



Claudia Hernandez

Having been diagnosed with epilepsy and known about the Epilepsy Foundation for several years, Claudia Hernandez reached out in 2012 with a desire to educate the Latino Community about seizure first aid and recognition.

“I had a seizure at the Cicero Township while walking with participants in my Exercise Club. When I fell, the other participants circled around me and began praying. One person placed a religious ornament on me, making it difficult breath. I also witnessed some people crying. When the ambulance came, members were speaking negatively about me having a seizure. I wasn’t sure if I should be mad or laugh about this. I didn’t need to be prayed for. I needed someone to turn me to my side, make sure I was safe, and ensure that my seizure lasted less than five minutes.”

Claudia Hernandez was connected with the Foundation through her involvement with a nonprofit organization in Cicero, IL. Her affiliation with the organization allowed her to receive support from a staff member who wanted to help Claudia in her effort to educate participants in her Exercise Club about epilepsy.

With the help of the Foundation, Claudia was able to have an educator train members and staff at the Cicero Township.

“The Latino community is very low in responding to epilepsy in comparison to other ethnicities... they believe that if you have epilepsy you shouldn’t be out in the community for fear or shame that someone will see you have a seizure, and if you have a seizure then the community will view it as if you were possessed by demons... this is why educating Latino community is important.”

Coordinating the training to the members fueled her desire to outreach to Latino community. She proceeded to work with the Foundation to create a Cicero Consumer support group at the township. With this effort, the Foundation has developed a presence in the community by participating in health fairs, conducting Spanish seizure trainings, and connecting with other local nonprofit organizations to increase brand awareness of Epilepsy Foundation in the Latino community.

“I have noticed that in my effort to provide fliers and pamphlets about epilepsy to nearby clinics and organizations, that people of non-Latino/Hispanic decent and organizations want more information about epilepsy too. It is sparking an interest among all ethnicities...the only thing I can say is that I am really happy. I hope to continue progressing in my efforts with helping the Latino community. ”