

SB 0549-- BRYNLEIGH'S ACT -- SUPPORT

March 3, 2020

Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen St., Annapolis, MD 21401 – 1991

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

This preschool class photo was taken in the spring of 2016.



About one year later, my son Gavin, a healthy little boy, would be diagnosed with epilepsy after having two unprovoked seizures. Two years after his diagnosis, his epilepsy would stop responding to medication. He would have countless hospitalizations, miss many days of school and endure brain surgery. He would have to take 4 AED's and follow a medically prescribed diet to make it through the day. A seizure alert dog would be added to his treatment plan. Presently, in spite of all he has been through and continues to go through, he is developmentally on track and acts like a typical 8 year old boy. You would not look at him and think he could have a seizure emergency at any time.

Going back to that class photo...about three years after that preschool picture was taken in the summer of 2019, *another* child in the class would go on to have a single seizure. Coincidentally, this child's mom brought our family a meal in the days following Gavin's brain surgery. As a friend who lent support and a sympathetic ear, she was aware of the various ways seizures can present and how to respond. It was this awareness that allowed her to act with knowledge during her own daughter's seizure.

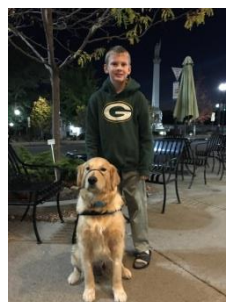
With statistics like 1 in 26 people being diagnosed with epilepsy during their life and 1 in 10 people experiencing a seizure, chances are you know someone like Gavin or his peer.

There are times when Gavin will get down and feel like he is the only one affected by seizures. I tell him that anyone who has a brain could possibly have a seizure. He looks at me and is like, *Come on mom; that is EVERYONE in the world!* And I tell him...*Yes, that is exactly right!* So while Brynleigh's Act will certainly help to ensure that my child is safe at school, it will also ensure that everyone else at school is safe if they were to experience a seizure too. The day that preschool class picture was taken no one would have predicted that epilepsy and a seizure would become a part of Gavin and his classmate's story. Giving our school communities the tools to act from a place of awareness, knowledge and preparation when handling seizures is truly a benefit for all!

Respectfully,

Gavin's mom, Lauren DiBietto

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