

Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog

Editor's Note: Content presented in the Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog is for awareness and informational purposes only, and it is not meant to be a diagnostic tool.

Why is November the greatest month in the world of epilepsy? Easy! November is Epilepsy Awareness Month. What is epilepsy awareness? What does it look like? What does it sound like? What does it feel like? In this edition of the Carpe Diem-Seize the Day Blog, I want our readers to be aware of how Epilepsy Alliance Ohio (EAO) fulfills its mission of being dedicated to supporting those impacted by epilepsy in our local communities by confronting the spectrum of challenges created by seizures and to **Seize Hope** every day.

Additionally, I want to convey concrete evidence of what epilepsy awareness looks like and sounds like. Awareness leads to enlightenment. Enlightenment leads to empowerment. Empowerment leads to choice. Choice leads to change. Awareness is a process and cannot be accomplished with a slogan.

For Epilepsy Alliance Ohio, epilepsy awareness is more than just a slogan. It is a two-pronged approach. Today, I want to share with our readers what EAO does for the epilepsy community. Secondly, you will discover the epilepsy awareness education that Epilepsy Alliance Ohio provides to let the public become aware of epilepsy. As James Thurber, famous American author once said, “Let us not look back in anger, nor forward in fear, but around in awareness.”

Listed below are the services that Epilepsy Alliance Ohio provides to those impacted everyday by epilepsy.

- We have the Facebook Live sessions presented with up-to-date and vital topics presented by noted epilepsy professionals.
- Each year EAO has hosts Living Well Conferences in Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati.
- EAO has conducted a number of Art Therapy groups in the past few years both with adults and children.
- We assist at the hospital levels with transition from pediatric to adult care providers as well as just being in clinic to meet families whose child have just been diagnosed, attending follow up appointments, and providing folders of information.
- Our counseling services are provided at no charge. EAO counselors provide individual, family, and couples counseling.
- Advocacy services are provided for children, teens, and youth, and adults.
- EAO personnel provides assistance for parents when navigating Individualized Education Program and 504 Plan meetings at school. Additionally, parents received special education guidance for their children.

- Support Groups for those impacted by epilepsy are provided each month by EAO personnel.
- A Mom's Facebook Support Group is provided for mothers of children impacted by epilepsy.
- Information about epilepsy and epilepsy awareness activities are posted on the EAO's Twitter, Epilepsy Alliance Ohio Website, and Epilepsy Alliance Ohio Facebook page.
- EAO hosts Camp Flame Catcher. Camp Flame Catcher is uniquely designed to give children with epilepsy the typical camping experience that their peers enjoy with the added guidance of trained epilepsy specialists to care for their specific needs.
- Each Monday the Carpe Diem-Seize the Day Blog is published on EAO's social media platforms. A different topic, such as up-to-date information about epilepsy, self-care for caretakers, mental health tips and strategies for those impacted by epilepsy and their caretakers, and how the brain works, appear each week.
- EAO publishes editions of its Newsletter periodically throughout the year.
- College scholarships offered to graduating seniors impacted by epilepsy.
- Epilepsy Alliance Ohio manages four residential group homes for adults impacted by epilepsy and/or developmental disabilities. Those group homes are Arborview, Benton Center, Cedar Creek, and Sycamore Vista all of which are in Clermont County. The clients who live in the group homes are trained for independent living in the areas of community access, personal and social adjustment, practical academics, and home management. The staff at each of our group homes includes Home Managers, Registered Nurses, Qualified Developmental Disability Professionals, Direct Care Staff, and they share a Director of Residential Services and a Director of Activities.

Another example of how Epilepsy Alliance Ohio fulfills its mission of supporting those impacted by epilepsy in local communities is through their many awareness activities hosted throughout the community. EAO believes in the power of their awareness and education activities. Nathaniel Branden says, "The first step toward change is awareness. The second step is acceptance." It is only through awareness that EAO can work towards removing barriers for those impacted by epilepsy.

Listed below are the activities that EAO engages in to raise the awareness of the public about epilepsy within our local communities.

- EAO has multiple curricula for awareness and education to a wide array of audiences such as first responders, day care personnel, nursing home employees, students (grades 4-12), teachers, school nurses, teachers, bus drivers, businesses, and non-profit organizations.
- Personnel from EAO present epilepsy awareness at local and state conferences.

- Epilepsy Alliance America will be a key contributing partner in EAO's educational programs and continued epilepsy awareness activities.

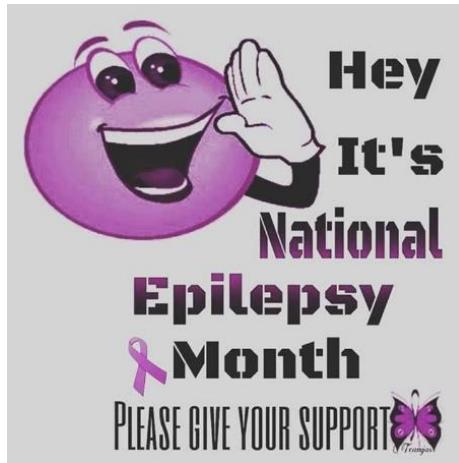
- At the Seize Hope Gala and the Buckeyes for Hope gatherings the public is invited to help EAO honor those individuals and companies that have supported us throughout the years which in turn is awareness activity.
- EAO's fundraisers always have an awareness component embedded within them.
 - Each year EAO sponsors Stroll at the Polaris Mall in Columbus Ohio. During Stroll there are treasure hunt stops where EAO personnel or volunteers will ask questions to participants that are related to epilepsy.
 - During our distance races and golf outing, EAO places signs along the course that gives facts about epilepsy.
 - Sand Volleyball helps to raise awareness about epilepsy to the public and local community.
- Personnel from Epilepsy Alliance Ohio regularly attends Health Fairs, Community Fairs, and School Ready-Fests to raise awareness about epilepsy. Epilepsy related EAO materials, Seizure First Aid posters, Seizure First Aid Bookmarks, and Seize Hope bracelets are distributed to the public.
- EAO presents the puppet show Kids on the Block for students in grades K-3.

The question of what does epilepsy awareness look like and sound like has been answered. The final question to be answered is what does epilepsy awareness feel like. Epilepsy awareness feels like:

- the weight of the world being lifted off your shoulders because people finally realize there is more to epilepsy than just seizures.
- the stigma of epilepsy is finally gone.
- the recognition that epilepsy impacts more people than cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and cystic fibrosis.
- people understanding that you are not faking being sick, but faking being well.
- everybody is doing their part to find a cure for epilepsy.

Dr. Phil says, "Awareness without action is worthless." During November, wear purple to demonstrate your epilepsy awareness. Increasing epilepsy awareness is one of the most critical issues of our time.

A higher level of epilepsy awareness dictates a higher level of energy toward finding a cure for epilepsy. Utilize the services that Epilepsy Alliance Ohio provides for those who are impacted by epilepsy within our community. Help Epilepsy Alliance Ohio get into your schools, businesses, and organizations to spread epilepsy awareness. Invite one more person each week to join EAO's support groups. To help EAO in its spread of epilepsy awareness please post on your social media either each day, every other day, or once a week during November about a different aspect of living with epilepsy, and tag Epilepsy Alliance Ohio. Epilepsy awareness gives us a feeling that we have a mission and destiny to fulfill. Let's do this!



Editor's Note: The Carpe Diem – Seize the Day Blog will be distributed and posted weekly.
Always remember – **CARPE DIEM – SEIZE THE DAY!**

Steve.Hutton@epilepsy-ohio.org