

Purple Day raises awareness about epilepsy



Christine Weal showing her Purple pride.

Every day is precious for Christine Weal, since she feels that she was given a second chance at life. For over four years, Christine struggled with epilepsy and dealt with seizures that took away her independence. She is now seizure-free, and has regained her life and her independence after having brain surgery.

Christine helped coordinate Purple Day events in Assiniboia to help raise awareness about epilepsy in the community. Worldwide, Purple Day is an international grassroots effort dedicated to increasing awareness about epilepsy that is observed on March 26, every year.

People in countries around the world are invited to wear purple and host events in support of epilepsy awareness on Purple Day. Last year, people in dozens of countries on all continents including Antarctica participated in Purple Day. In Assiniboia, they have a local bakery that creates 'purple' cupcakes.

"It is so important to help spread awareness about epilepsy, and make people more aware of the sickness,

and what they can do if they see someone having a seizure."

Recalling her own struggles with the sickness, Christine said that having a seizure was a very scary experience. "I would wake up most days in the hospital, or in the ambulance."

"The seizures took away my independence," said Christine, adding that she had lost her driver's license because of the seizures. There was also a point where the epilepsy and

seizures were so bad that she couldn't work anymore.

Another important part of the Purple Day celebrations in Assiniboia is helping to raise funds to purchase video-EEG equipment that is used by the Royal University Hospital Foundation and their surgeons.

"I felt very fortunate that I could get the surgery. It took a lot of time and preparation for the surgery itself. The equipment is very com-

plex, as it monitors everything in your body," said Christine.

She also felt fortunate to have Dr. Jose Tellez-Zenteno available for consulting, as he founded the Saskatchewan Epilepsy Program.

Now back in control of her life, Christine feels fortunate to have the opportunity to raise awareness about epilepsy. "I just want to help educate people, so that they know the risks of the sickness, and how they can help."