



Dear Friends of the Epilepsy Foundation of Florida,

Happy New Year!

Since 1971, EFOF has led the fight against epilepsy as the principal agency for epilepsy programs and services in the state of Florida. This year - 2018 - will be no exception to our commitment to accelerating therapies to stop seizures, find cures, and save lives. With this new year brings new opportunities to serve as an unwavering ally for individuals and families impacted by the disorder, and we're energized and ready to help those in need pursue seizure freedom.

We hope you'll join us in the fight against epilepsy by attending one of our [2018 Walk the Talk](#) events that will be taking place across the state this spring! Early bird pricing specials are now available, so be sure to take advantage by registering today.

*Sincerely,*



*Karen Basha Egozi  
Chief Executive Officer  
Epilepsy Foundation of Florida*

## *Bringing Holiday Cheer to Children with Epilepsy*

On Saturday, December 16th the Miami office hosted a wonderful children's holiday party that was attended by more than 200 children and adults from across South Florida!

Staff did an incredible job of manning the many stations available for the children to enjoy including: a music station where Christmas carols were sung, two arts and crafts stations, a manicure station, and a cupcake decorating station. Santa made a special appearance and each child left with a smile on their face as everyone received a holiday present!

A big thank you to the following organizations and companies who made the event extra special by donating toys and food for everyone to enjoy: Expeditors, Shoppes at Lago Mar Publix, Respetable Logia "Jose Manuel Avila Acosta," Farm Share, Nguyen Law Firm, Regis HR Group, Toys for Tots, and Menendez Management Corporation.



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[Click here to view more photos from the holiday party!](#)

## The Child with Epilepsy

*The following is an excerpt from an article published by Dr. Judith Siskind, EFOF staff psychologist, on the need for parents of children with epilepsy to help them lead as normal a life as possible.*

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Many children with epilepsy experience few seizures and no significant learning difficulty. In fact, some excel academically in school despite occasional seizures. Children whose seizures have persisted for several years despite adequate treatment are the most likely to experience difficulty in school; the prognosis for successful learning is better if the seizures are promptly brought under control with an anticonvulsant regimen.

While earlier age of onset is associated with higher risk of cognitive problems, research has increasingly implicated both seizures and medications as playing a likely role in the cognitive difficulties of many children with epilepsy. Various studies report that between 10% and 30% of children with epilepsy underachieve in reading, spelling, and/or math. Those children with functional deficits in language-related abilities are likely to have learning difficulty. Short-term verbal memory is also essential for school success, as are attention and concentration. Any or all of these may be disrupted by medications or by the seizures themselves.



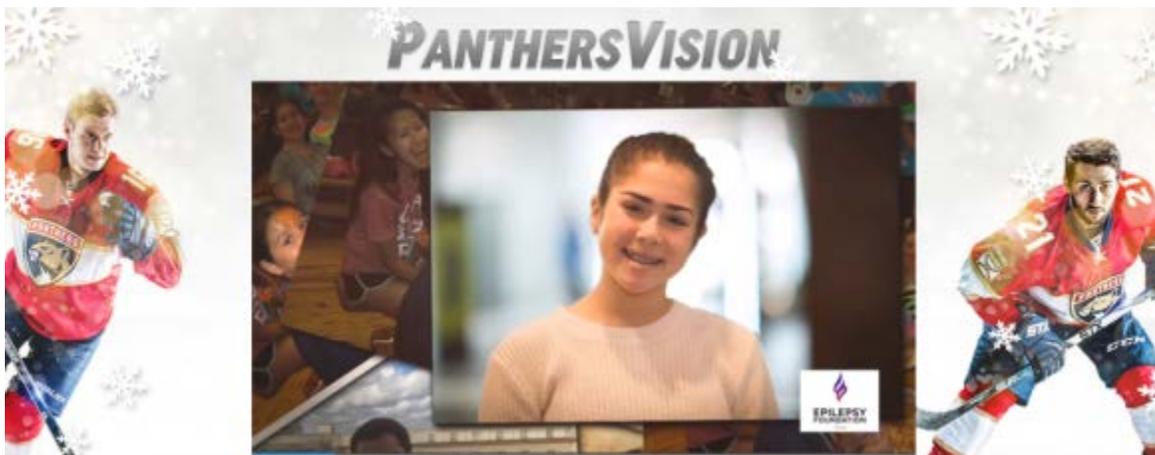
[Click here to read the full article.](#)

## Florida Panthers Honor EFOF



A big thank you to The Florida Panthers for choosing the Epilepsy Foundation of Florida as their Foundation Community Champion Grant winners! At a Panthers game on December 23rd they honored Clayton Feig Youth Awardee, Kayleigh Gallo as their Community Champion & EFOF Board President, Pat Dean, as the Walmart Community Playmaker Awardee, and granted EFOF \$25,000 to further our fight against epilepsy! Both Kayleigh and Pat were featured on the Jumbotron during the game and the entire stadium joined in celebrating their dedication and passion to spreading epilepsy awareness and fighting on behalf those with epilepsy. We are so proud to have Pat and Kayleigh as part of the EFOF family, and are so grateful for our partnership with the Florida Panthers!

**Check out the amazing video that was featured on the Jumbotron:**



Are You Ready to Walk? Register Today!

# **WALK** *the* **TALK** *for* Epilepsy **2018**

**JACKSONVILLE**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 24**  
METROPOLITAN PARK

**DAYTONA**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 14**  
MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE  
BEACH PARK

**NAPLES**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 14**  
NORTH COLLIER  
REGIONAL PARK

**GAINESVILLE**

**SATURDAY, APRIL 28**  
VETERANS MEMORIAL  
PARK

**WEST PALM BEACH**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 29**  
JOHN PRINCE  
MEMORIAL PARK

**MIAMI**

**SATURDAY, MAY 5**  
TROPICAL PARK

**BROWARD**

**SUNDAY, MAY 6**  
NORTH BEACH PARK

**PENSACOLA**

**SATURDAY, MAY 19**  
BLUE WAHOOS  
STADIUM

# Clayton Feig Legacy Fund - Faces of Epilepsy

By: Emily Daycock



I was 10 months old when my seizures started after a bout of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). Though not supported, it seemed that all my triggers came from anything that was upper respiratory, i.e. sinus, ear infections, cold, and it would normally happen every 6 to 9 months.

During my teen years, my seizures took on what appeared to be Catamenial Seizures with the start of me having an episode every 3 weeks instead of 6 to 9 months, mostly Grand Mals, which would then take me a week to recover only for the cycle to repeat itself. (Catamenial epilepsy is a gender-specific type of epilepsy in which seizure frequency intensifies during certain phases of the menstrual cycle.) (Studies have also shown that the decrease of

progesterone and the increase of estrogen during a cycle can contribute to Catamenial Seizures.)

After trying almost every medication out there for seizures with no success, my pediatric neurologist sent me to my GYN. Our first attempt to stop the seizures lasted approximately 1 year with weight gain as the major side effect. On our second attempt I got to 17 months seizure free, and during this time I had also started running. I also decided to join the girl's basketball and flag football teams for 3 years and cross country for 1 year. During my 12<sup>th</sup> grade year I was an all-star in all 3 sports and as a scholar-athlete in 12th-grade I received a scholarship.

Upon graduating, my coach got me into 5k racing and shortly thereafter I was invited to join a racing team. I have since done 5K and 10k races, half marathons, full marathons, Ultras, and one 100 mile relay race. I have now done over 200 5k races, 18 10k races, 16 Half Marathons, 12 Full Marathons, 3 Ultras (six hour runs), 2 Sprint Triathlons, 3 Sprint Duathlons and 1 Half Ironman Duathlon.

In November of 2014, my doctor decided to switch my medication to a stronger pill. Though there is no proof of what actually stopped my seizures, be it progesterone, my exercise routine or that I just grew out of them, I couldn't be more grateful for that and all the support from my family and friends especially my mom, dad and brother. I am proud to say that this December I am now 11 years Seizure Free!

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Check out more Faces of Epilepsy stories [here!](#)

## Upcoming Events



The Honda Classic  
Birdies for Children  
Feb. 19



Chili Cook Off for Epilepsy  
Port St. Lucie | April 7

## 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](http://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

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