

## Living with Epilepsy

Delilah Krahn

Delilah Krahn, a 12-year-old Aylmer native, is a sports fanatic with a passion for swimming. She is currently completing her last level of lifeguard training, and enjoys playing volleyball and basketball. When she was eight-years-old, she experienced her first seizure.



“I was at home because I was sick, and I wanted to do karaoke and record it on my dad’s phone, and that’s when I had a seizure. It was an absence seizure,” explained Krahn.

At school, Krahn would have seizures but she wouldn’t realize they were occurring. “I just wouldn’t know what was happening at school. They would be explaining something and all of a sudden I’m like, ‘wait, how do we do this?’”

Because Krahn’s mom, Anna, was coincidentally filming her daughter during an episode, the diagnosis came pretty quickly. The doctors also did an EEG that confirmed Krahn’s epilepsy.

Since her diagnosis, Krahn has been on three different medications. “I am used to taking pills, they just taste bad when they go on my tongue,” confessed Krahn. “When I was on the other medications I was really sleepy.”

The drowsy symptoms Krahn felt when she took these medications made it difficult for her to continue her regular athletic activities. “I felt like I couldn’t do a lot of sports as well as I could before,” explained Krahn.

“Finding the right medication for Delilah was probably the hardest part about her journey so far,” commented the mother. “The first medication she was on was absolutely horrible for her. She was not the same bright, cheerful child that she has been before. The second medication was a bit better but still wasn’t working well for her. To be able to somehow figure out what makes certain meds work for some and not for others would be great.”

The adjustment to this new life was difficult for the family, but their first appointment with ESWO helped to combat the stress. “The Educators were great with explaining stuff to us and making us feel more comfortable and at ease with everything, how things were going to be

different,” said Anna. In the weeks following, ESWO also went to Krahn’s school to educate her peers and teachers about epilepsy and provided tips on how to be supportive.

Krahn attended the YEP! Program for a few sessions, and found it to be beneficial for her. “We did fun stuff and we talked about health and we went over everything,” she said. “It was fun and you could meet other people who have epilepsy too.”

After seeing the help ESWO provided, Anna has become an advocate for support centres like ESWO. “Getting involved with organizations is obviously a great support system.” She believes that the education they provide is imperative to truly understanding the nature of epilepsy and what is really going on in the brain during seizures.

Krahn agreed with her mother about the importance of education. “I want them [seizures] to go away. But I want people to know about it so if something happens, people know what to do.”