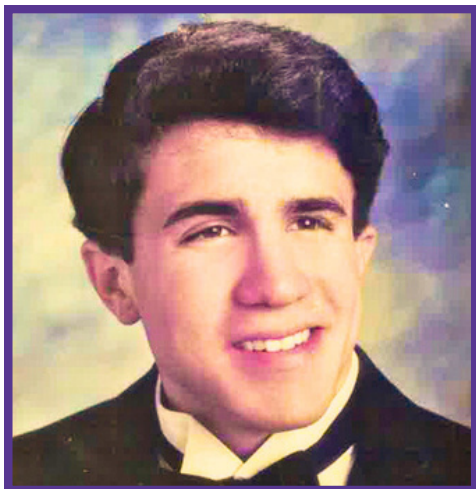

A Legacy That Lives On



**In Memory of
Michael Zapoticzny**
Forever Remembered



Matthew Henderson
*2026 Michael J. Zapoticzny
Memorial Scholarship
Recipient*

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County is proud to announce Matthew Henderson as the recipient of the Michael Zapoticzny Memorial Scholarship for the 2026–2027 academic year. This scholarship recognizes a student who has demonstrated extraordinary resilience, determination, and a commitment to making a meaningful impact despite the challenges of living with epilepsy.

Matthew was diagnosed with epilepsy at just two years old. After years of successful seizure control, his seizures returned during high school, affecting his education, memory, concentration, and ability to continue playing the sport he loved—hockey. In February 2024, he underwent brain surgery, where physicians discovered and removed a rare, slow-growing brain tumor called a gangliocytoma. Since then, Matthew has become seizure-free, completed his senior year while recovering, and has been able to discontinue his epilepsy medications.

Now pursuing a degree in Physics at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Matthew hopes to become a medical physicist specializing in neurological conditions. Inspired by his own experiences, he joined an undergraduate EEG research team, where he is helping study brain activity while gaining hands-on experience with neurological research. Beyond the classroom, Matthew has volunteered with youth hockey programs and served as a peer tutor in math and science, reflecting his passion for mentoring others. Despite financial hardships that disrupted his education, he has remained focused on his goal of advancing medical technology to improve the lives of people living with neurological disorders.

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County is honored to recognize Matthew Henderson as this year's Michael Zapoticzny Memorial Scholarship recipient. His resilience, compassion, and determination to turn adversity into purpose embody the spirit of this scholarship, and we look forward to the impact he will make in the years to come.

Honoring a Legacy. Inspiring the Future.



In Memory of Dr. Kim Tallian
*Honoring her legacy of hope,
compassion, and education*



Elliana Haines
*2026 Kim Tallian Memorial
Scholarship Recipient*

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County is proud to recognize Elliana Haines as the recipient of the Kim Tallian Memorial Scholarship for the 2026–2027 academic year. Named in honor of the late Dr. Kim Tallian—a beloved pharmacist, educator, researcher, and advocate for the epilepsy community—this scholarship recognizes students whose resilience, academic achievement, and commitment to serving others reflect her enduring legacy.

A senior at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Elliana is pursuing a degree in Biology with a minor in Economics and plans to become a Physician Assistant or contribute to biomedical research. Living with epilepsy has strengthened her determination, most notably during a semester studying abroad in Barcelona, where she successfully navigated the challenges of managing her condition while living overseas.

Elliana earned her National Healthcareer Association Medical Assistant Certification and was selected as one of only 25 students from more than 300 applicants for the prestigious QB3 Internship Fellowship at Claret Bioscience, where she is researching genomics and the genetic causes of epilepsy.

Beyond academics, Elliana helped establish UC Santa Cruz's first all-women's club volleyball team and will lead the team's new partnership with the Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County to support epilepsy awareness and fundraising.

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County is honored to present Elliana Haines with the Kim Tallian Memorial Scholarship. Her resilience, leadership, and dedication to advancing healthcare embody Dr. Kim Tallian's legacy of compassion, innovation, and service.

Celebrating Our Scholarship Recipients

Recognizing five exceptional students whose resilience, perseverance, and commitment to making a difference embody the spirit of the Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County's scholarship program. Through the generosity of our donors and memorial scholarship funds, these students are pursuing their educational dreams while inspiring our entire community.



Raygan Carroll

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County is proud to recognize Raygan Carroll as a recipient of the 2026–2027 College Scholarship Program. A student at California State University, Northridge, Raygan is pursuing dual degrees in Kinesiology and Psychology with the goal of becoming a sports psychologist, combining her passion for athletics with her desire to support the mental well-being of others.

Living with epilepsy has strengthened Raygan's resilience, perseverance, and determination to help others overcome challenges. Rather than allowing her diagnosis to limit her aspirations, she has remained focused on her education while giving back to her community through meaningful volunteer service. As a swim instructor, Raygan teaches children not only essential swimming skills but also water safety, confidence, teamwork, and discipline. She also volunteers through a reading program at Canterbury Elementary School, helping young students develop literacy skills and a lifelong love of learning.

These experiences have strengthened her leadership, communication, and mentoring abilities while reinforcing her passion for helping others reach their full potential. Raygan hopes to use her education to empower athletes to build confidence, overcome adversity, and achieve success both on and off the field.

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County congratulates Raygan on this well-earned scholarship. Her resilience, compassion, dedication to service, and commitment to improving the lives of others make her an outstanding representative of the epilepsy community, and we look forward to seeing the impact she will make in the years ahead.



Claire Villaescuza

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County is proud to recognize Claire Villaescuza as a recipient of the 2026–2027 College Scholarship Program. A graduate of Vincent Memorial Catholic High School, Claire will attend **Imperial Valley College** this fall.

Living with epilepsy has strengthened Claire's resilience and inspired her commitment to serving others. Rather than allowing her diagnosis to define her future, she has dedicated herself to making a positive impact through volunteer service. Claire has volunteered with St. Mary's Catholic Church, Calexico Neighborhood House, Cody's Closet, and Best S.T.E.P. Forward, mentoring youth, supporting families in need, and coaching children with special needs. These experiences have strengthened her compassion, leadership, and commitment to creating inclusive communities.

Claire has also developed a passion for writing and storytelling, earning recognition for her work in high school journalism. She hopes to continue her education while making a meaningful difference through service and leadership.

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County congratulates Claire on this well-deserved scholarship. Her resilience, compassion, and commitment to helping others make her an inspiring recipient.



Mya Alexander

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County is proud to recognize Mya Alexander as a recipient of the 2026–2027 College Scholarship Program. A student at Wiley University, Mya is pursuing a degree in Mass Communications while preparing for a career in leadership, advocacy, and positive change.

Living with epilepsy has strengthened Mya's resilience and determination to succeed. As an out-of-state student, she has balanced the demands of college while remaining committed to serving others. Through her work with Wiley University's Career Closet, she reorganized the space to better support students preparing for interviews and professional opportunities. She has also mentored fellow students by connecting them with campus resources, offering encouragement, and helping them feel welcomed throughout their college experience.

Mya hopes to use her education and career to amplify the voices of others, advocate for individuals living with neurological conditions, and inspire people to pursue their goals despite obstacles.

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County congratulates Mya on this well-deserved scholarship. Her resilience and commitment to serving others make her an inspiring recipient.



Lucy Shields

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County is proud to recognize Lucy Shields as a recipient of the 2026–2027 College Scholarship Program. A graduate of Canyon Hills High School, Lucy will attend California State University, Long Beach, where she plans to pursue a career as a neurologist specializing in epilepsy.

Diagnosed with absence seizures in third grade, Lucy has transformed her personal experiences into a passion for medicine, research, and patient advocacy. Living with epilepsy has taught her resilience, perseverance, and empathy—qualities she hopes to bring to future patients facing similar challenges. Throughout high school, she maintained a 4.0 GPA, challenged herself academically, and remained active in athletics, lifeguarding, volunteer service, and community projects.

Inspired by the physicians who cared for her, Lucy hopes to combine research, clinical care, and advocacy to improve the lives of individuals living with epilepsy. She is committed to using both her education and personal experiences to help others navigate neurological disorders with confidence, understanding, and hope.

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County congratulates Lucy on this well-deserved recognition. Her academic excellence, compassion, and commitment to advancing epilepsy care embody the spirit of this scholarship.



Richie Guerra

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County is proud to recognize Richie Guerra as a recipient of the 2026–2027 College Scholarship Program. Richie has demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination while balancing academic excellence, leadership, and the challenges of living with epilepsy.

Following his epilepsy diagnosis, Richie faced uncertainty and setbacks that affected many aspects of his life. Rather than allowing epilepsy to define his future, he remained focused on his education, personal growth, and serving his community. He earned academic honors, received the California State Seal of Civic Engagement, became involved with Elevate Youth California, and excelled as a varsity athlete, demonstrating leadership, teamwork, and perseverance.

Richie plans to build on these experiences as he pursues a higher education at UCSD and a career dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of others. His journey is a testament to the strength and optimism that can grow from overcoming adversity.

The Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County congratulates Richie on this well-deserved scholarship. His resilience, leadership, and commitment to service make him an inspiring recipient.