



BC Epilepsy Society

BCES Newsletter DECEMBER 2018

Improving Lives. Inspiring Courage.

INSIDE: Sabrina's Story, Tis The Season For Giving ... AND MORE!

Sabrina's Story



Meet Sabrina, a young woman living with epilepsy who came to the BC Epilepsy Society offices a couple of months ago. She has been having regular meetings with us ever since and during our meetings we provide support and discuss her struggles with epilepsy and seizures as well as other aspects of her life.

During one of our weekly meetings, we informed Sabrina that the BC Epilepsy Society would be attending the Epilepsy Awareness Day at Disneyland (EADDL) event in November. We also told her that, provided she got her seizures under control and led a healthier lifestyle, she would be able to join us on this trip.

Sabrina was very excited about this opportunity and took her medications as prescribed, limited her unhealthy behaviours and worked very hard to achieve her goals, and was ultimately able to join us in Disneyland for EADDL.

In a video by the BC Epilepsy Society, Sabrina shared her story about her struggles with

epilepsy; how the BC Epilepsy Society has helped her with her physical health and her mental well being; and all about her experiences at EADDL. This is a touching story that can inspire people with epilepsy to take control of their life. Check out the video [here](#).

We are very proud to have impacted this young woman's life in such a meaningful way. It just goes to show that even doing something small can make a huge difference in someone's life. We hope that this story inspires you to do your part to make a difference this holiday season.



Tis The Season For Giving



**Make a
difference in
the lives of
people living
with epilepsy
in BC.**

**DONATE
TODAY**

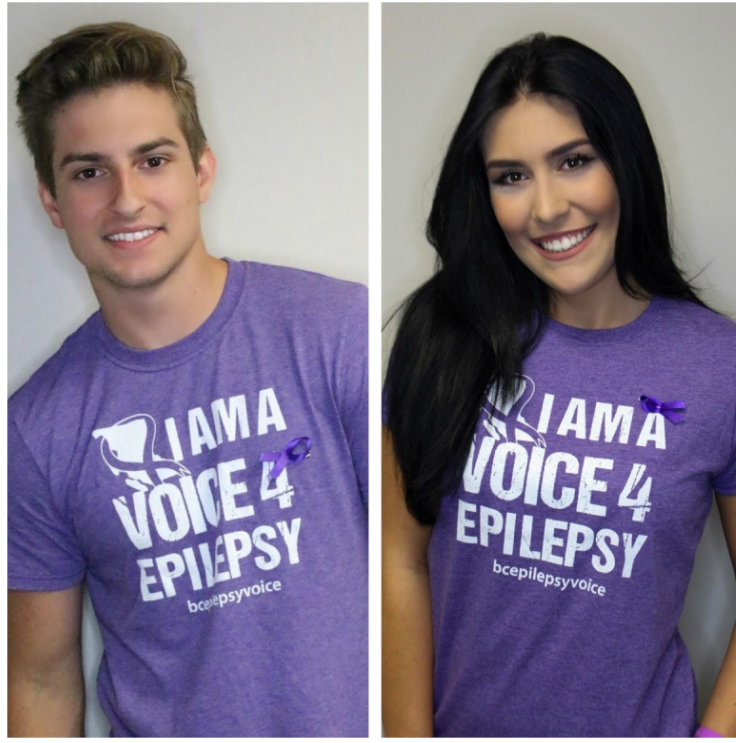
It is almost the end of the year and all of us at the BC Epilepsy Society are excited for 2019 because it means the start of our 60th anniversary! To kick off our 60th anniversary, we are doing an end-of-year fundraiser and we urge everyone to donate as much as they can!

Your generous donation will be used to support the expansion of our services to the Northern regions of BC, to help people in those regions who are living with epilepsy.

There are several ways that you can donate:

- Online through [CanadaHelps](#)
- Mail your cheque to #2500 - 900 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver BC, V5Z 1E5
- Call 604-875-6704 to donate over the phone

Tis the season for giving! Join us in our quest to help all people living with epilepsy in BC by donating to the BC Epilepsy Society during our end-of-year fundraiser. **All donations over \$200 made by the end of the year (December 31st, 2018) will receive one of our awesome "I AM A VOICE" t-shirts (pictured below) FOR FREE!**



Epilepsy Awareness Day at Disneyland (EADDL)



Earlier this month, the BC Epilepsy Society had the incredible opportunity to attend the 6th Annual Epilepsy Awareness Day at Disneyland (EADDL) on November 5th, 6th and 7th.

EADDL brings epilepsy out of the shadows because although epilepsy is one of the most common neurological disorders, it receives the least funding and has the least recognition.

EADDL is open to people who live with epilepsy and who are affected by epilepsy, as well as to people who have an interest in epilepsy for personal and/or professional reasons.

At EADDL this year, people got the chance to learn at the event during presentations and lectures as well as gather information at booths hosted by a number of organizations related to epilepsy from around North America, including the BC Epilepsy Society. Over three thousand individuals at the event were seen in EADDL purple shirts both at the Expo and at Disneyland Park to truly showcase the reach and scope of epilepsy.

We hope that more of our constituents will be able to attend EADDL next year and join us in Disneyland! Find out more about EADDL [here](#).



PEER SUPPORT GROUP ON DECEMBER 6TH

The BC Epilepsy Society offers opportunities for individuals living with epilepsy to help them get better connected and to strengthen their support networks. It is very important - especially during the holidays - to socialize with others and feel less isolated. Many people living with epilepsy can often feel isolated and it is important to combat this.

Some people living with epilepsy may need to socialize with others and get help to deal with their condition; whereas other people living with epilepsy may need to socialize with others to share their experiences and provide moral support.

If any of the above applies to you, **please join us at the BC Epilepsy Society offices in Vancouver on Thursday December 6th at 7:00 PM** for our monthly peer support group. To register for this session, please email info@bcepilepsy.com. We hope to see you all there!



COPING WITH EPILEPSY DURING THE HOLIDAYS

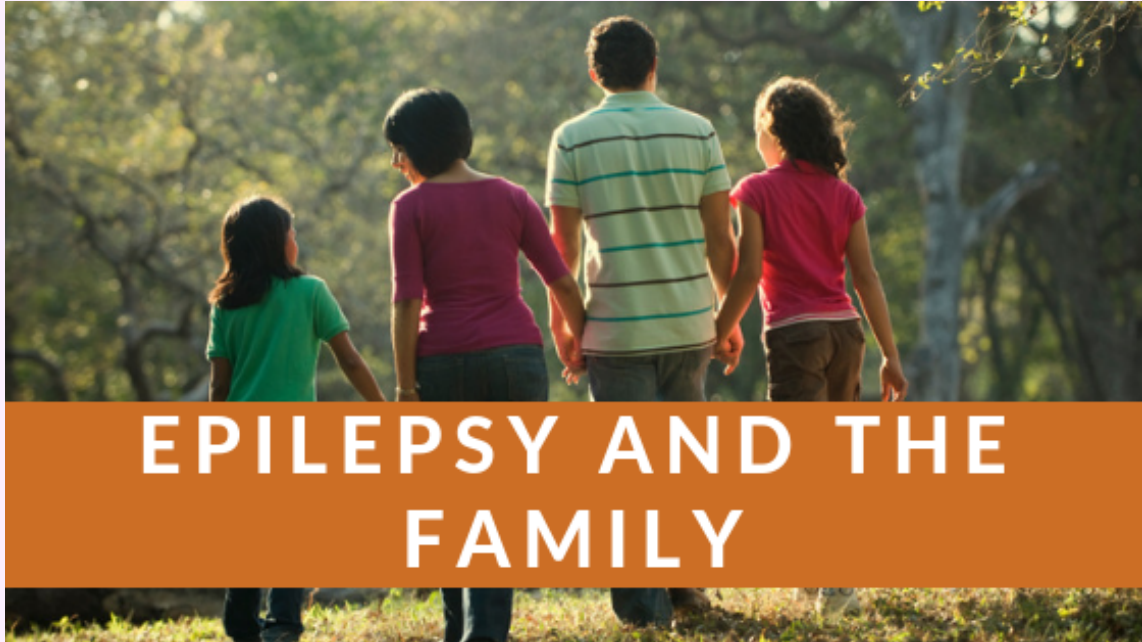


While the holiday season can be a fun and exciting time full of seeing family and friends, giving and receiving gifts and eating delicious food, they can also often bring unwelcome guests such as stress. This is especially true if you live with or are affected by epilepsy and its challenges. If you want to make sure that you are making the most of the holiday season, check out some of our tips on how to reduce the stress of the holidays below.

1. **Acknowledge Your Feelings:** Just because it is the holiday season does not mean that you need to be happy and cheerful 24/7. If you or a loved one live with epilepsy, keep in mind that your feelings are valid, no matter what time of the year it is. Realize it is okay to take the time to express your feelings during the holiday season.
2. **Continue Your Healthy Habits:** It can be very easy to get carried away and overindulge during the holiday season. However, it is important to continue your healthy habits so that you can manage your epilepsy and keep your seizures under control. Take your medications regularly and as prescribed by your physician, aim to get 8 hours of sleep a night, get as much exercise and physical activity as you can and eat a variety of healthy and nutritious foods. Just because it is the holiday season does not mean that your health should take a backburner!
3. **Ask for Help:** If you are feeling overwhelmed with the tasks that always seem to pile up during the holiday season, don't feel embarrassed to ask for help. Sharing tasks between friends and family can make planning holiday parties a lot smoother and will help you to destress and manage your epilepsy during the holiday season.
4. **Be Realistic:** Don't get too fixated on what you see on Pinterest or on social media. Maybe your stockings are hung crookedly, or your cookies are slightly burnt on the bottom, or your gift wrapping is misshapen. Not everything this holiday season has to be perfect and is more about spending time with friends and family. Letting go of perfection during the holiday season will work wonders on your stress levels and epilepsy management.
5. **Stick to A Budget:** Much of the stress during the holiday season derives from money or financial problems. This is why it is important to set a budget for yourself and track what you spend. Stop once you reach your budget and you will be well on your way to a less stressful holiday season!
6. **Practice Self-Care:** Take some time to relax during the holiday season to help you better manage your epilepsy. Do things like reading a good book by the fireplace, going on a

walk with friends or family, or trying out mindfulness or meditation. Practicing self-care is a great and easy way to destress during the holiday season.

“Tis the season to be jolly” can sometimes be easier said than done but with a little planning and our practical tips, you can minimize the stress that comes with the holiday season and manage your epilepsy at the same time. Happy Holidays everyone!



Epilepsy affects not only the individual living with epilepsy, but also affects their families because, in a way, all members of a family unit of individuals living with epilepsy also suffer from the condition. If this is the case for you and your family, please see below for some tips from the BC Epilepsy Society.

After an individual has been diagnosed with epilepsy, some families can experience disbelief, anxiety or fear, which is totally normal and completely understandable. Increase your knowledge of epilepsy by reading our [FAQs about Epilepsy](#) and our [Epilepsy Fact Sheet](#)

Epilepsy can also affect families because not only do they have to witness a loved one dealing with a serious medical condition, but they also must help to care for them during a time that is very trying for both the individual and their families. You can learn more about caring for an individual living with epilepsy with information on [Providing Child Care to a Children with Epilepsy](#).

Individuals living with epilepsy are also at an increased risk of stigma, which can negatively impact them and their families. As education helps to eliminate stigma, it is important that epilepsy – including medical issues and emotional, social and psychological impacts – is well understood by individuals, their families and their communities. You can learn more about raising awareness of epilepsy in communities through our [“I AM A VOICE”](#) campaign and our [Partners in Teaching](#) program for schools and students.

When individuals and families have difficulty coping with epilepsy, it is important to employ

coping strategies to help them come to terms with the diagnosis, its effects and its treatment. Check out some coping strategies below:

- **Communication:** Talk with your family about how you are all feeling about epilepsy and seizures, let your family know that it is all right to feel frustrated at times and try to always be open and honest with each other
- **Self-Care:** Attend to your physical needs like getting enough sleep, eating health and nutritious meals and making physical activity a priority. You also can find ways to relax and rejuvenate, such as listening to music, reading a good book, taking a bath or meditating. While this may feel overly self-indulgent, rest assured that it is not. It is important to rejuvenate yourself in order to be able to better take care of others.
- **Join a Support Group:** The BC Epilepsy Society hosts the BC Epilepsy Parents Network (BCEPN) support groups for parents of children with epilepsy. They are held on the third Saturday of every month from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM. To find out more and to register, click [here](#).
- **Learn from the BC Epilepsy Society:** Learning as much as you can about epilepsy can go a long way towards making you feel more comfortable and in control. Check out our [Information Sheets](#) on a number of topics related to epilepsy to help you become more informed and knowledgeable about epilepsy.

Chalet Lights Charity 2018



Michael Iwasaki 2017

The Ribalkin Viau family is at it again – covering their roof, gardens, gutters, railings and driveway in thousands upon thousands of lights, blow-up displays, Christmas decorations and holiday cheer!

Check out Chalet Lights, an awe-inspiring Christmas lights display at 4967 Chalet Place in North Vancouver.

The proposed date that the lights will go up is December 2nd, 2018 at 7:00 PM. You will be able

to see the lights on after that daily from 5:30 PM to 11:00 PM. The lights will be shut down on January 6th, 2019 at 11:00 PM.

From 2010 to 2017, Chalet Lights Charity has raised \$96,919.99 and 951 bags of groceries. Last year they were able to raise \$31,667.61 and 182 bags of groceries. This year, they hope to beat that number and raise \$35,000 and 250 bags of groceries.

Thank you to the Ribalkin/Viau family for their generous support in accepting donations that will be equally split up between their three chosen charities – the BC Epilepsy Society is grateful to be one! To donate online to Chalet Lights, click [here](#). For more information about Chalet Lights click [here](#).

Our mailing address is:

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Vancouver BC V5Z 1E5
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www.bcepilepsy.com

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