



LASTING FRIENDSHIPS. INCREASED INDEPENDENCE.

The first time Jeremy and his parents walked up to the check-in at Camp Oz, he was nervous, and his parents were even more anxious. To a first-time camper, the hive of activity and emotion may seem chaotic, but when Jeremy returned to Camp Oz in 2017, his family simply saw it as a homecoming for one of the best weeks of his year. As his parents take care of health forms, funding the camp store account, and double-checking medication and supplies for the week, Jeremy busies himself with greeting his friends from last year. Camp drop-off is full of excitement and happiness for campers, and a mixture of pride and worry for parents as they leave their children.

Now in its 36th year, Camp Oz is a well-oiled machine that culminates a year-long planning effort of staff at EFMN and hundreds of volunteer hours, all dedicated to ensuring that campers are set for a successful week away from home.

Each day of the week is managed closely to ensure safe and positive experiences, from the time campers meet their cabin counselors and nurses, to the time their parents pick them up on the final day.

Campers, youth with epilepsy and their siblings ages 9-17, spend the week playing games, riding horses, rock climbing, and generally being carefree kids, all while under the watchful eyes of nurses and adult volunteers.

At the end of the week, Jeremy packs up his duffel bag and warmly greets his parents at pick-up. Jeremy's mom feels fierce pride as she watches him walk to the car standing a little taller, smiling a lot wider, and feeling a little more independent.

To register for camp visit efmn.org/camp

With the success of Camp Oz and the generous support of donors, we've expanded our camp offerings to achieve our goal that every child is able to experience camp:

- **Day camp** prepares young kids for a full week away at Camp Oz.
- **Family camp** gives youth whose needs cannot be accommodated at Camp Oz a chance to experience camp activities.
- **NEW in 2018**, we are adding a day camp in each of our four service regions.

Every camp has a shared goal of connecting youth with epilepsy to other kids like them.

2018-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

“Good company in a journey makes the way seem shorter.” –Izaak Walton

I began my role at EFMN about a year ago and joined an extremely strong organization. We have innovative programming, a strong staff, wonderful volunteer leadership, stable finances, and most importantly, an engaged community of people who care a great deal about helping people with epilepsy live life to their full potential.

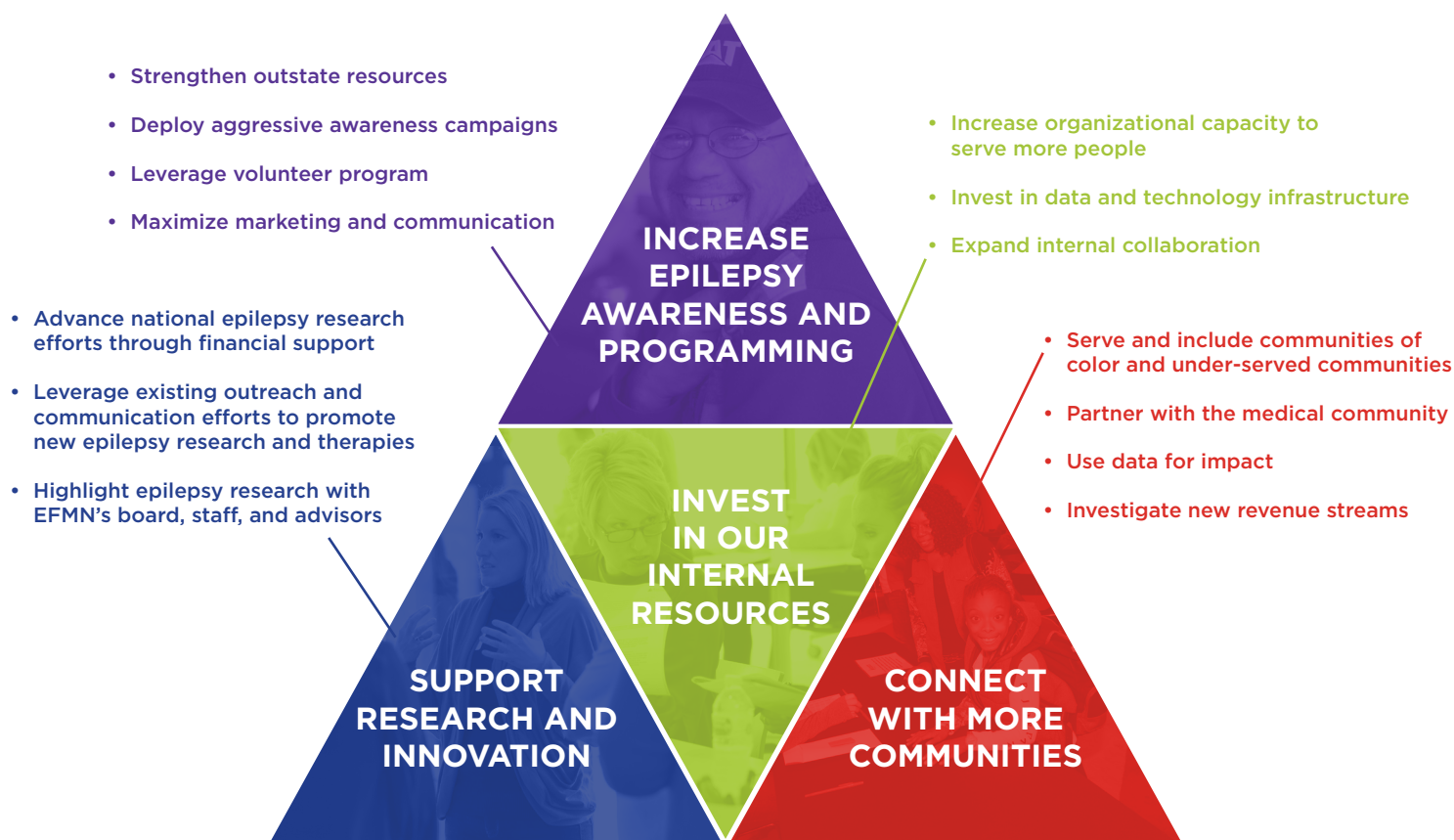


Executive Director Heidi Fisher (left) at one of three half-day strategic planning sessions.

Because of the strength of the organization, the Board of Directors, staff, and I were able to think deeply about our future. We were able to take the time to engage many of our stakeholders in listening to and understanding the strengths and opportunities of the organization. Based on that feedback we have crafted a three-year strategic plan that will position us to grow into our areas of strength while adding new aspects to our work that we think will be a valuable resource to our community.

Our plan is organized into four segments, seen below. Each of these segments increases our ability to serve ALL people in Minnesota and eastern North Dakota with resources, both current and new. It will allow EFMN to be an even more indispensable resource for those we serve as we lead the fight to overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy and to accelerate therapies to stop seizures, find cures, and save lives.

-Heidi Fisher, Executive Director



The initiatives listed above make up the framework of our 2018-2020 Rise Beyond Strategic Plan.

INFORMATION & REFERRAL

MORE THAN JUST A PHONE NUMBER



Nikki Baker (Youth & Families Program Manager) shares information about EFMN services and programs at the Epilepsy & Seizures Wellness Expo.

To ensure everyone with seizures gets the support they need, we offer extensive Information & Referral (I&R) services beyond our 24/7 Seizure Helpline. During business hours, you can connect with our in-house I&R specialist for resources and support, and during nights and weekends

you can always get immediate assistance by calling the Seizure Helpline listed below.

Support also comes from our Regional Coordinators who offer in-person guidance to the individuals and families in their area. This often comes in the form of helping newly diagnosed individuals navigate the medical field, but also extends to information about EFMN programs, services, and beyond. In our June 2017 Thriving with Epilepsy story, we featured the Rennquist family in Duluth who connected with their Regional Coordinator at the hospital when their daughter was first diagnosed.

Our extensive material offerings cover topics such as driving in Minnesota, seizure recognition and response, raising a child with epilepsy, and much more. This important information will become more widely available as we continue to expand our I&R materials to languages like Hmong, Somali, and Spanish, per our Strategic Plan objective of better supporting underserved communities.

Most Frequently Requested Info:

17% General Epilepsy Info

14% Other (ex. Service Dogs, Brain Injury, Medical Cannabis)

10% EFMN Program Info

10% School Support

Not all topics shown. We provide support on a range of epilepsy-related questions.

Business hours support: 800.779.0777

24/7 Seizure Helpline: 800.332.1000

Español: 866.748.8008

In addition to helping those who seek out support, we also provide resources at a variety of health and educational conferences throughout the region. Combined with our partnerships with similar organizations, like PACER and The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MNCCD), we seek to educate the general public while at the same time making sure to support those who suffer from seizures.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

NEW IN 2018

Support is now available to those who have questions or are experiencing employment challenges. In response to the strategic objective of increasing our programming, we're happy to introduce Jon Hoffman, Employment Coordinator. Jon is an employment specialist that can help with everything from interview prep to providing employment-related resources. Additionally, if you are an employer and would like seizure training, or assistance in working with people with epilepsy, we are a resource for you too.

EFMN is proud to have Jon Hoffman serving individuals with these needs. Jon is new to the organization but has years of experience in this role. You can contact him at jhoffman@efmn.org or 651.287.2333.

To start receiving our monthly eNewsletter visit efmn.org/enews

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

CREATIVE WAYS TO GIVE



Every year we are grateful for the generosity of our donors. Without you, it would be impossible to raise epilepsy awareness and provide resources to our 60,000 community members with seizures. Below are some inspirational stories from the last month.

Former Camp Oz camper and State Fair volunteer **Mike Hogan** spent his summer mowing lawns and raising money for the Bridge to Independence Fund. Mike has epilepsy himself, and after hearing about the funds purpose to provide financial assistance to those in need, he decided to get involved and do what he could to help.

Every year during the holiday season the **Harris Companies** holds an Employee Charity Auction where their employees submit the name of their favorite charity. EFMN was lucky enough to be the charity drawn and as a result received a \$13,626 donation.



EFMN staff members Keri Olufson and Heidi Fisher with Joe Kennedy at the 2017 Twin Cities Jeep Show for Epilepsy.

To help fund and promote epilepsy education, **Joe Kennedy** raised \$18,287 at his annual Jeep Show for Epilepsy with all the proceeds going to EFMN.

**THANK YOU
DONORS!**

BRIDGE TO INDEPENDENCE FUND

Seizures can have an unpredictable impact on lives and create unanticipated expenses. To alleviate these burdens, we've created the Bridge to Independence Fund. The Bridge Fund will provide short-term financial assistance for items or services that offer a meaningful improvement to the quality of life for someone living with epilepsy.

Donations for the Bridge Fund are accepted year-round, and applications to receive this form of assistance will be available in the coming months. We would like to give a special thank you to the Hubbard Broadcasting Foundation for providing a \$10,000 matching grant to help get this program started.

**Interested in making a gift?
Visit efmn.org/giving.**

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

2018 FOCUS - STEP THERAPY LEGISLATION

Step therapy, also known as fail first, is a cost savings tool used by health insurers to manage access to medications. Oftentimes cost – not medical necessity – influence insurer's step therapy requirements and interfere with physician-directed care. An example of step therapy is when a doctor prescribes a certain medication, and the health plan determines a lesser cost medicine in the same class should be used first.

This is not an unreasonable concept; most doctors already prescribe the most effective medicines at the least cost to their patients. However, medications for epilepsy and many other complex chronic conditions are not interchangeable and there are times when an individual's unique medical needs require a certain medication. This is when the one-size-fits-all approach with step therapy is a problem.

As part of the Minnesota Step Therapy Coalition, EFMN is advocating for legislation that would streamline and bring greater transparency to the step therapy process. Join us on March 14th for our annual Day at the Capitol to educate your legislators on living with epilepsy and help us support the step therapy legislation.

Visit efmn.org/advocacy for more information.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN 2018?

FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF OUR REGIONAL AND METRO PROGRAM STAFF

Fargo/Moorhead

Janice Tweet | jtweet@efmn.org

- Hosting a family picnic in Grand Forks to offer families in the northern part of the region the opportunity to connect.
- Holding EFMN Open Houses around the region and offering anyone the opportunity to learn more about EFMN programming.
- The 2018 Rise Above Seizures Walk on Thursday, August 2nd will be a fun and inspiring evening again this year.

Duluth

Lisa Peterson | lpeterson@efmn.org

- Hosting special fun and connect events for children, teens, young adults, and adults impacted by epilepsy.
- Providing training to help schools and other organizations learn how to recognize and respond to seizures.
- A great lineup of speakers touching on a wide range of subjects for our Connect Groups.

St. Cloud

Lori Braegelmann
lbraelmann@efmn.org

- Offering Open Houses in the region as a new way to reach members of the community and get them connected to EFMN resources and support.
- Our popular warm summer events like the St. Cloud Rise Above Seizures Walk and St. Cloud Rox baseball game and picnic.
- What I enjoy most: educating people about seizure recognition and response to help reduce the stigma and misinformation that surrounds epilepsy.

Metro

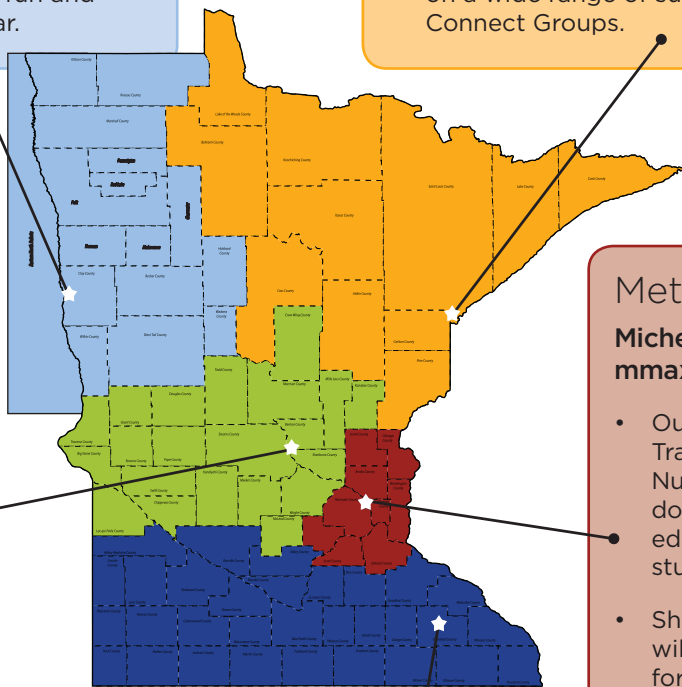
Michelle Maxwell
mmaxwell@efmn.org

- Our free statewide Seizure Training 2.0 for School Nurses on April 16 where we do a deep dive into epilepsy education and supporting students with seizures.
- Shining Star Abby Ackerman will go to Washington D.C. for the National Walk for Epilepsy and to meet with her congressional representatives as part of her role as this year's Winning Kid.
- The Aging and Living Well Workshop on March 29 with multiple partners; BrightStar Care, Parkinson's Foundation Minnesota, and Tandem Strength & Balance.

Rochester

Emily Gomez | egomez@efmn.org

- Planning my second Rise Above Seizures Walk and using it to connect with more families in my region.
- Expanding programming to the western part of the region and bringing Connect Groups to Mankato.
- Teaching seizure recognition and response and making more area schools Seizure Smart.





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2018 UPCOMING EVENTS

- Mar 14:** Day at the Capitol
Apr 28: Rise Above Seizures Gala
Aug 2: Regional Rise Above Seizures Walks
Sep 22: Metro Rise Above Seizures Walk

To have a calendar of quarterly events mailed to you, call 800.779.0777.

Dear Friends of the Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota,

We are excited to bring you another way to stay connected with our organization and learn about the work we are doing. With this new semi-annual newsletter we will share our work and how we're improving the lives of people living with epilepsy, their friends, and caregivers.

In 2018 we are unveiling a three-year strategic plan which you can read about on page 2. One of the pillars of our plan is to increase awareness of epilepsy and EFMN programming. This newsletter is one of our new tools. We hope you enjoy this opportunity for us to tell you stories about the people and programs that make us one of the strongest Epilepsy Foundations in the country. It is the stories of the people we serve that make our work so meaningful.

This is also the time of year when we open applications for our Elam Baer & Janis Clay Educational Scholarship. The applications we receive from students living with epilepsy, as they work towards a bright future, are emblematic of our vision that all people with epilepsy will realize their full potential. I hope you recognize this vision throughout this newsletter.

-Heidi Fisher, Executive Director



Recipients of the 2017 Elam Baer and Janis Clay Educational Scholarship pose with Janis Clay. For info on the 2018 process, visit efmn.org.