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For Immediate Release

Fifth Grade Workshop to End Stigma of Epilepsy

SUMMIT – Trained staff from the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey (EFNJ) will continue their statewide traveling workshop by joining fifth grade students at Jefferson Elementary School on Tuesday, October 4th. The workshop titled “Thinking About Epilepsy” aims to change perceptions of epilepsy at an early age by teaching the importance of tolerance and compassion for their peers with epilepsy.

Staff will educate students on how the brain works and what causes seizures in coordination with the fifth grade science curriculum. Staff will provide students with simple tips to detect seizures and how to provide simple first aid to their peers to empower the class to be active, compassionate participants.

“It’s invaluable for kids with epilepsy to know that their teachers and classmates understand their seizures and how to help them,” explains Andrea Racioppi, Associate Director of EFNJ.

Almost 25% of all epilepsy diagnoses each year in the United States involve children under the age of 15. Additionally, one in ten people will have a seizure in their lifetime. Because of outdated stigma and lack of understanding, children with epilepsy often face ostracism and bullying from their peers which may produce lasting effects of low self-esteem and depression throughout adulthood. EFNJ hopes to stop the continuation of the outdated stigma by teaching students the necessary facts about epilepsy before leaving elementary school.

EFNJ joined forces with the Anita Kaufmann Foundation, founder of the “Thinking About Epilepsy” program, in 2007 to bring this empowering educational program to New Jersey schools. To date, EFNJ has trained fifth grade students at nearly 150 elementary schools across New Jersey.

To bring the “Thinking About Epilepsy” program to your school, please contact Jenna Andolora at 800-336-5843 or via email at tae@efnj.com.

The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey (EFNJ), an affiliate of the National Epilepsy Foundation and the Family Resource Network, provides programs for families living with epilepsy, such as a residential summer camp, support groups, scholarships, referral programs and respite care. EFNJ also institutes free educational presentations about seizure first aid and police training. To learn more, please visit www.efnj.com.

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