



Move it or Lose it!

BY NANCY ANDERSON

I have been increasingly thinking about Parkinson's Disease and how it is affecting me, and how exercise and movement impact this. I am becoming more and more convinced that moving both the body and the mind is vital to the quality of what life I have left.

After reeling from my diagnosis, I sunk into my own dark hole of depression. I was given a flyer on Rock Steady Boxing. I had NO interest whatsoever in boxing. It sounded sweaty and disgusting, not anything I would ever want to do. Months later, I noticed the flyer, still sitting on my counter so I started boxing. I still wasn't interested in boxing, but I also realized I didn't want to spend the rest of my days just sitting in my chair dozing off and feeling crappy, so I decided to check it out.

I started checking out what else the Parkinson's Group of the Ozarks had to offer. I gradually added more and more classes to my schedule. I am currently taking eight classes each week, including Pilates, Dance Therapy, PD Speak-Swallow-Learn, Drumming Therapy, Music Therapy, F8 general exercise, and, of course, Rock Steady Boxing. Each class has its own specific focus while still incorporating and reinforcing similar activities from the other classes. Some of the common activities such as

stretching, balance, and cognitive exercises are included in all the classes, as well as adjustments and accommodations for people with specific needs.

Recently, I was in St. Louis for a research study on Parkinson's. A neurologist walked into the room where I was sitting; took one look at me, and said, "Are you sure you're not part of the Control Group?" The fact that he thought I didn't have PD made me feel so good inside and validated, for me, all the work I have been doing.

I received further validation from my last appointment with my Parkinson's healthcare team member, Lisa Potthoff. She reassured me that I was doing well and told me that she was very proud of me. She continued, saying that it is obvious that I, and some of her other patients, are putting in the time and work that is needed to delay the progression of the disease for as long as possible.

Lisa's words of encouragement mean a lot to me. There are some days that I don't want to go to class or even get out of bed. Sometimes, my legs spasm so much or I've been up most of the night with hip pain, or...I just want to rest. I know that it would be easier to say, "NO" to going to class and instead just stay home hibernating. Those are the times that I force myself to get up and get going. I choose to say, "YES" to going to class, and to keeping both my BODY and MIND in motion.



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

PGO proudly sponsors multiple exercise and wellness classes for people with Parkinson's and their care partners. Wellness classes help those with PD stay mobile and independent through a variety of physical activities, exercises, and movements specifically designed to improve PD symptoms. PGO also promotes and encourages support groups that help families approach the mental and social aspects of the disease. The groups provide a sense of togetherness so they do not feel alone in their journey.

To provide education

PGO provides education through one-on-one assistance by phone, email, or in-person. Group education is offered through support group meetings. Support group leaders will often have guest speakers from around the area such as healthcare professionals, social workers, wellness instructors, etc. speak on various topics relating to the disease. During Parkinson's Awareness Month in April, PGO hosts an annual resource fair where families may visit with local businesses and organizations to learn about available PD resources. In addition, PGO also partners with the Parkinson's Foundation Heartland Chapter and other organizations to co-host several learning events on different PD topics throughout the year.

To support our community

For over 25 years, 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

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. Support groups can help keep people up to date about the latest changes and developments in the disease and aid in dealing with day-to-day activities. They also provide an opportunity to discuss experiences and feelings and to share solutions to common problems.

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.

SHARLIN HEALTH & NEUROLOGY

Meetings: Last Wednesday of the month at 12:30 PM.
Email valerie@sharlinfxmed.com for Zoom meeting link.

PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP - BRANSON WEST AREA

11016 State Hwy 76, Ste 11
Branson West, MO 65737
785-643-7466

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 Wednesday of the month at 11:30 a.m.

WOMEN'S ONLY CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

This group is for women caring for someone with Parkinson's disease. CoxHealth Advantage Care Clinic
1819 S. National Ave.
Springfield, MO 65807
417-269-3616

Meetings: Fourth Tuesday of every month at 3 PM.

Registration is required before attending.

ABOUT PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Nearly one million people in the U.S. are living with Parkinson's disease, and over 90,000 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.



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 SUPPORT OF PGO

Doug & Judy Clements
Connie & Charles Powell
Marjorie Francis
John & Cordelia Gresham
Alyce Drewel

IN HONOR OF SHARON HARMON

Martha Swick

IN HONOR OF DONNA NELSON

Jeff Bryant

IN HONOR OF WILLIAM "BILL" BRAYMAN

Kristina Brayman

IN MEMORY OF TOMMY ROCKWAY

Elinor Rockway

IN MEMORY OF BRENDA NIMMO

Nancy & Gary Morris
John & Ann Smith
Stephen & Rita Otradovec
Jim & Linda Grigsby
Glenn & Jean Neely



**Gifts to the Parkinson's Group
of the Ozarks are tax deductible.
To learn more, visit us online at
parkinsonsgroup.org.**

PARKINSON'S GROUP OF THE OZARKS

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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

417-814-6067
info@Parkinsonsgroup.org



WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBER!

Molly McGrady

Hello, my name is Molly McGrady and I am honored to take on the Secretary position for PGO. I work as a speech-language pathologist for Mercy hospital in Springfield. In my work, I get to help individuals with speech, voice, swallowing, and cognitive impairments across a wide variety of conditions to improve their quality of life. This work has allowed me to work with many patients with Parkinson's as individuals with PD often have difficulties in one or more of these areas. I also have the privilege of leading PGO's LSVT Loud for Life class weekly.

A little bit about my background— I was born and raised in Springfield. I received my bachelor's degree from Truman State University in 2020 and my master's degree from University of Missouri in 2022. In my free time, I enjoy singing in church and with Springfield Chamber Chorus (a local community choir), going for walks with my dogs, cooking, and spending time with friends and family.

A Time for Goodbyes

HONORING TWO PGO BOARD MEMBERS



MELISSA MILLER YOUNG

The Board of Directors of the PGO wishes to extend much appreciation and well wishes to retiring board member, Melissa Miller Young.

Melissa was diagnosed with Parkinson's in April 2021. Already a client of The Bodysmith, she quickly joined Rock Steady Boxing classes, threw herself into learning as much about the disease as she could and eagerly joined the board in July of that same year.

Melissa works full-time for Women's Connect for Good while she has been tirelessly helping the PGO advocate for those within the PD community. She has secured large donations for the annual 5k from Women's Connect for Good while volunteering at the event and other PGO fundraisers.

Melissa is stepping down from the board to spend more time with family and will be welcoming her first grandchild.

Thank you Melissa for your service and hard work fighting back against PD.



LAURA LARIMORE

We would like to take a moment to recognize and thank Laura Larimore for her tremendous dedication and impact as a valued member of our Board. During her time with us, Laura has been a passionate advocate for the Parkinson's community—supporting our mission through her leadership, compassion, and hands-on involvement.

Through her advocacy and support, Laura has helped countless individuals living with Parkinson's find strength, connection, and confidence—especially through the many classes and programs she championed. Her energy and commitment have left a lasting mark, and we are deeply grateful for the time and care she has devoted to our organization.

Although Laura is stepping down from her role on the Board, we're delighted that she will continue to share her talents by assisting with our yoga classes. Her warmth and dedication will continue to inspire both participants and fellow instructors alike.

Please join us in expressing heartfelt thanks to Laura for her outstanding contributions and ongoing support. We are so thankful for all she has done—and continues to do—for the Parkinson's community.

Thank You

New Location Brings Beautiful Scenery for This Year's Walk/Run

BY JUSTIN MILAM



On September 20, 2025, the Pound the Pavement for Parkinson's Walk/Run brought our community together once again for a powerful morning of fun and connection. After an early round of rain showers looked to possibly dampen the mood, the clouds parted and treated us to a cool, beautiful fall morning, creating perfect running weather and a welcome backdrop for the day's events. This year marked our first race at Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park, and the new location delivered in every way. The scenic Wilson's Creek Greenway trail offered a peaceful, tree-lined course filled with wildlife sightings. This included a few deer who seemed as curious about the race as we were excited to be there!

Participants enjoyed post-run refreshments and connecting with friends and family. With nearly **300 attendees** this year, the energy was incredible, and together we raised **nearly \$20,000** to support programs that enhance the quality of life for individuals living with Parkinson's Disease in the Ozarks. These funds directly support our wellness classes, outreach efforts, and community initiatives that make a real difference for local families.

This year's event also came with a bit of friendly competition and a remarkable achievement. **Eli Saenz claimed victory for the third year in a row**, officially pulling off the three-peat! Whether running, walking, volunteering, or cheering from the sidelines, every person in attendance contributed to the spirit and success of the day.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our **presenting sponsors—Acadia,**

Cowork SGF Offices, and Women Connect 4Good—whose generosity helped make this event possible. We are also grateful for the support of our additional sponsors: **Wellness Concepts Clinic, AbbVie, Steak 'n Shake, Rock Steady Boxing at the Bodysmith, Center for Music Therapy and Wellness, Go See Soutee, Skully's, State Farm (Fred Harle), Empower Abilities, Kimberlynn Canvas, F8 Fitness, Dodson Williams Automotive, Kyle Insurance Services, Victory Technology Company, and Gateway Counseling Center.** Your partnership strengthens our mission year after year.

A big thank-you goes as well to our food sponsors, who kept everyone fueled and happy: **Pyramid Foods (Price Cutter), Ozark Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Village Inn, McAlister's Deli, S&L Donuts, and Early Bird.** From warm breakfast casseroles to refreshing drinks and sweet treats, no one left hungry and our participants certainly earned it!

And of course, we want to recognize the dozens of **dedicated volunteers** who assisted with setup, registration, course guidance, cleanup, and everything in between. We absolutely couldn't do this without you.

As we reflect on this memorable day, we are filled with appreciation for our participants, sponsors, and volunteers. **Your commitment helps us move closer to our mission of supporting, uplifting, and empowering those affected by Parkinson's Disease.**

Thank you for joining us, and we look forward to seeing you next year! Keep up with event updates at facebook.com/ParkinsonsGroup5K.





Cassi Locke Celebrates 5 Years with PGO

Many of you know her as the PGO girl and have seen her speaking at the Parkinson's support groups, taking pictures at the wellness classes, or behind the scenes at PGO events like the Parkinson's Resource Fair, Trivia Night, or Pound the Pavement for Parkinson's.

Cassi is the Executive Assistant for the PGO and their one and only employee. November marked a small milestone, her 5-year anniversary with the organization. Cassi took a moment to reflect on her time with the PGO and shared some of her favorite memories serving the Parkinson's community.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT WORKING WITH PGO?

I love visiting with our families. You really get to learn about their PD journey and a better sense of what they're going through. Each family experiences it differently, so they always have a unique story to tell. One thing in common is that they're always very grateful for the PGO and what we do. It's a very heart-filled rewarding experience to hear that.

WHAT'S BEEN YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY WITH THE PGO?

A few years ago, we gave out tickets to a Springfield Cardinals game through a community donation we received. My favorite memory was the pregame tailgate party at the Bodysmith's parking lot. I really enjoyed it because the weather was always wonderful, families brought delicious snacks, and we had fun with some baseball trivia.

WHAT'S THE HARDEST PART ABOUT YOUR JOB?

The most difficult part of my job is remembering names and faces! I'll either recognize one or the other, but it can take a while for my brain to piece the two together. With hundreds of people attending our classes and support groups, it can take me a moment to remember who's who sometimes, but I'll get there eventually!

WHAT ASPECT OF THE PGO MAKES YOU PROUD TO WORK THERE?

I work with such an amazing team. Each one of our Board Members comes from a unique background relating to the disease and is passionate about helping others. They've helped the PGO grow tremendously in the last 5 years. When I first started, there were just a few small groups and now we have 6 support groups and 11+ wellness classes in the area. None of this could have been made possible without their support and dedication.

WHAT'S A FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF THAT OTHERS MAY NOT KNOW?

I love board games and puzzles. I'm not much into card games unless the mood strikes me. My husband and I like to have game nights with our friends and we'll play a wide variety of games...Good Dog, Bad Zombie; Boggle; Betrayal at House on the Hill; Scattergories; just to name a few.

FREE GROUP CLASSES & ACTIVITIES IN THE OZARKS

As part of our mission, PGO is proud to sponsor multiple exercise and wellness classes for people with Parkinson's.

PD DANCE

THURSDAYS AT 3 PM

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

YOGA FOR PARKINSON'S

TUESDAYS AT 10:30 AM

Provided thanks to a community grant from the Parkinson's Foundation.

King's Way United
Methodist Church
2401 S. Lone Pine Ave.
Springfield, MO 65804
417-209-5418



PD SPEAK, SWALLOW & LEARN

TUESDAYS AT 1:30 PM & 6 PM

Virtual option available.
MSU – Ann Kampeter Sciences Hall
509 E. Cherry St.
Springfield, MO 65806
501-412-5621

PARKINSON'S EXERCISE THERAPY

TUESDAYS AT 2 PM &

SATURDAYS AT 10 AM

F8 Training and Wellness Studio
2048 S. Stewart Ave.
Springfield, MO 65804
417-720-1057

PILATES

WEDNESDAYS AT 12 PM & 1 PM

A physical assessment is required to start this class so make sure to call before joining.

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



PARKINSON'S EXERCISE GROUP

THURSDAYS AT 11 AM

11016 E. St. Hwy 76 Ste. 10
Branson West, MO 65737
417-357-6134

LOUD FOR LIFE SPEECH THERAPY

THURSDAYS AT 4:00 PM

Completion of LSVT LOUD is required before joining.

The Downtown Church
314 E. Walnut St.
Springfield MO 65804
417-763-9722



DRUMMING THERAPY & MUSIC THERAPY CLASSES

THURSDAYS AT 10:30 AM

& FRIDAYS AT 9:30 or 11:30 AM

No musical experience necessary.

Caregivers welcome.

Center for Music Therapy & Wellness

Drury University - Springfield Hall
Springfield, MO 65802
417-873-7877

PARKINSON'S INDOOR CYCLING

FRIDAYS AT 12 PM

Cox Meyer Center
3545 S. National Ave.
Springfield, MO 65807
417-844-3443



KARA DUNN MEMORIAL ROCK STEADY BOXING

Days and times vary. A physical assessment is required before joining. Visit www.bodysmithpilates.com or call for more info.

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





Parkinson's Group
of the Ozarks

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

SAVE THE DATE

Parkinson's Resource Fair

Saturday April 18th 2026 | 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

EMPOWER: ABILITIES

1450 W. Cambridge St., Springfield, MO 65807

Visit with local businesses and organizations to learn about programs
and services centered around Parkinson's disease in the Ozarks.

Free Resources • Health & Wellness • Education
Support • Planning for the Future
and Much More!

**50/50
Raffle**

**FREE
TO ATTEND!**

**Mini
Learning
Sessions**

**DOOR
PRIZES!**

**FOOD
TRUCK!**