HOPE • COMMUNITY • SUPPORT • RESOURCES

WISCONSIN PARKINSON ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE

ISSUE NO. 118 | 2025

Empowered Living:

Finding Strength in Every Step of Your Journey

Your Story Matters!

We'd love to share your personal journey

See page 7 to get started!

—APRIL IS—
PARKINSON'S DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

In this Issue

Featured on Cover:

Bob and Georgia Mixdorf

WPA Brookfield Support Group Members

April Is Parkinson's Awareness Month: Engage, Educate, and Support

Advocacy during Parkinson's Awareness Month is a powerful way to make a lasting impact. Here are some actions you can take to be an advocate and share information about Wisconsin Parkinson Association:

- **Educate Yourself and Share Information with Others**
- **Share Your Story**
- **Participate In and Support WPA Events**
- **Hold Your Own Fundraising Event**
- **Leverage Social Media and Share Resources**
- **Volunteer with WPA**

For more information about how you can connect and participate, please reach out to Wisconsin Parkinson Association at 414-312-6990 or mail@wiparkinson.org.

The power of monthly donations

Your donations are a lifeline for the Wisconsin Parkinson Association, ensuring that we can consistently plan and implement impactful initiatives. WPA is grateful for your support. It helps make our programs accessible to the people who need them most.

Have you ever considered shifting your giving commitment to a monthly time frame? That simple change can be a big help to an organization like ours. Just like your budget at home, knowing when to expect funding will come in, helps our organization be more planful and allows us to respond when new opportunities arise. We are always looking to develop new resources and expand our reach across the state. The demand for our services continues to grow. Thanks to ongoing monthly donations we're able to make a substantial difference in the lives of those affected by Parkinson's right here in Wisconsin.

You are also an integral part of our Wisconsin Parkinson Association mission. Your loyalty and sense of community amplify the impact of each dollar given, making you a key player in our efforts. Moreover, your consistent support transforms lives and inspires others to join the cause, creating a ripple effect of positive influence. Thank you for your unwavering support and contributing to Wisconsin Parkinson Association's success. Your dedication makes all the difference.

For information on giving monthly, go to **wiparkinson.org/donate** and select the recurring donation option when making your individual or corporate donation.

Other ways to donate:

1. Mail a check:
   Wisconsin Parkinson Association
   13400 Bishops Lane, Suite 120
   Brookfield, WI 53005

2. Venmo:
   @WIParkinson

3. WPA donation webpage:
   www.wiparkinson.org

Letter from the Executive Director

Friends,

April holds a special place in my heart as it marks both Parkinson's Awareness Month and our annual Spring Symposium. Each year, I'm in awe of this event – from the presenters and sponsors to the WPA team who meticulously plans and coordinates the day. However, my greatest admiration is for all of you who attend. Your strength and courage in facing Parkinson's is truly inspiring. I am thankful for our community, as being there for each other is a precious gift.

Wisconsin Parkinson Association's annual Spring Symposium takes place on April 22, 2025, at the Brookfield Conference Center. Go to wiparkinson.org for more information.

This month's publication features inspiring stories from individuals who refuse to let Parkinson's disease define them. Often, we hear that it's the "one thing" people do that makes a difference, and many times, it is the connection and support we offer one another that becomes the greatest help. We all have the opportunity to hold someone's hand, be a listening ear, and provide comfort and support.

We are grateful to those who share their Parkinson's journeys in this publication, support groups, and other settings. These stories remind us that we are not alone. The article about the impact of sharing your story also provides an opportunity to engage with WPA if you'd like to share your journey. Your story, like each of ours, truly matters.

Additionally, you'll read about the fresh and exciting mix of new and expanded programs the WPA team is developing. These initiatives are designed to support you and make a bigger impact across Wisconsin. We encourage you to join these programs and take advantage of the wonderful resources and education available. Please share these resources, especially the Newly Diagnosed Program, with those who need them. We understand how life-changing a diagnosis can be, and WPA is here to help.

As I conclude, I wish you a happy spring. I encourage you to connect, engage, and be part of something bigger within the Wisconsin Parkinson Association. I am so glad we have found each other and that you are part of our community.

Warm regards,

Kelly

Kelly Cieslak, MBA, Executive Director
kellyc@wiparkinson.org | 414.312.6990

Medical Insights and Updates:

Hey, What's New?

By: Kathryn Gaines, DO
Aurora Health Care, Milwaukee, WI
WPA Medical Advisory Committee Member

"What's new?" is a favorite question I like to ask my patients when they come to see me for follow-up appointments. Invariably, I get the question turned right around and I am often asked, "What's new (with PD treatment)?" or "What's new with finding a cure?"

There is an astounding amount of information on the internet about PD, research trials, medications, anecdotal remedies, procedures, personal stories, videos, educational presentations and blogs. Many foundations and organizations dedicated to the fight against PD exist and they all generally have their own depot of information.

Below is a synopsis of new medication options for treatment of PD motor symptoms that have become available within the last several months or will be available soon. Generally, these particular options are more fitting for patients with advanced PD. I emphasize that the medications treat symptoms but there is still no cure.

In no special order (and in full disclosure, I am not affiliated in any way to any of them):

- **Crexont**-this is a reformulated, new and improved version of carbidopa-levodopa, our faithful gold-standard treatment option for most PD patients. Crexont is for more advanced PD patients who are experiencing "off" times and may be having a difficult time managing PD symptoms with regular carbidopa-levodopa. See website crexont.com.

- **Vyalev**-this is carbidopa-levodopa subcutaneous infusion (similar in concept to diabetic patients who have an insulin pump). It was approved and is available for patients with commercial insurance and hopefully will become available for patients with non-commercial (i.e. Medicare) insurance. This medication may be well-suited for patients who have advanced Parkinson's disease and problematic wearing off with their oral medications. See website vyalev.com.

- **Onapgo**-This was approved by the FDA this year. While it's not yet available on the market, it's expected to be available later this year. It is a subcutaneous infusion of apomorphine which is used to treat "off symptoms." This particular drug already exists in the form of a subcutaneous injectable called Apokyn (brand name). A different version was briefly available named Kynmobi which existed as a sublingual film to put under the tongue but success of the version was limited and led to removal of Kynmobi from the US market. See website onapgo.com.

It should be noted that all new medications are brand-name and by default are expected to be expensive to the average consumer. If this is the case, then discuss possible options with the treating physician. Requesting a tier reduction by the insurance company or an exception to policy may be required, but oftentimes this is not possible. For patients with commercial insurance, the drug company can offer a coupon to defray costs, but this is not available for every drug. Ironically, many PD patients have Medicare or other government-funded insurance which makes them ineligible for a coupon. There are also various organizations that help fund patient medications or provide guidance on how to reduce overall medication or other healthcare costs. Monetary funds are provided in the form of a grant by these organizations. Patients must apply on an annual basis and the funds are usually "first come-first serve" but not everyone who applies will be eligible. I am providing a partial list of organizations (again in no particular order):

- **Melvin Weinstein Parkinson's Foundation** (mwpf.org)
- **Parkinson's Wellness Fund** (parkinsonswellnessfund.org)
- **Patient Access Network Foundation** (panfoundation.org)
- **The Assistance Fund** (tafcares.org)

As always, I would encourage patients and family members to discuss questions about new medications or treatment approaches regularly with their treating neurologist. Bring a notebook and write questions and answers down. The work of treating and curing PD is persistent and ongoing!

Never Standing Still:

Reggie's Life in Motion

Every first Friday at 1:00 PM, something special happens at the Ashland Enrichment Center. People with Parkinson's gather around an ever-growing table—not just for information, but for connection, support, and the quiet reassurance that they are not alone. At the center of this movement is Reggie Holmes, a woman who refuses to let Parkinson's slow her down.

When Holmes returned to Wisconsin after teaching special education in China, she found that the local Parkinson's support group had dissolved. She could have accepted that loss. Instead, she rebuilt it from the ground up.

"If we're by ourselves, we grow inward," she says. "We start thinking about what might happen. What if I fall? What if I can't do that activity? But when we're out with others, we think about them instead. That's what keeps us moving."

Under Holmes' leadership, the group has flourished, growing from a handful of participants to fifteen and counting. In northern Wisconsin, where the nearest neurologist is across state lines in Duluth, the group is more than a meeting—it's a lifeline. Holmes organizes guest speakers, from physical therapists to physician assistants, tackling everything from mobility challenges to cognitive concerns.

Each month brings new faces, each person looking for more than just medical advice. They come seeking hope and Holmes offers that to this group.

"Activity makes a difference," Holmes frequently tells them, and her own story proves it.

When Parkinson's took her singing voice after her 2018 diagnosis, she fought back—joining the "Parkinsong Choir" and reclaiming her voice. When balance became a challenge, she took up Tai Chi, gradually trading her cane for confident strides.

"Fear has no place with PD," she says with quiet determination. "If you're afraid, you will not move forward."

Forward is exactly where Holmes keeps moving. Her calendar would exhaust someone half her age! She has performed on stage and creates costumes for the Chequamegon Theatre Association, recently appearing in "Clue" as a library victim dispatched with a candlestick. She has designed costumes for productions like "Peter and Wendy," "Camelot," and "Swan Lake."

Even while living in China, she found ways to stay involved in the arts, helping stage school productions. After returning last spring, she's already preparing for another trip in March to lend a hand once more. She's rediscovered her childhood passion for music, playing saxophone in a local band with her original instrument from 1961. She even performs puppet shows for seniors and children, with plans to teach puppet classes to children in homeschool.

"Fear has no place with PD," she says with quiet determination. "If you're afraid, you will not move forward."

These aren't just hobbies, they are acts of defiance, proof that life with Parkinson's doesn't have to mean retreating from joy.

That same philosophy drives her support group. Every meeting, members are encouraged to share their victories—no matter how small. A good day. A walk taken. A fear overcome.

Holmes' residence overlooks Lake Superior, and she often finds herself drawn to the water's restless movement. Parkinson's is a progressive disease, but she refuses to let it dictate her story. Through physical therapy, weekly brain games like Qwirkle with neighbors, theatre productions, and community engagement, she reminds others that life isn't about what you've lost—it's about what you can still discover.

"My goal is to help other people," she explains. "To give and to love."

In doing so, she offers a blueprint for resilience—not just for those with Parkinson's, but for anyone facing life's challenges: Keep moving forward. One step at a time. Together.

The support group meets on the first Friday of each month at 1:00 PM at the Ashland Enrichment Center. All are welcome to attend.

Your Story Matters!

Finding Strength Through Sharing Your Parkinson's Journey

Living with Parkinson's isn't just about doctor visits and medications – it's a deeply personal journey with unique ups and downs. Some days are harder than others, and that's okay. What many of us have discovered is that there's real power in opening up about our experiences. When we share our stories, something remarkable happens: we heal, we connect, and we grow stronger together.

Finding Peace in Sharing

Remember those moments when you felt overwhelmed, like no one could possibly understand? Talking about these feelings – whether with family, friends, or others with Parkinson's – can lift a weight from your shoulders. It's like finally being able to take a deep breath. When you put your experiences into words, those big, complicated feelings become a little easier to handle.

Helping Others See Through Your Eyes

Your story helps bridge the gap between those who live with Parkinson's and those who don't. When you share what your daily life is really like – the small victories, the frustrating moments, the unexpected laughs – people begin to truly understand. They stop seeing just the condition and start seeing you, the whole person behind it.

You're Not Alone: Finding Your Community

There's something powerful about knowing someone else truly understands your experience. Every time you share your journey, you create connections with those who've walked a similar path. These bonds form a network of support that's there for you on both good days and bad. Your story might be exactly what someone else needs to hear to feel less alone.

Owning Your Journey

When you share your story, you shape the narrative. Maybe you've picked up tips and tricks that make daily life easier, or perhaps you've found a fresh approach to everyday tasks. Your insights are valuable—not just for others, but as a reminder of your own resilience and resourcefulness.

Starting Your Sharing Journey

- Start where you're comfortable: Maybe it's writing in a journal, talking with a close friend, or joining an online support group. There's no wrong way to tell your story.
- Share at your own pace: Some days you might want to talk about everything, other days not so much. Listen to what feels right for you.
- Connect naturally: Look for opportunities to share with others who understand – whether it's at support group meetings, online forums, or casual conversations with friends who also have Parkinson's.
- Be real: Don't feel pressure to always be positive. Some days are tough, and that's part of your authentic story.
- Take care of yourself: If sharing brings up difficult emotions, it's perfectly okay to take a step back and talk with a counselor or trusted friend.

Remember, your story has power – not because it's perfectly polished, but because it's genuinely yours. Every time you share, you're helping build a more understanding and supportive community for everyone living with Parkinson's. Your experiences, your struggles, and your victories matter more than you know. When you're ready to share, there's a whole community ready to listen, understand, and walk alongside you.

Share *Your* Parkinson's Journey!

Your experiences, challenges, and victories shape a journey that only you can tell. By sharing your story, you can inspire, connect, and support others in the Parkinson's community. Use this page to reflect on your journey and, if you're comfortable, share your responses with WPA for possible future use in advocacy, education, and community outreach.

1. Describe Your Parkinson's Journey

When were you diagnosed, and how did you first react? What has changed since then?

_____

_____

2. What Keeps You Moving Forward?

What or who has been your biggest source of strength through this journey?

_____

_____

3. A Moment That Changed Your Perspective

Have you had an experience that shifted how you see Parkinson's or how you approach life with it?

_____

_____

4. Advice for Others

What's one piece of advice you would share with someone newly diagnosed?

_____

_____

5. How Would You Like to Inspire Others?

Would you be open to WPA using your story to help others? (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Yes, you may share my story in WPA newsletters or social media
- ❑ I'd like to be contacted for an interview
- ❑ I'd prefer to keep this private but find value in reflecting and sharing

If you're open to being contacted, please provide your name and email:

Name: _____

Email: _____

Thank You for Sharing!

Your story has the power to bring understanding, hope, and strength to others in the Parkinson's community. If you'd like to continue the conversation, call us at 414-312-6990 or email us at mail@wiparkinson.org.

Supporting the Parkinson's Community in 2025:

New Programs and Workshops

In 2025, the Wisconsin Parkinson Association (WPA) is rolling out a fresh and exciting mix of new and expanded programs to support individuals living with Parkinson's disease and their caregivers. From engaging educational workshops to innovative fitness initiatives, WPA is broadening its reach and making a bigger impact across Wisconsin.

Here are just a few of the exciting programs you can look forward to:

Newly Diagnosed Workshops

Receiving a Parkinson's diagnosis can be overwhelming, and many individuals struggle to find the right resources early on. WPA's newly diagnosed workshops aim to bridge this gap by providing essential education and support for those at the start of their journey. These half-day workshops, hosted at eight different locations across Wisconsin, will connect participants with movement disorder specialists, physical and occupational therapists, and support groups.

Each session will cover the basics of Parkinson's disease, treatment options, and the importance of rehabilitation therapies. A key component of the workshops is the opportunity for attendees to hear from individuals who have lived with the disease and can provide practical insights on managing symptoms and navigating emotional challenges. Local support group facilitators will also be present to help attendees connect with ongoing resources within their communities.

"In these workshops, we're making sure that no one newly diagnosed with Parkinson's feels lost or alone," said Dacy Reimer, Director of Medical Advising and Education at WPA. "They'll leave with the knowledge and connections to take their next steps with confidence."

Workshops will take place from 7 AM to 1 PM, featuring expert presentations, Q&A sessions, and vendor booths with information on medical equipment and care services.

For the latest information on workshop dates, locations, and additional details, visit wiparkinson.org.

Urban Poling Workshops and Virtual Exercise Sessions

Urban Poling has long been a valuable exercise tool for individuals with Parkinson's, and in 2025, WPA is expanding its reach. The in-person Urban Poling workshops will now be available in more regions across Wisconsin, providing hands-on instruction and opportunities to engage in guided outdoor walking sessions. In addition, WPA has developed a recorded virtual series demonstrating how to use Urban Poling indoors as an exercise tool, which will be available on the WPA YouTube channel. This series, led by movement instructor, Joy Cochran, PT, DPT includes seven different sessions, one of which is specifically designed for seated exercises.

"We want to make sure that people have options beyond just outdoor walking, especially in the winter," says Jill Compton, Director of Mission Impact at WPA. "These recorded sessions will allow more people to stay active and engaged no matter the season."

Facilitator Support and Retreat

WPA's facilitator program is a cornerstone of its outreach efforts. Monthly virtual facilitator support meetings provide a space for group leaders across the state to connect, share challenges, and discuss best practices for managing effective support groups.

"Support group facilitators play such an important role in their communities," explains Jill Compton. "These meetings are a way to make sure they feel supported and have the tools they need to succeed."

In summer 2025, WPA will take this support one step further by hosting a one-day in-person retreat for facilitators. The retreat will offer networking opportunities, educational sessions, and mindfulness activities to enhance facilitator effectiveness.

Mindfulness Workshops for Care Partners

Caring for a loved one with Parkinson's can be stressful and emotionally demanding. To support care partners, WPA is launching two-day mindfulness workshops in 2025. These sessions will focus on stress reduction, emotional resilience, and connecting caregivers with others who share similar experiences. The workshops will provide practical tools for maintaining well-being while navigating the challenges of caregiving.

Milwaukee Table Tennis Club Partnership

Table tennis has gained immense popularity among individuals with Parkinson's, and WPA is happy to announce that its collaboration with the Milwaukee Table Tennis Club is now an ongoing monthly event.

Table Tennis has been shown to enhance coordination, balance, and reaction time, making it a valuable exercise for individuals with Parkinson's.

"Table Tennis is great exercise, but it's also a great way to build community and have fun," Jill Compton says.

Rock Climbing Pilot Program

After hearing from so many people eager to try it, WPA is exploring a new rock climbing program in Brookfield. While still in its pilot phase, this initiative aims to provide a unique exercise opportunity that promotes strength, coordination, and confidence in a safe, supportive environment.

"We started getting a lot of interest in rock climbing after people saw it featured on national news," Jill Compton shares. "It's a great way to challenge balance and strength in a supportive setting."

Details on program dates and locations will be announced soon. Visit wiparkinson.org for the latest information.

Virtual Parkinson's Dance Classes

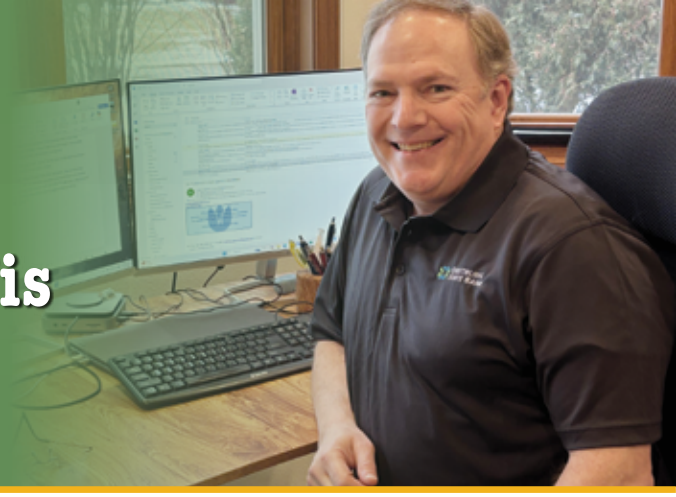
Movement is a crucial aspect of Parkinson's care, and WPA is launching a virtual dance class in partnership with instructor Susanne Carter. This program offers accessible dance sessions designed specifically for individuals with Parkinson's, allowing participants from all over Wisconsin to engage in movement therapy from the comfort of their homes.

"Dance can be incredibly beneficial for people with Parkinson's," explains Jill Compton. "It helps with movement, coordination, and even mood, and having a virtual option means more people can join in."

From movement-based programs to emotional support initiatives, WPA is dedicated to making life with Parkinson's a little easier, a little brighter, and a lot more connected. Visit wiparkinson.org for the latest updates and registration details.

Faith Over Fear:

How Jeff Garside Turned His Diagnosis into Devotion



For Jeff Garside, the first signs appeared subtly—during his routine jogs, an activity he had loved since junior high. His left leg wasn't working quite right, but there was no pain, no apparent injury. What followed was an 18-month odyssey through medical appointments, five MRIs, and extensive cardiac testing before doctors finally arrived at a definitive diagnosis: Parkinson's disease.

"In some ways, it was a shock," Jeff recalls. "But they were testing me for so many other things—some far worse—that in a strange way, it was almost a relief."

That relief didn't make the early days any easier. At 53, living and working in California, Jeff found himself navigating the diagnosis largely on his own, despite the love and support of his family. Without a broader network or clear direction, he struggled to find resources and guidance. That changed when he moved back to Wisconsin. A simple moment—spotting a business card for a Parkinson's support group held at the very church where he and his wife were married—led him to the community he desperately needed.

"It's so important to not do this alone," he explains. "Having people who understand what you're going through makes all the difference."

After taking an early retirement, Jeff searched for Christian resources specifically designed for people with Parkinson's but found none. Realizing the gap, he decided to step in and get to work. Throughout 2024, he poured his experiences and hard-won insights into *I Will Not Be Shaken: Devotions for People with Parkinson's and Care Partners*, a deeply personal and faith-driven devotional.

The process was both methodical and heartfelt. Jeff began by gathering topics from his own journey, as well as support group discussions on challenges like using canes, managing swallowing difficulties, and coping with tremors and voice changes. He then organized these into broader themes like physical struggles, emotional frustrations, and the evolving relationship between patients and care partners.

With these themes as a foundation, Jeff turned to scripture, searching for passages that spoke to each challenge. He then collaborated with his wife, Tanya, to include insights from the perspective of care partner and retired pastor, Don Ritsman, to refine the content.

"Don took out all the heresy," Jeff jokes.

Designed to foster meaningful conversations, *I Will Not Be Shaken* pairs devotional reflections with space for journaling. "When do you actually sit down with your care partner and intentionally discuss your thoughts and feelings about Parkinson's?" Jeff asks. "This devotional can serve as a starting point, helping people open up about their experiences, fears, and hopes in a way that strengthens their connection and deepens their faith." Even he and his wife have found new depth in their conversations by working through the book together.

For Jeff, faith has been his anchor. "God is calling me to live differently—to find a new purpose within Parkinson's," he reflects. "How can I glorify God more with Parkinson's than I could without it?" He sees the friendships forged in his support group and the lives touched by his book as unexpected blessings.

The devotional is already having an impact. At a recent support group meeting, a woman shared that she and her husband read it together every morning. Even Jeff and Tanya, despite being its creators, continue to find fresh insights in its pages.

I Will Not Be Shaken: Devotions for People with Parkinson's and Care Partners is available now on Amazon in e-book, hardcover, and paperback. **From March 1 to May 1, 2025, Jeff will donate all proceeds from sales of the devotional to the Wisconsin Parkinson Association, supporting our mission to provide education, resources, and community for those living with Parkinson's.**

From Isolation to Impact:
Laura Peck's Journey

When Laura Peck received her Parkinson's diagnosis on March 12, 2020, she longed for connection. Three weeks later, the pandemic forced the world into isolation. Everything went silent.

In those early days, Laura wrestled with the same haunting questions that many newly diagnosed patients face: What comes next? What will my future look like? Google offered plenty of answers, but each one seemed darker than the last.

For nearly a year, she withdrew, sinking into what she now recognizes as apathy—a common but crushing symptom of Parkinson's. "I didn't want to do anything," she admits. Each day blurred into the next, the isolation of COVID making it all too easy to stay home and do nothing at all.

However, deep inside the former executive assistant who had built a career around helping others, a spark remained. That spark reignited the moment she stepped into a Parkinson's support group in Minocqua, 30 miles from her home in Rhinelander. It was her very first meeting, and just as she arrived, the longtime leader announced her retirement. Laura felt something stir inside her—an urge she hadn't felt in a long time. The urge to step up. To help. To lead.

"I realized it wasn't about all the things I can't do," she says. "It's about what I can do. I can be a leader. I can be a support for other people."

"I realized it wasn't about all the things I can't do," she says. "It's about what I can do. I can be a leader. I can be a support for other people."

Her husband, initially reluctant to attend meetings, quickly became her biggest champion. "I'll help you," he promised. "I'll be there with you every step of the way."

Running a support group in northern Wisconsin comes with unique challenges. Some members drive more than an hour from small towns like Iron River, MI and Prentice just to attend. The nearest neurologist is over an hour away. But for Laura, these obstacles only reinforce the need for connection.

Still, doubt creeps in sometimes. Am I really the right person for this? She wonders, but then she watches the small, powerful moments unfold—a shared laugh, a breakthrough, a simple but profound exchange of encouragement and suddenly, she remembers exactly why she's here.

"It's not about being perfect," Laura says. "It's about being there for each other."

She sees that same resilience in every person who walks through the door. "People with Parkinson's have incredible tenacity," she says. "They just keep going—whether they need a hip replacement, a medication adjustment, or a little extra help, they push forward."

Now, she's expanding her mission. Laura has launched a second support group in Rhinelander at the YMCA, building more than just meeting spaces—she's creating communities where people with Parkinson's can find their own strength, purpose, and ways to lift each other up.

"It's not therapy," she clarifies. "It's collective help. When you look someone in the eye, hear their story, and see them struggling with the same fears you have—silently thinking, that could be me. How would I handle that?—that's when real support happens."

For Laura, Parkinson's may have closed some doors, but it has opened others. It has led her to deeper connections, a renewed sense of purpose, and the immense satisfaction of helping others find their way through the same darkness she once faced.

"Yes, I have Parkinson's," she says with quiet determination. "Yes, I may walk a little different. But I'm still here and I'm going to be a part of this world."

Both support groups meet on the second Tuesday of every month. The Minocqua group meets at 10:30 AM at Ascension Lutheran Church, while the Rhinelander group meets at 3:00 PM at the YMCA of the Northwoods.

Empowering Those with Parkinson's:
The Journey at Aurora BayCare Medical Center

From chair-based exercises to voice work, Tai Chi, and outdoor walks in good weather, Junius and the trainers ensure that participants have a safe space to try various activities and movements that help them manage their Parkinson's disease.

The Mobile and Fit exercise program at Aurora BayCare Medical Center in Green Bay, Wisconsin, aims to help people with Parkinson's gain independence and maintain their functional abilities. Junius Ho, a Personal Trainer at Aurora BayCare, shared that the program has been running for over thirteen years and has seen significant growth in both attendance and referrals. Initially, the program started with just a handful of participants and has since expanded to include up to twenty attendees per class, depending on the day and time of year.

The one-hour classes, offered three times a week, are designed to reduce falls, improve mobility and boost mood. Junius and the other trainers see a consistent group of participants each week, though some "snowbirds" leave for the winter and return when they come back to Wisconsin.

Mobile and Fit is a unique medical fitness program where collaboration with physical therapists and hospital providers is possible. Participants include individuals with rehabilitation needs, chronic health conditions, and even the general public, but primarily people with Parkinson's disease. The program receives many referrals from local healthcare systems, support groups, and Parkinson's disease events.

The benefits of participating in this program extend beyond physical improvements. Members of the Mobile and Fit program have formed a close-knit community. Classes are engaging and friendly, and the group even has a monthly social hour where they go out for lunch and connect outside of class time.

The social aspect of the program has a positive impact on attendees, and the team can see the difference that exercise makes in keeping their class active and independent. The trainers offer a mix of activities to keep participants' bodies and brains functioning optimally. From chair-based exercises to voice work, Tai Chi, and outdoor walks in good weather, Junius and the trainers ensure that participants have a safe space to try various activities and movements that help them manage their Parkinson's disease. Junius encourages those considering the program to join, sharing that participants are always glad they did after attending.

For more information about the Mobile and Fit program at Aurora BayCare Medical Center, call 920-288-5491.

Chef Lauren Posa's Journey:

From Battling Disease to Culinary Health Advocate

This restorative eatery offers simple, sustainable food catered to health-conscious individuals. Lauren aimed to provide an affordable, clean, and healthy dining option, which has attracted a loyal clientele who frequently visit.

A recent visit to Green Bay provided a wonderful chance to meet Chef Lauren Posa at her restaurant, the Farmacy, and enjoy a delicious, health-focused lunch. Lauren exudes vibrancy and enthusiasm, clearly demonstrating she has found her passion and purpose in life. However, her journey to this point was far from straightforward.

Originally from Michigan, Lauren pursued her interest in health and dietetics by obtaining a degree in sustainable cuisine in Vail, Colorado. Upon graduating, she gained a variety of experiences, including working in agriculture in Hawaii, managing a CSA, and working at a restaurant in Traverse City, Michigan. She ultimately returned to Hawaii to continue her work in agriculture.

During this period, Lauren contracted Rat Lungworm Disease, a parasitic brain infection often misdiagnosed as meningitis due to its severe "bone-breaking" pain. It took doctors over four months to correctly diagnose her condition. This diagnosis marked a devastating and debilitating period in Lauren's life, with doctors predicting a grim future, suggesting she would never be able to hold a job and would have minimal quality of life. Lauren was only 21 years old at the time.

Along her challenging journey, she encountered the Wellness Way, a chiropractic center, where doctors identified inflammation in her body as a key issue to address. Embracing an anti-inflammatory diet, Lauren's background and culinary arts training helped her to effectively use food as medicine, ultimately aiding her recovery.

As Lauren's health improved through her dietary changes, she felt compelled to share this knowledge with others facing health challenges. Combining her diverse experiences in agriculture, nutrition, farm-to-table cuisine, culinary training, and personal health struggles, Lauren founded the Farmacy. This restorative eatery offers simple, sustainable food catered to health-conscious individuals. Lauren aimed to provide an affordable, clean, and healthy dining option, which has attracted a loyal clientele who frequently visit. She also offers meal prep services and classes to help people develop sustainable healthy eating habits.

Chef Lauren will share her passion for nutritious, delicious foods and their health benefits at WPA's 2025 Spring Symposium, where she will be a presenter. Reflecting on how her journey aligns with the symposium's theme, "Finding Strength in Every Step of the Journey," Lauren shared her perspective:

- Know your "why" every day.
- Be there for others.
- Help people feel good physically and emotionally.

Maintaining her health and spreading the message of nutritious, healthy food, Lauren often cites her favorite quote from Hippocrates: "Let food be thy medicine, and medicine be thy food." It serves as a reminder that the path to health can start with what we eat.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE!

Register online at wiparkinson.org or call 414-312-6990.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE WISCONSIN PARKINSON ASSOCIATION

COSENTINO FAMILY PARKINSON'S OPEN

Benefiting the Wisconsin Parkinson Association

MONDAY | AUGUST 25 | 2025

Westmoor Country Club | 400 S. Moorland Road | Brookfield, WI 53005

EVENING RECEPTION: $125/person | EVENING SCHEDULE: 5:00pm Cocktails & Hors D'oeuvres

BOOK YOUR FOURSOME TODAY!

TUESDAY, SEPT. 16, 2025
8:30 A.M. – 6:30 P.M.

THE LEGEND AT BRANDYBROOK GOLF COURSE WALES, WI

WPA GOLF OPEN

Tee Up for Parkinson's!

HOPE • COMMUNITY • SUPPORT • RESOURCES

RETURNING IN 2025:

Free Parkinson's Movement Clinic for up to 25 people with Parkinson's and their care partners, including:

- Golf Clinic
- Mindful Movement Activities
- Urban Poling Workshop
- Complimentary Breakfast Buffet

WISCONSIN PARKINSON ASSOCIATION

GOLF | DINNER | LIVE & SILENT AUCTIONS | NETWORKING

Swimming with Sharks:

Students Win Big to Support Parkinson's Community

They are planning to use the funds to get Urban Walking Pole certified and purchase additional ACTIVATOR® Poles. Their goal is not just to become instructors themselves but to train others and expand the reach of Urban Poling within the Parkinson's community.

Three college students with a shared passion for healthcare embraced an opportunity that has the potential to change the lives of many people living with Parkinson's disease. Emily Brands, Rebekah Luckwaldt, and Melissa Tonn are not just students at Wisconsin Lutheran College; they are also participants in the Christian Leadership Serve2Lead Program, which requires them to develop and execute a significant service project.

As they considered and researched what project to pursue, Emily's thoughts kept returning to her grandfather, who had battled Parkinson's disease. Emily, who frequently works with Parkinson's patients, felt a personal connection to the cause. All three of the students also happen to be health care majors. A little more research led them to Wisconsin Parkinson Association (WPA). Through that connection they learned about the positive impacts of Urban Poling and were inspired to develop a project aligned with WPA.

Their project began in earnest as they developed a comprehensive plan and ultimately pitched it to a panel of judges in a local "Shark Tank" style competition at Wisconsin Lutheran College. They were up against strong competition, with five teams vying for the top prize. However, the judges were deeply moved by the passion and dedication of Emily, Rebekah, and Melissa. That evening, they received the thrilling news—they had won the competition and were awarded $5,015 in grant money.

They are planning to use the funds to get Urban Walking Pole certified and purchase additional ACTIVATOR® Poles. Their goal is not just to become instructors themselves but to train others and expand the reach of Urban Poling within the Parkinson's community. Rebekah expressed her excitement, stating that the "real impact will be getting certified and working directly with people with Parkinson's to use the poles."

The team's efforts are gaining momentum. They are partnering with WPA to assist with existing classes and would like to recruit fellow students to join their cause. They felt the impact of their project immediately—the night of their presentation a member of the audience approached them, eager to get WPA's contact information to share with a friend who has Parkinson's.

Although Emily's grandfather had passed away eight years ago, the team felt his presence throughout their entire process. As they presented to the judges, Emily couldn't help but feel his influence, knowing that their project was a tribute to his memory.

Through their dedication and hard work, Emily, Rebekah, and Melissa transformed their vision into reality, proving that coming up with an idea and following it through can have a profound impact. Their service project is a testament to the power of compassion, collaboration, and the unwavering desire to serve others.

WPA looks forward to the continued partnership with these three wonderful students in the year ahead.

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

WISCONSIN PARKINSON ASSOCIATION

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