



spotlight on health

Hollywood Lends A Helping Hand

(NAPSA)—Jennifer Garner, Sean Hayes, Sylvester Stallone and David Schwimmer were among the celebrities who recently gathered for “Hollywood’s Helping Hands,” a fundraiser inspired by “Alias” co-star Greg Grunberg’s 9-year-old child Jake, who is being treated for epilepsy. Epilepsy is one of the most common disorders of the nervous system, affecting more than 2.5 million Americans of all ages.

After facing the challenges of trying to understand the disorder and find the right treatment for his child, Grunberg invited Hollywood personalities to creatively unite and join him in his efforts to raise awareness of epilepsy and effective treatments. Featuring an auction of original finger paintings by over 100 celebrities, the event raised money for pediatric epilepsy treatment, training and research programs at Mattel Children’s Hospital at UCLA, where Greg’s child Jake is treated.

“As parents it was very difficult emotionally to see Jake struggle with epileptic seizures. On top of that, we struggled to find the right treatment for Jake because of concerns about side effects. We knew we needed to do everything we could to find the right medical advice and a treatment that would work for Jake,” said Greg Grunberg. “My wife and I created ‘Hollywood’s Helping Hands’ because we felt compelled to raise awareness of epilepsy and help other families going through the same thing.”

The family met with numerous doctors and tried several different treatment combinations before



TV’s *Alias* star Greg Grunberg hosted a star-studded gathering to raise awareness of epilepsy.

consulting Dr. Raman Sankar of UCLA, who added Lamictal (lamotrigine) to Jake’s medication to help with seizure control and better manage his side effects. Today, Jake’s epilepsy symptoms are well controlled and he is an active 9-year-old who enjoys karate and does well in school.

Epilepsy, defined by recurrent unprovoked seizures, is a change in sensation, awareness or behavior brought about by an electrical disturbance in the brain. For as many as 80 percent of people with epilepsy, seizures can be considerably reduced or completely controlled with current treatments.

“There are both older and newer medications available to manage epilepsy,” said Dr. Raman Sankar, Professor of Pediatric Neurology at the David Geffen School of Medicine and Mattel Children’s Hospital at UCLA. “Since epilepsy is often a chronic

condition, the goal of therapy should be to provide patients with both tolerable and effective treatment options. While each patient may respond differently, in Jake’s case, he responded well to Lamictal, one of the well-established, newer medications.”

It is important for individuals affected by epilepsy to work with their doctor to identify the treatment plan that is most appropriate for them.

“Hollywood’s Helping Hands” is a campaign organized by the Pediatric Epilepsy Project at UCLA and Greg Grunberg with support from GlaxoSmithKline. To learn more, visit www.4pep.org.

In pediatric patients, Lamictal is limited to add-on treatment for partial seizures and a very serious form of epilepsy, called Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, in patients 2 years and older.

Most people who take Lamictal tolerate it well. However, for patients taking Lamictal, there is a risk of rash. Although most patients who develop rash while receiving Lamictal have mild to moderate symptoms, some individuals may develop a serious skin reaction that requires hospitalization. Rarely, deaths have been reported. These serious skin reactions are most likely to happen within the first eight weeks of treatment with Lamictal. Serious skin reactions occur more often in children than in adults. If patients develop side effects or symptoms that they are concerned about, or if they need more information, they should call their doctor.