

Michael is swimming for Epilepsy Scotland

Edinburgh man, Michael Sturrock, has set himself a 70 km swimming challenge to raise funds for Epilepsy Scotland in this their 70th anniversary year.

Sturrock, who has epilepsy, will be swimming 7 kilometres—or 280 lengths—every day for 10 days starting Monday 14 October until Wednesday 23 October.

Epilepsy Scotland, of which he is a trustee, was founded in 1954 as the Scottish Epilepsy Association. Since then, the charity has continually evolved to meet the needs of the community it serves.

Mr Sturrock hopes to raise at least £3,000 for Epilepsy Scotland, which provides person-centred, individually tailored support to those affected by epilepsy in Scotland.

He said: “My epilepsy came along when I was 18, and since then I have been on a journey to control it, navigating lifestyle challenges and changes and trying different medications.

“Thankfully, I have now been seizure-free for 3 years.

“When I did a fundraising swim before, I was clocking 120 lengths a day, so this is taking it up a notch. But, while I expect this to be quite a slog for 10 days, the sustained effort that will be required will eventually, and thankfully, end. That’s not the case for the many people who live with

some forms of epilepsy who require much greater strength and determination to manage their daily lives with frequent seizures and associated issues.

“It’s not only the individual living with epilepsy whose enormous effort is required to manage it. The impact epilepsy has on others, especially loved ones, is profound. Rates of PTSD in people living with epilepsy and their loved ones are higher, and it’s obvious why. A seizure is a devastating—even heart-breaking—thing to witness, especially when it is happening to someone you love and there’s nothing you can do to stop it.

“One of the things neurologists ask people to do is video record seizures so they can better diagnose or understand epilepsy type. It was only after seeing the footage of myself having a seizure and hearing the fear in my husband’s voice as he looked after me that I understood the toll it can take on others.

And, of course, it’s not only the seizure that is scary. While the risk is small, particularly for people like me with controlled seizures, death during a seizure does occur. SUDEP (Sudden Unexplained Death from Epilepsy) is the leading cause of death of people with epilepsy. That’s a terrifying thing to have hanging over you and your loved ones and certainly has been a cause of anxiety in my life. The moment before having a seizure.

“Seeing a seizure generally scares the living daylights out of people, loved ones or not. Consequently, people who cannot fully control their seizures are prone to isolation, not wanting to inflict this on others or deal with the consequences of having a seizure in a public place. So, they don’t go to shops, or take public transport, for example. They wouldn’t even think of going for a swim as I’m thankful to be able to do.

“One of the really important things Epilepsy Scotland does is helping people in this situation. Whether by providing counselling or activities or a space where one can go and socialise knowing that, if a seizure strikes, people who know how to help are on hand.

“This has saved lives – go on the Epilepsy Scotland website and watch Phil’s story about how Epilepsy Scotland and the people there helped him to navigate his life with epilepsy, which had previously pushed him to the point of suicidal ideation.”

In recent decades, Epilepsy Scotland has expanded its services to include a freephone Helpline, Check-in support, Welfare Rights assistance, Wellbeing services, and Youth Groups in Glasgow and Edinburgh. £700,000 is needed annually to maintain these services.

The charity’s 70th anniversary fundraising ball was hosted by TV and Radio presenter Jennifer Reoch and featured performances by Michelle McManus, The Jersey Notes, and The Tartan Tenor.

Michael said: “I’m hugely grateful for all the support I have received, every penny will go to the very best of use.”

The fundraiser can be found at <https://www.justgiving.com/page/michael-sturrock-swim70>



1954 - 2024
70 YEARS SUPPORTING
PEOPLE WITH EPILEPSY

epilepsy scotland

