

**Bryan Carson, Board Member, Angels of Epilepsy**

**A day in the Life of Epilepsy.**



Epilepsy had never been considered a threat to me, moreover an incapability. All throughout life I thought it was an experience common to young children rather than adults. I had a very limited understanding of its side effects and the harm that was possible. Unaware of its severities caused me to remain fearless. This popular Neurological disorder had never been a worry of mine- until 17 years ago.

Over the past 16 years given my epileptic experiences, realization that recurring seizures were different for all walks of life as well as age groups. Now in my middle 50s while participating in active support groups on a regular basis, Epilepsy awareness noticed by many had become routine. Healthcare providers and Parents concerned about their little ones, allowed me to witness others fighting the same fights that were becoming common.

I've come to realize that the entire epilepsy society travels in various paths and is often difficult for many. Tonic Clonic, and Partial Seizure impairments appeared as a threat in the early days but now appear as everyday living- resulted in significant change in lifestyle. Being employed in an industry that required me to drive throughout the city, and responding to service calls, was no longer an option. Not being able to provide for myself, which was a daily habit as well as enjoyment, had become forbidden.

Over the years I had been trying to mentally prepare myself for physical downfalls that could become common. Clearly aware I was getting older daily, even though far from elderly- never convinced me I had nothing to medically worry about. I do understand fully that negative downfalls can take place in life as we age. Developing Epilepsy never disappointed me yet presented itself as a newborn obstacle. Not being able to work every day, earning the same amount of income successfully achieved over the years, and being forced to remain stationary due to disability was a frustration. Trying hard to remain focused, I reminded myself that life could be much worse. Given the strengths I still possessed allowed me the mental clarities needed to avoid depression. Positive living was still a mainstay, and I had no intention of giving up! Significant improvements were experienced, although a few setbacks are often seen. Many improvements, surprisingly, have not directly linked to Epilepsy illness. Obesity had always been a problem I lived whipped over the years, but that's no longer a problem. Other health incidents have developed as well surprisingly.

Despite the ups and downs oftentimes experienced with brain disorder, it is not impossible whatsoever for an individual to achieve the goals they've always longed for.

As I stated earlier, Epilepsy is an obstacle not a brick wall that can't be broken through. My personal "Frontal Lobe" impairments in life have clearly displayed those realities.

Anyone who lives with Epilepsy daily has the capabilities of achieving goals they've always desired. No one should ever allow this Neurological disorder to convince them they no longer have a life that can be lived.

Never believe you do not possess ailments that can be mentally overpowered. The move forward may be slow but that's all it is- it won't stop you. In closing I would like to add, never refer to your disorder as an illness, but a drive; a drive meant to encourage you to try harder, to advance forward!

**Lowell G. Evans, Regional Director, Epilepsy Foundation of Virginia**



Lowell Gerard Evans is the Regional Director of the Epilepsy Foundation of Virginia. He took the position in order to make a positive difference in the lives of people living with epilepsy and their loved ones. Most of all, he wanted to educate society about this neurological condition.

Lowell was born and raised in Gloucester, VA and then in 1979 attended Virginia Wesleyan University to further his education. In 1980, he had a fall playing basketball and hit his head, which caused him to have a seizure and later develop epilepsy.

While looking for advice during this change in life, he found very little.

As the years went on, Lowell decided to help others understand epilepsy and he wrote The Village, a book based on the theory that it takes a village to help people make it in life. Lowell felt that was especially true when it came to epilepsy. As the Regional Director for the EFVA, he helps find doctors for patients, assists with finances when possible, and helps with programs to raise epilepsy awareness.

**Dr. David Garcia, PhD, FACSM, Associate Professor, Zuckerman College of Public Health, University of Arizona**



Dr. David Garcia is an Associate Professor in the Zuckerman College of Public Health at the University of Arizona. Dr. Garcia has designed and implemented trials as a lead investigator focused on reducing obesity-related health disparities among Mexican-origin men. More recently, he has focused on examining the prevalence of metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD) and associated risk factors in Arizona communities.

He has secured multiple grants to support his research agenda, including funding from the NIH and the American Cancer Society.

He is also the Director and Founder of Nosotros Comprometidos a Su Salud-Committed to Your Health, a program developed to foster community-engaged research collaborations, service, and education to advance health equity in Southern Arizona. This community-based effort promotes regular access to health communications and information and opportunities to participate in lifestyle interventions tailored for Mexican-origin and Indigenous communities. Within Nosotros, Dr. Garcia has provided students from diverse backgrounds with numerous opportunities to engage in various stages of research, including over 100 students who previously had not trained in lifestyle and health. The outreach and mentoring efforts of the Nosotros team have grounded his work in trust and community relevance. Over 5,800 participants have been a part of his research studies in the areas of obesity and cancer prevention.

**Ronald Henry, Founder and current President, Men's Health Network**



Ronald Henry is a Founder and current President of the Men's Health Network, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the United States dedicated to addressing the causes, consequences, and potential for reductions in the Lifespan Gender Gap. The increase in the lifespans of women has been a wonderful accomplishment, and the Men's Health Network works to learn from those successes to help men catch up. Reducing premature death and disability among men is important not only for the men themselves, but also for the wives and daughters who love them, the communities they support, and the employers who lose productive workers.

Mr. Henry is a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School and an attorney in Washington DC. He is a Life Member of the American Law Institute.

**Stephen Silva-Brave (Sicangu Lakota Oyate), doctoral candidate in social work, University of Texas at Arlington**



Stephen Silva-Brave (Sicangu Lakota Oyate) is a doctoral candidate in social work at the University of Texas at Arlington. He is the originator of the Repowering Theory/Framework, a decolonial model repositioning Indigenous people as born with inherent power that colonization disrupted and healing work restores. His research centers on Indigenous people's mental health, culturally grounded interventions, and community-based approaches to healing.

Stephen speaks from both scholarly and lived experience. As a man in recovery from addiction, living with a liver disease diagnosis, and actively rebuilding his life, he brings a personal understanding of what it means to fight for your health when systems were not built with you in mind.