$450,000 Gift to Expand Parkinson’s Foundation Center of Excellence Network

Here at Parkinson’s Foundation, we believe that everyone with Parkinson’s disease should have expert care.

That is why we were so pleased to accept the extraordinarily generous $450,000 donation from Stephen Bittel, chairman and founder of Terranova, a leading commercial real estate firm. This level of funding will provide critically needed resources that will help the Parkinson’s Foundation expand our Center of Excellence network this summer. Our network consists of 42 of the top medical centers we have recognized as providing expert care.

There are at least 60,000 new Parkinson’s disease diagnoses each year, and one million people living with the disease in the U.S. We must do more to ensure they have the life-improving care they will need to live life to the fullest — and that means addressing the fact that many medical centers across our country are not properly equipped to treat people with Parkinson’s.

Mr. Bittel’s gift will enable more medical centers to meet the rigorous criteria surrounding research and patient care that are hallmarks of a Parkinson’s Foundation Center of Excellence designation. This, in turn, will ensure as many people as possible receive the best medical advice, the support and the resources they need to live a full life with Parkinson’s disease.

“We are extremely grateful for Mr. Bittel’s generous donation and his ongoing support,” said Parkinson’s Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer John Lehr. “His contribution will have a significant impact on our community, as we continue to lead the charge in making life better for people with Parkinson’s and working toward a cure.”

Mr. Bittel has also agreed to raise an additional $1 million to support the movement disorder fellowship program, which is instrumental in developing the talents and passions of young Parkinson’s researchers, clinicians and physicians. These grants encourage them to devote their careers to the study and treatment of Parkinson’s disease.

Stephen Bittel says he first became involved with the Foundation in 2014 after seeing the impact of the disease on his colleague, Terranova Executive Vice President Mindy McIlroy, who serves on the Parkinson’s Foundation board. Like many people affected by Parkinson’s, the employees of Terranova and their families came together to support Ms. McIlroy, becoming the first Moving Day, a Walk for Parkinson’s team to raise more than $100,000.
By 2030, the number of people living with Parkinson’s disease is projected to double from the current number of one million. Yet there is not a corresponding number of clinicians and other health professionals being adequately trained to care for people with Parkinson’s — creating a severe healthcare treatment emergency.

Your generous support is helping us fill this gap through a host of in-person and online educational sessions for healthcare providers.

One such program, the Allied Team Training Program (ATTP) at the Parkinson’s Foundation, offers an intense 40-hour, three-day accredited course for healthcare professionals and caregivers. This immersive curriculum provides training on best practices for interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration with the goal of providing patients with the best care. This is the only program in the world that brings nurses, doctors, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists and social workers together to both teach and receive Parkinson’s training.

One alumnus of the program said: “ATTP will change my group practice and how we interact as a team. Better teams mean better care.”

Through another initiative — the Edmond J. Safra Visiting Nurse Faculty program — the Parkinson’s Foundation has educated more than 220 nurses in Parkinson’s care. Nurses are the front-line responders to patients, and studies have shown that when they receive specialized Parkinson’s training, their patients see vast improvements in well-being. These nurses have in turn gone on to train an estimated 20,000 student nurses annually. The number of individuals with Parkinson’s disease ultimately benefiting from this improved care is exponential.

What is a Parkinson’s Foundation Center of Excellence?

One of the most sought-after designations in the medical community, Parkinson’s Foundation Centers of Excellence are selected using strict selection criteria for Parkinson’s care, research and education — ensuring that facilities are staffed with the world’s leading healthcare experts in movement disorders.

Through a growing network of 42 leading medical centers worldwide, Centers of Excellence provide expert care to more than 100,000 people annually.

To find a Center of Excellence near you, visit Parkinson.org/search.
In the Research Lab:
Empowering the Next Generation of Researchers

One of the greatest challenges in the search for a cure is motivating young researchers to choose Parkinson’s as their life’s pursuit — especially since so many breakthroughs in medicine are discovered by people in the early stages of their careers.

That’s why the Parkinson’s Foundation invests $4 million annually to fund young physicians and scientists, as well as students, encouraging them to use these resources to bring their groundbreaking ideas to life through innovative therapies and treatments. These grants include:

The Stanley Fahn Junior Faculty Scholar Award

Dr. Stanley Fahn, a member of the Parkinson’s Foundation Board of Directors, is a pioneer in movement disorder research and patient care. Not only has he made significant contributions to the field, Dr. Fahn’s commitment to training and nurturing young scientists at Columbia University has shaped present-day methodologies in movement disorders treatment. This three-year award helps support early career researchers exploring the most promising treatments for Parkinson’s disease. It also helps recipients establish the groundwork that paves the way for future grants in independent scientific research.

Postdoctoral Fellowships for Basic Scientists

This two-year grant is awarded to young scientists who have recently completed their Ph.D. training. The first five years after receiving a Ph.D. are crucial in determining to which field of study a scientist will devote their life. This Parkinson’s Foundation fellowship helps encourage the next generation of scientists to pursue the field of Parkinson’s disease research. In addition to exploring potential new therapies for treating the disease, current fellowship recipients are also searching for biomarker tests that could be used for early diagnosis of Parkinson’s.

Visiting Scholar Award

The most groundbreaking research is rarely uncovered by one scientist working alone. Collaboration and creative thinking are crucial to achieving innovative breakthroughs. This award allows graduate students to expand their skill sets to benefit Parkinson’s research by visiting a host laboratory to work on a research project. In this unique setting, students will learn from other researchers, compare findings and maximize the knowledge gained from multi-disciplinary research projects — all with the goal of improving the lives of people with Parkinson’s.

Since 2000, the Parkinson’s Foundation has funded more than 400 scientists who are developing new treatments and moving our entire community toward a cure.

To learn more, visit Parkinson.org/research.
Giving Hope to One Young Woman

Christina was just 22 years old when she noticed a small tremor in her right foot.

She didn’t pay it much attention as she focused on her new career and starting a family.

Shortly after her first daughter was born, Christina began having trouble walking. Soon, her left arm stopped its natural swing as she walked. Christina went from doctor to doctor searching for answers to what was happening. One of her doctors even remarked half-joking that she might be one of the youngest people with Parkinson's ever.

Nearly 10 years after her first symptom appeared, she noticed her sense of smell diminishing — an early sign of Parkinson’s disease. Her husband insisted she see a movement disorder specialist.

A Parkinson’s Foundation Center of Excellence specialist in New York was able to see Christina immediately, and diagnosed her with young-onset Parkinson’s disease. She was only 33 years old.

"It was like something out of a nightmare," Christina recalls. She went on to explain that when you have your whole life ahead of you, you just aren’t prepared to hear a doctor say, “You have young-onset Parkinson’s disease.” It wasn’t until she looked up and saw her husband choking back tears that she knew this was reality.

Thanks to the expert care she receives at one of our Centers of Excellence, Christina manages her symptoms with medication, complemented by a vigorous exercise program, and is living an active life with her husband and two children.

As for tomorrow, Christina says, “I wake up every day thankful for the things I once took for granted. Although I am not sure what my future will hold, I know with my family by my side, I can conquer anything.”

To share your story, visit Parkinson.org/MyPDStory.

| YES! | I want to help improve care for people like Christina who are living with Parkinson’s, and advance research toward a cure. Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift to the Parkinson’s Foundation in the amount of: |
| $35 | $75 | $150 | $500 | Other $_____ |

Name

Address

Address

City     State  Zip

Please make your check out to the Parkinson’s Foundation. You may also give online at Parkinson.org/voice. All gifts are tax-deductible as allowed by law.