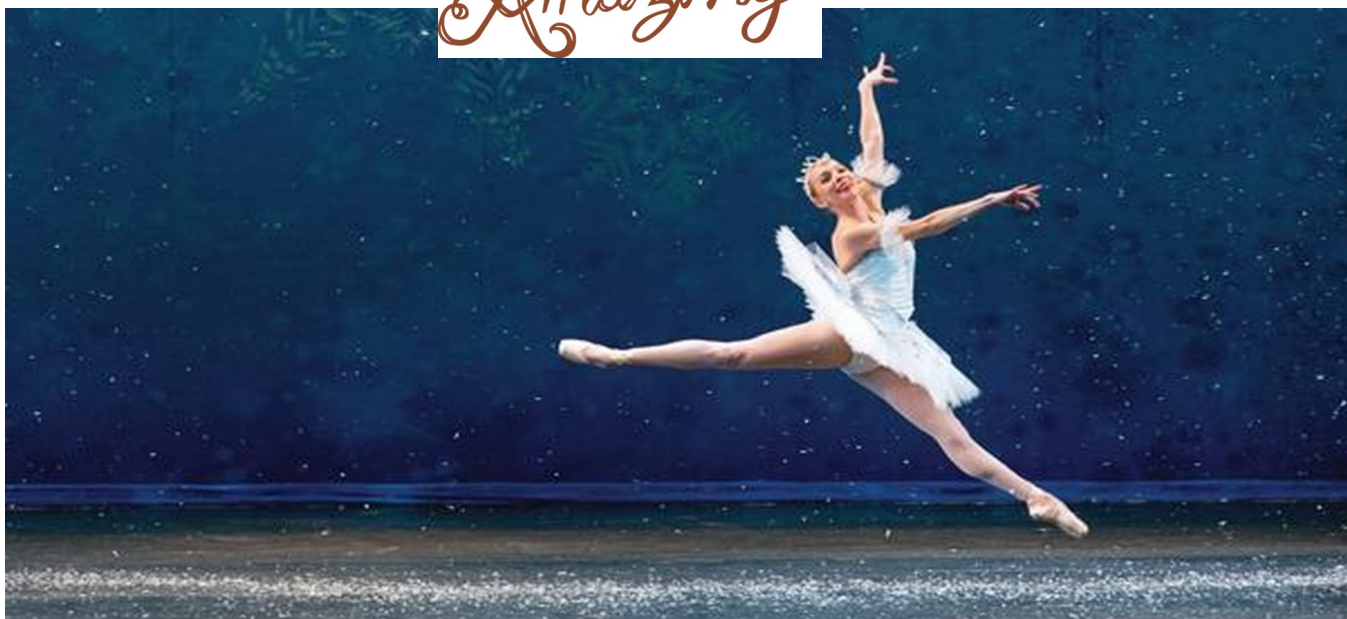
\* Reference: *Pointe Magazine* 2017

Devin Larsen currently holds her dream job, a ballerina in the Oklahoma City Ballet. After a summer intensive program led to an apprentice contract, she was promoted to the corps de ballet for the 2017 season. With her everyday focus on personal growth and improvement she is steadily working towards dancing her favourite roles, including Juliet and Cinderella.

At the age of 3, Larsen was diagnosed with epilepsy. She averaged about 20 focal impaired awareness (previously called complex partial) seizures per day and eventually began to also have generalized tonic clonic seizures. Until she was nearly 10 she was on four medications and experiencing several side effects, including a loss of coordination and balance. The seizures had an enormous impact on Larsen's childhood, and the impacts were felt hugely by her family as well. When Larsen was 8 years old her brother was enrolled in and enjoying dance, so her mother decided to enroll Devin as well.

Larsen began training at ballet West Academy at age 8, and at the time was falling behind her peers: "I had to play catch up and work really hard." Larsen remembers. During the time of her seizures she had lost about three years in cognitive development, leaving aspects of dance such as memorization of choreography extremely difficult. Larsen became seizure free shortly before her 10<sup>th</sup> birthday and continued training at Ballet West for 12 years. Upon approaching graduation she completed extra training and auditioned many times without receiving a contract, yet she persisted in her journey and overcame the many obstacles she faced to attain her goals: "I told myself I needed to make this happen no matter what", she says. Today she still works extremely hard to continue on with her career, and although at times she does feel frustrated she reminds herself of all that she overcame to achieve her dream: "it is a blessing to be where I am...I am finally on the path I want to be".

*Amazing*



## Resources

### Empower

Empower, the Disability Resource Centre, is a consumer-controlled organization committed to providing supports, resources, and opportunities for empowerment, which enables persons with disabilities to make informed choices about their lives.

For more information visit their site: <http://www.empowernl.ca/>



### Channel Peer Support Warm Line

Consumers' Health Awareness Network Newfoundland And Labrador (CHANNAL) is the only consumer-led mental health organization in the province.

CHANNAL's aim is to combat isolation for those living with mental illness, to provide a forum for mental health consumers' concerns, to educate the public on issues relevant to mental health consumers and to offer advocacy, social and emotional support to mental health consumers.

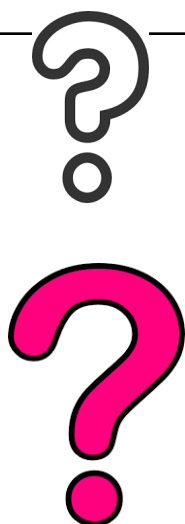
If you are looking for support the line is open from 11 am to 11 pm

**CALL TOLL FREE: 1-855- 753-2560**



### Brain Teasers: Sudoku

The rules to play Sudoku are: Fill in the blanks so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contain one instance of each of the numbers 1 through 9. Sudoku is a fun and effective way of stretching your brain power!



			2	6		7		1
6	8			7			9	
1	9				4	5		
8	2		1				4	
		4	6		2	9		
	5				3		2	8
		9	3				7	4
	4			5			3	6
7		3		1	8			



Solution on page 4.