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2 Children From Maryland will Join 43 Others to Raise Awareness About Epilepsy and Bring Their Stories to Capitol Hill!

Towson, MD, March 18- On March 31st, 2009, 45 children from across the country will meet in Washington as part of the *Kids Speak Up* event and talk with their state representatives in hopes of affecting policy and raising awareness about epilepsy. Fifteen year old Greg Laslo from Finksburg, MD and ten year old Alexandra Rundelett from Silver Spring, MD, will bring their stories of battling epilepsy to the lawmakers and politicians on Capitol Hill.

The *Kids Speak Up* event is paired with the *Public Policy Institute* (PPI), an advocacy program geared towards adults which gives them the foundation, knowledge, and strategy to prepare for their advocacy in Washington. The Epilepsy Foundation welcomes children, parents, adults and staff from all over the country to participate in this two day event.

The day before the *Kids Speak Up* event, Greg and Alexandra will enjoy a full day of mingling with the other children, fun activities, and lots of games. They will also prepare for the following day, when all 45 children will span across the Senate and House offices relaying their message of living with epilepsy. The children speaking will help put a face on the often misunderstood disorder and will hopefully make an impact on lawmakers.

Greg and Alexandra receive services through the Epilepsy Services program at Abilities Network/ Epilepsy Foundation of the Chesapeake Region (EFCR), which is headquartered in Towson, MD. The program serves individuals, families, and the greater community with epilepsy education, information and referral services, assistance with medical issues, advocacy support groups, and scholarship support.

Mary Wontrop, Education Coordinator at Abilities Network/ EFCR states, “The *Kids Speak Up* program is a wonderful opportunity for children with epilepsy to take an active part in our government system. They learn how laws are passed and get to see where the congresspersons from their states work. An added benefit of this program is that they have an opportunity to meet other kids from around the country who also have epilepsy.”

For additional information on the *Kids Speak Up* event, contact Lauren Dunn at 410-828-7700 ext. 1229, or ldunn@abilitiesnetwork.org.

Abilities Network is a non-profit organization that provides individualized services to children and adults, as well as their families of differing abilities that focus on one-on-one supports to foster broadened, more inclusive communities through education, training, and advocacy. For more information about Abilities Network, please visit our website at www.abilitiesnetwork.org.

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