



WISCONSIN PARKINSON

ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE ISSUE NO. 121 | 2026

Navigating

YOUR JOURNEY WITH
PARKINSON'S

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Announcing the
Inaugural "Steppin' Out"
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Philosophical Musings
of a Neurologist

—APRIL IS—
**PARKINSON'S
DISEASE**
AWARENESS
MONTH



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Step Up for Parkinson's Awareness Month

Be the Difference Wisconsin Needs!



Every April, we come together to bring attention to Parkinson's disease. This progressive illness affects thousands of our neighbors but often remains unseen. We can't wait for someone else to act, this is our moment to stand up, spread the word, and create meaningful change.

Parkinson's Awareness Month is our call to action, an urgent invitation to support those impacted by this disease. Let's raise our voices, break the silence, and build momentum. Your actions this month can foster understanding, reduce stigma, and offer hope to families across Wisconsin.

Your support is essential. Together, we can provide vital resources, launch life-changing programs, and empower Wisconsinites with Parkinson's to live fuller lives. Awareness is the first step, but action is what truly makes a difference. By sharing knowledge, advocating for better care, and supporting research, you become a

lifeline for those searching for answers and hope. Because of you, hope is more than a word, it's a movement. Your generosity unites everyone in the Parkinson's community. Every dollar stays local, making a visible impact right here in Wisconsin.

This April, don't just observe Parkinson's Awareness Month, lead it. Make a donation, start a conversation, and invite others to join you. Let's ensure no one in Wisconsin faces this journey alone. Together, we can turn awareness into action and hope into progress.

Act now: Scan the QR code to make your donation and ignite change this Parkinson's Awareness Month. Share this opportunity with others, pass along the donation envelope included in this magazine and invite friends and family to join you in fueling hope for Wisconsin. Together, let's make 2026 a turning point for Parkinson's in our state!

Donating is easy! Simply scan the QR code with your smartphone to make a donation today!



OR if you prefer, you can mail your donation in the attached envelope.

Letter from the

President & CEO

April is Parkinson's Awareness Month, and across Wisconsin, something worth celebrating is taking shape. People are showing up for one another. Programs are reaching further. A community that knows something about perseverance is finding, again and again, that it does not have to face this journey alone.

At the center of this April is our annual Parkinson Symposium, coming to Brookfield on April 21. This year's theme, *Own Your Journey: Navigating Life with Parkinson's Disease*, is more than a title. It is an invitation. An invitation to claim your story, to ask hard questions, to sit alongside others who understand. Keynote speaker Molly Cupka will open the day with a message that captures that spirit beautifully: *Rewriting What's Possible: Rock Climbing, Exercise, and Living Boldly with Parkinson's*. A medical panel, a lived experience panel, and a mindful movement break will carry us through a day designed not just to inform, but to move us. We hope you will be there.

And yet the Symposium is only one chapter in a much larger story unfolding across our state.

People are scaling climbing walls at Adventure Rock in Brookfield, discovering that they are still capable of overcoming new challenges. They are finding rhythm and laughter around the ping pong table through our partnership with the Milwaukee Table Tennis Club. They are moving with intention through Mindful Movement for Parkinson's and Dance for Parkinson's classes that happen week after week, season after season. From Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire to Stevens Point, Green Bay, the Fox Valley and even virtual sessions, support groups and movement classes are thriving throughout the state.

Others are finding their way inward. The Midday Pause Mindfulness Series gathers people virtually each week for thirty minutes of breathing and stillness, a small shelter carved out of a demanding day. The WPA Journaling Club meets monthly, opening with a poem or

a prompt, and making room for whatever comes next, whether that is writing, sketching, dictating, or simply sitting quietly with a thought. No experience is needed. Only a willingness to show up. Both programs are open to people across Wisconsin, and both are changing lives in ways that are hard to measure but impossible to miss.

This is what it means to be 100% Wisconsin, 100% local. Every program we offer, every connection we help spark, every dollar raised stays right here, in service of our neighbors, our friends, our families. All across Wisconsin, WPA belongs to this community, because this community built it.

As you read through this issue, we hope you find something that speaks to you, whether it is a story that feels familiar, a program you did not know existed, or simply the quiet reassurance that you are not walking this road alone.

We are deeply and genuinely grateful for everyone who makes this work possible. People living with Parkinson's.

Care
partners.
Volunteers.
Donors.
Advocates.
You are the
reason any
of this exists.

Here's to a
meaningful
April, and
to all that
this season
of renewal
holds.



Kelly Cieslak, MBA, President & CEO

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FINDING THE PAUSE:

Mindfulness and Journaling in the Parkinson's Community

"The Midday Pause is a short space during the day to come together and learn meditation practices and just center ourselves," says Jill Compton, Director of Mission Impact at WPA.

Life with Parkinson's disease asks a lot of people, and of the families and care partners who walk alongside them. The physical changes are visible, but the emotional weight of the journey is just as real. At the Wisconsin Parkinson Association, two programs are quietly making a difference for people who are learning to meet that weight with a little more grace.

The first is the Midday Pause Mindfulness Series, a weekly, 30-minute virtual gathering that does exactly what its name promises: it carves out a moment of stillness in the middle of an often demanding day. "The Midday Pause is a short space during the day to come together and learn meditation practices and just center ourselves," says Jill Compton, Director of Mission Impact at WPA. Guided by simple breathing and meditation practices, participants are invited to slow down, exhale, and return to the present moment. Because the sessions are held virtually, people with Parkinson's from across Wisconsin can join, no matter where they live.

For people living with Parkinson's, that pause is more than a nice idea; it can genuinely help. "Stress can exacerbate symptoms, so learning how to pause and come back to the present moment can be really helpful for people with Parkinson's and their care partners," Compton explains. Mindfulness builds a kind of inner buffer: the ability to notice what's happening before reacting to it. Over time, that awareness can also sharpen attention to surroundings — something that matters enormously when it comes to safety and reducing fall risk.

Just as meaningful are the quieter benefits. Participants report feeling less anxious, more grounded, and more connected to their own bodies and emotional lives.



Sometimes, that sense of being present is its own form of relief.

The second program, WPA's virtual Journaling Club, meets monthly and takes a different but equally gentle approach.

Sessions open with a poem or reflective prompt, followed by time to write, and then, for those who wish, an opportunity to share with the group. The community that forms around that sharing is part of the point.

One thing this program gets right: it doesn't assume journaling looks the same for everyone. "Journaling can mean writing, doodling, dictating, or simply reflecting," Compton says. "Everyone is welcome, and you don't need any writing experience." For many people with Parkinson's, handwriting can be difficult or discouraging, so the definition of "journaling" here is refreshingly open. Write if you can. Type if that's easier. Dictate your thoughts out loud. Sketch something. Or simply sit with an idea quietly. The goal is expression, not perfection.

The results speak for themselves. One participant shared that the practice changed the way she moves through her days — she finds herself noticing small moments of gratitude she might have walked right past before. She doesn't always write them down. But she sees them now.

That shift, learning to see, is at the heart of both programs. Mindfulness and journaling aren't promises to make Parkinson's easier. They're invitations to meet it differently: with more clarity, more self-compassion, and a steadier sense of who you are beyond the diagnosis.



*To join a session or learn more,
visit wiparkinson.org/events.*

Advancing Understanding, Hope, and Community

April 2026-A Time for Education, Support, and Action

Every April, the world comes together for Parkinson's Awareness Month, a time dedicated to shining a spotlight on Parkinson's disease, sharing stories, and fostering understanding. This month is more than just a calendar event, it's a movement that brings together patients, care partners, medical professionals, and the broader community. World Parkinson's Awareness Day falls on April 11, commemorating Dr. James Parkinson's birthday, whose work in 1817 first recognized the disease as a medical condition.

In Wisconsin alone, 20,000 people live with Parkinson's, joining the 1,000,000 Americans who navigate the challenges of this neurological disorder every day. The impact is far-reaching, touching families, workplaces, and communities across the state. Wisconsin Parkinson Association is a local organization working tirelessly to make a real difference through education, support, and advocacy with 100% focus on making an impact in Wisconsin.

Awareness months like Parkinson's are crucial for advancing scientific understanding and promoting efforts toward a cure. Medical research benefits immensely from increased visibility, funding rises, new studies launch, and innovative therapies emerge. Advocacy and fundraising campaigns, often sparked by these months, support patients and drive progress toward improved treatments and, ultimately, a cure.

The importance of Parkinson's Awareness Month isn't

limited strictly to medical research. For those living with the disease, it brings hope and community. Awareness months foster targeted campaigns that educate the public about the symptoms, prevention, and treatment of Parkinson's. They also help reduce stigma, offering opportunities for open conversations and empathy. Sharing stories, whether your own or as a care partner, builds understanding and breaks down barriers.

Support groups, numbering 66 across Wisconsin, offer spaces for connection, encouragement, and practical advice. Through collaboration and networking, individuals, families, and professionals create a supportive environment that inspires action and empowers people to live their best lives.

Parkinson's Awareness Month is a reminder that education, support, community, and hope are all vital to advancing understanding of the disease. It's a time to share knowledge, connect with others, and work together, for a cure and for a more compassionate world.

Wisconsin Stats

20,000

Wisconsinites Living
with Parkinson's

1,000,000

People in the US
with Parkinson's

66

Support Groups in
Wisconsin

88

Exercise Groups
& Classes in Wisconsin

Announcing the Inaugural “Steppin’ Out” Parkinson’s Walk

WPA is excited to announce the first-ever “Steppin’ Out” Parkinson’s Walk, benefitting WPA, to be held on May 16th in Stevens Point. This special event honors Dan Firkus and his family, and is organized by his daughter, Sarah Solinsky. Inspired by her experience at a WPA Newly Diagnosed workshop, Sarah has taken the initiative to bring our community together for an impactful day of support and awareness.

The event will feature activities and opportunities for participants to connect and make a difference in the lives of those affected by Parkinson’s disease. Stevens Point, located at the heart of Wisconsin, offers the perfect setting for statewide involvement. With hopes to make this an annual event, and even expand to include virtual, statewide teams in the future, your participation this year is crucial to building momentum.

Join us in supporting the Parkinson’s community and help us make “Steppin’ Out” a signature fundraising event for WPA. Registration is open, invite friends, family, and colleagues to walk with us and show their support. Together, we can make a meaningful impact across Wisconsin.



**IN HONOR OF DAN FIRKUS
& HIS FAMILY**

**Walk as far or as
little as you like!
Total Loop = 1 Mile**



**WISCONSIN
PARKINSON
ASSOCIATION**



**Join Us for a Fun-Filled Fundraising
Walk to Spread Awareness about
Parkinson’s Disease**

\$25 per Adult | 12 & under free

**Saturday
May 16, 2026**

10:00 AM - REGISTRATION

11:00 AM - WALK

12:00 PM - LIVE DJ

**PFIFFNER BUILDING
425 FRANKLIN STREET | STEVENS POINT, WI**

**DJ MUSIC- MILLER’S DJ SERVICE
FOOD TRUCK-THE PIG PEN
DOOR PRIZES FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES**

**LIGHT REFRESHMENTS FOR ALL
REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS
ALL PROCEEDS DONATED TO WPA**

Register at WIPARKINSON.ORG



Philosophical Musings of a Neurologist

By: Dr. Kathryn Gaines, DO, Aurora Health Care,
WPA Medical Advisory Committee Member

I am grateful for the opportunity to write for the WPA's Spring 2026 issue. I was given "carte blanche" permission to be creative, and with that freedom, I want to share something that is admittedly a bit touchy-feely. My hope is that it is received as reflective and encouraging—not preachy.

First and foremost, I genuinely love being able to help patients. I love seeing smiles, moments of relief, and contentment—not only in patients, but also in caregivers and families. I also recognize that this does not come easily or often for many. Over time, I have seen how feelings of defeat or resignation can quietly creep in. These emotions can be deeply detrimental, yet they are worth fighting against.

"It is often the nearly imperceptible, small 'wins' that keep us afloat, while the larger 'wins' give us reason to celebrate. Both matter."

Growing up, I experienced more than my fair share of heartache and challenges, which continued into adulthood. At some point, I came to accept that this is, in many ways, simply part of life. While age often brings confidence and wisdom, I also credit an inherent optimism and resiliency. For me, every day remains a new opportunity.

When it comes to Parkinson's disease, I cannot pretend to fully understand what it is like to live with declining coordination, energy, balance, mobility, thought processes, or the many other frustrations that may accompany the disease. Perhaps one day I will. Until then, I remain a witness—learning from my patients every day.

What I have observed repeatedly is that patients who maintain a sense of purpose—those who wake up with an agenda, however modest, and an intention to carry out some version of it—often navigate Parkinson's challenges more effectively. This observation brings to mind Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, where purpose serves as an anchor even in the most difficult circumstances.

It is often the nearly imperceptible, small "wins" that keep us afloat, while the larger "wins" give us reason to celebrate. Both matter. Taking time to acknowledge them, reflect on them, and feel genuine gratitude for them can make a meaningful difference in daily life.

Life is not over with a Parkinson's diagnosis, but it does look different than many of us might have expected. Every person with Parkinson's is unique, and every Parkinson's physician shares the same fundamental goal: to maximize quality of life using the tools available to us. Our individual experiences, styles, and perspectives inevitably shape how we pursue that goal.

I would especially encourage those newly diagnosed with Parkinson's to embrace—or, if necessary, learn a purpose-filled mindset. It becomes invaluable over time, because life does not stop when a diagnosis is made. While life may now hold a new reality, it can also hold a revised vision.

For what it's worth, all of us must periodically recalibrate our hopes and dreams based on the challenges we face. We are not our diseases. We are defined by what we make of each day, and by the purpose we choose to attach to our lives.



Finding Strength Together:

Rob and Jennifer's Journey with Parkinson's



Meet Rob Billings, a widower, devoted father, music enthusiast, friend, and care partner. Rob's journey as a care partner began when he cared for his wife through illness, an experience that shaped his compassionate approach to helping others. Years later, when Jennifer, a member of his church, lost her husband and needed support after being diagnosed with young-onset Parkinson's disease (YOPD) at age 41, their pastor saw an opportunity to connect two people who could truly help each other. Over a simple coffee, a mutual friendship blossomed.

Rob stepped in to help Jennifer manage her Parkinson's; balancing positive energy and negative emotions, learning along the way and becoming an invaluable part of her support system. He admits that "ten years ago I didn't know anything about Parkinson's disease," but in the seven years since he became Jennifer's care partner, he's learned a great deal about the challenges and victories that come with it. Rob explains Parkinson's as a

three-legged stool, one leg is the disease itself, another is anxiety and depression, and the third is energy. Together, Rob and Jennifer focus on keeping all three legs balanced, allowing her to stay active and engaged.



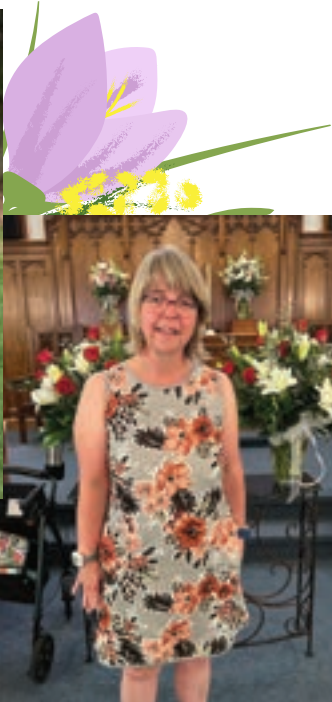
Jennifer is an inspiration to Rob and those around her. With a strong support network, a caring church family, and even a boyfriend, she thrives in her assisted living facility. She's started a Parkinson's and Wellness Support group there and keeps busy with activities like Rock Steady Boxing and the Sunshine Singers, a group Rob convened to make music together and share that joy with others. Rob explains that because of these activities, Jennifer is the best she has been in the seven years he has known her. Jennifer also launched a "grand-buddies" program

pairing local third graders with residents, creating meaningful connections through letter writing.

"Be there but be quiet, presence is often needed more than words."

"Have patience, let the person do the 'thing'."

"Schedule extra time to do things so that you don't feel rushed or anxious."



Rob says that their partnership is a dynamic one, and he credits Jennifer's intelligence and resilience for her continued well-being. In his words, "The real hero in the relationship is Jennifer." He's proud to support her, emphasizing the importance of patience, allowing space for independence, and scheduling extra time to avoid stress. Jennifer affectionately refers to Rob as "D2" or Dad 2. Rob supports his own well-being by daily walks with his dog Lucie and his love of music, he even wrote Jennifer a song for Christmas titled, "When" with an important message: "I am still me!"

When asked what words of advice Rob would share with other care partners he offered the following:

"Be there but be quiet, presence is often needed more than words."

"Have patience, let the person do the 'thing'."

"Schedule extra time to do things so that you don't feel rushed or anxious."

Rob believes it's vital to educate the public about Parkinson's and how to support those living with it. Sometimes, just giving someone extra time or a little understanding can make all the difference. For Rob, the greatest gift you can give is your time, a gift he's given freely and feels he's received in return from Jennifer.

When

Key of D

Verse 1

When my feet start moving each and every way.
When you can't understand what I am trying to say.
When my legs stop moving, and I am stuck in my chair.
The Lord is still with me, cause he's everywhere.

Bridge

Don't you be frightened, it's just Parkinson's you see.
I am right here, yes I am and I am still me!

Chorus

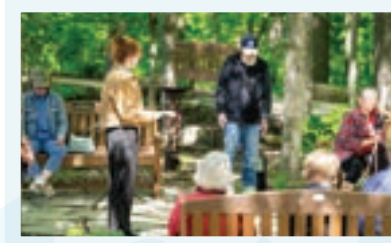
So walk with me, talk with me,
let's enjoy the fresh air.
See the wonders of this world,
like we don't have a care.
God is in his heaven, and someday that's where I'll be,
surrounded by his love, in my brand-new body.

Verse 2

Some days I can stand and sing, praises to the Lord.
Other days my body is stiff, just like a board.
Often I need my walker, I hope that you can see,
I just need for you, to wait patiently.

Verse 3

Every day's a battle, but I'll never give in.
Say get behind me Devil, you can't make me sin.
I gave my heart to Jesus, and he has my soul,
And when I get to Heaven, he can make me whole.



Upcoming WPA Events Bring *Movement, Connection, and Community*

Across Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Parkinson Association continues to create opportunities for people with Parkinson's and their families to connect, stay active, and experience new things together. This spring's calendar is filled with events that combine movement, learning, and community.

Reaching New Heights at Adventure Rock

One of the most unique activities on the calendar is WPA's ongoing rock climbing program at Adventure Rock in Brookfield. Participants have the opportunity to try climbing in a supportive environment designed for all ability levels.



The program offers more than a physical challenge. It encourages confidence, teamwork, and a sense of accomplishment as participants try something new. For many, the experience becomes a reminder that Parkinson's does not define what they can do.

Ping Pong and Parkinson's

WPA's partnership with the Milwaukee Table Tennis Club continues to grow with regular ping pong workshops. Table tennis has become increasingly popular within the Parkinson's community because it combines balance, coordination, reflexes, and rhythm in a social and engaging way.



These workshops offer instruction and practice in a welcoming environment where participants can build skills, enjoy friendly competition, and connect with others living with Parkinson's.

Learning and Gathering at the WPA Symposium

Education and connection will come together at the upcoming WPA Parkinson Symposium on April 21 in Brookfield. The Symposium is a full-day event designed for individuals living with Parkinson's, care partners, and medical professionals. The day begins with registration and a resource fair, followed by a welcome from WPA President and CEO Kelly Cieslak. The program will feature keynote speaker Molly Cupka, Executive Director of Up ENDing Parkinson's, who will present "Rewriting What's Possible: Rock Climbing, Exercise, and Living Boldly with Parkinson's."



The symposium will also include a medical panel discussion featuring neurologists Taylor Finseth, MD; Bayan Vojdani, MD; and Sheila Eichenseer, MD-MS, moderated by WPA Chief Operating Officer Dacy Reimer, APNP, as well as a lived experience panel with members of the Parkinson's community sharing their personal journeys. A mindful movement break led by physical therapist Beth Dieringer will give attendees a chance to stretch and recharge during the morning program.

Urban Poling: Movement with Purpose

WPA's Urban Poling program continues to be a valuable way for individuals with Parkinson's to stay active and build strength. Using specially designed poles, participants engage their upper and lower body at the same time, improving balance, posture, and coordination. This spring and summer, WPA will offer several Urban Poling workshops across the state, giving participants the opportunity to learn proper technique

and build confidence in a supportive, group setting. The program offers a simple but effective way to incorporate movement into daily routines while promoting stability and independence.

Support Groups Across Wisconsin

At the heart of WPA's mission is connection, and that is most evident in its support groups held throughout Wisconsin. These groups provide a consistent space for individuals with Parkinson's and their care partners to share experiences, ask questions, and find encouragement. Many groups meet monthly, while others offer virtual options, making support accessible regardless of location. These gatherings often include guest speakers, resource sharing, and open discussion, helping participants feel less isolated and more empowered as they navigate their Parkinson's journey.

Programs Happening Every Week

Alongside these special events, WPA offers a robust calendar of weekly programming across the state. Exercise classes, including Mindful Movement for Parkinson's, Dance for Parkinson's, and other wellness activities, keep participants active and engaged throughout the year. New virtual offerings, such as mindfulness sessions and a journaling group, are also gaining momentum (see page 4).

WPA is also proud to host two podcast series as part of our ongoing programming. Every Monday, Dacy Reimer, APNP and WPA's Chief Operating Officer, shares practical daily living tips in Pearls for Parkinson's. Once a month, she sits down with physicians and industry leaders in EmPower Talks: Insights from the Experts, bringing fresh perspectives on living an empowered life with Parkinson's disease.

Together, these programs reflect WPA's commitment to supporting the Parkinson's community through movement, learning, creativity, and connection. Each offering is another opportunity for individuals and families to find encouragement and strength, together.



*To learn more about events,
visit wiparkinson.org/events.*



WISCONSIN
PARKINSON
ASSOCIATION



Yacht Rock

CONCERT FOR A CAUSE

Set sail for smooth tunes and good vibes! Join us for live music, fun, and giving back. Come as you are or rock your best yacht attire – rain or shine!

Every dollar raised helps fund care, education, and hope for those affected by Parkinson's. Visit wiparkinson.org to learn more.

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2026
11am – 5pm

MUSIC BY: THE ABBY MOELLER BAND
followed by AFTER HOURS BAND

- BASKET & 50/50 RAFFLES
- SILENT AUCTION
- LIQUOR PULL

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OF JOAN WIELAND**

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music, dancing, and the lake.



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\$50 per person ages 16+

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Kids 15 and under accompanied by a paying adult are entitled to a free all-access pass.

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Dan & Elizabeth Hurrle



King Shaky's Guide to Living Out Loud

**"I asked them why they hadn't said anything," he recalls.
"We were afraid to," they told him. Bill shook his head.
"That's what I want people to know. It's okay to talk about it."**

When Bill Radtke's eight-year-old grandson handed him a chess piece a few years back, the boy looked up and said, matter-of-factly, "You can be King Shaky."

Bill laughs telling the story. That laugh, easy, unhurried, full of life, says just about everything you need to know about how he's decided to live with Parkinson's disease.

Bill was officially diagnosed in 2023, though the tremor in his left hand had been showing up for years; at dinner, on the golf course, in the quiet moments where the body says something the mind hasn't caught up to yet. His kids used to tease him about it. His golfing buddies noticed but never said a word.

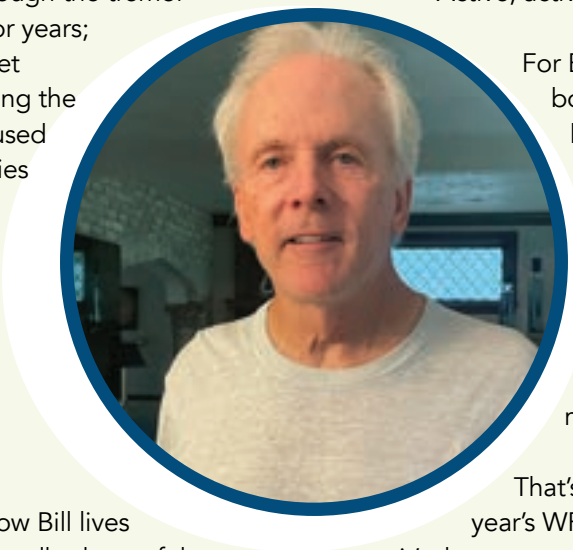
"I asked them why they hadn't said anything," he recalls. "We were afraid to," they told him. Bill shook his head. "That's what I want people to know. It's okay to talk about it."

That instinct toward openness, toward connection, has become the heart of how Bill lives with Parkinson's. After his diagnosis, he walked out of the neurologist's office with a prescription and very little else. No resource list. No roadmap. Just the quiet hum of the drive home and the question echoing in his head: What do I do now?

He and his wife Kaleen decided to find out. Together, they dove in, researching programs, showing up, saying yes. Rock Steady Boxing in New Berlin. Big and Loud

movement classes at Froedtert. Twice-weekly workouts at the Wisconsin Athletic Club, where a dedicated Parkinson's program draws participants ranging from their mid-30s to their mid-70s. Monthly rock climbing sessions, where Bill has cheerfully recruited fellow classmates to join him on the walls. Every day, rain or shine, Bill and Kaleen, his partner and motivator, trek four miles on foot.

"Active, active, active," he says, grinning.



For Bill, this isn't just about keeping his body moving. It's about refusing to let Parkinson's become something whispered about in corners. He thinks about everyone who has ever left a doctor's office feeling alone and uncertain. He thinks about what a simple handout — here are your options, here is your community — might have meant on day one.

That's the message he's carrying to this year's WPA Symposium as a panelist, and it's the message he'll carry anywhere someone will listen: Own your journey. Name it. Talk about it. Find your people.

"It stops the whispers," he says simply.

King Shaky, it turns out, is not a cautionary tale. He's a pretty good role model.



2026 WPA SPRING SYMPOSIUM

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 | 8:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.
Brookfield Conference Center | 325 S Moorland Rd
Brookfield, WI 53005 | NO CHARGE, Donations Appreciated



Get ready for the 2026 Wisconsin Parkinson Association Spring Symposium, our signature event of the year! This year's theme, "Own Your Journey: Navigating Parkinson's with Purpose," is all about inviting people living with Parkinson's to step confidently into their journey and embrace life with intention. Our lineup of speakers will share how taking an active role in your own care can truly make a difference. Plus, our popular Resource Fair, made possible by our generous sponsors and exhibitors, is open to all attendees.

The Spring Symposium is always a highlight for the WPA Team. It's a special day that brings together people with Parkinson's, care partners, medical professionals, and community organizations for connection, learning, and support. It's especially meaningful as it takes place during Parkinson's Awareness Month, making it the perfect time to come together as a community. We're thrilled to welcome Molly Cupka, Executive Director and President of Up ENDing Parkinson's, as our keynote speaker. She'll kick the day off with her inspiring talk, "Rewriting What's Possible: Rock Climbing, Exercise, and Living Boldly with Parkinson's." You can also look forward to Mindful Movement breaks throughout the day, and an informative Medical Panel Discussion led by Dacy Reimer, APNP and WPA Chief Operating Officer, featuring Dr. Taylor Finseth, Dr. Bayan Vojdani, and Dr. Sheila Eichenseer. Our Lived Experience

Panelists, Wendy Sorem, Bill Radtke, Peter Skanse, and Peggy Mitchell, will share their honest stories about living with PD.

Whether you're a caregiver, living with Parkinson's yourself, or connected to the Parkinson's community in another way, our breakout sessions have something for everyone. Not only will you find helpful information and resources, but you'll also have the chance to connect with others who truly understand the PD journey, helping to grow and strengthen our Parkinson's community.

"My partner and I attended the Symposium for the first time last year and found it so informative and uplifting. We knew we had to return because being with others who understand life with PD was invaluable." – Bill

If you can't join us in person, don't worry! We'll be recording select sessions and sharing them on our website and WPA's YouTube Channel.



*Scan the QR code to subscribe
and turn on notifications
so you don't miss any updates!*



Program Agenda

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

CHECK IN/REGISTRATION & RESOURCE FAIR

Coffee Bar | Light Refreshments | Sponsor & Exhibitor Visits

9:00 AM - 9:10 AM

WELCOME

Kelly Cieslak, WPA President, Chief Executive Officer

OWN YOUR JOURNEY: NAVIGATING PARKINSON'S WITH PURPOSE

9:10 AM - 9:50 AM

REWRITING WHAT'S POSSIBLE: ROCK CLIMBING, EXERCISE, AND LIVING BOLDLY WITH PARKINSON'S

Molly Cupka - Executive Director and President
Up ENDing Parkinson's

9:50 AM - 10:00 AM

MINDFUL MOVEMENT BREAK

Beth Dieringer, MPT, DPT(c)

10:00 AM - 10:45 AM

MEDICAL PANEL DISCUSSION

Facilitated by Dacy Reimer, APNP, WPA Chief Operating Officer
Panelists: Taylor Finseth MD, Bayan Vojdani MD, and Sheila Eichenseer MD-MS

10:45 AM - 11:00 AM

MORNING BREAK

Restroom & Refreshments

11:00 AM - 11:45 AM

LIVED EXPERIENCE PANEL

Wendy Sorem, Bill Radtke, Peter Skanse, and Peggy Mitchell

11:45 AM - 12:00 PM

MINDFUL MOVEMENT BREAK

Amy Strong, RSB-C and Emily Gerlach, CPT

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Lunch and Resource Fair: Visit Sponsors and Exhibitors

1:30 PM - 2:30 PM

Breakout Sessions

THERE'S POWER IN PREVENTION

START TODAY WITH BETTER BREATH SUPPORT

Presented by Lisa Dickas, M.S., M.H.S., CCC-SLP

THE GUT, THE BRAIN, AND THE LOSS OF SMELL IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE-WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

Presented by Dr. Balaraman Kalyanaraman, PhD
Professor of Biophysics

CULTIVATING YOUR IDENTITY AS A CARE PARTNER

Facilitated by Kelly Krause, LCSW and
Joy Cochran, PT, DPT, CEEAA

BUILDING EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

Jean McFadden, MA, MBA, LPC

2:30 PM - 2:40 PM

TRANSITION TIME

2:40 PM - 3:10 PM

SPRING INTO POSSIBILITY

Lisa Pritzl, Certified Teaching Artist and Joyologist

3:10 PM - 3:15 PM

RAFFLE/CLOSING

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