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# NEWS RELEASE

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **November is National Epilepsy Awareness Month!**

*Epilepsy Foundation Launches National Campaign to Raise Epilepsy Awareness*

**Washington, D.C. (October 22, 2009)** — The Epilepsy Foundation joins the social networking phenomenon to raise awareness and educate people about epilepsy. *Talk About It!*, this year's National Epilepsy Awareness Month theme, will empower people with epilepsy to dispel myths and encourage the public to better understand the condition.

During November, the Epilepsy Foundation is using social networking Web sites like Facebook, Twitter, and the Foundation's own eCommunities to educate people about epilepsy and demonstrate the power of personal stories. Parents, friends, family and caregivers are encouraged to talk about epilepsy by "tweeting" about what epilepsy means to them, updating their status on Facebook with a message about epilepsy or creating a 60-second video sharing their personal story of epilepsy.

"I want to share my feelings on being considered different because I have epilepsy. I enjoy being called different, not because I have epilepsy, but because I AM different in many other ways," said Sara-Elizabeth Clark, a 14 year-old epilepsy advocate. "That's what makes me who I am." Epilepsy is the third most common neurological disorder in the United States and affects nearly 3 million Americans (and 50 million people worldwide). Despite its prevalence, the condition is often overlooked and misunderstood.

"We're encouraging everyone affected by seizures to share some aspect of their story during National Epilepsy Awareness Month," said Eric R. Hargis, president and CEO of the Epilepsy Foundation. "Talking about epilepsy will empower those impacted by the condition to speak out without shame."

The Web site [TalkAboutIt.org](http://TalkAboutIt.org) is a collaboration between Greg Grunberg (star of NBC's *Heroes* and the father of a child with epilepsy) and the Epilepsy Foundation. The site is devoted to educating the public about seizures and epilepsy on behalf of those who are coping with the condition. Hollywood celebrities such as

Jennifer Garner, John Mayer, Hayden Panettiere and a host of other stars from television, film and music have joined Grunberg in the effort to get people talking about the condition.

In 1969, November was declared National Epilepsy Awareness Month as a part of a nationwide epilepsy public education campaign. Since that date, the observance has been recognized in most years by a White House message from the President. In 2003, the U.S. Congress passed a formal resolution declaring November as National Epilepsy Awareness Month.

The Epilepsy Foundation's nationwide network of affiliates is coordinating events around the country to get people talking about epilepsy. National Epilepsy Awareness Month activities include:

- November 1, Epilepsy Foundation of Metropolitan Washington is hosting a health, wellness and beauty event to raise awareness of epilepsy.
- November 5, Epilepsy Foundation Southern Wisconsin is hosting a gala.
- November 7, Epilepsy Foundation of Chicago is coordinating a series of "at-home" dinner parties called *Talk About it @ Dinner* to raise awareness and funds.
- November 10, Epilepsy Foundation of Alabama is holding a conference to educate employers about epilepsy.
- Throughout November, Epilepsy Foundation of Rochester is hosting a series of education seminars for parents, family members and caregivers of individuals with epilepsy.
- November 21, Epilepsy Foundation of Northern California is sponsoring, *Taking Charge of Epilepsy Conference* to educate people on issues that affect those with epilepsy.

"National Epilepsy Awareness Month is an opportunity to take advantage of the many new social network technologies so that more people will understand what epilepsy is, what challenges come with having this condition, and how people can come together to raise awareness and find a cure.," Hargis continued. "Then, the lives of nearly 3 million Americans will have changed for the better. This is our goal."

For more about the epilepsy Foundation or National Epilepsy Awareness Month activities, visit [www.EpilepsyFoundation.org](http://www.EpilepsyFoundation.org) or call 800-331-1000.

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#### **About Epilepsy**

Epilepsy is a serious neurological condition that affects almost 3 million Americans and 50 million people worldwide. The condition produces seizures, which can range from a momentary disruption of the senses, to short periods of unconsciousness or staring spells, to convulsions. A seizure happens when a brief, strong surge of electrical activity affects part or all of the brain. When a person has two or more unprovoked seizures, they are considered to have epilepsy. Currently there is no cure for epilepsy; however, more than half of people with epilepsy are able to control seizures with existing treatment options.

#### **About the Epilepsy Foundation**

The Epilepsy Foundation, a national nonprofit with affiliated organizations throughout the United States, has led the fight against epilepsy since 1968. The Foundation's goals are to ensure that people with seizures are able to participate in all life experiences; and prevent, control and cure epilepsy through services, education, advocacy and research, so not another moment is lost to seizures. For additional information, please visit [www.epilepsyfoundation.org](http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org).

#### **About TalkAboutIt.org**

TalkAboutIt.org is a collaborative effort between Greg Grunberg, the star of NBC's *Heroes* and the father of a child with epilepsy, and the Epilepsy Foundation. The site features stars of film, television and music, including Jennifer Garner, John Mayer, Zachary Quinto, Kristen Bell and Hayden Panettiere. Visitors to the site can become part of the *Talk About It!* Promise to help eliminate the misunderstanding about what epilepsy is and how to react to seizures.