



**CELEBRATING A
NEW YEAR
TO FIGHT THE STIGMA,
SPREAD AWARENESS,
AND FIND A CURE!**

January 2017 Newsletter

Dear Friends of the Epilepsy Foundation of Florida,

Happy 2017!

A new year means new possibilities, new ways to grow, and new opportunities to make a difference. Here at EFOF, we're inspired by this and ready to make this our best year ever as we continue the fight against epilepsy and accelerate therapies to stop seizures, find cures, and save lives.

In preparation for the year ahead, EFOF recently held its annual staff retreat where staff from our six offices across the state came together to share ideas, learn from each other, and bond. I look forward to this event each year, and can't reiterate enough my gratitude toward each and every member of our staff for their commitment to our organization and mission. Please be sure to check out our staff photo below, which to me, sums up the spirit of who we are as a team.

Looking to get more involved with EFOF this year? Register for our [2017 Walk the Talk](#) events and please be sure to check out our section of upcoming events located at the end of this newsletter. We look forward to connecting with you as we embark upon the New Year!



Sincerely,

Karen Basha Egozi
Chief Executive Officer
Epilepsy Foundation of Florida

Will you give for the ONE?



Help us start off this New Year with a spirit of giving, generosity and hope. The funds we raise today will go further to help fight the stigma, spread awareness, and find a cure for those of tomorrow. One in 26 people are diagnosed with epilepsy - to us ONE is not just another number. ONE is a little sister, a loving husband, a best friend, a life with a story.

This year, we hope you will consider giving for the ONE as we continue to fight for them.

[Make your donation count!](#)

Preparing for the Year Ahead



On December 13 and 14, EFOF held its annual staff retreat at the Coral Gables Country Club. A wonderful training was provided by EFOF Board Member Carlos Garrido, of Sandler Training, on improving identity awareness and how that relates to job efficiency. Board President Lourdes Boue also joined in by delivering a truly moving and personal story – reminding all staff "why" we are here. Following the retreat, EFOF CEO Karen Basha Egozi hosted a fun-filled holiday party at her home where staff members danced the night away.

All in all, this year's staff retreat was a great success!

An Unexpected Gift: EFOF Benefits from Generous Donation



Berta L. Moreno and her daughter Maria Antonia Hernandez.

The EFOF Miami office recently received an unexpected check in the amount of \$80,000!

This generous donation was made on behalf of Berta L. Moreno who passed away on September 30, 2016. Prior to her passing, Berta had asked her close friend Marta Garcia to be the executor of her will and oversee the sale of her apartment, of which all proceeds were to be presented to EFOF in memory of her daughter, Maria Antonia Hernandez. Maria had epilepsy and was a client of the Foundation; she passed away from complications related to epilepsy.

EFOF is extremely grateful for this gift, and looks forward to using it to help people with epilepsy fully participate in all life experiences, improve how people with epilepsy are perceived, and promote research for treatments and cures.

Join Us! Walk the Talk for Epilepsy 2017



WALK the TALK
for Epilepsy
2017

45
EPILEPSY FOUNDATION
Florida

Epilepsy Resource Center

UPCOMING WALKS

GAINESVILLE Saturday, March 25 University of Florida, Flavel Field	DAYTONA Saturday, April 1 Mary Bethune Park	NAPLES Saturday, April 1 North Collier Regional Park
PENSACOLA Saturday, April 8 Inside Blue Wahooni Stadium	WEST PALM BEACH Sunday, April 30 John Prince Memorial Park	
MIAMI Saturday, May 6 Tropical Park	BROWARD Sunday, May 7 North Beach Park	JACKSONVILLE Saturday, May 20 Metropolitan Park

Registration is at 8:00 a.m. Walk Begins at 9:00 a.m.

Please visit www.efof.org/walkthetalk
for more information, or call us at
1-877-55-EPILEPSY
1-877-553-7453

<https://www.facebook.com/EpilepsyFLA>
<https://twitter.com/EEOF>
<http://www.efof.org/>

The Early Bird Gets the Worm

All of this year's 2017 walks feature early bird pricing, so be sure to [register in advance](#) to take advantage of these savings!

Check it Out!

Our official Walk the Talk 2017 PSA is now available on YouTube. Please use this video as a way to spread the word about the walks to others in your network!



Clayton Feig Legacy Fund - Faces of Epilepsy

By: Jay Hennessy

My journey with epilepsy began with a simple twist of fate as a result of a recreational motorcycle accident causing a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) which later manifested into Post Traumatic Epilepsy (PTE), a latency period of 10 days. Initially diagnosed with epilepsy, the two-year period following my accident rendered frequent uncontrollable status seizures resulting in fracturing my vertebrae C-4 - C-7 and requiring surgery to repair with fusion/cages. During this period, the embarrassment of people, family, children, and friends witnessing my seizures had me paralyzed, scared, and withdrawn. I chose seclusion. I accepted my illness, embraced it, and conceded to it. I allowed epilepsy to control and dictate everything in my life. I lost belief in myself, feeling like epilepsy took everything from me, my ability to love, and all of the positives that were ahead of me. All I could see was the darkest of despair. My seizures were building, even under constant care, to hundreds daily causing further destruction of my soul and physical well-being.



What does it look like? Black eyes, bloody noses, severe damage to my tongue, bruises from head to toe, memory loss, vision and hearing loss, and – as embarrassing as it can be – the loss of my bladder during seizures. I tried to accept the diagnoses, which were improbable to me early on; but deeply felt there has to be more that can be done.

As a result of the continued and uncontrollable severity of my epilepsy during that two-year period, I was further diagnosed with Intractable Epilepsy by my surgeon who repaired my vertebrae (ironically not my neurologist) after discussing his concerns that my next seizure could undo his work and cause me to become paralyzed. My surgeon's foresight to refer me to an epileptologist for improved care was a pivotal moment in my healing process. My next option was a Vagus Nerve Stimulator (VNS), a surgical implant along with three therapeutic remedies all at the maximum FDA dosages. I assumed this would be my immediate savior. Although benefits were achieved, it was a lengthy and painful process getting to where I am today.

I am now proud to say epilepsy is a part of my life – a dissipating part of me! With support from my parents, family, loved ones, and a growing foundation of extended support from Epilepsy Foundation of Florida and Epilepsy Foundation of America, I advocate with my executive teams at both local and national levels while lobbying for increased funding. I started to manifest into my true self – a strong proponent seeking a cure. I recognized epilepsy is a blessing and I have an opportunity to contribute to all the TBI and PTE patients seeking our cure!

As we sit here on the precipice of finding a cure, I ask all of you to please join me in a moment of silence for all the warriors of the past, present, and future who have and will continue to encounter this disease (or face an injury resulting in the disease). May life rise up to meet each one of us on the road of our journey!

Upcoming EFOF Events



**The Honda Classic -
Birdies for Children**



**Downtown at the Gardens
Fashion Affair**
*West Palm Beach | January
28*



**Miami Marathon - Run for
EFOF!**
Miami | January 29



**Marathon of the Treasure
Coast**
Stuart | March 5



Kendra Gives Back
Boca Raton | February 9



Beast Feast
Vero Beach | March 11

SUPPORT YOUR EPILEPSY FOUNDATION OF FLORIDA

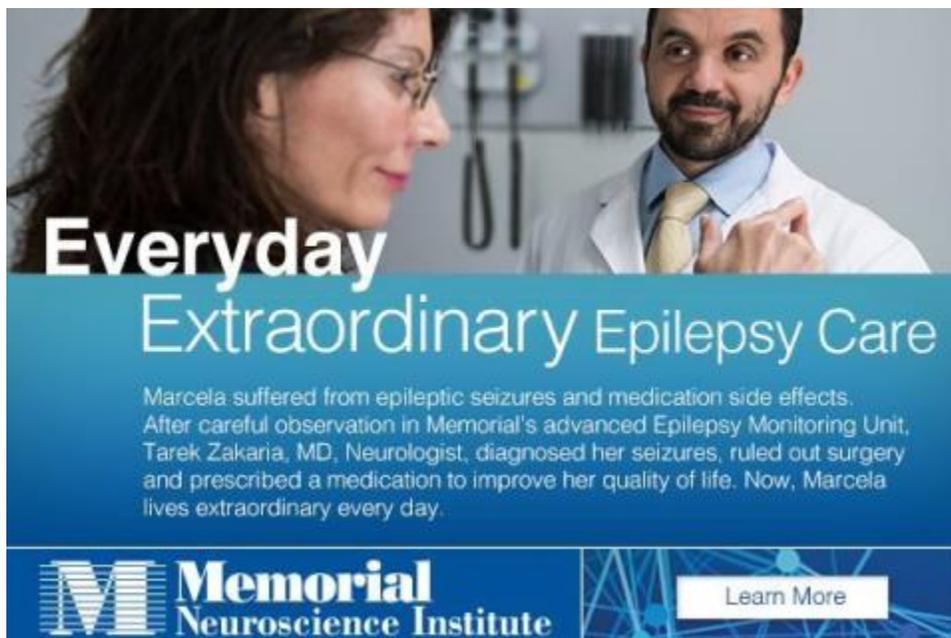
No one can prepare for a seizure as it can happen at the most unexpected time. There are currently more than 400,000 individuals who suffer from epilepsy across Florida with more than 89,000 of those sufferers being children. Prevention and education can better prepare those impacted by the disease. The Epilepsy Foundation of Florida (EFOF) is here to help provide services and resources to those needing it most, and to those seeking more information.

EFOF offers extensive and supportive services and programs to individuals, families, friends and the community at large including:

- Educational presentations
- Current epilepsy resources and information
- Medical services
- Support groups
- Sponsorship & Volunteer Opportunities
- Summer Camp
- Patient Navigation
- So much more!

To become a client and for more information about the organization, the individuals it serves and the resources provided to those in need, visit www.epilepsyfla.org or call 1-877-553-7453.

[Make a Donation](#)



Everyday
Extraordinary Epilepsy Care

Marcela suffered from epileptic seizures and medication side effects. After careful observation in Memorial's advanced Epilepsy Monitoring Unit, Tarek Zakaria, MD, Neurologist, diagnosed her seizures, ruled out surgery and prescribed a medication to improve her quality of life. Now, Marcela lives extraordinary every day.

M Memorial Neuroscience Institute

Learn More



A Global Leader in Pediatric Epilepsy Care

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