



Grade School Student Shines a Light on Epilepsy Awareness Month

November 5, 2021 - Last winter, 7th grader Elise Anderson, 13, of Orland Park, Illinois, was asleep next to her 10-year-old sister, Amber, when she was awakened by unexpected sounds. She realized something was wrong and immediately left to get her parents. For the first time, Amber had experienced a seizure that night. Fast forward to January 2021, and Elise's sister, Amber was officially diagnosed with epilepsy through medical professionals.

With that diagnosis, the Anderson family faced a new chapter of learning how to live with a loved one who is facing epilepsy. The journey has been a long and exhausting one, as epilepsy episodes are hard to predict and medication doses, particularly with kids, are learned as the body changes and adjusts.

However, the Andersons jumped in with two feet to learn everything they could about epilepsy, especially Elise.

"When I saw Amber's first seizure, I was really scared. I didn't know what to do," Elise explained. "I don't ever want to feel like that again."

Lucky for the Andersons, the Danny Did Foundation was a huge resource for them. The Danny Did Foundation was founded by Chicago parents Mike and Mariann Stanton in January 2010 after the sudden death of their four-year-old son, Danny. The Foundation's primary mission is to prevent deaths caused by seizures. It is dedicated to advancing public awareness of Epilepsy and enhancing the communication model between medical professionals and families impacted by seizures. The name of the Danny Did Foundation originates from the last line of Danny Stanton's obituary, written by his dad: "Please go and enjoy your life. Danny did."

"Danny Did was really great at helping us explain things to the girls on their level," says Theresa Anderson. "The videos and educational materials were outstanding. It allowed us to show Amber that she was not alone and can live life however she wants to."

After learning about epilepsy, Elise wanted to teach others what she had learned and to let others know its nothing to be afraid of if you know the right steps to take if a seizure happens.

"I want kids to know what to do if something happened to my sister or anyone who has a seizure."

To celebrate Epilepsy Awareness month this November, Elise and her friend Sara Blake put together an educational and fundraising campaign at St. Michael School in Orland Park.

The girls gave away flashlight key chains with whistles to help shine light on their cause. They also created posters with safety tips and seizure triggers throughout the school and even gave a presentation to the entire school on epilepsy. The girls also want to make a video with their 7th grade class for the Danny Did Foundation.

“It’s a lot of fun working on the campaign and watching our [GoFundMe page](#) funds grow. We want to make it bigger next year and with help from other schools. I’d like to see if Justin Fields can help, since we learned he has epilepsy too.”

The funds the girls raise will help those in need to secure seizure detection devices that may prevent injuries related seizures and seizure-related deaths, as well as advance public awareness of epilepsy and the risk of Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP).

"We are very impressed by Elise and Amber's efforts. We appreciate that they are raising awareness with all age groups, because you are never too young to learn about epilepsy and seizure first aid," says Mary Duffy from the Danny Did Foundation. "We are also grateful that St Michael School embraced this very important awareness campaign. Together, they are supporting the 3.4 million people with epilepsy in the United States. And equally significant, the students are showing their support for Amber. Navigating an epilepsy diagnosis can be a hard journey, but support from her amazing sister, family, and now school friends will make a difference. We hope the students learn a lot this month and that they share what they learn with their family members."

For more information on epilepsy and the Danny Did Foundation, visit <https://www.dannydid.org>. If you wish to donate, please visit the girls’ page: <https://gofund.me/86be430e>.

And remember to Enjoy Life, just like Danny did!

