



December 2009

The International Day for Persons with Disabilities: Take Action!

The annual celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December aims to promote an understanding of disability issues, the rights of persons with disabilities and gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of the political, social, economic and cultural life of their communities. The Day provides an opportunity to mobilize action to achieve the goals of full and equal enjoyment of human rights and participation in society by persons with disabilities. It was established by the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1982.

In response to the United Nations General Assembly's proclamation of the 3rd of December as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, South Africa joined the family of nations by observing and celebrating this day as the national day of persons with disabilities. In 1992, the United Nations General Assembly appealed to Member States to devote this day to the reflection on issues of persons with disabilities so as to advance the equalisation of opportunities for this constituency.

In South Africa the period 01 November – 03 December 2008 has been declared Disability Awareness Month. A major focus of this month is raising awareness through practical action to sensitize citizens about norms and standards that guide processes aimed at improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities. Such standards should assist all stakeholders in facilitating the participation of persons with disabilities in the social, economic and political life.

As Epilepsy South Africa we believe in the rights of people with disabilities. People with epilepsy and other disabilities have experienced and are still experiencing tremendous discrimination just based on their conditions. As Epilepsy South Africa we commit ourselves to redress such discrimination and we ask this nation to join us in achieving our goal. So let's stand up and make our voices heard for the rights of people with epilepsy and other disabilities! Be an advocate by joining our Social Development Program for 2010 and achieving the change with us toward 2011 in the fight against stigma's and myth surrounding people with epilepsy.

For detailed information about our advocacy, awareness and other programmes please contact Epilepsy South Africa National Office at 021 – 447 3014 or phone 0860 EPILEPSY (374537) to contact your closest Branch of Epilepsy South Africa.

Join Epilepsy South Africa in commemorating this day and drawing attention to some people that are "changing obstacles into true potential!" We focus on the achievements of

people living with epilepsy that leaves the rest of us in awe and inspired to do the same!

Be an advocate by joining our Social Development Program for 2010! This will enable us to achieve the change in the fight against stigmas and myth surrounding people with epilepsy as we move toward 2011.

CD's & RINGTONE DOWNLOAD: For today only download "Sister!!", the ringtone of a song produced by the Jo Ellis band dedicated to Zaan Ellis, their drummer with epilepsy. They join us as proud advocates to break down the stigma surrounding people living with epilepsy by making the free download of their two CD's available for your pleasure.

TWITTER - Launching our twitter platform today. Become a follower!

FACEBOOK - Already on Facebook but befriend us on this special day and watch the advocacy issues being addressed during 2010

BLOG - Launching our new outlet to voice issues surrounding epilepsy today. Share the passion!

Drikie Snyman (Marketing and Public Relations for Epilepsy South Africa)

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"Making the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) Inclusive: Empowerment of persons with disabilities and their communities around the world"



(Information obtained from page for IDPD, UN)

Recent studies indicate that persons with disabilities constitute up to 20 per cent of the population living in poverty in developing countries. Many persons with disabilities continue

to face barriers to their participation in their communities and are often forced to live on the margins of society. They often face stigma and discrimination and are routinely denied basic rights such as food, education, employment, access to health and reproductive health services. Many persons with disabilities are also forced into institutions, a direct breach of the rights to freedom of movement and to live in their communities.

The United Nations commitment to the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities is deeply rooted in a quest for social justice and equity in all aspects of societal development. The World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities translated the Organization's commitment into an international policy framework, which has been further strengthened by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, an international legal instrument, to empower persons with disabilities to better their lives and that of their communities around the world.

The United Nations and the global community continue to work for the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development. Although many commitments have been made to include disability and persons with disabilities in development, the gap between policy and practice continues. Ensuring that persons with disabilities are integrated into all development activities is essential in order to achieve internationally agreed development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs can only be achieved if persons with disabilities and their family members are included. This in turn will ensure that people with disabilities and their family members benefit from international development initiatives. Efforts to achieve the MDGs and implement the Convention are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. More information on the MDGs and persons with disabilities [CLICK HERE](#)

Important Tool for Action: Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) a bridge between policy and practice: A thriving approach to integrate persons with disabilities in development that is practiced in over 90 countries around the world is community-based rehabilitation (CBR). CBR is part of the general community-development strategy intended to reduce poverty, equalize opportunities and involve individuals with disabilities in society. CBR is a flexible, dynamic and adaptable strategy to different socio-economic conditions, terrain, cultures and political systems throughout the world. It includes access to health care, education, livelihood, community participation and inclusion. Empowerment of disabled people and their family members are key components of a good CBR programme. Through community action it serves to empower persons with disabilities (individually and within groups) to realize their rights and promote respect for their inherent dignity, ensuring that they have the same rights and opportunities as other community members.

This year, new ideas and options may be further explored as to how CBR can be used as a tool in operationalizing the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). Inclusive MDGs and similar national legislations highlight the crucial importance of the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities and their contributions in the development of their societies.

Take Action: A major focus of the Day is practical action to further implement international norms and standards concerning persons with disabilities and to further their participation in social life and development on the basis of equality. The media have especially important contributions to make in support of the observance of the Day - and throughout the year - regarding appropriate presentation of progress and obstacles implementing disability-sensitive policies, programmes and projects and to promote public awareness of the

contributions by persons with disabilities to the development of their communities.

Global Commemoration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities: There are activities taking place all over the world. Information on activities commemorating this special day can be found on [THE UN SITE](#)

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Free Downloads!



RINGTONE: If you have WAP access on your cellphone, you simply have to join the supporters of Epilepsy South Africa and fans of the Jo Ellis Band in receiving the free download of the song "Sister!" This inspirational song was written and produced by Jo Ellis with his band, Jo is the brother of Zaan Ellis, the drummer who lives an inspirational life, overcoming the obstacle that epilepsy presents!

Go to: www.mobiles24.com (Note that registration is free and you will have to register to download the song - only available for 24hours) (To download this file via WAP, follow the instructions: Connect to: wap.mobiles24.com, Select Download Private File, Enter the WAPcode: 653614978)

FREE CD: The Jo Ellis Band supports Epilepsy South Africa by sharing a message about epilepsy at all their performances. Zaan lives with epilepsy and proves that a person with epilepsy can live a "normal" life and enjoy it. They have made both their albums available for free download and we invite you to follow the links to enjoy the drumming!

Go to www.joellis.co.za follow the link to Free downloads and streams on the right!

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A short story of inspiration to Teens or the Adventurous at heart:



If you have traveled the roads of Cape Town, benefited from the programmes presented by Epilepsy South Africa, read Brainstorm or previous editions of Epinews, you have been affected by the hand of Tim De Villiers. Tim is the current Chairperson of Epilepsy South Africa National Office and a successful traffic engineer at Cape Town Municipality.

Tim is also a person living with epilepsy and managing his condition so well that he has done the Argus Cycle Tour more than 10 times. Mountain biking and extreme sports are also some of his favorite activities, but the list is topped by his beautiful wife sharing these things with him. She agrees with us that Tim is a hard worker doing everything with passion until completed. He simply does not give up. Tim is also the chairperson of Epicare - a support group for people living with or affected by epilepsy and single-handedly motivates hundreds of people with his Brainstorm newsletter on a monthly basis. He recently stated "You get out what you put in!" - a philosophy he lives by as we have seen evidence of.

Thank you for your support and guidance in helping people to "Change obstacles into true potential!" Tim, we acknowledge you as our special advocate on this International Day for People with a Disability. What a mighty man!

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Surfs up, and nothing is down for Pieter Walser!



Another one of the organisation's heroes is Pieter Walsler - a winemaker and businessman with brilliant sales strategies and mottos. Pieter shames bystanders whether on a surfboard or cycling his way to vineyards in the Cape Winelands. He was diagnosed with epilepsy only a few years ago and decided to "get right back out there" and overcame the obstacles presented to him and his family. He is a proud husband and father of two beautiful kids.

Two of Pieter's wines were recently selected by Woolworths to become an in-store wine. While this is an achievement in itself, the Parlotones also added to his repertoire by requesting his hand in a wine with their label. They are already working on a second wine to follow on the first. Read all about this on his homepage at www.blankbottle.co.za Walk with him through his days and see that he is a "normal" person that only works very hard.

Thank you for your support and donations Pieter, your motivation is spread through Cape Town and your story told all over the world. (Picture included was kindly authorized for use by Thys Lombard)

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Join in our daily chatter!



* If you have access to social media tools, you are welcome to drop us a line and talk epilepsy! We are currently featured on Facebook, Twitter and have a regular Blog that is updated with relevant news.

* Should you be interested in becoming part of our group to receive sms text only messages - please send an email with SMS in the subject line, and include your name, surname and cellphone number in the body. You are welcome to unsubscribe from this service at any time, and are charged normal cellphone rates for replies, but none for

receiving our messages. The email can be sent to marketing.no@epilepsy.org.za

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Become an advocate!

Before we introduce you to some internationally known advocates for epilepsy kindly sharing their stories on youtube, we urge you to remember that these people are “normal” to those that know them best, although some are seen as famous or specially blessed.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#) - Mark Grunberg from Heroes and the Band from TV, an advocate for his son who lives with epilepsy!

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW](#) - Amy Lee from Evanescence, an advocate for her brother who lives with epilepsy!

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW A SONG](#) - Be a hero and talk epilepsy. Share this motivational, informative and viny clip with others.

Should you require any assistance or want to share your interest, please contact us at socdev.no@epilepsy.org.za or to contact your local branch of Epilepsy South Africa phone 0860374537

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ADVOCATES NEEDED 2010-2011

by Karen Robinson – National Social Development Manager

Epilepsy South Africa National Office as part of there business plan for 2010-2011 will be focusing on advocacy of the youth living with epilepsy. We are very excited about advocacy training as this will focus on defining the meaning of being an advocate. It will help to know your rights, improve self esteem, as well as starting ones own advocacy group and assisting you to conduct training to other youth living with epilepsy. To assist everone to become an advocate.

It is time for youth living with epilepsy to reclaim it's place and by telling their stories to create awareness of their felt needs, issues and also of the stigma's and discrimination that they are uniquely experiencing. It is also time to stop being complacent and take control of our lives and also do something positive about the issues that are affecting us.

Epilepsy South Africa National Office aims to do three training sessions which will consists of approximately 15-20 youth living with epilepsy attending each training session. If you want to make a difference by being an advocate on all levels and collaborate with other youth living with epilepsy as well as get mobilized within our national youth epilepsy forum

JOIN OUR ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN.

Please contact us:086 037 4537 or (021) 447 3014

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Visit our website or to contact any of our Branches or National Office.
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TO GET IN CONTACT WITH YOUR CLOSEST BRANCH OF EPILEPSY SOUTH AFRICA

This is the electronic newsletter of Epilepsy South Africa, compiled by the National Office.

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