

Our friend, Ava the Brave, is 18 and has epilepsy.
We invite you to learn more about her journey.



SEASON'S GREETINGS!

FROM



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Ava was born at just over 2 lbs., and was diagnosed with autism, significant visual impairment, cerebral palsy, von Willebrand disease, and failure to thrive. As parents, we met each new diagnosis with trepidation and hope.



However, when Ava was 6 years old, our world was turned upside down. She had her first of many nocturnal, tonic-clonic seizures, which sent us careening down a path that made her earlier challenges look like a warmup. **Epilepsy was the diagnosis, ready or not.**

The next months went by in a blur where some days felt as if we were barely hanging on. I clearly remember how isolating it was for our whole family while coming to grips with Ava's epilepsy. **Then we heard about the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan.**

Connecting with the Foundation was like coming out of the dark. In so many ways, they have helped empower us to make the most informed choices we can when it comes to our daughter's care.

The Foundation's annual epilepsy conferences became bright beacons of hope and the individuals we met through their resources helped us realize that we were not alone. **Ava even started participating in the Foundation's E-SMART program for teens with epilepsy.** I've watched her eyes light up as she builds relationships and gains confidence while being surrounded by teens who truly get it.

The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan has hands down been the most significant lifeline for our family's epilepsy journey. They have provided us with countless connections, programs, support, and tools for self-advocacy.

Ava is now 18 years old, and living with epilepsy continues to have its challenges. She has had multiple brain surgeries and treatments. However, like many people with drug-resistant epilepsy, there is often a honeymoon period of success and then the seizures find a way to outsmart the treatment. **This is the most frustrating part of her epilepsy story.**



Yet, we remain hopeful that there could be something just around the corner that might make the difference for Ava and others like her.

Perhaps the answers will be found in new medications, or new surgical options, or even a deeper understanding of the causes of epilepsy on a cellular level that could lead to a cure.

At so many of the highs and lows of Ava's epilepsy story, the Foundation has been by our side, somehow providing just what we needed, at exactly the right time. **Although we can't ever know what the future will bring, we know that we have the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan as our most trusted partner in this journey.**

- Lisa (Ava's Mom)



What an honor it is to be considered someone's trusted partner. I am sure you can tell from her pictures that Ava has a smile that can light up a room! Our mission is devoted to honoring warriors like Ava, who despite all epilepsy has thrown at her, can still smile her big, beautiful smile.

When you support the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan, you create opportunities for Ava and her family to be welcomed into our beloved epilepsy community with open arms. And that is why your gift is so important! Every word of this story is made possible because of supporters just like you.


Please make your gift today knowing you are bringing another big smile to someone like Ava.



Thank you,



Brianna Romines | President



The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan
leads the fight to overcome the
challenges of living with epilepsy and to
accelerate therapies to stop seizures,
find cures, and save lives.



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