



WISCONSIN PARKINSON

MAGAZINE

ISSUE NO. 101 | 2019

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RESOURCES

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Credits

Wisconsin Parkinson Magazine is a publication for people with Parkinson disease, their families and friends, and any interested individuals and groups. It is published by Wisconsin Parkinson Association.

Information provided concerning medical diagnosis, treatment, and research is not intended to answer individual problems but to report and explain current information about Parkinson disease. You should always ask your physician about specific treatment issues.

If you do not receive *Wisconsin Parkinson Magazine* quarterly, join our mailing list at wiparkinson.org. You will receive this magazine, as well as periodic information about educational events, support & exercise groups, and other resources in your area. This magazine is funded by your donations. Your support helps those living with Parkinson disease by allowing us to enhance and expand our services to them and their families. For more information, visit wiparkinson.org.

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Letter from the Executive Director



Does Mission Matter?

Welcome to Issue 101 of *Wisconsin Parkinson Magazine* – guaranteed to warm you up after a loooooong winter! The focus in this issue is “alternative” exercise options, and you’ll also find offerings on much more, including great

financial planning advice as you navigate life with Parkinson’s and an inspiring piece on an event called Art Heals that took place in Washburn recently. All these articles have one thing in common – they are the manifestation of our mission statement.

About a year ago, we held a broad discussion about who Wisconsin Parkinson Association is today. That conversation, which included input from some of you, led to our new mission statement:

“Providing hope, community, support, and resources for people with Parkinson’s and their loved ones.”

But does an organization’s mission statement really matter? My answer – only if the organization takes it seriously and gives it life through programs and practice. WPA’s mission promises to provide four things to two sets of people. Let me walk through those, and share what they mean to us, and you!

Provide hope... Like any chronic disease, Parkinson’s can cause hope to fade. WPA promises to make our programs and communications focused on what is possible in the treatment and management of PD.

Provide community... Life is better when shared with others. Whether it is in a support group, an exercise group, a fly-fishing outing, or a night out for Working Professionals with Parkinson’s, we seek each day to bring you into a community of friends.

Provide support... We may not be your #1 cheerleader (likely that is family) but we will strive to be #2, 3, or 4! We are honored to come alongside you on this journey and be in your corner – be that through a phone call or an across the table conversation.

Provide resources... We are confident that you will find that there is no other organization in our state that provides the breadth and quality of services for those with Parkinson’s as we do. Local educational programs, assistance to over 150 Parkinson’s support & exercise groups, the latest information delivered through this magazine, an educational website, a biweekly podcast, and a monthly e-newsletter, as well as phone and email access to our knowledgeable staff providing referrals and answers to your PD-related questions.

For people with Parkinson’s and their loved ones...

We, of course, provide all of the above to those of you with Parkinson’s. But what makes WPA unique, is our strong focus on serving the rest of the family. We know that PD also affects those who love and care for the family member. We make sure these loved ones are cared for in our programs.

Please contact me should you have any thoughts regarding WPA’s work and I look forward to seeing you soon at one of our programs!

Gary

Gary Garland
Executive Director
garyg@wiparkinson.org

PS: Don’t forget to register for our Parkinson Disease Symposium coming up on Friday, July 26!



Anna Warren and daughter Abby continuing a 10-year tradition at Empty Bowls Milwaukee.

Read more about Anna and her family on pages 16-17

Planning for a Doctor Appointment: Making the Most of Your Visit

Health Insurance plans often dictate the amount of time your physician has for each patient visit. When you have a chronic health condition, it's more important than ever to make the most of your time at the doctor's office. Below are some helpful tips to maximize your visit!

✓ **In general, an appointment should address more than your medical condition.**

Your physician will want to know about any changes in your medical health, emotional health, and lifestyle.

✓ **Consider bringing an advocate or "note taker" to your appointments.**

There is often a lot of information and if you have a chronic condition, often family members want to know the outcome of the appointment. Having someone along to take notes will provide a reference point for you and your loved ones.

✓ **Rank your concerns and discuss the most important topic first.**

Human nature often leads us to address the most emotionally-concerning topic last.

✓ **Compile your list of medications in advance of the visit.**

Medication includes prescribed and over-the-counter, including: vitamins, herbal supplements and remedies, eye drops, and laxatives. It is also important to tell your doctor when you take a medication (one hour before eating, for example) and how (with a full glass of water, for example).

✓ **Recognize that symptoms can be physical or emotional, and symptoms can be adverse reactions to your medication.**

✓ **Share any visits to the Emergency Room, any falls, or any "near falls."**

Your insurance may cover extra therapy to stabilize or improve your gait and strength.

✓ **Prepare to share lifestyle changes since your last visit,**

including: use of new assistive devices, changes in sleep pattern, bowel or bladder changes, intimacy or sexual habits, alcohol consumption, or smoking.

✓ **Stick to the point.**

It may be tempting to "vent" your frustrations, but you may miss out on the expert advice from your physician.

✓ **Finally, be honest with your doctor.**

Your goals are the same: to maintain health and wellness. Withholding information will only prevent your doctor from offering the best treatment. 🍷

Inspired by personal experiences as a caregiver for her father who had Parkinson disease, Ruth Busalacchi, Certified Senior Advisor; is the Owner of SYNERGY HomeCare, which has been serving families since 2010. Ruth also has many years of experience in social and residential services, including licensing and operating group homes. She has a degree from Concordia University in Business Management and Human Resources. If you are interested in some free forms to prepare and bring to your appointment, reach out to Ruth at 414-763-8368 or rbusalacchi@shcmilwaukeecounty.com.

Yoga for Parkinson's



Yoga can be incredibly beneficial for Parkinson disease, and has been known to visibly reduce tremors and improve the steadiness of an individual's gait. Yoga helps to increase flexibility, improve posture, loosen tight muscles, and build confidence.

The Joy of Movement is a new therapeutic yoga and movement class offered at 5 Koshas Yoga and Wellness in Wausau. Bill Miller, MA, RYT-200, is a certified wellness instructor and really enjoys the unique challenges of leading a class for people with Parkinson's.

"Much later in life, upon retirement, I decided to try a yoga class, at my wife's insistence – and I loved it," Bill said. "It awoke something in me. I began practicing yoga on an almost daily basis. Now my goal with

teaching this class is to help students increase confidence and reduce some of the anxiety that can come along with having a movement disorder."

Yoga classes can be adapted, and if you are able to sit down on the floor and get up off the floor on your own, either with or without the use of a chair, a class like The Joy of Movement might be right for you. The class incorporates a combination of light weights, yoga poses that adapt easily to your needs, chairs, yoga mats, and blankets. Movements include the big, sweeping movements that are known to be beneficial to someone with Parkinson's, helping to rebuild strength and flexibility, and focusing on controlled breathing. "We also bring in contralateral movements to help with balance. Moving the left arm and right leg at the same time,

for example, really helps with mental focus," Bill said.

Simple meditation and calming techniques are also a part of every class. Bill shared the importance of appreciating the mental benefits of yoga as well as the physical benefits. "With a disease like Parkinson's, you can give in to it, or you can fight it. It might vary from day to day, but finding something like yoga to focus on, and building a community of people is so important in that fight." 🌱

The Joy of Movement class takes place at 5 Koshas Yoga and Wellness in Wausau on Tuesdays from 9:15-10:15 am. To learn more, visit 5koshasyoga.com.

Financial Strategies & Tips – After a Parkinson’s Diagnosis

By Jim Cantrell

According to a recent study, nearly 60% of Americans feel they have not done enough financial planning and 34% have done nothing at all. I have been in the financial planning profession for 30 years, and I am not surprised. It seems to me that very few people have done a thorough job planning for their financial future.

Even if you are the exception, and have done extensive financial planning, changing life situations can play havoc on your plan. What happens if a job changes, or a loved one passes away, or if you are diagnosed with Parkinson disease? How can this impact your long-term plans?

My father was diagnosed with PD in 1975. As an 11-year-old, I wasn’t much help. I didn’t know anything about Parkinson’s and even less about financial planning. Over time, my dad could no longer work. This disrupted everything for our family. I don’t want that to happen to you.

If you have been diagnosed with Parkinson’s, here are some things to consider:

1 See your financial planner.

Your financial planner needs to know your situation. They should know where you are now and should help you address changes you may need to make.

2 If you are still working, consider the possibility of early retirement.

Early retirement may become necessary, so maximize your retirement plan contributions now. If you become unable to work in the future, you will be glad you stored away some extra money. This would include 401(k)s, IRAs, and Roths. I especially like Roths. Roth IRAs allow you to grow money tax deferred and remove money tax exempt. If you are

eligible, put money in a Roth. Also contribute to an HSA if you are eligible. HSAs allow you to deduct contributions, defer tax on growth, and remove money for qualified medical expenses tax free.

It seems to me that very few people have done a thorough job planning for their financial future.

3 Consider the maximum pension benefit for your spouse.

Most of us don’t get pensions anymore, but if you do, think about your spouse’s need with or without you. A spousal benefit on your pension is often an inexpensive way to provide income after you are gone. It isn’t fun to think about, but none of us will live forever. Unless your spouse has plenty of money, consider the maximum spousal benefit.

4 Get your estate plan in order.

As long as we are talking about the inevitable, we might as well talk about estate planning. This could be an article in itself, but for now, let’s just say it is vital to know how your assets will be distributed after you are gone, and maximize the efficiency of the distribution of your estate.



4 Work as long as you can.

Working is good for us. It exercises our minds and bodies. The longer we can work, the younger we stay. And the longer we work, the better our finances will look. If you are working now, and you can continue to work, then keep working.

Apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) if you are unable to work and you are under the full retirement age.

Although SSDI will not provide enough for most people to live on by itself, the monthly benefit can be of great help. If you are able to receive benefits, they will be equal to your full retirement benefit as if you were at full retirement age. Approximately 70% of applicants are turned down the first time they apply for SSDI. If you are turned down for SSDI, don't give up. Consider hiring an attorney and appeal.

5 Stay active, even if you are not working.

We all know the benefits of staying active. It is good for our brains and our bodies. Having enough money to do the things you love to do is an important part of staying active. Planning for expenses like travel, hobbies, gym memberships, etc. is imperative.

6 Do the things you want to do while you can enjoy them.

Maybe you have a dream vacation you always wanted to take. Maybe you always wanted to take a class in music or car repair. Do it now while you can enjoy it.

I had clients that always wanted to take a special trip together. After the husband retired, I encouraged them to take the trip. Year after year I would ask if they had taken their trip. The answer was always, "No, we'll do it next year, and save the money now." Eventually, the husband got sick and couldn't travel any more.

We get into saving mode when we are preparing for retirement, and it is hard to get out of that mode. Don't save it all for the future; spend some of it now, unless you are saving it for your kids to take a great trip.

I hope these financial planning tips help, but all the financial planning in the world won't mean a thing if life is not enjoyable. Remember to keep a good attitude. Watch a funny movie, the old kind where comedy was clean and wholesome, go to church, spend time with friends and family, tell a joke, say a prayer, sing a song, tell someone you love them, listen to your favorite music. An ancient proverb says, "A cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine." Don't let the troubles of life defeat you. There is great reward for those who overcome.

I will always miss my dad – he was a very strong man. I hope I can be more like him. Even when the illness seemed to be winning, I can honestly say he never gave up. That is my best advice for you, never give up, and live life to its fullest. 🌱

Jim Cantrell is a Certified Financial Planning Professional with 30 years of experience. He is the president of Financial Strategies, Inc. a Fee-Only, comprehensive, financial planning firm in Brookfield, WI. He has been a member of NAPFA (National Association of Personal Financial Advisors) since 1996 and has served as Chair and President of the NAPFA Midwest Regional Board and served on NAPFA's national board of directors. Jim currently serves as president of Wisconsin Parkinson Association's board of directors.

Music Therapy

by Lynnae Sis | Village at Manor Park

According to musictherapy.org, “Music therapy is the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship.”

Lynnae Sis is the board certified music therapist at Village at Manor Park (VMP) in West Allis. Lynnae works with the residents in groups or in one-on-ones at VMP. Music is powerful, influencing brain functioning and subsequently emotions, behavior, and cognition.

What does music therapy look like at VMP? It could be regulating mood and energy level with background music over breakfast. Or it is promoting a sense of community and building self-esteem through chorus rehearsals and performances. In music therapy groups, residents actively make music as they sing and play percussion instruments together, or reminisce in group discussions, or write their own lyrics to familiar melodies. This helps meet a variety of goals including increased relaxation, orientation, social interaction, self-expression, and more!

Music therapy services can also serve as complementary care along with other disciplines like respiratory and nursing, as well as speech, physical, and occupational therapy. This is where the new Parkinson's Music & Movement exercise group comes into play.

Jackie Immekus, assistant administrator at VMP, helped identify a need for community groups with those in

the area diagnosed with Parkinson disease, as well as for caregivers to have an opportunity to engage with one another in a caregiver support group setting. Research has shown that exercise is an integral part of maintaining and improving mobility for individuals with Parkinson's. Messages are sent to and from the brain via electrical signals between neurons. With Parkinson's symptoms, the brain's communication between neurons is impacted. Messages are not sent, delayed, or modified in a way that makes it difficult for the individual to complete a movement like they used to. This is where adding the stimulation of music along with the exercises is beneficial. Listening to music is one of the only activities to stimulate 80% or more of the brain at one time. This means more neurons are working and firing together. Music can also stimulate increased production of dopamine and serotonin. They elevate mood, but also increase the ability of neurons to send and receive signals. The rhythm in music energizes and organizes the movements. More connections and clearer connections can be made with music therapy incorporated into the exercise program. “Neurons that fire together, wire together!”

What does this music therapy look like in action? Lynnae incorporates sung cues, strong rhythmic pulses, and ascending/descending strums on the autoharp to musically cue, support, and carry the residents through occupational therapy's specially designed movements. Residents also become musicians in the group as drumming is incorporated. The weight of the drum, the visual of the drum and mallet in hand, the movement involved in bringing the mallet to the drum, and the auditory cue of making contact with the drum all work to enhance the targeted movement.

There are other exercises that can be incorporated and some ideas for the future as well, such as singing to support vocal production. Participants have been observed to really extend their movements out, up, and down fully during the Music & Movement group. Additional outcomes noted include elevated mood, increased social interaction, and a sense of community as they smile, laugh, move, and create rhythms together. 🌱

Village at Manor Park's Music & Movement Class is offered on the 2nd Thursday of the month in West Allis, at the same time as their Parkinson's Caregiver support group. To learn more about either group, call 414-607-4223.

Rock Steady Boxing at FastBack Physical Therapy



Beginning a new exercise program can be intimidating – with or without Parkinson’s. But Patrick Barron, PT, owner of FastBack Physical Therapy in New Berlin, and his clinic are working hard to remove the intimidation and help patients feel comfortable from the minute they walk in the clinic.

Everything about the new FastBack Physical Therapy clinic was designed with comfort and function in mind. A variety of workout equipment, group exercise space, exercise tables, and more greet patients as they walk in, and Patrick even has a kitchenette set up where he plans to host cooking and nutrition classes.

After previously meeting Dr. Taylor Finseth, a movement disorder specialist at Aurora Health Care, and member of Wisconsin Parkinson Association’s Medical Advisory Committee, Patrick learned about Rock Steady Boxing, a program that matched his passion for working with people with Parkinson’s. Rock Steady Boxing is a non-contact boxing program that enables people with Parkinson’s to fight back against their disease. Each class consists of rigorous exercise that emphasizes gross motor movement, balance, core strength, and rhythm, and can have a huge impact on strength, flexibility, balance, and has even been shown to improve the quality of movement and reduce the effect of tremors in people with Parkinson’s.

“Rock Steady Boxing is different from all other exercise classes,” says Patrick.

“Participants have to constantly adapt and adjust their movements and balance. As soon as they start to settle into a consistent motion, we change it. It requires them to focus on the task at hand, with preparedness to switch to a new task quicker. This helps with mental changes as well as physical changes associated with Parkinson’s.

Kris Morrissey loves the class at FastBack, and said it was the best thing that ever happened to her. “When you find obstacles like Parkinson’s, you’ve got to find a way to work around them. I’ll be exhausted when I get home today, but it’s a good exhausted.”

Wisconsin Parkinson Association has given a grant to support the work at FastBack Physical Therapy. With this money, Patrick and his team are able to provide an assessment and boxing gloves to new participants – free of charge. Patrick also recently took on facilitation of the early-onset Parkinson’s support group, which previously met in Wauwatosa.

To learn more about FastBack Physical Therapy, visit fastbackpt.com. To find a boxing class near you, visit wiparkinson.org and click on Find a Support Group. 🍏



(From left to right) Kris Morrissey warms up and gets ready for Rock Steady Boxing • WPA staff presents Patrick Barron, PT with a grant award to support the Rock Steady Boxing class. Pictured from left: Alice Graham; Gary Garland, WPA executive director; Patrick Barron, PT, owner of FastBack Physical Therapy; Laurie Couillard, WPA director of group engagement; Anna Warren; Kris Morrissey. • Kenneth Szalacinski sits with physical therapist Jenny Riley, PT for his initial assessment at FastBack Physical Therapy.



WPA *In the Community*

Assisted living communities are prepared to care for older adults, but they aren't always familiar with Parkinson disease. When a new resident has Parkinson's, they turn to WPA for help. Jeremy Otte, WPA's director of outreach & education, is happy to connect with these facilities and spend time training their staff to recognize some of the unique challenges presented by Parkinson's.

"We are a RCAC assisted living facility," said Bonnie Cohn, RN, campus administrator for ProHealth Care Regency Senior Communities. "We see many residents that move in with very minimal effects of Parkinson's and see how quickly their disease can progress."

Regency Senior Communities recently invited Jeremy to help educate their staff. He visited their campuses in New Berlin, Muskego, and Brookfield, and gave five presentations for employees on different shifts.

"It was wonderful for him to be here to explain the different stages and what to watch for. It helped them to understand the reasons that a resident may have 'freezing' episodes, difficulty getting their thoughts across, or slow mobility," Bonnie told us.

Jeremy also discussed the importance of administering medication at a certain time, helping staff to understand the impact medication can have on a resident's quality of life.

She was grateful that he helped the staff understand how to assist a resident who is having these issues. 🌱



If you would like to invite Jeremy Otte, WPA's director of outreach & education, to speak at your community or agency, call WPA at 414-312-6990.

Cycling for Parkinson's



For someone dealing with the balance issues that can often accompany Parkinson disease, riding a two-wheeled bicycle might seem intimidating, but there are so many benefits to cycling.

Barb Skutka, a support group facilitator in Cedar Grove, has been a cyclist for years. "Between my husband Sean and me, we probably have ten bikes at our house!" she joked. Barb leads cycling classes in Cedar Grove and Oostburg at least five times a week. Each class is 45 minutes, and provides a great workout for Barb and her attendees. She participated in the Maywood Earth Ride in Sheboygan and rode 50 miles. "That was the farthest I've ever ridden!"

Barb volunteers for Pine Haven Christian Communities in the Sheboygan area, and last year, Pine Haven purchased a trishaw. With three wheels and a small passenger cart on the front, Barb and other volunteers are able to provide rides for the residents. "It's a great way to get them out into the town and they all really seemed to enjoy it!" Barb said.

The rides last about a half hour each, and some residents have brought grandchildren along for the ride too. For the residents, it's a wonderful

opportunity to get some fresh air, and for Barb, it's another chance to get in some exercise. "The trishaw has a battery assist, but you still have to pedal. The battery assist makes the hills a lot easier though!"

Since she's always been active, Barb knows the importance of exercise to manage her Parkinson's symptoms. "Any exercise is good for someone with Parkinson's. I'm flexible and agile, and able to get on the ground and play with my grandkids." 🍷



Cycling classes specifically for Parkinson's are offered at many gyms and YMCAs around Wisconsin. Visit wiparkinson.org to find a class near you.

Barb gives a trishaw ride to a resident and her granddaughter at Pine Haven Christian Communities.

Exercise Classes in Stoughton & Oregon

By Rachel Peerenboom, DPT and Emily Devine, DPT



Seven years ago, Stoughton Hospital Rehab decided to help tackle Parkinson disease in their local community head on... and guess what! It's working!



(above) Stoughton Hospital staff and Parkinson's Support Group members are excited to grow their exercise classes with a grant from WPA. (below) WPA recently presented a grant to grow these exercise programs. Pictured are executive director Gary Garland, Rachel Peerenboom, DPT, Emily Devine, DPT, and Laurie Couillard, WPA director of group engagement.



Collaborating with the Stoughton Area Senior Center, weekly exercise classes were started every Friday afternoon. Attendance continued to grow over time and participants were able to not only get the benefit of exercise but also form a strong support group amongst their peers.

About two years ago the excitement and benefit of movement spread!

Another exercise class started in nearby Oregon at the Oregon Senior Center on Tuesday mornings, therefore offering two exercise classes a week for people in the community. Stoughton Hospital physical therapists, Emily Devine, DPT and Rachel Peerenboom, DPT, currently lead the bi-weekly classes. Each class is 45 minutes, designed for people with Parkinson's and their loved ones to participate.

The class focuses on strength, posture, range of motion, balance, and walking in a fun, fast paced environment using research-based exercises, with a goal of decreasing fall risk and optimizing quality of life. If you meander by a class someday, you will see a variety of things happening that could include people doing work on stepping big with weights, standing on foam pads while doing a brain challenge, stretching on yoga mats, working on posture against the wall, and being loud!

Both Emily and Rachel are also LSVT BIG® certified instructors. LSVT BIG is a specialized exercise program developed for people with Parkinson's. Program participants attend physical therapy sessions four days per week for four weeks for a total of 16 visits. During sessions they learn specific exercises to reduce the movement impairments resulting from Parkinson's.

Treatment is focused on improving the "bigness" of movement and is modified to include activities specific to the participant's individual goals. Once trained, participants can perform the exercises at home as part of a lifetime exercise routine.

Emily and Rachel have a combined 14 years of experience working with individuals with Parkinson's disease and love having the opportunity to work with participants in the community and collaborate with the local senior centers. The communities that benefit from these classes include Stoughton, Oregon and surrounding communities including McFarland, Brooklyn, Janesville, Evansville, Edgerton, Fitchburg, and Cambridge. Both classes continue to expand, and with the support of a recent grant award from Wisconsin Parkinson Association, the sky is the limit! Both programs plan to purchase more equipment for expanding balance, strengthening, and floor work for the participants. 🌱

If you are interested in joining or learning more, please contact the Stoughton Hospital Rehab clinics at 608-873-2313 (Stoughton) or 608-835-5373 (Oregon).

Dance & *Creative* Movement



Another great way someone with Parkinson's can "get moving" is by joining a Parkinson's movement and dance class.

"Dance" may sound intimidating if you haven't participated before, or don't consider yourself a dancer, but these classes focus on movement of all kinds. Each class is easily adaptable depending on participants' abilities. Chairs are often incorporated, and seated dances include arm and leg movements.

Wisconsin Parkinson Association partners with dance classes in Whitefish Bay, Wauwatosa, Fond du Lac, and Kenosha, and is providing grants to train dance instructors in Kiel, Minocqua, and more locations to grow the program.

Kate Mann currently leads regular Parkinson's movement and dance classes at the Jewish Community Center in Whitefish Bay and Fond du Lac Senior Center. She also teaches other classes for seniors at several other locations around southeastern Wisconsin.

"I love seeing what music can do for people living with Parkinson disease," Kate said. "The sound vibrations of music help people initiate movement. Music acts like an inner motor for the body, helping people relax, release stiffness, and find ease in their body."

Kate knows that the ease of movement for someone with Parkinson's can make such a difference. She can feel a change in their energy from when they walk in the door, sit

down in the chair, and then the music starts and they start moving. When they get on their feet and move in a circle, or across the floor, "the disease fades away and they are simply moving to the music with pleasure!"

The Parkinson's Dance instructors also appreciate when a spouse or caregiver attends with the person with Parkinson's. It really helps to have a partner who is supportive and enjoys the same things. They are there together, sharing an experience with each other, which is helpful during class, and is also carried out of the room with them. That feeling of closeness and shared activity gives a couple something to talk about afterwards, and something to look forward to doing together next time. It can also help the spouse or caregiver be more understanding of what it's like to be in the body of a person with Parkinson's.

Don't let the word "dance" throw you off. Instructors like Kate promote that you're simply letting the music enter your body through the beat, and enjoying the feeling of different styles of music!

To find a Parkinson's Movement & Dance class near you, visit wiparkinson.org or call 414-312-6990. 



Tai Chi

Originating in China as a form of martial arts, Tai Chi is a balance-based exercise consisting of gentle, rhythmic flowing movements that encourage balance and flexibility. It involves deep breathing and places very little stress on joints and muscles resulting in fewer injuries. This “meditation in motion” exercise is a low-impact activity, suitable for all ages and fitness levels.

Ginger Ayres leads a Tai Chi class at Mequon United Methodist Church twice a week. The class started back in 2013, but after a few years, the instructor moved to Florida. The class followed along with a video for a while, but when video equipment became cumbersome, Ginger stepped up to lead. About half of the members of the class have Parkinson’s, and the other half are members of the church or local community.

Participants follow the same routine each class, starting with a half hour of standing exercises. It is possible to do the beginning exercises while sitting, but most choose to stand, keeping a walker or a chair close in case they need it. The exercises start with the top of the body and move down, moving nearly every joint in the body. The class goes

through a series of about 20 different movements, all with repetitions of 10. They also include “Tai Chi steps,” which involves totally lifting each foot off the ground so you balance on the other foot. Two minutes of deep, abdominal breathing is also included in the routine.

According to the Ginger, the main benefit of Tai Chi for someone with Parkinson’s is balance, balance, balance! The class includes one exercise where participants move up and down on their toes, then lean forward on one leg and raise their back leg. When the class first started several years ago, most struggled to hold the pose and balance, but now they can all hold it for 10 seconds or longer!

While this class doesn’t include a meditation component, the movements become routine so that participants are

able to focus on their breath and balance and almost reach a meditative state. Ginger’s husband Herb participates in the class, and has found one of the biggest benefits to be stress reduction. The flow from one movement to the next can be very relaxing.

Herb has participated in LSVT BIG® and PWR! therapies, and while the class isn’t based on those therapies, Ginger sees the value in focusing on big movements. For each exercise, she reminds the class to stretch to their limits and reach farther each time.

“Any Tai Chi class should be beneficial for someone with Parkinson’s,” Ginger said. “And the class can be adapted for your abilities. There may be a learning curve when you start, but any movement is good movement!” 🌱

The Tai Chi class meets at Mequon United Methodist Church on Mondays and Fridays at 11:00 am. For more information, contact Ginger & Herb Ayres at 262-242-7703.



Washburn: *Art Heals* Event

The Parkinson disease support group in the Bay Area recently hosted an event called “Art Heals.”

Mary Rehwald, co-facilitator of the Bay Area support group, was inspired by the movie “Capturing Grace,” a film featuring a dancer from Mark Morris Dance Group in Brooklyn, New York. “I know that dancing around my living room has been the only thing that’s helped my gait, and I wanted to share that with the other people in our support group,” Mary said.

Mary called Laurie Couillard, WPA’s director of group engagement, who connected her with dance instructor Melanie Panush Lindert. Melanie led a class of 20 participants – some with Parkinson’s, some instructors, and some community members – in a lesson, and then in a brief demonstration during an art opening hosted by the Chequamegon Bay Arts Council in Washburn.

“This was a really beautiful way to bring together two community groups, and show how great dance is for people with Parkinson’s,” Laurie said. “It was an incredible community collaboration to raise awareness of both groups.”

Mary’s goal now is to find dance instructors to teach dance for Parkinson’s in the Bay area regularly. “We all used to dance around when we were kids. No one was afraid of looking silly or being too tough to dance. Any kind of movement helps a person with Parkinson’s, and we want people to know that they are all welcome here!”

Learn more about the Bay Area Parkinson’s Support Group at wiparkinson.org. 🌱

“This was a really beautiful way to bring together two community groups, and show how great dance is for people with Parkinson’s.”



Parkinson's Profile: Anna Warren

Six months ago at age 49, I was diagnosed with "Idiopathic Early-Onset Tremor-Dominant Parkinson Disease." The doctor's words came with fear of the unknown and heavy sadness. Strangely, it also came with an immense sense of relief because after nearly three years of "unusual" symptoms, I finally had an answer and could move forward. It was a busy time in our lives: My husband was learning a new position at his job, our daughter had moved away for college, and our son had started high school. I had been working at Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital, but for several months I had been unable to work due to the physical nature of my job.

Looking back, my first noticeable symptom was in 2015. I had months of horrible sleep due to muscle spasms in my legs. Next, a strange slip down the stairs caused a very painful back injury. I had LOTS of physical therapy and tried various medications. Once my back healed, I still had the unexplained leg spasms and had developed an occasional tremor in my left arm as well as gastrointestinal issues (not constipation). I felt like my insides were tight and buzzing, which I now realize were internal tremors. Extensive medical testing in 2016 ruled out infections, autoimmune diseases, tumors, multiple sclerosis, lupus, Lyme's disease, and Wilson's disease. I asked if it could be Parkinson's and was told "you're too young."



I was frustrated but wanted to just live my life. I convinced myself that maybe I was imagining the internal tremors, or that my anxiety was causing my symptoms. I began to distrust my body and go into denial. The tremors continued to worsen and became painful.

In early 2018 I went through another round of tests, which pointed to something being wrong. Since my symptoms didn't match any one disease, doctors couldn't give me a diagnosis. I was referred to a neurologist specializing in movement disorders and four months later went to Mayo Clinic for more tests, including a DaTscan. Finally, a diagnosis!

Now it's easy to put the pieces together and see that it was all related to Parkinson's. At the time and by themselves, my symptoms easily could have been other issues. My symptoms were also partly "atypical," which made it even more difficult to diagnose.

I have been a physical therapist (PT) for over 27 years. For most



of my career I've specialized in treating patients with neurological disorders, brain injuries, strokes, and occasionally Parkinson disease. Working with a rehab team, I help people relearn how to move their bodies, including balance and walking. I absolutely love what I do! I know I'm fortunate to have found a career I'm passionate about and to work with such devoted coworkers. There are challenges of course, but I get to meet inspirational people going through life-altering events who can still smile. It's worth it.

Being on the "patient" side has been strange. My "PT brain" frequently kicks in when I'm at exercise classes.



I will notice someone stooped over and shuffling their feet, and I want to help them correct it. Then, I realize I'm doing the same thing. My knowledge of the brain and body tells me why my left leg won't bend the way I want it to, why my balance is worse when I'm tired, and why fast physical multitasking is frustrating. I feel like I should be able to fix my movements by myself. I am thankful for the team of therapists who have helped me move better.

I didn't ask to go down this path, but I can choose how I live my life as a person with Parkinson's.

I choose to extensively educate myself, and anyone who will listen, about PD. Knowledge helps me make wise decisions about the best ways to improve my life now, and in the future. Helping others to understand my situation, and PD in general, brings acceptance. It's tough for me to say, "Parkinson's does not define me." Having a medical condition that affects every part of my body does define me, however it's far from the only thing.

Denial will not heal my brain and makes it more difficult to cope on the rough days.

I choose to be part of the Parkinson's community. I have joined support and social groups through Wisconsin Parkinson Association. I am participating in research through Fox Insight because helping find a method to diagnose PD early, find a cause, and develop a cure will be life-changing for someone. I am sharing my story because reading other people's stories gives me hope when I'm frustrated. Isolation brings loneliness and increases depression.

I choose to exercise. Many people assume that because I'm a PT it's easy for me to exercise. I know exercise benefits everyone, but it's essential for people with Parkinson's. Exercise helps improve balance, strength, flexibility, tremor, endurance, breathing, sleeping, and digestion. It likely improves cognition, mood, and energy level. There is increasing evidence that exercise helps slow the decline in mobility and decreases the risk of falls. The huge challenge? Overcoming the lack of motivation that creeps into each day! I finally joined a health club with my husband, go to yoga, and participate in Rock Steady Boxing. Having these motivating forces helps override the apathy that can lead to physical and mental decline.

I choose to prioritize my energy towards people and activities that bring me joy. I am extremely fortunate to have an understanding husband, two amazing children,

and friends and family who stand with me for the ups and downs on this journey. They support my new endeavors and make me laugh. And, most important, they help me keep things in perspective. I know it's ok to be sad, scared, angry, and frustrated. It's ok to think, "I wish this wasn't happening." It's ok to miss the "old me..." As long as I don't allow myself to stay down for too long.

I choose to accept the "new me" and move forward. 

Anna Warren lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



1 Good friends stand by each other through everything! Anna and some friends participated in their annual trip to tour the Christmas lights downtown last December.

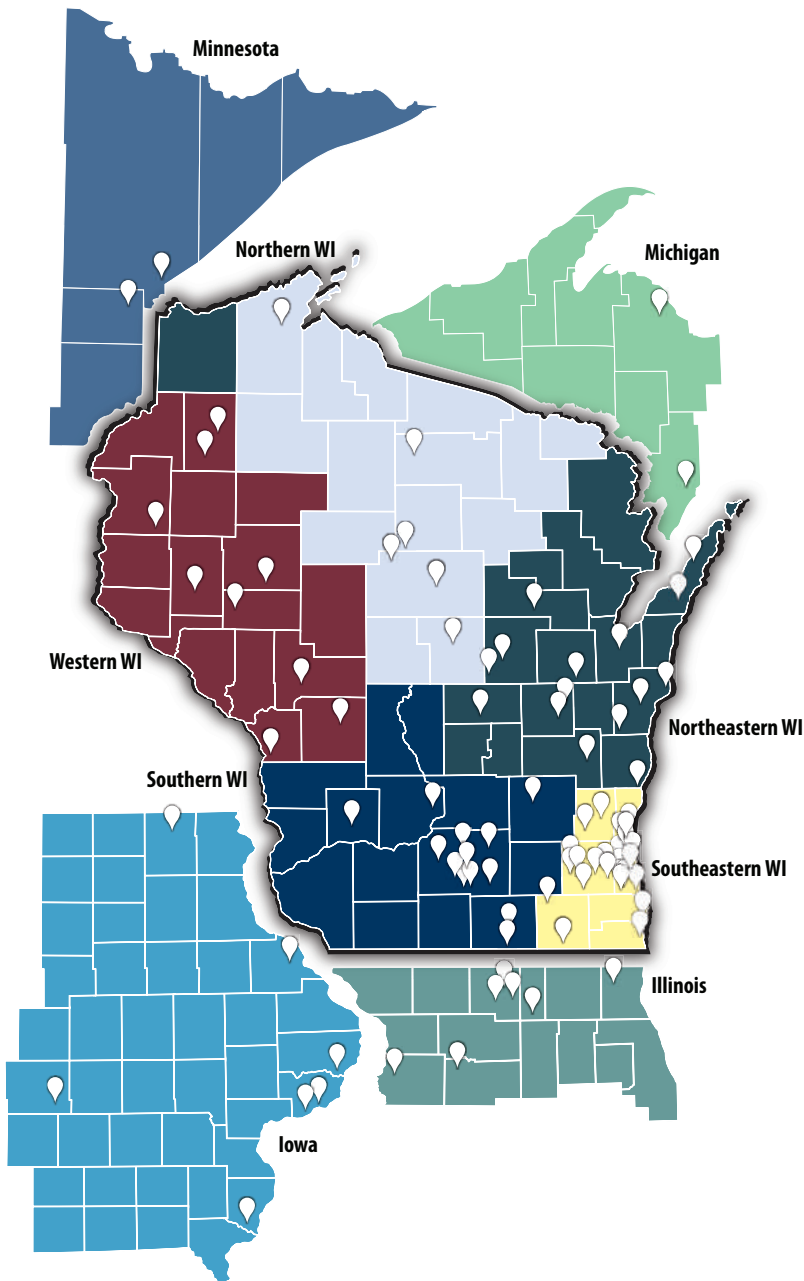
2 The Warren Family in Grand Teton National Park.

3 Anna and son Ben at a Wisconsin Badgers football game last fall.

4 The Warren Family recently celebrated Anna's 50th birthday.

Support Groups & Exercise Groups

WPA works with groups around Wisconsin and in surrounding areas. Groups include support groups, exercise groups, caregiver groups, and young-onset groups. Most groups are run by volunteer facilitators.



Northeastern Wisconsin

Appleton
Cedar Grove
Fish Creek
Fond du Lac
Green Bay
Kiel
King
Manitowoc
Neenah
Oshkosh
Shawano
Sheboygan
Sturgeon Bay
Waupaca
Wautoma

Mukwonago
New Berlin
Oconomowoc
Racine
St. Francis
Summit
Thiensville
Waukesha
Wauwatosa
West Allis
West Bend
Whitefish Bay
Whitewater

Southern Wisconsin

Baraboo
Beaver Dam
Beloit
Fitchburg
Janesville
Madison
Middleton
Oregon
Richland Center
Stoughton
Sun Prairie
Verona
Waunakee

Northern Wisconsin

Athens
Bayfield/Apostle Islands
Colby
Marshfield
Minocqua
Stevens Point
Wausau

Southeastern Wisconsin

Brookfield
Brown Deer
Franklin
Grafton
Greendale
Greenfield
Hartford
Hartland
Kenosha
Lake Geneva
Mequon
Milwaukee

Western Wisconsin

Black River Falls
Chippewa Falls
Clear Lake
Eau Claire
La Crosse
Menomonie
Shell Lake
Spooner
Tomah

Illinois

Dixon
Lake Forest
Lindenhurst
Loves Park
Moline
Rockford
Roscoe

Clinton
Davenport
Decorah
Dubuque
Newton

Michigan

Menominee
Negaunee

Iowa

Bettendorf
Burlington

Minnesota

Cloquet
Duluth



For more information
on groups in your area,
visit wiparkinson.org
or call 414-312-6990.

WPA Happenings



1 Rock Steady Boxing class at Wautoma Fitness in Wautoma.

2 PWR! Parkinson's Wellness Recovery class at Froedtert South in Kenosha.

3 Rock Steady Boxing class at Martial Arts America in Beaver Dam.

4 Parkinson's Support Group in Chippewa Falls.

5 Early-Onset Parkinson's Support Group facilitators presented a thank you gift to their host location at Brookdale Senior Living Solutions in Appleton. Pictured are Michele Wuest, Sandy Lange, Brookdale Administrator Linda Hobbs, and Margaret Kaspar.

6 WPA was featured on *The Morning Blend*, a morning talk show on TMJ4 Milwaukee. Pictured are Jeremy Otte, director of outreach & education for WPA, Dale Luedtke, and hosts Molly Fay and Tiffany Ogle. To view the segment, visit wiparkinson.org.

7 WPA recently provided a grant to Sheboygan County YMCA to expand their exercise programs. Pictured are Gary Garland, WPA executive director, Jana Adams, PD Dance Instructor, Matt Mueller, senior physical director, and Laurie Couillard, WPA's director of group engagement.

8 Geneva Lakes Family YMCA's Rock Steady Boxing class supported Parkinson's Awareness Month by displaying a sign about Parkinson's.

9 Aurora Health Care supported Parkinson's Awareness Month by displaying a sign about Parkinson's. Pictured is Erica Vitek, MOT, OTR, BCB-PMD, PRPC, occupational therapist at Aurora Sinai Medical Center.



Would you like to receive Wisconsin Parkinson Magazine?

If you do not receive *Wisconsin Parkinson Magazine* quarterly, join our mailing list at wiparkinson.org. You will receive this magazine, as well as periodic information about educational events, support & exercise groups, and other resources in your area. This magazine is funded by your donations. Your support helps those living with Parkinson disease by allowing us to enhance and expand our services to you and your families. For more information, visit wiparkinson.org.

Wisconsin Parkinson Association provides hope, community, support, and resources for people with Parkinson's and their loved ones.



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Upcoming Programs

May 15

Working Professionals with Parkinson's
New Berlin

June 27

Working Professionals with Parkinson's
Milwaukee

June 28

Education Program
Janesville

July 25

Facilitator Retreat
Milwaukee

July 26

Annual Parkinson Disease Symposium
Milwaukee

August 23

Education Program
West Bend

September 10

WPA Open Against Parkinson Disease
Wales

September 26

Education Program
Green Bay