

**During our 40th Anniversary year, we will be profiling individuals who helped define the past forty years. There is no better place to start than with our Founder.**

Our organization was founded by **Marion Harwick**, a Mom, who had a daughter with epilepsy. In the 1970's and early 1980's, there wasn't a lot of information available to help parents whose children were diagnosed with epilepsy. The starting point for most families was the library. Marion, however, wanted more than this. She started a support group for parents of children with epilepsy, with meetings being held at her home around the dining room table. She also invited adults who had epilepsy to attend. On October 19, 1981, she officially incorporated the organization, naming it the Epilepsy Association of the Capital District, Inc. Funding to open the doors was provided by the Office for Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (now called Office for People with Developmental Disabilities), with a matching grant from Albany County.



The organization served nine counties including Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Columbia, Greene, Saratoga, Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie. Services included information and referral, counseling and a support group. Marion hired the first paid staff, and formed a Board of Directors to oversee the organization. She served as the first President of the Board. The first real "office" was a desk and a phone in a hallway at the Center for the Disabled. From there the organization moved to lower Central Avenue, then to the United Way Building, and finally to our current location at 3 Washington Square, Albany.

In January, 1998, the name of the organization was changed to Epilepsy Foundation of Northeastern New York. The territory has expanded twice, and now includes 22 counties encompassing the North Country, the Capital Region and the Upper Hudson Valley area. Our programs today include information and referral, service coordination, counseling, support groups, professional in-service training, school education programs, and art therapy.

Thank you, Marion, for your visionary leadership!

