

Bright Minds, Bold Futures



SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Mission: Improve the lives of people affected by epilepsy through education, advocacy, research, and connection.



Raygan Carroll, Michael Zapoticzny Memorial Scholarship Recipient

Driven by resilience, compassion, and a love for athletics, Raygan has dedicated herself to academic excellence, athletic achievement, and meaningful community service. Over the past several years, she has completed more than 40 hours of volunteer work as a peer buddy for the Lake Elsinore Unified School District School Games (Special Olympics), supporting athletes with physical and cognitive disabilities. This rewarding experience shaped her understanding of inclusion, teamwork, and the power of perseverance.

Despite living with partial complex seizures, she has consistently maintained a strong academic and athletic record. She is a multi-year CIF Scholar Athlete and has earned numerous accolades, including the CIF Division 3 Player of the Year for Water Polo and the President's Award of Excellence. She will continue her athletic and academic journey at California State University Northridge, where she has committed to play water polo and study psychology/kinesiology.

Her personal experiences managing epilepsy have inspired her to pursue a career in sports psychology, with the goal of helping other athletes overcome mental and physical challenges. She hopes to give back to the community that has supported her and use her story to empower others to reach their full potential.



Nikhil Raisinghani, Kim Tallian Memorial Scholarship Recipient

Nikhil is a resilient scholar, advocate, and aspiring law student who has turned personal adversity into a powerful source of motivation. Diagnosed with primary generalized epilepsy during his first finals week as an undergraduate, Nikhil faced a cascade of medical complications—including a traumatic fall that resulted in a skull fracture, inner ear damage, and spinal compression fractures. Despite these challenges, he returned to school with renewed determination, earning Dean's List honors at UCLA.

An award-winning mock trial competitor, Nikhil has represented both universities at national tournaments, earning multiple All-Regional Witness Awards and serving in key roles as both attorney and witness. His passion for advocacy also extends to real-world legal experience, including internships at the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office and Gordon Rees, where he supported litigation, legal research, and trial preparation.

In addition to academics, Nikhil is committed to service, having completed over 150 hours of volunteer work and currently teaching music to underserved youth through SLAM at UCLA. His lived experience with epilepsy has shaped his drive to pursue a legal career focused on civil rights, public interest law, and meaningful impact.

2025 Scholarship Awards



Elliana Haines, Scholarship Recipient

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County is proud to once again recognize Elliana Haines. After receiving the Michael Zapoticzny Memorial Scholarship in 2023, and additional awards in 2024 and now 2025, Elliana continues to inspire with her resilience, academic excellence, and dedication to the epilepsy community.

Diagnosed with epilepsy early in high school, Elliana quickly transformed a difficult diagnosis into a source of strength. Now a college student, she balances upper-division science coursework with medical assistant training and a minor in economics—preparing for her goal of becoming a compassionate physician. She also coaches high school volleyball and contributes to research at CSU San Marcos.

This year, she supported her younger brother through a diagnosis of myotonic dystrophy and underwent genetic testing confirming a NEXMIF mutation related to her epilepsy—experiences that deepened her empathy and purpose.

In fall 2025, Elliana will take on her next challenge: studying abroad in Barcelona, Spain, where she'll take senior-level science courses and pursue an internship in public health—all while continuing to manage her epilepsy with strength and grace.

Elliana exemplifies the mission of the Epilepsy Foundation: turning adversity into action and challenge into purpose. We are proud to support her continued journey.



Matthew Henderson, Scholarship Recipient

At just two years old, Matthew Henderson experienced his first seizure—an unresponsive episode that sent him to the emergency room and began a lifelong battle with epilepsy. Diagnosed after a week of uncertainty, Matthew's condition was initially managed with medication, allowing him to lead a relatively normal childhood. But everything changed in high school, when the seizures returned with force, disrupting his health, education, and passion for hockey.

After exhausting medications with difficult side effects, Matthew made the courageous decision to pursue brain surgery. Following more than a year of testing at Rady Children's Hospital, he underwent temporal lobe resection in February 2024. To everyone's surprise, surgeons discovered a hidden, slow-growing tumor—a gangliocytoma—that had gone undetected for years. Fortunately, the entire tumor was removed, and Matthew has been seizure-free ever since.

Despite facing a tough recovery, Matthew completed his senior year and is now a Physics major at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, with aspirations to become a medical physicist. Inspired by both his passion for science and his personal medical journey, he hopes to one day help develop technologies that improve the lives of others with neurological conditions.

Matthew's story is one of extraordinary resilience and determination—proof that no challenge is too great to overcome.

2025 Scholarship Awards



Amy Chan, Scholarship Recipient

For Amy Chan, living with epilepsy hasn't been defined by obstacles—it's been a journey of self-improvement, discipline, and growth. What once felt like a frustrating interruption in her life is now seen as a challenge that helped her build healthier routines and a stronger sense of self.

After experiencing seizures both at home and at school, Amy and her family sought medical guidance and began identifying patterns that contributed to her condition. She quickly recognized that procrastination and sleep deprivation played a role in triggering her seizures—so she took action.

Amy began to reshape her daily habits, tackling small tasks immediately and framing her to-do list in ways that motivated her to stay on track. With a change in medication and a new commitment to better time management, Amy has not had a seizure since October 2023—a milestone that has boosted her confidence and reduced her anxiety, especially in public settings.

This fall, Amy will begin a new chapter at the University of California, Riverside, where she plans to major in Animation and Video Gaming. "Time management is key," she says. "Not just for my health, but for my future." Her story is a powerful reminder that small changes can lead to big transformations, and that living well with epilepsy is not only possible—it's empowering.



Scarlett Wales, Scholarship Recipient

Scarlett Wales, a recent graduate of St. Joseph Academy in San Marcos, has proven that perseverance, passion, and purpose can defy the toughest obstacles. Despite living with epilepsy and experiencing multiple absence seizures each day, Scarlett has remained unstoppable in her academics, the arts, and service to her community.

With 170 hours of community service under her belt, her favorite projects include building homes for families in Mexico, collecting donations for expectant mothers, and using dance as a healing tool for others. Adopted after living in five foster homes, she's especially passionate about supporting vulnerable families and children.

As captain of her high school's Varsity Dance Team, Scarlett has taught ballet, jazz, and line dancing, performed for seniors, and represented her school as a finalist in the prestigious Edge Dance Competition. Despite the danger seizures can pose during performances, she says, "I've never had a seizure while dancing. It's where I feel strongest."

Scarlett is a California Scholarship Federation member and 2024 Gold Honor Roll student. Her proudest achievement is finishing high school and preparing for college—something neither her biological parents nor grandparents achieved. She'll be one of three siblings in college, with her great-grandmother supporting all three.

She plans to study criminology, health science, and dance at California State University San Marcos to help young people overcome trauma and disability. With the help of a scholarship from the Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County, Scarlett is one step closer to using her gifts to uplift others.