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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 22, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

As we enter our Bicentennial year, we can be proud of the quality of life and health care available to most Americans. It is only right that we give special attention to the problems of those whose disabilities keep them from realizing self-fulfillment in education, employment and family involvement.

Some four million fellow citizens are afflicted with epilepsy. Research has made it possible for many of them to lead a normal life. But for many others the answer lies in the future.

It is therefore most appropriate that we set aside a National Epilepsy Month. In focusing on the needs of persons with epilepsy, the month of November also pays fitting tribute to the thousands of volunteers who work with the Epilepsy Foundation of America. These men and women help individuals with epilepsy to find effective treatment, necessary education and employment opportunities. They improve our nation's understanding of the disorder and our own sensitivity towards those who are afflicted with it.

On behalf of all Americans, I salute the dedication and humanitarian concern of all who engage in this noble effort. I hope that the coming year will witness the conquering of new medical frontiers in this area.

# # #



For immediate release  
Wednesday, October 22, 1975

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford  
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Mrs. Ford will greet the 1975 Epilepsy Poster Child, Stacie Elizabeth Meacham from Oilsdale, California, at the White House today, October 22, 1975, at 1:50 P.M. in the Map Room. Accompanying Stacie will be her mother, Mrs. Kathleen Walters, and the President-Elect of the National Epilepsy Foundation, Mr. James A. Autrey.

# # #

Photo Coverage Only: Pickup in press lobby at 1:40 P.M.



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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 20, 1975

MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM M. KETCHUM (R-CA)  
AND 1975 EPILEPSY POSTER CHILD

Tuesday, October 21, 1975

11:45-11:55 a.m. (10 minutes)

The Oval Office

From: Max L. Friedersdorf *m.l.f.*

I. PURPOSE

Opportunity for Congressman Ketchum to introduce the 1975 Epilepsy Poster Child, her mother, and the President-Elect of the National Epilepsy Foundation.

Unrelated to this, the Congressman will also present a copy of the 1975 Bakersfield High School Yearbook.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS AND PRESS PLAN

A. Background:

1. Stacie Elizabeth Meacham, the 1975 Epilepsy Poster Child, is from Oildale, California, in Mr. Ketchum's Congressional District. Mr. Ketchum has requested the opportunity to bring Stacie, her mother, Mrs. Kathleen Walters, and the President-Elect of the National Epilepsy Foundation, Mr. James A. Autry, in to meet the President.
2. To help publicize this worthwhile foundation, Mr. Ketchum requested that the President proclaim November as National Epilepsy Month. In the absence of a Joint Resolution authorizing the President to do so, the Congressman was advised that the President would release a statement, which was to his satisfaction.
3. The President will present the statement to Mr. Autry, President-Elect of the Foundation, and the Press Office, in announcing the meeting, will release the text. (TAB A)
4. Mr. Ketchum also had a request pending to present the President with a copy of the Bakersfield High School 1975 Yearbook. Since he was coming in for the Poster Child appointment, he was asked to bring the yearbook along for presentation at the end of the Poster Child event.



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

NATIONAL EPILEPSY MONTH

November, 1975

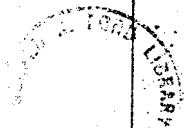
As we enter our Bicentennial year, we can be proud of the quality of life and health care available to most Americans. It is only right that we give special attention to the problems of those whose disabilities keep them from realizing self-fulfillment in education, employment and family involvement.

Some four million fellow citizens are afflicted with epilepsy. Research has made it possible for many of them to lead a normal life. But for many others the answer lies in the future.

It is therefore most appropriate that we set aside a National Epilepsy Month. In focusing on the needs of persons with epilepsy, the month of November also pays fitting tribute to the thousands of volunteers who work with the Epilepsy Foundation of America. These men and women help individuals with epilepsy to find effective treatment, necessary education and employment opportunities. They improve our nation's understanding of the disorder and our own sensitivity towards those who are afflicted with it.

On behalf of all Americans, I salute the dedication and humanitarian concern of all who engage in this noble effort. I hope that the coming year will witness the conquering of new medical frontiers in this area.

*Gerald R. Ford*



B. Participants: The President  
Stacie Elizabeth Meacham (Poster Child)  
Mrs. Kathleen Walters (Mother)  
Mr. James Autry (President-Elect of Foundation)  
Rep. Bill Ketchum  
Max Friedersdorf (staff)

C. Press Plan:

Announce meeting to the Press and release Presidential Statement. Press and White House photographers.

III. TALKING POINTS

1. Bill (Ketchum), I very much appreciate your bringing Stacie, her mother, and Mr. Autry in to see me.
2. The National Epilepsy Foundation has done a magnificent job over the years in making the public aware of this dread disease, and in the collection of funds for research and care of its victims.
3. Mr. Autry, it is with pleasure that I issue this statement today in support of the National Epilepsy Foundation.
4. Bill (Ketchum), thank you also for bringing me a copy of the Bakersfield High School 1975 Yearbook.





Newsmakers----

*Los A. Times 10/23/75*

## Maureen Dean 'Told It to the Judge'

—The judge received a plaintive letter from a woman whose husband he had sentenced to 1 to 4 years in prison. She had suffered a nervous breakdown shortly after he



was sentenced, she said, and she was "emotionally incapable of facing life" with her husband in jail. She was trying to keep herself "together by receiving psychiatric treatment after being committed to a hospital following a total breakdown . . ." The letter writer was

fice for the first time this week. His doctor said he was not yet quite ready to resume a full business schedule.

—Back in the White House, Betty Ford met with the 1975-76 national epilepsy poster child, **Stacie Elizabeth Meacham**, 11, of Bakersfield. The President had to cancel his meeting with Stacie Monday because of his cold. Stacie gave Mrs. Ford a hug and a scroll to give to the President, thanking him for his efforts to help epileptic children. It was signed by her 32-sixth grade classmates. Mrs. Ford said she was sure the scroll would make the President "feel much better."

UP-125

(BETTY)

WASHINGTON (UPI) -- BETTY FORD GOT AN AFFECTIONATE HUG AND A KISS TODAY FROM STACIE MEACHAM OF BAKERSFIELD, CALIF., THE EPILEPSY POSTER CHILD.

MRS. FORD WAS A STAND-IN FOR THE PRESIDENT, WHO HAD TO CANCEL A PICTURE-TAKING SESSION WITH 11-YEAR-OLD STACIE LAST MONDAY BECAUSE OF HIS SINUS COLD.

STACIE READ THE FIRST LADY A SCROLL SIGNED BY SIXTH GRADERS AT THE BEARDSLEY SCHOOL. IT TOLD FORD, "WE THINK YOU WILL BE ONE OF OUR BEST PRESIDENTS."

"HE'LL BE THRILLED TO DEATH," THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE SAID. "I'M SURE HE WILL BE MUCH BETTER WHEN HE SEES THIS."

WHEREUPON STACIE ASKED, "HOW IS HE?"

"HE IS FEELING FINE, THANK YOU," SAID MRS. FORD. THEN SHE HANDED THE YOUNG GIRL A PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING NOVEMBER AS NATIONAL EPILEPSY MONTH.

ASKED ABOUT HER OWN COLD, MRS. FORD SAID, "I'VE HAD THE SNIFFLES LIKE EVERYONE ELSE."

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MRS. FORD

WASHINGTON (AP) -- FIRST LADY BETTY FORD, SUBSTITUTING FOR THE AILING PRESIDENT, MET TODAY WITH THE 1975-76 NATION

L EPILEPSY POSTER CHILD,

FRECKLE-FACED STACIE ELIZABETH MEACHAM OF BAKERSFIELD, CALIF.

THE PRESIDENT WAS TO HAVE MET WITH 11-YEAR-OLD STACIE ON MONDAY, BUT HAD TO CANCEL WHEN HE DEVELOPED A COLD AND SINUS INFECTION.

STACIE GAVE MRS. FORD A HUG IN THE WHITE HOUSE MAP ROOM AND PRESENTED HER WITH A SCROLL FOR THE PRESIDENT. THE SCROLL WAS SIGNED BY HER 32 SIXTH-GRADE CLASSMATES AT BEARDSLEY SCHOOL IN BAKERSFIELD AND THANKED FORD FOR HIS EFFORTS IN HELPING EPILEPTIC CHILDREN.

MRS. FORD TOLD STACIE: "YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY LOVELY IN YOUR PRETTY PINK DRESS, AND A VERY PRETTY FACE TO MATCH."

SHE TOLD THE GIRL THE PRESIDENT WILL "BE THRILLED TO DEATH" WITH THE SCROLL. "I'M SURE HE'LL FEEL MUCH BETTER."

STACIE HAS HAD EPILEPSY SINCE SHE WAS FOUR YEARS OLD. HER SEIZURES ARE CONTROLLED BY MEDICATION SO THEY ONLY OCCUR ONCE EVERY MONTH OR SO.

THE FIRST LADY ALSO TOLD JAMES AUTREY, PRESIDENT-ELECT OF THE NATIONAL EPILEPSY FOUNDATION, THAT FORD IS DESIGNATING NOVEMBER AS NATIONAL EPILEPSY MONTH.