

## Drikie Snyman

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**From:** Epilepsy South Africa [info@epilepsy.org.za]

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*March 2009*

### **Dear Valued Subscriber**

During the month of March 2009 Epilepsy South Africa will be focussing on our national meetings that will take place from 18 – 21 March 2009 in Parys, Free State. At these meetings all the Directors of all the Epilepsy South Africa Branches meet to discuss matters of national importance to Epilepsy South Africa and people with epilepsy. The National Board of Epilepsy South Africa also meet for our bi-annual meeting discussing the governance of Epilepsy South Africa nationally.

Any person wanting more information on these meetings and the content thereof are welcome to contact me directly.

Despite the time required in preparation for our national meetings, we are also working hard on our day to day projects and programmes. I am happy to announce that we have commenced with our planning for National Epilepsy Week 2009, our national wine auction 2009 and the completion of our 2008/2009 business plan implementation , thus focussing on the planning for the implementation of our 2009/2010 business plan, which will commence as of 1 April 2009. In my next letter I will provide you with some of the programme details for 2009/2010 which will showcase the dedication from the personnel of Epilepsy South Africa towards people with epilepsy. I once again welcome your inputs and contact, as we can only achieve our goals if we work together.

Let us truly turn obstacles into true potential for every person with epilepsy within South Africa!

The National Director of Epilepsy South Africa,

Noeline de Goede

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### **March E-news Contents:**

- [Sandscapes 2009, Epilepsy South Africa Western Cape](#)
- [Finding the Right Way to Disclose a Disability](#)
- [A well kept secret](#)
- [Information on epilepsy](#)

## Sandscapes 2009, Epilepsy South Africa Western Cape

Sandscapes is an annual sandcastle building competition held at Sunrise Beach, Muizenberg. It is here that Epilepsy South Africa brings together, corporate companies, families and children from Homes and Special Schools in an effort to bring back values to communities and in the same way afford the youth the opportunity to realize their true potential.



The day started bright and early, erecting the marquee, setting up the stage and sound and preparing to receive the children from the Homes and Special Schools. Councilor Demitri Qually once again welcomed all our special guests, and the day kicked off with much enthusiasm and excitement as SAS Wingfield grouped the kids' together and played games with them, such as volleyball, tug-of-war, etc. The amazing, DJ Ready was the MC for the day; the crowd was entertained by break dancers, belly dancers and D himself wreckin' the decks!

The children were frantically busy building sandcastles, playing games and having their faces painted. One can say that all 305 kids were thoroughly entertained for the day. Volunteers from False Bay College also ensured that things ran smoothly. They facilitated the food preparation, arena control and face painting.

In the end, the corporate team, Ottery Toyota won for the best Sandcastle built by a corporate team, St. Josephs School won for the Youth Category, Nero's won for Sponsored plots and the Vermaak family won for the Family/friends category.

All in all, great fun was had by all. Epilepsy South Africa would like to thank our partners, Department of Social Development, Good Hope FM, City of Cape Town, SAS Wingfield and False Bay College. Without them, this event could not have been possible. Also to our sponsors and donors, thank you for all that you have contributed towards the success of Sandscapes 2009

We would also like to extend a few thank yous to: our board members, Esme, Tim and Bobbie who were present on the day to do the judging and the trophy presentations. To the Homes, Special Schools for coming through on the day. To DJ Ready D for doing such an awesome job of being the MC and the DJ for the day as well as arranging the break dancers. To the belly dancers for putting on a great show.

Lastly, to the Epilepsy South Africa Volunteers and Staff. You guys did an amazing job once again. Thank you and well done!

Anthea Emmanuel  
ESA Social Development Manager

[\[back to top\]](#)

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## Finding the Right Way to Disclose a Disability

Career column from the Aug. 26, 2008, Wall Street Journal.

By Suzanne Robitaille

Disclosing a disability is a personal decision but can be beneficial if done right. Only you can decide whether — and when — to tell your new employer about your disability. Disclosing a condition can help protect your legal rights but can also leave you open to

discrimination. Still, experts say you're better off giving management a heads-up. Here are a few different approaches to disclosure:

**Know the company.** Before you even apply for a job, you can scope out a firm and its culture. Some companies have disability-friendly reputations, which can help quell fears about revealing your condition. KPMG LLP's disabilities network, for example, offers employees resources, tools, advice and counsel for living with a disability or caring for someone who has one. You also can ask colleagues and friends or search Internet groups for insights into corporate culture.

**Choose the time.** Don't reveal your disability on your resume or in a cover letter unless there is a direct relevance to the job. The best time to disclose to a hiring manager is during the first or second interview, once you have had a chance to demonstrate your skills and competency, says Lana Smart, director of corporate services for the National Business and Disability Council, a network of more than 100 U.S. companies that seeks to integrate people with disabilities into the workplace. At that point, you will be able to respond positively to specific disability issues that may be raised. "Discrimination is less likely face-to-face," Ms. Smart says.

**Tell someone you trust.** If you've waited until you've had a chance to prove yourself before disclosing your condition, you should seek out a trusted colleague, mentor or boss you get along well with to make the revelation. Dana Foote, an audit partner at KPMG's Omaha, Neb., office, who has multiple sclerosis, says she put off disclosure for three months until she started having symptoms. "At that point I trusted my boss, and he knew I was a good worker so it wasn't a big deal," says Ms. Foote.

**Get accommodated.** Your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act to "reasonable accommodations" to perform your job aren't protected until you've disclosed your disability, says Judy Young, a vice president for Abilities Inc. "As soon as you realize you need an accommodation, you should tell someone," says Ms. Young, who has counseled Fortune 500 companies on hiring people with disabilities.

**Join a network.** Participating in a disability employee group lets you reap the benefits of a company's disability resources. This is a good option if you don't want to reveal the scope of a disability, but want to know your options and make connections, says Barbara Wankoff, KPMG's national director of workplace relations. A support network can help you find others facing similar situations and gain the courage to speak up — a move that may help your career in the long run, Ms. Wankoff says.

[khutchinson@disabilityfunders.org](mailto:khutchinson@disabilityfunders.org) [www.disabilityfunders.org](http://www.disabilityfunders.org)

The Social Justice Movement of the 21st Century ...Building a Bridge Between Disability and Community Philanthropy

[\[back to top\]](#)

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## A well kept secret

Epilepsy South Africa has to make use of creative ways to do fundraising and the National Office of the organisation is becoming famous for the annual Wine Auction. We are in the planning phase of the third Wine Auction and have to admit that a suitable date is difficult to find. South Africans are very busy and the weather in Cape Town has to be seriously considered before confirming a date. We are weeks away from announcing the detail of our National Office Wine Auction and are very excited to see things



come together.

To be included in the invitation list, please contact Drikie at [funddev.no@epilepsy.org.za](mailto:funddev.no@epilepsy.org.za)

[\[back to top\]](#)

## Information on epilepsy

What is epilepsy?

Epilepsy is one of the most common serious neurological conditions and affects at least 1 in every 200 people worldwide. In South Africa 1 in every 100 persons have epilepsy. Epilepsy is a physical condition characterized by unusual electrical activity in the brain. It is a symptom of a neurological disorder and shows itself in the form of seizures. Epilepsy is the tendency to have recurrent, unprovoked seizures and seizures are caused by a temporary change in the way the brain cells (neurons) work. Epilepsy is a disorder, not a disease, illness, psychiatric disorder nor a mental illness; and it is not contagious.

Epilepsy affects all people, both sexes, all ages, all races, people of all levels of intelligence and of all social backgrounds.

What causes epilepsy?

In more than 50 % (approximately 66 %) of cases, the underlying cause of the epilepsy is unknown. This is called idiopathic epilepsy. In the rest of the cases, the underlying cause can be identified. This is called symptomatic epilepsy. With symptomatic epilepsy there can be many different underlying causes, for instance:

- A result from a head injury
- Birth injury (lack of oxygen during birth, etc)
- Infections (e.g. meningitis, encephalitis)
- Hemorrhage
- Strokes
- Tumors
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Degeneration (getting older)
- Metabolic or biochemical disturbances or imbalances.

What happens in the brain when a person is having a seizure?

The brain consists of millions of nerve cells, called neurons. Billions of electrical messages are passed on or fired between these cells, controlling our whole body, including what we think, feel, do, see, muscle movement, etc. The body has its own built-in balancing mechanisms which ensure that messages usually travel between nerve cells in an orderly way. Sometimes, an upset in the brain chemistry causes messages to get scrambled. When this happens the neurons fire off faster than usual or in bursts or too many neurons are triggered and fire off at the same time. This disturbed activity, which is like a small "electrical storm" in the brain, triggers seizures.

Can anyone have epilepsy?

Epilepsy affects all people, both sexes, all ages, all races, people of all levels of intelligence and of all social backgrounds.

Please send an email to request a free poster on how to assist a person when having a



seizure from Drikie Snyman at [funddev.no@epilepsy.org.za](mailto:funddev.no@epilepsy.org.za)

[\[back to top\]](#)

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TO GET IN CONTACT WITH YOUR CLOSEST BRANCH OF EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA

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