2018 Year End Gift Campaign - Help Us Reach $20,000

As we near the end of 2018 we can't thank each of you enough for being a friend of the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana. As we enter this time of giving, we hope you will consider donating today to the Foundation. Your gift will make a difference for the over 153,000 children, adults, and veterans living with epilepsy in Kentucky and southern Indiana.

1 in 26 are diagnosed with epilepsy at some point in their life – please consider to help the 1.

1 gift = 1 life changed. Your tax-deductible donation will directly help the children, adults, veterans, and families touched by epilepsy throughout Kentucky and southern Indiana. No gift is too small and please know that 85¢ of each $1 of your donation will directly help make a difference so not another moment or life is lost to seizures. Donations can be made online at www.efky.org or by mail using the donation form located on page 3 of this newsletter. (Mail to: Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana, Kosair Charities Centre, 982 Eastern Parkway, Louisville, KY 40217).

Thanks to the continued generosity of our supporters we can provide education, advocacy, outreach, support services at no cost to those impacted by epilepsy and fund vital epilepsy research for individuals and families affected by epilepsy and seizures throughout Kentucky and southern Indiana. We hope you have found and continue to find comfort in knowing that you are not alone in the fight against epilepsy and remember that you have a devoted team at the Foundation who is ready and willing to offer help, hope, and support at a moment’s notice.

We hope you have a healthy and happy Holiday season and are grateful for your continued support of the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana. Thank you!

The good news is, your donation will be matched!!!! An anonymous foundation has offered to match the first $10,000 of contributions made by the end of 2018. We are grateful for this opportunity and with your donations, hope to turn $10,000 into $20,000!

To learn more about ways to donate and provide your time, talent, and/ or treasure to the Foundation, please contact Deb McGrath, Executive Director at 502-907-1532 / 866-275-1078 / dmcgrath@efky.org.

Visit www.efky.org today and help us #EndEpilepsy in 2019.
From the Executive Director

I wish you seizure-free tidings of good health and a joy-filled Holiday season as you surround yourself with family and friends! It is hard to believe that we will soon be ringing in the New Year and I wish you all the best in 2019. I have a lot of exciting things to tell you about this issue of the Illuminator, so hang tight!

It is a pleasure to announce that Cliff Vatter has joined the team at the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana (EFKY) as Director of Development. Cliff is a retired financial advisor who donated an auction item to benefit this year’s Expressions of Hope Gala. After learning about the good work of EFKY, Cliff approached me to offer his service and support to help further the Foundation’s mission. The EFKY has set an audacious goal of raising $250,000 in recognition of its 25th anniversary and Cliff has accepted the challenge.

This has been another busy year at the EFKY. Over the past 25 years, it has been a complete honor and joy for me to be of service to you and your loved ones. It has been my privilege to work to help you overcome the myriad of challenges and heartbreaking consequences caused by epilepsy and seizure disorders in Kentucky and southern Indiana. As the leader in the fight against epilepsy, my staff and I are committed to being your ally in the fight to end epilepsy.

In November, the national Epilepsy Foundation launched the “Use Your Brain to End Epilepsy” marketing campaign to increase awareness and change the conversation around epilepsy – to improve and save lives through care, advocacy, research, therapies, and education – mobilizing everyone to take action. I am so proud of the action Lyndsey Crunk took to use her brain and share her epilepsy story to advocate for other students who have been negatively impacted by having seizures in the school setting. She made it her mission to make Kentucky schools “seizure smart” through her work to get HB 147 (Lyndsey Crunk Act) passed in Kentucky earlier this year. I am excited that Kentucky is the first state to pass legislation of this kind requiring (1) all public school administrators, school nurses, counselors, and teachers to participate in a one-hour seizure recognition and response training; (2) all students with epilepsy to have a seizure action plan; and (3) the administration of any FDA approved seizure medication prescribed by the treating physician.

I am excited to share that Lyndsey’s actions caught the attention of the national Epilepsy Foundation (EF) and she was invited to be involved in the “End Epilepsy” marketing campaign! Lyndsey and her mom, Cyndi, traveled to New York City for a photo shoot and videotaping of their epilepsy story. Through this campaign, the EF is engaging other affiliates and chapters to advocate for their state to adopt legislation requiring their public schools to be “seizure smart.” The EF is honored to lead this charge and we are looking forward to seeing similar legislation adopted throughout the country to bring epilepsy out of the shadows through education and empowerment!

We are already at work for the 2019 legislative session and I am excited to announce that our annual Epilepsy Advocacy Day at the Capitol in Frankfort has been set for February 26, 2019. This is a great opportunity to come together with others to talk with your elected officials about the impact epilepsy has on you and your family. I will never forget the first time I had the opportunity to do this – sure, I was nervous, but I knew there was no one better to tell my daughter’s epilepsy story than me. It was empowering. I knew right then that our epilepsy story mattered. Your epilepsy story matters too, and it can help make a difference for you and the over 153,000 children and adults living with epilepsy in Kentuckiana. The EFKY will take care of setting up appointments with your legislators, help you to get to your meetings, and attend meetings with you. You will have the opportunity to sit in on committee hearings, where proposed legislation will be discussed and see laws being passed by lawmakers in their respective chambers, just like we did with the Seizure Safety in Schools legislation last year! Your voice is vital in helping us improve the lives of those battling this potentially life-threatening condition.

If you have epilepsy/seizures and are 18 or older, you hope we will consider joining us at the Foundation office (Kosair Charities Centre, 982 Eastern Parkway, Louisville) one Friday each month as we meet in a support setting (without any art therapists) to create art, eat lunch, and enjoy fellowship with others living with epilepsy. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Beth Stivers, MS, director of education at 502-907-1533 / 866-275-1078 x14 / bstivers@efky.org.

Join Us for our Monthly Art Group Gathering

Would you like to save paper and help the Foundation at the same time? Please sign up to receive the Illuminator in your inbox instead of your mailbox by contacting Connie Costelle, administrative assistant at 502.637.4440 / 866.275.1078 x0 / ccostelle@efky.org. If you wish to donate to the Foundation via check/debit card, you may do so at www.efky.org or, by calling Connie at the number above. You would like to make a donation via check, please fill out the form below, cut it out, and mail it to us using the address of the form.

Would you like to make a donation or discuss giving, please feel free to contact Cliff at 502-907-1533 / 866-275-1078 x16 / cvatter@efky.org.

Cliff Vatter Joins the EFKY Staff

The Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana is excited to announce that Cliff Vatter joined the staff in October as the Director of Development after a successful career as a financial advisor. During the years, he was active on non-profit boards, but is excited to become involved in a more meaningful way at the Foundation. Cliff says, “As a retired financial advisor, my goal is to join a non-profit agency where I could make a difference. I am so pleased to have landed at the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana and look forward to raising funds for those affected by epilepsy.” Cliff has a BA from the University of Denver, and both a BS and MBA from the University of Louisville.

Cliff lives in Prospect with his wife of 45 years, Bonnie. They have a daughter, Crissy, and two grandsons. In his free time, he enjoys sailing, tennis, and mountain biking. He wishes all of you a Happy Holidays and hopes to meet many of the Foundation’s supporters in the near future.

If you would like to make a donation or discuss giving, please feel free to contact Cliff at 502-907-1533 / 866-275-1078 x16 / cvatter@efky.org.

From the Executive Director (cont. from pg.2) threatening neurological disease. For more information and to register to attend our Epilepsy Advocacy Day on Feb. 26, please go to www.efky.org/epilepsy-advocacy-day. Remember, your voice WILL make a difference as we work together to End Epilepsy!

Gary Zortman and I are already working on the 2019 Epilepsy Walk campaign. We look forward to coming together with you and your Walk team as we make strides in raising epilepsy awareness and support for the EFKY’s vital programs and services. We are looking at moving the Louisville Walk to a different location and are in discussions with the Louisville Zoo. Many of you have expressed your interest in returning the Walk to the Zoo, which originated over 15 years ago. While we loved holding the Walk at the Louisville Zoo, price increases in parking and venue rental over the last few years made it cost prohibitive and we felt it decreased the amount raised overall for EFKY programs and services. This said, we are considering all options and are currently in search of a sponsor to offset the cost of returning to the Zoo. As soon as a decision is made, we will send an announcement through our social media outlets, so be sure to “Like/Follow” our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/EpilepsyFoundationOfKentuckiana) and stay tuned for more information!

I thank you for your support in 2018. I know the Holidays can be a difficult time, especially when seizures derail your plans, which is why the EFKY’s work is so very important. Until we END EPILEPSY, you can count on us to be there for you and your loved ones.

May your Holidays be filled with many blessings!
Thank You
Kosair Charities!
We Love You!

Kosair Charities is a tremendous blessing to children with special needs and the agencies that partner with them. The Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana cannot begin to express how grateful we are to Kosair Charities for our continued partnership and commitment to improve the lives of the more than 50,000 children living with epilepsy and seizure disorders in Kentucky and southern Indiana. Kosair Charities provides funding (through grant #774C) for training programs for school nurses, school personnel, and students, seizure detection devices for children in need, patient education packets for children newly diagnosed with epilepsy, the annual Fall Festival, and the Youth Epilepsy Activity Group meetings in Louisville, Lexington, Owensboro, and Paducah! In addition to these, Kosair Charities campus is also home to the EFKY office and we are so proud to call this home!
2018 Peggy Sherrell Memorial Scholarship Recipient

The Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana is proud to announce that Keith Peirce is the 2018 recipient of the Peggy Sherrell Memorial Scholarship. Keith is a 1983 graduate of Jeffersonville High School in Indiana and went on to pursue a B.A. in biology at Indiana University Southeast. Unfortunately, he was in a head on collision at the fault of a young, distracted driver while traveling home from campus, changing his life forever. About two weeks later, Keith started experiencing tonic seizures and eventually had a generalized tonic-clonic seizure before being diagnosed with epilepsy.

Keith has struggled with employment and is currently unable to work because of his seizures; however, he is using this time as an opportunity to return to Indiana University Southeast to continue working on his degree. Using this degree, he plans to overcome his seizures and become employed in an office environment. Keith wants to become an inspiration for others living with epilepsy and other chronic diseases by showing them that there is life after a diagnosis that disrupts their life and their ability to achieve their goals. He hopes he can also volunteer with tax preparation services for those in need.

Keith is excited to represent Peggy through this scholarship and looks forward to carrying on her legacy with his future career. The Foundation is proud of Keith and hopes he keeps fighting to reach his goals!

2018 Shannon O’Daniel Memorial Scholarship Recipient

The Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana congratulates Nina Piazza for being awarded the 2018 Shannon O’Daniel Memorial Scholarship. Nina is a 2018 graduate of Sacred Heart Academy in Louisville, Kentucky. She is currently attending the University of New Hampshire, majoring in biology with plans to become a surgeon.

Nina has been seizure free for over two years, but during her first years in high school suffered generalized tonic-clonic seizures. After having two seizures in school, she realized it was much easier to share her story and move forward with her life, striving to make people see epilepsy more as “something a person has to deal with” than “something a person needs to be afraid of.”

Knowing how to deal with Nina’s seizures allowed her classmates to want to look out for her rather than not hang out with her. She encourages those living with epilepsy to speak up and share their story and to educate people about epilepsy. Even though Nina is now in college, she works to continue to change people’s views on how they see others with disabilities. Nina is honored to represent Shannon O’Daniel through this scholarship and hopes to carry on her legacy through her educational endeavors.

Peggy Sherrell was a 46 year-old wife and mother of two adult children who died suddenly on August 28, 2010 from what was attributed to sudden unexpected death in epilepsy (SUDEP). Peggy believed that education was extremely important and therefore, her family determined that a scholarship would be the perfect way to carry on her legacy. Peggy’s family developed the Peggy Sherrell Memorial Golf Scramble and have donated over $140,000 to the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana since its inception in 2010.

Shannon O’Daniel was a senior in college and just credits away from graduating when she died from what was attributed to SUDEP (Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy). Shannon struggled to overcome the seizures that frequently disrupted her life. She did so with a determination to achieve her dreams, one of which was to receive her college diploma. In the aftermath of her tragic death, this scholarship was created to honor Shannon and her achievements.

From the Director of Client Services

Amy Collier, CSW

If you don’t wear some form of medical identification (ID), we would like to urge you to get one and wear it every time you leave the house. A medical ID bracelet or necklace can help others know that you have a medical condition that may need attention and in the event 911 is called, it will alert first responders to your needs more readily, leading to better understanding and more efficient treatment.

If you are concerned that a medical ID will impact your life negatively, keep in mind that the more you help to educate others, the better you will be able to fight stigma and discrimination. Combating stigma is essential in order to raise awareness and improve quality of life for all individuals living with epilepsy and seizures.

There are many different types of medical alert options. Some are just pieces of jewelry that can be engraved with your key medical conditions or health information. Others look like a simple bracelet or necklace. You can purchase one from various online sources, however, if you are unable to afford a medical ID bracelet, please contact me at 502-907-1534 / 866-275-1078 x15 / acollier@efky.org to assist you in getting one. We have a limited supply of medical ID bracelets available on an as needed basis. Keep in mind, getting a medical ID for yourself or your loved one is more than a piece of jewelry, it’s peace of mind.

From the Operations Outreach Coordinator

Donald Bow, MS

I have had a busy summer/ fall leading up to all of the Veterans Day events. The 5th Annual Veterans of the Year Awards Banquet was held on November 5th at the Mellwood Arts Center and it was a wonderful evening to honor veterans. The Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana’s Operations Outreach program was honored to name Jeremy Harrell, Veteran’s Club Founder and Megan Karr (Team Red, White, and Blue) as the Kentucky Veterans of the Year and Jim Garigen (Invincible Vet) as the Indiana Veteran of the Year. The Traveling Kentucky Vietnam Memorial Wall was also showcased at the event as well as keynote speaker, Alex Ramirez. Entertainment was provided by DJ Wesley Howland and the banquet was catered by Victoria’s Catering. We would also like to thank special guests emcee Colonel Fred Johnson (US Army Retired), Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs Brigadier General Benjamin Adams, and Lieutenant Governor Jenean Hampton for presenting. We would also like to thank our sponsors Campbellsville University, Volunteers of America, and Karl Truman Law Office. If you missed out on this year’s event, don’t fret, as we will begin taking nominations for the 2019 Veteran of the Year very soon and continue to build on our annual awards dinner for veterans and celebrate again next November.

Kentucky is a great state for veterans and there always seems to be a different event honoring the veteran community. I attended several veteran events over the last few months including a Veteran’s Stand-down and Purple Heart pinning ceremony at Hunaman, the Charles Young Veteran Memorial unveiling at the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage, and the Patriot’s Peace Memorial ceremony for the 241 Americans who were killed on October 23, 1983 in the barracks bombing in Beirut, Lebanon. All of these events were a sight to see and I encourage everyone to get out and see these jewels throughout Kentucky.

Now that the summer has come and gone, and we have entered the Holiday season I would like to remind you that even with all the joy that this season brings, it can be a trigger for depression and suicidal thoughts in veterans and others. For veterans suffering with PTSD and/or TBI, the stress of the Holidays has the potential to exacerbate these conditions and veterans may find themselves at a higher risk of committing suicide. For all veterans, know there are many organizations available to assist you in your time of need. If you are in crisis and need to talk to someone, I urge you to please reach out to the Veterans Crisis Line at www.veteranscriseline.net or 1-800-273-8255 (then, press 1). Operators are available 24/7 and provide you with the option to talk or text. Please know that all calls are confidential and can save your life.

Another option available to veterans is to join the Veteran’s Club-Kentucky Facebook group. Through this page, you can interact with other veterans throughout Kentucky, as well as learn about ways veterans are helping other veterans. Resources are available, so never hesitate to reach out for help. For information about resources to meet your needs, please contact me at 502-907-1536 / 866-275-1078 x17 / dbow@efky.org.

I am truly honored and fortunate to be able to work with veterans and expand the Operation Outreach network across the state. Please Like/Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/EFKYvets/ and on Instagram at efkyoperationoutreach and kentuckyveteransoftheferry.org. I ask that you please share this important information with your friends and family, especially veterans, and have a wonderful and safe Holiday season!
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Happy Holidays from the Epilepsy Foundation of Kentuckiana
Phone 502.637.4440 • Toll-Free 866.275.1078 • Fax 502.637.4442 • Web www.efky.org
An independently incorporated affiliate of the Epilepsy Foundation

Youth Epilepsy Alliance!

WHO: School age & affected by epilepsy...maybe you have epilepsy, or your brother, sister, or parent does. If so, we’re just the group for you!!!
WHEN: Monthly. WHERE: Changes each month, so call for details, or to be added to the email/mailing list! WHY: To have fun, make friends, and talk & hang out with those who understand!
COST: Free to youth, thanks to Kosair Charities!

EPILEPSY FOUNDATION KENTUCKIANA’S YOUTH EPILEPSY ALLIANCE! IS SUPPORTED BY A GRANT (#774C) FROM KOSAIR CHARITIES.

UPCOMING YOUTH EPILEPSY ALLIANCE! EVENTS

Saturday, January 12
Louisville Slugger Museum
800 West Main Street, Louisville
9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Saturday, February 16
Malibu Jack’s
12101 Sycamore Station Place, Louisville
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 2
Malibu Jack’s
2520 Nicholasville Road, Lexington
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MARCH - LOUISVILLE - TBD

For more info or to attend, visit www.efky.org or contact Gary Zortman, events manager at gzortman@efky.org.