

April 8, 2021

Monica and Daniel Greco
5 Dalbeattie Avenue
Toronto, ON

Delegation | Purple Day Recognition through the Toronto Catholic District School Board

Good evening, everyone and Happy Easter.

My name is Monica Diaz-Greco. I am a teacher in the board and a parent of 2 young children attending All Saints Catholic School. I am joined tonight by my husband Daniel Greco and we are here to ask the board to recognize Purple Day, a day to wear purple in an effort to raise awareness about, and end the stigma associated with, epilepsy. We are happy to be here and advocate for this important day. Thank you for the opportunity.

In 2014, our youngest daughter Emma was diagnosed with a rare form of epilepsy and has been struggling with this disease ever since. She is now 7 years old. In the time since her diagnosis our family has had to overcome many obstacles. Indeed the journey has been long. As parents, you always want what is best for your children, and dealing with the unknowns of epilepsy have made that a challenge. The medical piece is difficult in and of itself. Navigating appointments, medications and tests is not something we would wish upon anyone. However, being a caregiver of someone with epilepsy also comes with a great deal of self-education and advocacy. Although we have often had to explain what epilepsy is to many, we have also found that we are not alone in this fight. We were surprised to learn that epilepsy is a lot more common in Canada than one might expect. In fact, 1 in 100 Canadians have epilepsy which means that 1 in 100 students/staff in our board have epilepsy. This does not include those who are living with, or affected by someone who has it. Through numerous conversations with fellow parents and educators, we have learned that

many children within the school system have similar challenges as our daughter. And, many of these challenges stem from the stigma associated with this disease. It is important to spread awareness of epilepsy to help combat these perceptions and create an inclusive learning environment for all. Having been involved within the epilepsy community since Emma was young, we know that we have to be advocates for her, as well as any other people struggling with this disease.

In 2008, in Nova Scotia, a young girl by the name of Cassidy Megan facing her own struggles with epilepsy decided to raise awareness and established Purple Day. Every year, on March 26, people around the world show their support by wearing purple in order to increase awareness and help end the stigma associated with this neurological disease. In 2012, through the Purple Day Act, the government of Canada supported this initiative and nationally recognized this day. We now respectfully ask the TCDSB trustees to embrace Purple Day and officially recognize it as a day within the system, whereby staff and students would be encouraged to wear purple to show support for the 1 in 100 people living with, or affected by, epilepsy.

We thank you once again for allowing us the opportunity to present tonight. Have a great evening and God bless!

Sincerely,

Monica and Daniel Greco