

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Amer Armbruster to Chair the 38th Annual Chocolate Ball.

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

Rochester, NY – March 12, 2024 – EPI will host the 38th Annual Chocolate Ball on Saturday, April 27, at the Joseph A. Floreano Riverside Convention Center. More than 400 guests are expected to attend the annual event which raises funds in support of EPI's epilepsy programs. Amer Armbruster has been named Honorary Chair for this year's gala.

Amer Armbruster, 18-year-old senior at Honeoye Falls-Lima High School, has been an inspiring figure within the community. Diagnosed with juvenile absence epilepsy in 2019, Amer has bravely navigated the challenges often associated with such a diagnosis, from diligently managing medications to coping with its impact on his daily life. "The medications I take come with side effects, some of which induce exhaustion and impact my ability to focus," Amer shares. "For a while, epilepsy prevented me from driving and participating in activities like biking, downhill skiing, and swimming."

Amer, an enthusiastic runner and cross-country skier, found himself initially sidelined from competition due to the unpredictable nature of his seizures. However, thanks to the support of his friends, family, and medical professionals, Amer has discovered strategies to adapt to his condition and reclaim the pursuits he holds dear. Now, having been seizure-free for a year, Amer has regained the freedom to drive and engage in a full spectrum of activities, embodying resilience and determination in the face of adversity.

Reflecting on his experiences, Amer shares, "Living with epilepsy has been challenging, but I'm fortunate to have supportive coaches, teammates, and family members. Many children with epilepsy aren't as fortunate, facing limitations and isolation. I wanted to make a difference and raise awareness through my passion for running." In 2022, Amer organized Seize the Day, a challenging 5K and 10K trail race held at Mendon Ponds Park. In just two years, the event has raised over \$100,000 in support of EPI's epilepsy services, including Camp EAGR, New York State's only camp for children with epilepsy and their siblings.

EPI President/CEO Jeff Sinsebox emphasizes the importance of raising awareness about epilepsy and combating stigma. “Epilepsy is still often misunderstood and still carries a stigma,” says Sinsebox. “We are grateful for Amer’s enthusiasm and initiative. 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.”

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. EPI offers a range of services, including education, support groups, advocacy, and specialized programs for children and families affected by epilepsy.

Tickets for the 38th Annual Chocolate Ball are available for purchase online at epiny.org or by calling 585-442-6420.

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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, and respite.

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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