

PRESENTATION BY MRS. ANGIE ASEMOTA
PURPLE DAY CELEBRATION 2015, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE,
NIGERIA.

AT OBA AKENZUWA

Hurray! Welcome to our 4th purple day celebration 2015.

Purple day is an annual event, a day dedicated to the sensitization of the reality of Epilepsy. It's a day people of good will try to put their legs in the shoes of the persons with Epilepsy the need to come to the assistance of Epilepsy survivors who cannot help themselves.

As a mother of a grown up man with Epilepsy who is almost weaned off medication, purple day has created a purposeful season for me and I know for many mothers to look forward to. During the months leading to purple day, I go down memory lane, the confusion, the loneliness, the ignorance, the throwing money into the hands of herbalist, fake pastors, the all-night prayers and fasting in different churches and I remember all the pains and my family felt and the dream I saw going down the drain.

Now writing this address and on this memory lane I feel God's presence, I feel his touch and I hear him telling me that all the pains, tears and hopelessness were worthwhile because all of these gave birth to **ANGIE EPILEPSY FOUNDATION**. There are many people with Epilepsy who never had chances in life because of incessant

Seizures ignorance, stigma but now with the birth of **Angie Epilepsy Foundation** the have one. Many mothers are very much aware now that there is treatment for Epilepsy and many girls and boys with Epilepsy knows now that they can be married and that there is no need for self pity. **Angie Epilepsy Foundation** has affected the lives of many and we hope to do more. We hope to stop mothers from sorrow and pain through serious awareness campaigns. We hope to take campaigns to the Barracks to the Territory institutions, to prison, to market places to transport companies.

We are all touched by Epilepsy whether a family, a co-worker, a friend or a neighbor. Epilepsy is a condition that affects millions of Nigerians every year an average 18, 5500 persons are diagnosed of Epilepsy that is about 60 people every day who are diagnosed with Epilepsy. About 78% of new parents are young children and children of adolescent. Senior citizens are forced to retire from their good life style because of Epilepsy. Those with loved ones suffering from Epilepsy are all too familiar with the fear that surrounds this disorder. If you like you can ask me. They fear for their loved ones and the powerless that accompanies a seizure. They fear that they will be in the wrong place when seizures occur. That it will happen in the shower, when they are home alone, when in class that could stir stigmatization, when they are crossing the High way the fear of a parent with Epilepsy is endless. There are so many variables to this condition that we have no power to control. However, we are not powerless. The government has a role to play; the public has a role to play too. The government must do a good job of adequate funding medical research and ensuring that medication is readily available and affordable. The religious bodies must ensure that fact and the realities of Epilepsy is discriminated from the pulpit. The public can also play its part by educating itself about Epilepsy and how to identify a seizure and early signs of seizures, Mosques and Churches should endeavour to invite Epilepsy workers to sensitize their people. Each of us can commit to helping someone in distress and taking action instead of watching from a distance so that sufferers are cared for adequately. Educating the public also so help people know about the causes of Epilepsy, Dangers, early detection and treatment. Unfortunately every day the general public does not know how to react when one is having a seizure. However old myths persist, people refuse to embrace realities. The public need to know about how to help someone having a seizure. There are so many myths and misconceptions about how to help someone who is having a seizure for example, restraining a person during a seizure or holding him down or struggling with him is wrong. Nothing should be placed in their mouth. That witches are the cause of Epilepsy is another strong myth we are trying to destroy. With so many Nigerians living with Epilepsy awareness is key. The awareness of the fact that Epilepsy is not malaria and should not be treated as such that treatment of Epilepsy runs into years. With the right diagnosis medication, keeping with doctor's appointment, Epilepsy can be cured however, it is working of note that some Epilepsy can be cared, some can be stabled with medication, some can only be managed and to

some no matter what one does one will have seizure though it gets better with medication. With the right dosage, positive attitude, exercise and eating right one can live normal life.

Angie Epilepsy Foundation works so hard to increase awareness of Epilepsy and seizures by offering awareness workshops/seminars distributing information to Churches, Mosques and social organizations. The commitment to educating and action will literally save lives.

March is Epilepsy awareness month. A time for us to be reminded of the prevalence of Epilepsy and how to prevent it in homes, offices and High way roads, how it affects those who live with it and their families and what work remains to be done to support those who live with it and to support effort to find a permanent cure. The purple day for Epilepsy campaign is very important in raising awareness about Epilepsy. It involves collective responsibilities, schools, corporate bodies Churches, Mosques, Hospitals, Transport companies should be very much involved with this awareness know about the non contagiousness and non infectiousness of Epilepsy. Workers should be able to have a peaceful co-existence and working relationship with a colleague with Epilepsy. Drivers!!! Hmm... who knows how many of our drivers today in Nigeria have Epilepsy? Have there been ways if identifying these individuals before certain drivers' licenses and other licenses are issued? What about pilots and co-pilots who fly planes, employers who work with fast moving and dangerous machines; motor cyclist and sailors, e.t.c.?

Have you ever imagined what will happen when a driver who is running at a speed of 120Km per hour suddenly loses consciousness for only 2 seconds? Or what will happen when someone crossing a very busy way loses consciousness and fall on the road? Many Nigerians have fallen victims and these victims will in turn have Epilepsy because Epilepsy can cause accidents and accidents can cause brain injuries that can in turn cause Epilepsy.

How do we help to reduce quacks that deliver women wrongly? How do we get rid of untrained midwives How do we get help to sanitize young men and women to be conscious of hard drugs pregnancy? Don't fold your hands. WHO says Epilepsy can happen to anyone at any time and age. It could be your sister, wife, husband,

son, cousin. What are you doing to help to reduce the stigma about Epilepsy and its realities discourage stigma and myths. Help a family who needs help.

My sincere thanks goes to the commissioner of Education and the permanent secretary who in their wisdom have decided to partner with us by sending the secondary school students to Purple Day. This will enable the next generation know about Epilepsy, what to do when someone has a seizure and how epilepsy can be prevented. We sincerely do hope that in the near future Epilepsy studies will be incorporated with the school curriculum. We also say a big “thank you” to the commissioner of Health for the support given to us so from ministry. A wonderful thank you to the Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Benin City who has ensured that this awareness continues to spread. Your Grace we say thank you and we pray that the Lord repays you and protect you forever. Edele Erstwhile Governor of Oyo & Taraba state, we say thank you for all your support, Hajia Tahma Mohammed Hassan we thank you. Mrs. M.A. Omoregie, Hon Abieyuwa Omoregie, Mallam Nurudeen Asonogie All my Christian and Muslim brethren who have supported us from inception we thank you.

However a lot remains to be done, we do not know how many people are not getting the help they need, help that is available, help that can be obtained at no great cost. Estimate suggests that over four million persons are living with Epilepsy in Nigeria. Where are these people? Over ten million Africans are suffering from different form of Epilepsy, many of them suffer in silent, and many suffer alone, beyond the suffering and absence of care lie the frontier of stigma, shame, exclusion and more often than we care to know death.

Many people commend us every day, we say thank you too for your assistance and to help us live out our dream but we want you to do more. Knowing about the people living with Epilepsy is not enough, let us redefine our habits of giving. Let us give and learn to ask of anything in return.

We want those living with Epilepsy to be good cheers, manage yourselves well and do something that will bring positive impact to the society. When we first started Angie Epilepsy Foundation, we were managing 17 persons but now we have over 2000 persons and we hope to do more. We however appeal to those living with Epilepsy and their families to identify with this foundation. This great event is the

Lord's doing of which greater glory of Him shall be revealed today. We are here today, it is because we are healthy, therefore, our profound gratitude goes to our chairman for her support and encouragement for this foundation, our speakers, we thank in no small measures for their supports and initiatives, our benefactors for their inspiration, to all our guests, friends, brothers and sisters, and all those who have supported us financially, morally and in prayers. In a special way I want to say a big thank you to my manager-Obehi, Mrs Owens, Michael, Desmond, Osarentin, Tracy, Omoyewen for their support making today a dream come true, to my son Osarentin whose condition gave birth to Angie Epilepsy Foundation, my other children for their understanding.

Finally, as you listen to me and other speakers, begin to ask yourself what I must do to help persons with Epilepsy and their families. I urge you to tell them that Epilepsy is not contagious, it has never been and it will never be. Tell them that they can live normal live, they can marry and have children just like you. Help them to be aware also that Epilepsy can be successfully treated. Hear this; Angie Epilepsy Foundation needs your support to grow and help the needy. Please continue to pass these words around and spread the awareness. It is so exciting to think just how big we will keep growing every year with all of us together.

Thank you once again.

Co-ordinator Angie Asemota