

*The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan improves the lives of people affected by epilepsy through education, advocacy, research, and connection.*



*Community Program Manager, Nicole Fitzpatrick, and members of the City of Ann Arbor Fire Department*

## **MISSION ACTIVITIES** *(Indicating the Strategic Planning Objective it supports)*

- ❖ Aligned with our strategic plan, a new **First Responder Informed Seizure Recognition and First Aid Training** was provided to 60 participants with the Ann Arbor Fire Department between March 17-19. This training included firefighters, EMS/EMTs and office staff. Overall evaluation summary indicated participants demonstrated strong increases in confidence and practical knowledge, with most reporting improved ability to recognize seizures, respond appropriately, and identify when emergency care is needed. A key learning outcome was increased awareness of the wide range of seizure types and presentations **(Objective 1, 4)**
- ❖ In January, the Foundation launched its **2026 Challenge of the Year - Supporting Independence**. In 2026, we will support the empowerment and self-determination of the epilepsy community as people navigate and shape their daily lives. This initiative focuses on breaking down barriers and strengthening support that promote empowerment, access, and meaningful participation in work, school, and community life across Michigan. **(Objective 1, 2)**
- ❖ In January 2026 (01/26), the Foundation launched a social media campaign to spotlight the fact that 1 in 26 people will be diagnosed with epilepsy in their lifetime. The campaign invited followers to share stories about their special “1 in 26”. Each day throughout the month, an epilepsy warrior from our community was spotlighted, and the Epilepsy Allies Monthly Giving Program was featured as a way to support them. In total, 35 people with epilepsy - or their loved ones - shared their stories, and three new supporters joined the Epilepsy Allies Monthly Giving Program. **(Objective 1, 2, 4, 6)**
- ❖ On January 6, Vy Ai Le, a student in her final semester at Eastern Michigan University, joined the team as the **Public Health Intern**. She will serve in this role until April. **(Objective 5)**
- ❖ In January, the Foundation launched a comprehensive **Seizure Safe Schools Advocacy Campaign** aimed at expanding awareness, increasing engagement, and mobilizing our community to contact legislators in support of SB 434, the Seizure Safe Schools Act. We developed and distributed a Seizure Safe Schools

Advocacy Toolkit and enhanced our website to ensure resources and action steps are clear, accessible, and easily replicated by constituents statewide. The campaign has generated strong momentum and visibility, particularly across social media, where community-driven videos have collectively garnered more than 40,000 views, amplifying advocacy efforts and broadening our legislative reach. **(Objective 1, 4)**

- ❖ On January 24, Nicole Fitzpatrick represented the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan as a vendor at the **All Abilities Fair**, hosted by the Detroit Police Department. This gathering fostered meaningful connections between disability serving organizations, and we are currently in conversation with the Detroit Police Department about Seizure Recognition and First Aid Training for Law Enforcement. **(Objective 1, 4)**
- ❖ In alignment with our **Strategic Plan**, we are working on enhanced data capture. In Q1, we partnered with our new contractors, Momentum, to begin data cleanup, refine strategic data goals, and research a forms processor that will streamline accurate data collection across multiple platforms. We have signed a contract, and we are on track to launch the new processor in April. **(Objective 1, 2,3, 4, 5, 6)**
- ❖ On February 8, our team joined Eastern Michigan University for their 10th annual **Gymnastics Purple Meet** honoring Ella, a young woman living with epilepsy. Several event elements worked to raise awareness including a photo booth with epilepsy-related props, custom purple meet stickers, as well as epilepsy facts, statistics, and pictures of previous events showcased on the big screen during the meet for the audience to view. **(Objective 1, 4)**
- ❖ During the quarter, the Foundation conducted targeted outreach for **Seizure Safe Schools stakeholder engagement and coalition building** to key statewide partners—including the Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Association of School Nurses, Michigan Education Association, Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education, Michigan PTA, and Detroit Disability Power—to share information about SB 434, the Seizure Safe Schools Act, and request formal cards of support to Senator Cherry. The response has been encouraging, with strong interest from multiple organizations, several elevating the request to advocacy leadership, and confirmed support from Michigan PTA and Detroit Disability Power. These efforts have increased awareness, strengthened relationships, and expanded our statewide advocacy network. **(Objective 1, 4)**
- ❖ The first session of the **Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP)** was held February 18 - March 25. Four participants completed the full 6-week series, gaining practical tools to manage epilepsy and other health conditions more effectively. Those that participated were highly engaged and requested to be connected to one another by week three. **(Objective 1, 2)**
- ❖ On February 20, the Foundation continued the **Virtual Book Club** with the book *Mountains of Our Own, A Teen's Journey to Find Her Gift*. The discussion was joined by the author, Delaney Kraemer, and 4 other members of the epilepsy community. It was a time of deep connection and an opportunity for community members to share their thoughts on the book as well as their own personal journeys. **(Objective 2, 4)**
- ❖ On February 26, the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan partnered with **Project Synara**, a student-led DECA club dedicated to epilepsy awareness, to advance education and advocacy in the community. The Foundation supported the club's efforts by providing marketing materials and hosting a Student & Staff Seizure Recognition and First Aid Training at Troy High School. The session reached over 80 students and staff, equipping participants with critical knowledge to recognize and respond to seizures confidently. Attendees were also invited to take their advocacy further by engaging with their Senators in support of the Seizure Safe Schools Act (SB 434), fostering a culture of empowerment and leadership among young advocates. This collaboration highlights the Foundation's ongoing mission to educate communities, empower students, and promote policy change that protects and supports individuals living with epilepsy. **(Objective 1, 4)**
- ❖ During this quarter, the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan partnered with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Family Center to support the **Michigan Youth with Epilepsy in Transition (MiYET) Project** by engaging youth and young adults with epilepsy through targeted virtual focus groups. These discussions were designed to gather direct input on the most effective ways to reach this population, identify priority topics related to education, employment, healthcare, and independent living, and better

understand preferred formats for content delivery, such as webinars, podcasts, and short videos. Insights collected will be used to inform the development of future programming that is responsive, relevant, and tailored to the unique needs and experiences of young people living with epilepsy, ensuring their voices are reflected in upcoming educational and support initiatives. *(Objective 1, 2, 4)*

- ❖ On March 3, we launched a structured **Volunteer Program** to expand our network and create more opportunities for involvement. Our first newsletter, featuring a staff introduction video and clear call to action, received overwhelmingly positive responses. This program provides a sustainable framework for volunteers to engage, contribute, and support our mission of education, advocacy, and awareness for the epilepsy community. *(Objective 2, 4)*
- ❖ On March 14, the Krajcar Family hosted the **5th Annual Flip for a Cure**. This event not only featured a fun pinball activity but also incorporated custom merch and live streaming on Twitch to spread awareness. Through event registrations and donations from the community, they raised \$8,280 in support of the Foundation! *(Objective 4, 6)*
- ❖ **Shining Forward** is a young adult initiative created in honor and memory of Zahra Abbas, designed to empower individuals living with epilepsy through connection, leadership, and advocacy. The program includes focus groups, webinars, conference engagement, and future opportunities such as a young adult retreat. This proposal was presented in March, with gratitude to the Abbas and Biggs families, whose support has been central to bringing Zahra's legacy to life. Implementation is set to launch in 2026, and will include a Young Adult Focus Group, an Advocacy Webinar, and an Epilepsy and Wellness Conference Session for young adults. *(Objective 1, 2, 4)*
- ❖ Emily Romblom, a person living with epilepsy, hosted a **Dine-to-Donate Fundraiser** at the Pita Way in DeWitt. This is the second year she hosted this event on March 26, which is recognized as Purple Day®. Emily shared awareness information online, participated in local TV interviews, and rallied community members to volunteer at the event. The event raised over \$450 to be donated to the Foundation. *(Objective 1, 4, 6)*
- ❖ **Devin's Epilepsy Awareness Fundraiser**, an ongoing project organized by a teen living with epilepsy, was shared throughout the community in honor of a celebratory milestone. Through an online fundraising page, Devin shared her story and highlighted resources and services available through the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan, and her efforts raised over the event. *(Objective 4, 6)*
- ❖ During this Quarter, we launched two new **Call & Connect** groups, and they are led by peer leaders. The **Adults with Epilepsy (30s and 40s) Call and Connect** meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month from 7-8pm, and their first meeting was held on Monday, January 26. This group is led by Susan Wagner and Carlo Zoccoli. The **Adults with Epilepsy (All Ages) Call and Connect** meets on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month and had its first meeting on February 2. This group is led by Dave Trojan. *(Objective 2)*
- ❖ The **Individual Advocacy Program** assisted with 31 interactions made on behalf of 23 people with epilepsy and their family members. *(Objective 1)*
- ❖ The **Call & Connect Network** included six different groups in the quarter, all taking place via Zoom. The **Young Adult Group** brought together 10 participants in this bi-weekly group. There were 6 meetings with an average of 9 participants per meeting. The **Parent Group** brought together 12 participants in this bi-weekly group. There were 12 meetings with an average of 3 participants per meeting. The **Older Adult & Caregiver Group** brought together 10 participants in this weekly group. There were 10 meetings with an average of 6 participants per meeting. The **UP Virtual Meetup Group** brought together 2 participants in this monthly group. There were 3 meetings with an average of 1 participant per meeting. The **Adults - All Ages Group**, brought together 21 participants during the quarter. There were 3 meetings with an average of 9 participants per meeting. The **Adults - 30s & 40s Group**, brought together 9 participants during the quarter. There were 5 meetings with an average of 3 participants per meeting. *(Objective 2)*
- ❖ During the quarter, in partnership with Andrea Thomas, MA, LLP, Psychologist at Henry Ford Comprehensive Epilepsy Center, the Foundation held three sessions of the **Mindfulness Moments** initiative. There were 14

people attending with an average of 11 participants per session. This is a monthly opportunity for epilepsy community members to meet one another and practice mindfulness and meditation together. **(Objective 2)**

- ❖ The **Here for You Helpline** assisted the epilepsy community with 275 interactions during the quarter. Interactions during the quarter resulted in 112 hours of staff time being contributed. The average call time was 24 minutes per contact. **(Objective 1, 2, 3, 4)**
- ❖ During the quarter, there were 521 new contacts entered into **Salesforce**. Contacts represent Helpline communication, registrations, and donors. **(Objective 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)**
- ❖ **Seizure Recognition & First Aid Trainings (Objective 5):**
  - **MICHIGAN:** Seizure First Aid ⇒ 5 presentations to approximately 216 School Staff/Students/First Responders/Health & Human Professionals or Company Employees