2020: A Year Like No Other

It began with such promise – EPI had the highest grossing ever Chocolate Ball in February, we embarked on an ambitious rebranding project, planned for a new website, and experienced significant growth in our community-based programs.

And then the world shut down in mid-March and, collectively, we lived through some of our darkest times. EPI, along with everyone else, had to reimagine what it meant to support people with disabilities during a global pandemic. We are proud to say that the staff at EPI rose to this challenge in creative and resourceful ways.

In the very early days of the pandemic, our CEO, Jeff Sinsebox, articulated EPI’s three guiding principles that would get us through the most trying times of the pandemic:

1. Keep people safe, both our staff and people supported
2. To provide stable employment
3. To ensure the future of the agency

These three priorities guided our decisions throughout 2020 and continue today. We implemented comprehensive safety protocols and offered programming alternatives such as telehealth, online support groups, and educational webinars. All our epilepsy services, including our camps, were moved to virtual formats. We implemented a masking policy at all our facilities prior to the NYS mandate and provided staff with reusable masks and personal protective equipment. We also take our responsibility as an employer very seriously and did not furlough any staff from our closed programs, instead opting to redeploy staff to open programs. And finally, we took steps to ensure the long-term financial health of our agency as our employees and the people we support depend upon us for their livelihoods and services. EPI has always been prudent stewards of our funding and that did not change during COVID-19.