



Parkinson's Group  
of the Ozarks

SPRING 2023

# NEWSLETTER

## Come Join Us at the Parkinson's Resource Fair!

**We are excited to announce that we will be hosting a resource fair for Parkinson's families in the Ozarks. The event will provide a meet-and-greet opportunity for families to visit with local community partners and to learn about available Parkinson's resources in southwest Missouri.**

Parkinson's disease is often misunderstood by many, and for those who have it, it can be hard to get the resources needed to handle everyday life. "When someone becomes diagnosed with Parkinson's and contacts our organization, they are often very surprised to learn about all the great things that are available such as local support groups and free wellness classes. This event will allow families to explore new opportunities and discover programs and services that they may not be aware of," stated Cassi Locke, Executive Assistant.

The free indoor event will have exhibitors such as Cox Health, Mercy, Sharlin Health & Neurology, The Bodysmith, F8 Training, Center for Music Therapy and Wellness, and many more. There will be light refreshments and snacks along with a chance to win a door prize.

The two-hour resource fair will take place in April, which is also Parkinson's Awareness Month. However, this will not be the only way we are bringing awareness about the disease to the community. Families can visit with us at the Cox Health Geriatric Conference on April 13th or at the Webster County Resource Fair on April 20th.

To learn more about the Parkinson's Resource Fair visit our website: [www.parkinsonsgroup.org/upcomingevents](http://www.parkinsonsgroup.org/upcomingevents) or follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ParkinsonsGroup>. We hope to see you there!

**SATURDAY  
APRIL 15**

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Center for Music  
Therapy & Wellness**  
1312 N. BENTON AVE.  
SPRINGFIELD

### FREE INDOOR EVENT

DOOR PRIZES,  
LIGHT SNACKS AND  
REFRESHMENTS...  
PLUS MUCH MORE!

### EXHIBITORS

- CoxHealth
- The Bodysmith
- Center for Music Therapy & Wellness
- F8 Training
- Mercy
- Sharlin Health & Neurology
- Parkinson's Foundation Aware-in-Care Ambassador
- ...and many more!

## OUR MISSION

The Mission of the Parkinson's Group of the Ozarks is to educate, support research and improve the quality of life for people with Parkinson's disease.

### *To improve the quality of life*

Parkinson's Group encourages monthly support group meetings, holiday parties, and various trips. Some people may have difficulty coping with Parkinson's disease. It may be hard for them to ask their doctor questions or talk about their problems with family or friends. A support group may be just the right answer. Our programs are selected to keep people up-to-date about the latest changes and developments in Parkinson's disease and to aid in dealing with day-to-day activities. These meetings also provide an opportunity to discuss experiences and feelings and to share solutions to common problems.

### *To provide education*

Free literature can be obtained through the Parkinson's Group office. Educational materials include the Aware in Care Hospitalization Kit from the Parkinson's Foundation (PF) and much more. Items are available by calling Parkinson's Group of the Ozarks at 417-814-6067. PF also operates a helpline at 800-4PD-INFO or 800-473-4636. The Parkinson's Group of the Ozarks sponsors an annual symposium where notable guest professionals speak on various topics relating to Parkinson's disease. Special speakers at the symposium are often neurologists, psychiatrists, physical therapists, nutritionists, pharmacists, leaders of support groups, etc.

### *To support our community*

For over two decades PGO has worked tirelessly to help people with Parkinson's Disease. PGO and its supporters provided the vision to establish the first clinic for Parkinson's patients known as Parkinson's Clinic of the Ozarks in 2001. In 2015 the clinic moved to the West tower at Cox Medical Center South becoming part of the Jared Neuroscience Center. Through ongoing community collaborations, classes and education offered, PGO provides access to programs and services for the welfare of Parkinsonians, their care partners, families, and friends.

# SUPPORT GROUPS

## FOR PEOPLE WITH PARKINSON'S DISEASE & CARE PARTNERS

Parkinson's Group of the Ozarks sponsors monthly support meetings. Support groups can provide information and access to a wide range of medical experts. They can assist caregivers in coping with the challenges associated with the disease. These special groups of people give and receive fellowship and support from people sharing similar experiences.

### THE BODYSMITH

1136 E. St. Louis St.  
Springfield, MO 65806  
417-865-0500

**Meetings:** Second Saturday of the month at 11 a.m.

### COXHEALTH PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP FOR SENIORS

Meyer Orthopedic and Rehabilitation Hospital  
3535 S. National Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65807  
417-269-3616

This group is available for caregivers and those who have been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease that are age 65+.

**Meetings:** Third Wednesday of the month from 2:30-3:30 p.m. Please call if you're interested in attending or have questions. Masks are required.

### KING'S WAY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2401 S. Lone Pine Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65804  
417-881-6363

**Meetings:** Third Tuesday of the month at 2 p.m.

### SHARLIN HEALTH & NEUROLOGY

5528 N Farmer Branch Rd.  
Ozark, MO 65721  
417-485-4330

**Meetings:** Fourth Monday of the month at 10 a.m.  
Virtual option is available.

### PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP - BRANSON WEST AREA

11016 State Hwy 76, Ste 11  
Branson West, MO 65737  
417-357-6134

**Meetings:** First Thursday of the month at 12 p.m.

### JOPLIN MERCY

100 Mercy Way,  
Conference Room 1  
Joplin, MO 65804  
417-556-2263

**Meetings:** Mondays at 3:30 p.m.

### FAIR ACRES FAMILY YMCA

2600 Grand Ave.  
Carthage, MO 64836  
417-358-1070

**Meetings:** Third Monday of the month at 11:30 a.m.

parkinsonsgroup.org | 417-814-6067 | [facebook](#) @ParkinsonsGroup

## ABOUT PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Nearly one million people in the U.S. are living with Parkinson's disease, and over 60,000 more are diagnosed each year. Many of these call the Ozarks home. Parkinson's disease is a slowly progressive neurological disease generally associated with tremor or trembling of the arms and legs, stiffness and rigidity of the muscles, slowness of the movement, and impaired balance and coordination. As these symptoms become more pronounced, patients may have difficulty walking or completing other simple tasks. This disease not only affects the patient, but also his or her family.



Thank you for your donation!

Sincere appreciation for assisting Parkinson's Group in our mission to provide education, support research and improve the quality of life for people with Parkinson's Disease.

**IN MEMORY OF JIMMY WHITFIELD**

Carole & James Butts

**IN MEMORY OF TREACIL MYERS**

Mark & Rebecca Ramsey

**IN SUPPORT OF MOLLY  
& DENNIS EDWARDS**

Nancy McCulloch

**IN MEMORY OF LINDA EVANS**

Randy & Brenda Martin

**IN MEMORY OF LEN S. BURTON**

Patsy Burton

**IN MEMORY OF BILL GHAN**

Anna Squires  
Louise Blumenstock  
Lori Murawsk  
Rebecca Crocker  
Roberta Rozell  
Craig & Nancy Martin  
Steven & Karen Glll  
David & Frances Schell  
James, Charles, & Glenn Kramer  
Corner Construction

*Gifts to the Parkinson's Group of the Ozarks are tax deductible. Visit us online at [parkinsonsgroup.org](http://parkinsonsgroup.org) to learn more.*

**PARKINSON'S GROUP OF THE OZARKS**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Dick Smith  
Charlene Stade

Our board of directors come from a variety of backgrounds, including medical, financial, education, legal, and wellness. Each member brings a unique set of skills that helps our organization achieve its mission.

**CONTACT PGO**

**CASSI LOCKE**  
Executive Assistant  
[cassi@parkinsonsgroup.org](mailto:cassi@parkinsonsgroup.org)

Office Hours:  
Wednesdays 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
or by appointment

417-814-6067  
[parkinsonsgroup.org](http://parkinsonsgroup.org)  
1136 E. St. Louis St.  
Springfield, MO 65806


**MAKE AN IMPACT IN THE PARKINSON'S COMMUNITY**

*Volunteer Opportunities Available*

- PGO Board Secretary
- Ping Pong Assistant
- RSB Corner Person
- Parkinson's Blog Writer

Visit [www.parkinsonsgroup.org/volunteer](http://www.parkinsonsgroup.org/volunteer) for more information!

**RAISE MONEY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**

 You can use Facebook to donate and raise money for both nonprofits and personal causes. Whether you donate \$5 or \$500, every little bit helps.

1. Log into your Facebook account and click "Fundraisers" from the left side menu options.
2. Click "Raise Money" and then "Non-profit."
3. Select the Parkinson's Group of the Ozarks.
4. Fill in the rest of the information about your fundraiser and click "Create."

**Is your business or organization interested in connecting with the Parkinson's community?**

Consider being a sponsor of our newsletter! For more information email: [info@parkinsonsgroup.org](mailto:info@parkinsonsgroup.org) or call 417-814-6067.

# PURSuing MY SONGWRITING PASSION

BY DAVID WAGNER



**I was working in a cup factory and was asked to train a new guy who told me he was going to work long enough to save some money to move to Nashville to be a songwriter.**

I told him that was my dream too. Well... he left for Nashville but before he did he said if you decide to come to Nashville call me.

Fast forward to 2004. I injured my back while working and during the physical rehabilitation things weren't right. After further testing and observation there was no doubt that I had Parkinson's and after 30 years it was time to retire. In 2006 other circumstances of my life changed my direction. I thought, "Well I'm not going to sit around." So that's where my songwriting came in. I always wanted to write and thought it was a good time to start.

I'm pretty sure I Googled "song writer can't play or sing." It led me to some forums on the internet with a lot of great people and someone in particular was a singer/songwriter named Danny Bloodworth from Georgia. That site had a contest and paired lyricist with performers, and we won! "Wow this is easy," I thought. The first song I ever wrote "Days Between" and not knowing how radio worked, I sent it to Andy Taylor with KTTS. He played part of it on Valentine's Day. Now a bigger head!

The first call to Nashville was to the guy I trained, Tim Nichols. You've probably heard of one of his songs, "Live Like You Were Dying." The rest is history. Here I am still writing after 18 years and battling Parkinson's. I try to stay active by exercising and using opportunities offered by the Parkinson's Group of the Ozarks such as music therapy, exercise therapy, or ping pong. I tell my doctors that I may have Parkinson's; I may be bent but I ain't broken.

**Austin Pool** – "Plain White Tee"

**Ashley Baker** – "Country Girls Rock"

**Chris Ining** – "Stomp"  
"Flat Tires and Fumes"  
"Have Another Beer"

**Pamela Benton** – "You're With Me"

**Tianna Woods** – "Bent, Not Broken"  
"Country Girls Rock"

Local Co-Writers:

**Doug Jackson**

**Tony Ingerson**

**Gail Taylor**

**Gary Scott**

**Jared Hicks**

**Lane Smith**

**Brian Pink**

**Bryan Copeland**

To learn more visit: <https://www.reverbnation.com/wagdaddysr> or <https://www.417mag.com/people/profiles/springfield-man-songwriting-parkinsons/>



## Meet Marien

You've probably seen this friendly face in the Parkinson's community several times. Her name is Marien Byrne, and she is our new volunteer PGO Community Advocate. Marien is a dedicated attendee of several of our Parkinson's wellness classes such as Encore! music therapy, Resonate drumming therapy, and Rock Steady Boxing, just to name a few. She's participated in many PGO events such as our Baseball Tailgate Party, PGO Open House, and our Pound the Pavement for Parkinson's 5K Walk/Run. She is the talented quilter who crafted our t-shirt quilt for the raffle last November.

Marien understands firsthand the

unknown journey with Parkinson's and wants to help others who are newly diagnosed with the disease. She will not only help families find local support groups and wellness class opportunities but will happily provide encouragement and guidance for families. If you're new to our PGO programs, Marien wants to say hello! Whether it's sharing life stories, cracking a joke for a good laugh, lending an ear, or just a warm smile, she wants to make you feel welcome in the Parkinson's community.

If you're interested in helping out the Parkinson's community, please contact us for available volunteer opportunities. 417-814-6067 or [info@parkinsonsgroup.org](mailto:info@parkinsonsgroup.org).



# Paul Weis Awarded the Len S. Burton Memorial Scholarship

Paul Weis is not only a familiar face at the Bodysmith studio, but he is also now a new Rock Steady Boxing (RSB) Coach. Paul grew up in Minnesota and felt called to the ministry where he became an ordained minister with the Assemblies of God and served as a youth pastor and pastor. He also spent 14 years in Guatemala in theological and leadership training. In addition, he spent ten years in Central America as the Area Director for over 200 missionaries.



we battle together." Wanting to help others, he began volunteering as an assistant for some of the other Rock Steady Boxing classes. Getting his coaching certificate was the natural next step. Paul noted that he is blessed not to have many major symptoms. While in this condition, he wants to do all he can to help others physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

Now retired, Paul enjoys time with his wife, his daughter, and his two grandchildren. Everyone's excited to have Paul's experience in leadership, his personal experience with Parkinson's, and his encouraging and uplifting nature in the Rock Steady Boxing classes.

After returning to the United States, Paul was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. He sought out the Rock Steady Boxing in March of 2021 to help manage symptoms. He has been coming faithfully and has seen the program's benefits in himself and others. Paul pointed out, "RSB has given me a tool to use against the symptoms of Parkinson's. In many ways, it has turned back the clock physically. In addition, I have benefited from the strength I have felt from my fellow Parkinson's people, whom I have met as

*Are you interested in becoming a volunteer Rock Steady Boxing coach, Parkinson's support group leader, or helping out in some other way? Email [scholarship@parkinsonsgroup.org](mailto:scholarship@parkinsonsgroup.org) or call 417-814-6067 to learn more about how we can help with Parkinson's education and training.*

## Rockin' the Rhythm

### Dance for PD Now Offered at The Bodysmith



Dance has been an integral part of human culture throughout history. For everyone moving the body to music provides social stimulation, support, builds relationships, sensitivity and understanding, and is just fun.

For those with Parkinson's Disease dance has an even greater impact and benefits to the brain and body. Many studies have been conducted on the measurable physical and psychological improvements seen for those with PD when

they participate in dance classes. Just some of these benefits include, but are not limited to:

- Improved balance
- Improved motor skills
- Increase in freedom of movement and endurance
- Gait
- Reduction in depression
- Stimulation of cognitive function

Moving to music provides rhythmic cuing, assists with initiation, coordination and maintenance of movement.

After receiving many requests for a class, The

Bodysmith is excited to be able to offer a dance class, fully supported by the PGO, led by Allegra Schaffer. Allegra, a fully certified Pilates instructor at The Bodysmith, holds a double major in Musical Theater and Dance from Missouri State University. She has taught dance and theater for over six years and is the assistant director of Springfield Little Theater's Illumination Dance Company.

The class incorporates a variety of dance styles including, tap, jazz, and ballet and a wide selection

of music. Dancers can sit or stand depending on their ability. Care partners are welcome but not necessary in order to participate.

**Join Allegra Monday's from 4:14-5:15 p.m. at The Bodysmith, 1136 E. St Louis St.** Call ahead, 417-865-0500, to reserve your spot, the class is already growing in popularity. The cost is free. Wear comfortable clothes that you can move in, bring a water bottle, and be ready to boogie down and have fun.

BY SHAUNA SMITH YATES

# Welcome Our Newest Member - June Kincheloe!

June Kincheloe is proud to serve on the Board for Parkinson's Group of the Ozarks. After her husband Don was diagnosed in February 2022, June did what she does best—ferociously fight for her loved ones. She sprang into action looking for every available resource that would help navigate this new diagnosis. While a shock to the family, they provided much-needed answers and helped inspire June to advocate on a broader scale.

June was relieved to find out that the Parkinson's community in the region was active and vibrant. "As quickly as the diagnosis impacted our lives, things like Rock Steady Boxing gave us hope and support. I can't imagine doing this without everyone we've met along the way." June also helped form a support group for Rock Steady



spouses. She looks forward to this time, laughing, crying, and sharing the experiences that binds them together.

June has lived in Springfield all her life, working for the past 23 years for Mercy Health Systems in Contracts and Pricing. She has two happily married daughters and one incredible granddaughter. Her daughter Amanda can frequently be seen as Don's corner person in boxing class. She enjoys planning family gatherings and decorating projects. June considers this appointment to the PGO Board as a privilege, and she can't wait to begin providing support to the Parkinson's community. "I look forward to doing whatever is needed to keep the fight against Parkinson's going forward."

## FREE GROUP CLASSES IN THE OZARKS

As part of our mission, The Parkinson's Group of the Ozarks is proud to sponsor multiple exercise and music therapy classes for person's with Parkinson's.

### **CROCHET CONNECTIONS** FIRST TUESDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 11 AM

Care partners welcome.  
Supplies will be provided.  
The Library Station  
2535 N. Kansas Expressway  
Springfield, MO 65803  
417-880-7610

### **YOGA FOR PARKINSON'S DISEASE** TUESDAYS AT 10 AM

Heart Filled Yoga at  
Empower: Abilities  
1450 W. Cambridge St.  
Springfield, MO 65807  
417-209-5418

### **PARKINSON'S EXERCISE THERAPY** TUESDAYS AT 2 PM & SATURDAYS AT 10:15 AM

This chair-based fitness class uses therapeutic exercises based off the BIG and LOUD therapy programming with a variety of gym equipment provided. Caretakers are welcome to join!  
*Special thanks to the Christine and Katharina Pauly Charitable Trust-K, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee for funding the Saturday class.*  
F8 Training and Wellness Studio  
2048 S. Stewart Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65804  
417-720-1057

### **PING PONG FOR PARKINSON'S** TUESDAYS & WEDNESDAYS AT 10:30 AM

Marshfield Senior Center  
427 W. Washington St.,  
Marshfield MO 65706  
417-859-3555

### **PING PONG FOR PARKINSON'S** FRIDAYS 2-4 PM

National Heights Baptist Church  
3050 N. National Ave.  
Springfield, MO 6580  
417-880-7610

### **PILATES** WEDNESDAYS AT 12 PM & 1 PM

Bodysmith  
1136 E St. Louis St.  
Springfield, MO 65806  
417-865-0500

### **RESONATE EMPOWERMENT** DRUMMING

THURSDAYS AT 10:30 AM  
ENCORE! MUSIC THERAPY  
FRIDAYS AT 9:30 AM  
No musical experience necessary.  
Caregivers welcome.  
Center for Music Therapy and  
Wellness at Drury University  
1312 N. Benton Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65802  
417-861-7345  
*Provided thanks to a grant from  
the Parkinson's Foundation.*

### **PARKINSON'S EXERCISE GROUP** THURSDAYS AT 11 AM

This class is designed to enhance movement, provide improvement in mobility and brain function.  
11016 E. St. Hwy 76 Ste. 10  
Branson West, MO 65737  
417-357-6134

### **ROCKIN' THE RHYTHM** DANCE CLASS

MONDAYS AT 4:15 PM  
Bodysmith  
1136 E. St. Louis St.  
Springfield, MO 65806  
417-865-0500



### **KARA DUNN MEMORIAL** ROCK STEADY BOXING

A physical assessment is required to start this class so make sure to call. Visit [www.bodysmithpilates.com](http://www.bodysmithpilates.com).  
Bodysmith  
1136 E St. Louis St.  
Springfield, MO 65806  
417-865-0500

# WE'VE COME A LONG, LONG WAY TOGETHER!

PGO sees amazing growth over the last 10 years.

BY JUSTIN MILAM

**W**hen Dick Smith was on our board of directors a few years ago, he liked to emphasize how we were one of the best kept secrets in Springfield. Well, the word is out and we have seen an explosion in growth in recent years. I took over as president of the board in 2014 and that's about as far back as we still have reliable financial information. I thought it would be fun to look back and see how far we've come in that time, and oh boy it was even more than I remembered! We have undergone a remarkable transformation, achieving impressive growth and offering more free resources to the Parkinson's community than we ever could have dreamed to do.

One of the most significant achievements of the PGO over the last 10 years has been our remarkable revenue growth. The organization's revenue has grown an astonishing 40 times over from less than \$3,000 in 2014 to breaking six figures in 2022. This has been achieved through greater fundraising efforts (most notably our 5K), grants received from a number of organizations including the Parkinson's Foundation, and many private donations. The private donations are what I'm most proud of, as they almost exclusively come from people who have seen first or second hand the programs we offer for people with Parkinson's and they know their donation will have a positive impact on the community.

A key driver of the PGO's success has been our commitment to providing wellness classes to the PD community. When the organization was founded, we did not offer any wellness classes. However what started as a couple class offerings at the Meyer Center has grown to an impressive 13 class offerings. These include a range of activities, from pilates and yoga to music and boxing to our new dance class that just started in 2023. The diversity of these classes reflects the organization's commitment to meeting the varied needs and interests of the community.

As I noted in our last newsletter, another success has been the growth of the annual 5K race, which I've had the honor of coordinating since 2013. From humble beginnings, the race has grown from just 60 sign ups and very little funds raised to over 350 registrants and nearly \$20,000 raised for our group last year. While the money raised is great, getting to see the Parkinson's community come together and see others fighting the same battle is my favorite part of the event.

The PGO's growth and success over the last decade would not have been possible without the contributions of many individuals and organizations. While there are way too many to name, looking back here are the key changes that helped make the PGO what it is today.

## HARRY HAS AN IDEA

Honorary lifetime board member Harry Beckett's idea to offer a bicycling class for people with Parkinson's expanded our class offering at the Meyer Center beyond the exercise and Tai Chi classes we had offered for years. He worked with the Meyer Center to start spin classes for Parkinson's patients, which expanded into multiple class offerings before they were shut down during the pandemic. The legacy continues through the many classes we offer across the region at a variety of locations.

## ROCK STEADY BOXING

Shauna Smith Yates and her crew were looking for ways to expand their offerings at The Bodysmith. They saw a news story about Rock Steady and immediately knew that was they wanted to do. And boy are we thankful they did! We now partner with the Bodysmith to offer three Rock Steady Boxing classes, two pilates classes, and a dance class. In addition, many of the private donations received were from Rock Steady boxers or friends of Rock Steady boxers who saw the impact on their lives from participating in the program.

## SUPPORT FROM THE PARKINSON'S FOUNDATION

While we have had collaborations with the Parkinson's Foundation (and NPF before they merged with the Parkinson's Disease Foundation) over the years, recently we have had even more success working together. This includes grants for the music classes, collaborating on a virtual symposium in 2021, as well as the Veteran's lunch and learn last July.

## TOO BIG FOR JUST VOLUNTEERS

In late 2020 we hired Cassi Locke as the organization's first paid staff member. Though she only works part time, she has been a critical factor in our growth and success during the last couple years. Her handling of the day to day duties has allowed the board to focus on looking into new opportunities. She also has been instrumental with grant writing and other community outreach.

Don't worry, despite the above we're not resting on our laurels! We're continuing to look into more opportunities to help people in our community. Among these are potentially expanding the types of classes offered as well as sponsoring classes in areas of the Ozarks outside of Springfield. With your support, we are well-positioned to continue our growth in support of our mission to improve the quality of life for people with Parkinson's and their families.



**Parkinson's Group**  
of the Ozarks

1136 E. St. Louis St.  
Springfield, MO 65806

# Sneakers 4 Good!



Drop off your gently worn, used and new sneakers/  
running shoes at our office inside  
**The Bodysmith, 1136 E. St. Louis St. in Springfield**  
any time during the month of April.

We will earn funds based on the total weight of the  
shoes collected. Those dollars will help  
support the Parkinson's community!

Collected sneakers and running shoes go on to  
developing nations where they are repurposed  
and resold by micro-entrepreneurs (small  
business owners). The athletic shoes help create  
commerce, jobs and a path out of poverty.

Learn more about the sneakers for good program  
at [sneakers4funds.com](http://sneakers4funds.com).

**It's a WIN-WIN-WIN for everyone!**