A New Era Begins for Camp Discovery

Camp Discovery is truly one of the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan’s most sought after programs. In 2011, the camp will begin a new era, with a new director.

Beatrice Castillo comes to the Foundation with a strong background in running various camps. Bea told us why she was so interested in taking on the Camp Discovery program.

“I was excited to imagine lots of kids on horses, in canoes, eating and laughing together, learning to swim, mucking with art materials, telling stories and singing around the campfire. And, I know from these past 24 years, that children with disabilities often have a harder time finding these opportunities, or making them work well for them because of health or other characteristics.”

“I believe that parents and children have to gain confidence that they can do these things safely, that the staff who support them are vigilant and skilled. My greatest hope is that we’re moving toward a more inclusive society, where accommodations and supports can be put in place in typical settings. That being said, I also think it is very helpful for people who share difficult circumstances to learn from and support each other, and Camp Discovery is especially suited to do this.”

Bea says she plans to concentrate on using everyone’s imagination, skills and personalities to make a satisfying camping experience for all. “I’d love to see campers leave with the willingness to try more things. I hope they will want to come back because it was so much fun, some will aspire to be counselors themselves, and staff will feel that they’ve contributed and gained personally from the experience.”

To learn more, visit www.epilepsymichigan.org or contact us at 800-377-6226.
From The President

SPRING IS HERE!

It’s especially welcome this year, as the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan begins several new programs and takes some important steps.

If you haven’t already read about her on our website or met her in person, you will read more in this issue of Headlines about our new Camp Discovery director, Bea Castillo. I’m thrilled to welcome this dynamic and skilled woman to our organization. Camp Discovery is truly one of our most coveted programs and I know Bea will continue to cultivate and develop it.

We also welcome Linda Fletcher as our project coordinator. Linda will be managing one of our most important endeavors to date, the telemedicine epilepsy grant.

This is always a busy time for us as we plan for our Summer Stroll for Epilepsy. We talk so often about wellness and taking care of ourselves in terms of trying to control seizures. The Summer Stroll in June is a great way to not only meet and mingle with others involved with the Foundation, but you can spend the morning outside and get some great exercise. If physically strolling isn’t possible for you, think about supporting the Foundation by ‘virtually’ strolling!

It’s also important to mention our upcoming Legislative Recognition Breakfast and Michigan Kids Speak Up! events, which will take place in Lansing on May 3rd. There are a number of important issues that will be addressed, including medication switching. For those of you who will not be attending, we will be sure to update you on the discussion. And, mark your calendars for the Adult Camp Retreat, set for May 14th and 15th.

We are also busy supporting a few 3rd party fundraisers, our ever-popular EEGs, the Learn & Share Conference Calls and much more. I invite you to join us for any and all of these activities. We love your input and your involvement!

See you soon, and as always, thank you for helping us tackle our mission of Not Another Moment Lost to Seizures™.

To learn more about our programs or to register, visit the Foundation’s website at www.epilepsymichigan.org or call 800-377-6226.

---

PLANNED GIVING

Future generations can benefit from your generosity and planning!

Please consider leaving a bequest or beneficiary designation in your will for the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan.

Leaving a legacy gift will ensure that the Foundation will always be here to help individuals touched by Epilepsy. Thank you!

For more information, please contact your financial planner, or call us at (800) 377-6226.
WHY DO I FORGET?

The Impact of Epilepsy on Memory

Sally (not her real name) has lived with epilepsy for a third of her life. “I think the toughest part of dealing with my epilepsy day in and day out is my loss of memory. For me, it’s the simple things. Did I call to make that doctor’s appointment? Did I write that item on my grocery list? Did I pay that bill?”

Sally is not alone. Memory affects a great deal of those who live with epilepsy.

“Sometimes, the epilepsy originates from areas of the brain that help control memory function, such as the hippocampus, because they have unique kinds of cells and are capable of creating electrical discharges that can be more susceptible to problems,” according to Dr. Linda Selwa, Professor of Neurology at the University of Michigan and Associate Chair for Clinical Activities. “Sometimes the epilepsy results from damage to these places, which also causes memory dysfunction, and sometimes ongoing abnormal firing like seizures can weaken memory, at least temporarily and perhaps more permanently.”

So, why do some people who suffer from epilepsy live with memory loss and some don’t?

“Some individuals with forms of epilepsy that do not directly affect parts of the brain that control memory function have less trouble with recall,” says Dr. Selwa.

So how do we tackle memory issues?

“There are many ways to try to help memory function,” according to Dr. Selwa. “One thing to do is to try to compensate for any problems by keeping pillboxes, lists or journals to serve as physical reminders. Other things that can boost brain functions every day are plenty of sleep and even exercise. It’s also important to make sure medications are not contributing to problems with thinking. If you are worried that a certain medication may have worsened memory or concentration, it is important to discuss this with your doctor. We have many options, and sometimes trying another medicine or changing the times of doses can help.”

Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan supporters suggest a few tips that have worked for them:

- B12 Shots (a doctor’s recommendation)
- Detailed notes and a journal
- Flash cards
- Many lists, calendars and planners
- Following a consistent routine.
Volunteers Make us Great!

On any given day, at any given time, the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan office is buzzing with activity. Not only are staff-members hard at work on projects and programs for our supporters, we have a dedicated and top-notch team of volunteers who help us make each event and program possible.

“Our volunteers are truly our ambassadors,” said Arlene Gorelick, President. “This group helps us with outreach, marketing, programming and they help us carry out our mission every day.” Volunteer opportunities are available in all areas of the Foundation. “If you can give 30 hours each week, or 3 hours for a particular event, know that you are helping us fulfill the needs of thousands of people in Michigan with epilepsy,” said Gorelick.

There are all sorts of volunteer opportunities including: the Summer Stroll, marketing and fundraising, phone calls, event planning and management, just to name a few. “Our volunteers come to us from all realms. We have some with epilepsy, some with a family member who has epilepsy and we have some who truly just care deeply about our vision and our mission. And, we welcome one and all!”

For more information about volunteering, please visit www.epilepsymichigan.org or call us at 800-377-6226.

A Winter to Remember!

HEADLINES is available via email. Please provide us with your email address by visiting our website at epilepsymichigan.org, so you can begin receiving your newsletter and other announcements easily.