

A close-up photograph of several lavender flower spikes in a field. The flowers are a vibrant purple color, and the background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. The lighting is bright, creating a warm and serene atmosphere.

2020–2021 Annual Report

A Year of Accomplishments

epilepsy
southwestern
ontario

www.epilepsyswo.ca

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ABOUT EPILEPSY SOUTHWESTERN ONTARIO

Mission

We provide a network of services that educate, support and build community awareness.

Vision

We strive to create a community free of barriers for persons affected by epilepsy.

Values

We provide services tailored to individual needs and are dedicated to being inclusive and collaborative.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are proud to bring you the 2020-2021 Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario Annual Report. As we all reflect on the wide variety of issues we have been forced to address during the past year, we are easily both concerned and inspired. It is no secret that individuals and families living with epilepsy experienced additional barriers and challenges directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, ESWO staff worked hard to adapt our services and reduce these barriers.

With our vision “to create a community free of barriers for persons affected by epilepsy”, alongside a group of dedicated staff and volunteers, we supported as many individuals, families and community groups as possible this year. Our focus has always remained on our mission, vision and values, and families living with epilepsy.

As a non-profit service provider, we work hard to secure funding to ensure the continuance of adaptations that are necessary to provide as much education and support to as many people as possible.

I would like to conclude by recognizing our clients, volunteers, staff and stakeholders. You enable us all to continue a passionate dedication towards supporting people living with epilepsy throughout our communities! Thank you!

-Tom Stadnisky

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Tom Stadnisky

Treasurer

Murray Jones

Vice President

Elaine Swan

Medical Advisors

Dr. Andrea Andrade

Dr. Seyed Mirsattari

Directors

Bob Harvey

Carmela Redhead

Evlynn Lipton

Joe Longmoore (Windsor Essex)

Katelynn Thibert (Windsor Essex)

Michelle Scott

Shaylana Nejim

Sharon Berry Ross (Sarnia Lambton)

Tabitha Cook (Chatham Kent)

Valerie Smith

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I must admit that I am thankful this year is behind us as the world faced the COVID-19 pandemic. The uncertainty, fear and isolation has impacted each one of us on some level; but as the infection rates decline, we optimistically move forward. We continue to be inspired by the resiliency of people living with epilepsy who face adversity on a daily basis!

As I reflect on the last year, I am very proud of the adaptability of our team in pivoting to working remotely and effectively providing virtual events and service delivery. An immense benefit of this mode of service delivery has been the accessibility of ESWO to families living rurally and to those without transportation. As a direct result, we are committed to a hybrid model of service delivery moving forward to maintain this increased accessibility.

In addition to providing virtual services, new programs and services were added in response to increased isolation and mental health issues. ESWO hosted several webinars on relevant topics such as 'The Impacts of COVID-19 on People Living with Epilepsy' and 'Coping with Anxiety and Stress'. Our team also implemented Project UPLIFT, an evidence-based program designed to teach participants skills that have been shown to improve depression, psychological well-being and quality of life in people living with epilepsy. Several new online groups and virtual support groups were also created in attempt to foster peer support and expand support circles for people living with epilepsy.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic brought a great deal of economic uncertainty for ESWO. We are extremely grateful for the federal and provincial economic support programs that we have benefitted from. We would like to give a special shout out to our Landlord - Southside Group - for voluntarily enrolling in the rent subsidy program. Their generosity meant a reduction in revenue for them, but also a huge savings for ESWO. They have always been financially supportive of our fundraising efforts, but this gesture was over the top! Thank you so much, Southside Group!

Last but not least, thank you to our committed staff, our passionate volunteers, our dedicated Board of Directors and all of our Purple Warriors out there! You are what makes our Purple Nation so strong!

Warm regards,
Michelle Franklin

LIVING WITH EPILEPSY

HOLLIE HARTFORD

I care about epilepsy because my daughter, Hollie, was born with Aicardi Syndrome 9 years ago and with that comes intractable epilepsy and a few other special needs.



Our family got connected to Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario (ESWO) through the neurology team at London Health Science Centre. We started out seeing Dr. Levin for seven years before he referred us to the CEC clinic with Dr. Nouri and their wonderful team. Most appointments, if not every appointment, we also talk to an ESWO Educator to check up on Hollie and evaluate her progress.

When Hollie had her first seizure, she was two weeks old. I was putting her in the bath when she went completely stiff and her eyes rolled back in her head. My instincts told me she was having a seizure, but I wasn't 100% sure. At that point she would only freeze up every so often; but we took her to the hospital at three weeks old to confirm what I already knew: Hollie was having seizures.

As a mother to a special needs daughter with intractable epilepsy, it has been hard not just on me but Hollie as well. We have tried 13 different medications and probably hundreds of combinations of medications.

Everyday when she is in school, I just pray that she makes it through without a seizure. We always have to make sure her medication is ordered, and her emergency medication is available. We also have to restrict the different types of lights in our house. As her mom, I'm always on high alert, just waiting for a seizure; you just never know when or how bad it will be when it hits. For her, I can't even imagine how hard it is. She started out having 50+ seizures a day and nine years later, she still has 1-2 every day. Hollie experiences tonic seizures that she screams through, drop seizures which we don't see very often, and absence seizures. That said, it's the tonic seizures that are giving us the problem.

The one thing that I've learned about myself through this journey with my daughter is that you are always stronger than you think you are and to always trust your gut. Hollie has gone through a lot to get to where she is today, and for that, she is my hero. -Teresa Hartford

H.O.P.E. AWARD

The Oke Family



This year we would like to recognize the Oke family. They have poured hours into fundraising, and have raised an extraordinary amount of money in order to help us provide support and educational services to people living with epilepsy. Their annual golf tournament has raised over \$57,550 to date. We are grateful for their contribution, although it is not just about the funds raised. With so many sponsors, donors and event attendees, the Okes have helped to increase epilepsy awareness – our ultimate goal!

ESWO has been presenting a H.O.P.E. award (Helping Out People with Epilepsy) since 2005. Each year, it is awarded to an individual, group of individuals or organization who has demonstrated compassion and caring for people living with epilepsy.



SUPPORT

Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario has built a support system for individuals living with epilepsy and their families that provides a community where those affected do not feel alone in their diagnoses. Our programming helps to form a sense of belonging among our clients by building confidence to feel accepted, strengthen coping skills, and finding resiliency within themselves.

126

clients attended a
C2C information
session

60

individuals attended 22
different meetings to
support students in their
school environment

44

clients participated
in UPLIFT

205

new clients

EDUCATION

Our public education programming allows us to provide information about epilepsy and train our community in seizure first aid across Southwestern Ontario. We reduce the associated stigma of epilepsy by delivering real facts to the future generation during our age-appropriate presentations. These programs will reduce stereotypes and increase knowledge, therefore creating supportive, safe, inclusive and inviting spaces for people living with epilepsy.

831

students were educated
through 37 classroom
presentations

194

health care providers
were educated
through 7 sessions

323

teachers were
educated through 30
teacher in-services

1626

people received public
education presentations in
their community throughout
Southwestern Ontario

AWARENESS

Providing information to create awareness among our region is one of the numerous ways we help break down barriers that prevent those living with epilepsy from actively and entirely taking part in their communities. March Epilepsy Awareness Month is a national platform to begin a discussion about epilepsy that we encourage individuals throughout our community to participate in. March Epilepsy Awareness Month 2021 looked different this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although many of our in-person events were unable to take place, our community was able to come together and raise awareness in new and exciting ways. While the current circumstances of the world have challenged our typical ways of celebrating March Epilepsy Awareness month, the #purplenation has come together to persevere.



70

photos were submitted
to our Purple Door
/People contest

THIRD PARTY

Thank you to all of our third party event organizers for their generous support! Third party fundraisers are any fundraising event that friends, companies or community groups host to support ESWO. All proceeds raised from your initiative, whether a dress-down day, bake sale or golf tournament, are donated to ESWO. ESWO relies heavily on donations from the community to operate, and your efforts and fundraising dollars help to further our mission. Through these efforts, you will help make a difference in the lives of people affected by epilepsy in your region and help sustain ESWO.

Approximately
\$30,975

was raised by 17 third party fundraisers to help fund support and educational services in Southwestern Ontario



Financial Report

Revenue	2021	2020
Ontario Trillium Foundation	\$35,200	\$124,800
Net Fundraising	\$163,230	\$147,044
Donations	\$57,755	\$56,101
United Way	-	\$16,840
OBI	\$1,926	\$36,089
Grants	\$35,054	\$21,994
Summer Camp	\$1,310	\$1,915
COVID Government Subsidies	\$135,342	-
Other Income	\$2,451	\$9,270
Total Sales Revenue	\$432,268	\$414,053

Expenditures

Program Expenses	\$284,368	\$378,890
Administration Expenses	\$75,399	\$ 101,461
Total Expenditures	\$359,767	\$480,351

Excess of revenue over expenses	(\$72,501)	(-\$66,298)
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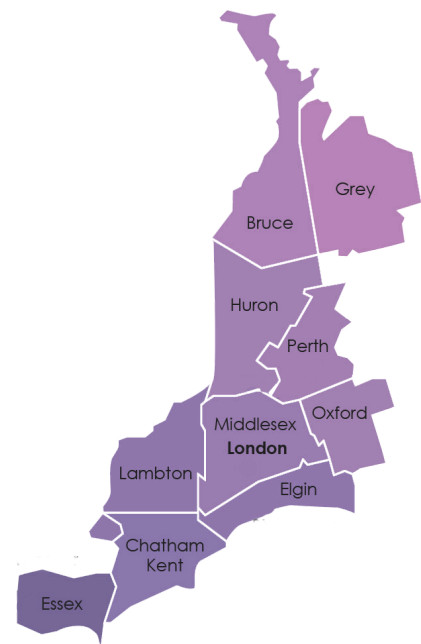
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Find Us On Social Media @epilepsyswo



Epilepsy Southwestern Ontario provides service in London Middlesex, Sarnia Lambton, Chatham Kent, Windsor Essex, Oxford, Elgin, Huron Perth, and Grey Bruce.

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