



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Registration is Open for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Seize the Day: Amer's Epilepsy Trail Run.**

*Proceeds from the race support services for children and adults with epilepsy in our region.*

**Rochester, NY – June 23, 2023:** Seize the Day: Amer's Epilepsy Trail Race, an event that includes 5K, 10K and One-Mile Fun Run/Walk trail races, will be held on Sunday, July 16, 2023 at Mendon Ponds Park, in Mendon NY. The 5K and 10K races will start and end at the North Meadow Trailhead, located on Canfield Road, between Douglas Road and Pittsford-Mendon Center Road. The One-Mile Fun Run/Walk will follow the Pine Woods trail across the street.

Check in and onsite registration for all races will start at 8:00 am. The 5K and 10K races will start at 9:00 am and registration is \$35 per person. The One-Mile Fun Run/Walk will start at 9:30 am and registration is \$10 per person. The One-Mile Fun Run/Walk will not be timed.

Participants can register online at [www.epiny.org/seizetheday](http://www.epiny.org/seizetheday). The event is presented by the following generous sponsors: All-American Home Care, Armbruster Capital Management, and Glover-Crask Charitable Trust.

Proceeds from the race will benefit the Epilepsy Alliance of West Central New York, the epilepsy services division of Empowering People's Independence (EPI). EPI serves thousands of children and adults who suffer from epilepsy and seizure disorders in Upstate New York.

The race is organized by Amer Armbruster, a 17-year-old student at Honeoye Falls-Lima High School, an avid runner, and member of his high school cross-country, Nordic skiing, and track teams. Amer was diagnosed with juvenile absence epilepsy in 2019. While his epilepsy has not completely prevented him from participating in school and sports, it has presented some unexpected challenges in remaining competitive in both athletic and academic endeavors.

Amer reflects upon his own experiences and channels that into helping others. "Running has always been a big part of my life, both competitively and socially. The onset of epilepsy forced some issues I really wasn't prepared for, and it's been hard to feel like I'm not progressing. Other things that used to come easily like some class work are now much more difficult and I've had to find new ways to learn."

However, Amer recognizes that other kids with epilepsy or seizure disorders are not as fortunate. "I'm grateful I can still participate in running and skiing, and my coaches and teammates are very supportive. Even my dad

helps by running with me every day to make sure I'm safe. Many kids with epilepsy find themselves limited in what they can do, and I don't think people understand how isolating that can be. I wanted to do something to help people learn about epilepsy and a trail race seemed to be a good fit."

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## **ABOUT EPILEPSY**

Epilepsy is a complex condition, and it varies in severity from individual to individual. While some might experience mild symptoms, others might suffer severe, frequent and uncontrollable seizures that limit participation in daily activities like driving or typical recreational activities like swimming, running or biking. Epilepsy can affect higher order cognitive functions like planning, decision making and evaluative thinking, all of which can make it very difficult to succeed in school or hold down a regular job. It is the most common brain disorder with no age, racial, social class, national or geographic boundaries, affecting more people than multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and Parkinson's disease combined.

Epilepsy can be a hidden disability, is frequently misinterpreted and unfortunately still carries a negative connotation. Of the 3.5 million Americans affected by epilepsy, 50% feel stigmatized and 33% feel it is more difficult to find a job. A recent study found that 69% of teenagers would not date someone with epilepsy. Considering that one in 26 people will experience epilepsy at some point in their lives, it is a condition that many feel should be better understood.

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. "Epilepsy is still often misunderstood and still carries a stigma," says Jeff Sinnebox, EPI President/CEO. "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."

EPI's epilepsy services include education, support groups, advocacy, individual and family consultation, a swim program, information tailored for newly diagnosed children and their families, and assistance with medication and seizure monitoring devices. EPI also hosts the only week-long, sleep-away camp for children and young adults with epilepsy and seizure disorders in New York State.

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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, 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 ten 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](http://epiny.org).