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Acclaimed Author and Screenwriter Marc Palmieri to Deliver Keynote Address at 37th Annual Chocolate Ball.

EPI's gala raises funds for epilepsy programs and services in Upstate New York.

Rochester, NY, March 6, 2023 - Empowering People's Independence (EPI) is pleased to announce that renowned author, playwright and screenwriter, Marc Palmieri, will deliver the keynote address at the 37th Annual Chocolate Ball on April 29, 2023, at the Hyatt Regency Downtown Rochester.

With over two decades of experience in the entertainment industry, Palmieri's works have been staged in major theaters across the United States and Europe. He has written for popular television shows, such as "Law and Order" and "The Blacklist." Palmieri's screenplays include Miramax Films' 1999 Telling You. Palmieri has been recognized with numerous awards and nominations throughout his career. He is an assistant professor at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, NY. He is also a longtime guest faculty member of The City College of New York's MFA program in Creative Writing. He lives with his family in New York City.

In 2022, Marc Palmieri published his memoir, *She Danced with Lightning*, about life with his daughter's epilepsy. Marc's daughter, Anna, was diagnosed with epilepsy at 5 months. The book chronicles how Anna's condition and her seizures governed every aspect of the Palmieri family's life.

"Epilepsy is still often hard to treat and it has no cure," says Jeff Sinsebox, EPI President/CEO. "We are grateful to have Marc Palmieri as our keynote speaker. His moving book will help provide a deeper understanding of the challenges individuals diagnosed with epilepsy and their families face. It is important to educate our community about epilepsy, its prevalence, and the impact that this condition has on the life of many children and adults in our community."

Proceeds from the annual Chocolate Ball fund EPI's epilepsy programs and services. The highlight of the event is the Chefs Cake Competition when local Pastry Chefs create elaborate chocolate cakes inspired by the theme of the event.

EPI serves thousands of children and adults who suffer from epilepsy and seizure disorders in Upstate New York. EPI's epilepsy services include education, support groups, advocacy, individual and family consultation, and assistance with medication and seizure monitoring devices. EPI also hosts the only week-long, sleep-away camps for children and young adults with epilepsy and seizure disorders in New York State.

In the United States, epilepsy and seizure disorders affect 3.4 million people including 470,000 children. Epilepsy generally affects the very young or very old, but anyone can develop epilepsy at any time during their lifetime. While medications and other treatments help, about half of those affected will have seizures that severely limit school achievements, employment prospects and participation in life.

ABOUT EPI AND EPILEPSY ALLIANCE OF WEST CENTRAL NEW YORK

EPI provides progressive, tailored care solutions to people with developmental disabilities, epilepsy, and brain injury. Headquartered in Rochester, NY and with offices in Syracuse and Binghamton, EPI provides comprehensive services in the Finger Lakes, Southern Tier, Western and Central New York regions. EPI's offerings include Self-Direction, Day and Community Habilitation, residential services, respite, and Health Homes.

EPI is a founding member of Epilepsy Alliance America. Epilepsy Alliance America is a new, national organization dedicated to providing support, care, and service to those with epilepsy. Epilepsy Alliance America is comprised of 12 state-based partners, serving hundreds of thousands of people with epilepsy, and their families, caregivers, and communities. To reflect its close relationship to this growing national network of epilepsy service providers, EPI has recently rebranded its epilepsy services under the new name of Epilepsy Alliance of West Central New York.

For more information about EPI and Epilepsy Alliance of West Central NY, please visit epiny.org.

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