



The Matty Fund®  
Epilepsy Resource Center  
Helping Others with Epilepsy  
www.MattyFund.org  
February, 2012

February is a special month for all of us here at the Matty Fund. We celebrate Matty's birthday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, all month long with "Matty Hatty", a statewide elementary school epilepsy education and awareness program. Students of both pre and elementary school age learn about epilepsy in a fun, uplifting manner. The program celebrates diversity and students learn seizure protocols and how to be a good friend to children who live with seizures and epilepsy. Over 30 schools participated last year touching nearly 7,000 students. This year, as we visit schools around the state, we see the impact of this program as students remember "Matty Hatty" and what they have learned about epilepsy and seizure protocols. "Matty Hatty" is such a wonderful way to celebrate Matty's life and make a positive difference in the every day lives of children living with epilepsy. Believing that knowledge is power in fighting the myths and stigma surrounding epilepsy, consider inviting your child's school to participate in next year's Matty Hatty! This month's Matty Matters focuses on the importance of raising epilepsy awareness among school aged children.

- Richard and Debra Siravo

**Happy Valentine's Day!** Did you know...St. Valentine was considered by many to be the patron saint of epilepsy



Purple Day was founded in 2008, by nine-year-old Cassidy Megan of Nova Scotia, Canada, with the help of the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia (EANS).

Cassidy chose the color purple after the international color for epilepsy, lavender. The lavender flower is also often associated with solitude, which is representative of the feelings of isolation many people affected by epilepsy and seizure disorders often feel.

Cassidy's goal is for people with epilepsy everywhere to know they are not alone.



To learn more about Purple Day, Visit their website at [www.purpleday.org](http://www.purpleday.org).

#### Excerpts from Experts

As researchers continue to uncover complex relationships between epilepsy and a host of cognitive, behavioral, psychiatric, and other neurological disorders, they argue that epilepsy should be considered a spectrum disorder. Such a characterization could increase awareness and improve the treatment of this serious brain disorder, which affects 50 million people worldwide.

Recent evidence suggests that epilepsy and seizures may be components of such conditions as depression, autism, and Alzheimer's disease. In children, epilepsy can influence quality of life, school performance, and social and family interactions. A Cleveland Clinic study found that 40% of 116 children with chronic epilepsy had mood disorders, 31% had attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, 25% had anxiety disorders, and 14.7% had autism spectrum disorders. Because some of these children had been previously evaluated but remained untreated secondary to their epilepsy, the authors of the study advocated for including psychiatrists in epilepsy management.

The variations in seizure types, treatments, causes, disabilities, and outcomes support the rationale for redefining epilepsy as a spectrum disorder. The type of seizure and its symptoms depend on the brain region affected. Treatments – including anticonvulsant medications, surgery, and neuro-stimulation therapy - have different effects on different patients, while approximately 30% of cases are refractory (do not respond) to treatment. Additionally, the causes of epilepsy are varied, and may include genetic factors, head trauma, brain tumors, and stroke.

Excerpts were taken from an article entitled "Experts Describe "Spectrum" of Epilepsy" by Tracy Hampton, PhD, JAMA January 27, 2010 – Vol 303, No. 4

We wish to thank one of our Discovering M.E. Support Group families for sharing this insightful article! For a copy of the full article, please feel free to contact The Matty Fund Resource Center.