

# Global Day of Epilepsy Awareness

Senator read this on March 25, 2011

**Hon. Jane Cordy:** Honourable senators, recent weather reports for this coming Saturday, March 26, indicate that it may be slightly grey; me, I am forecasting purple.

Honourable senators, in 2008, a young girl from Nova Scotia by the name of Cassidy Megan founded, with the help of the Canadian Epilepsy Alliance and other groups around the world, Purple Day for Epilepsy. Cassidy's dream was to have one day each year designated for global epilepsy awareness. It is thanks to a school presentation given by the Epilepsy Association of Nova Scotia and her school principal, who set the date, that Cassidy's dream was put into action when the first Purple Day was held as a local initiative.

Since that time, the campaign has expanded and the challenge to stand up and show support for those living with this life-altering neurological disorder has been extended to people around the world. This initiative has garnered much support from politicians, celebrities, businesses and schools alike. It has spread to all continents, with the exception of Antarctica. Paul Shaffer of *The Late Show with David Letterman* was a supporter of the first Purple Day and the following year was the special guest at the launch of the campaign in the United States.

The disorder of epilepsy currently affects over 300,000 Canadians and 50 million people worldwide. Our participation by wearing purple on March 26 is just one small way in which we can promote understanding and show support for those with epilepsy.

Private member's Bill C-430, the Purple Day Act, introduced by the Honourable Geoff Regan, has just passed first reading in the other place and has been tabled in the House of Commons. Once passed, this bill will help the Canadian Epilepsy Alliance further the initiative to have this date endorsed by the World Health Organization and the United Nations. It is with this kind of awareness that 1 in 100 people who live with epilepsy, like Cassidy Megan, will know that they are not alone.

Education in this matter is imperative and will certainly help to save lives. Risks are that much lower when people are able to properly identify an epileptic seizure and know what to do in its instance.

I urge honourable senators to lend your support to this worthy cause by sporting your favourite shade of purple on Saturday. "Hue" will not regret it! Furthermore, it will be an active way of making our world a brighter place — despite the weather.

About Hon. Jane Cordy:

Senator Cordy was appointed to the Senate by the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien on June 9th, 2000. She was born in Sydney, Nova Scotia and now lives in Dartmouth with her husband Bob. Her daughters Alison and Michelle also live in Dartmouth.

Senator Cordy is a graduate of the Nova Scotia Teachers College and Mount St. Vincent University. She taught elementary school for 30 years in Nova Scotia, teaching in Sydney, New Glasgow and the Halifax Regional Municipality. She has made numerous presentations at both local and provincial teachers' conferences.

Senator Cordy has served as vice-chair of the Halifax-Dartmouth Port Development Commission. She was also the chair of the Board of Referees for employment insurance. She also served on the Board of Phoenix House for Youth. Senator Cordy has just completed two terms as a Board Member of Mount St. Vincent University (2007 – present).

Senator Cordy is a past president of the Nova Scotia Women's Liberal Commission. She also served on Prime Minister Chrétien's task force on seniors. Senator Cordy was a member of the senate committee which published a report "Out of the Shadows at Last" a study of the issues relating to mental health, mental illness and addiction in Canada. She was also a member of the special senate committee on aging.

Senator Cordy is the past chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association. She is presently serving as an international vice president of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly representing North America on the executive. She is also vice president of the Civil Dimensions of Security Committee in the Assembly.

Senator Cordy has a particular interest in issues related to mental health, seniors and aging, NATO and Gender Security, education and children.

**Current Member of the following Senate committee(s):**

Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration  
Social Affairs, Science and Technology