November 2018 Newsletter

Parkinson’s Foundation Georgia is dedicated to making life better for people with Parkinson's disease by improving care and advancing research toward a cure. With a unique focus on the benefits of exercise for those living with PD, we manage the PD Gladiators Fitness Network, a network of over 60 weekly community-based exercise classes in greater Atlanta and provide education and outreach to the medical community about the emerging body of research indicating that exercise can change the brain and positively impact PD symptoms.

As part of our commitment to serving the local Parkinson's community, we will send out this monthly e-newsletter to keep you informed about local events, fitness class changes, inspiring stories and more. Speaking of events, I hope to see you at our upcoming Fitness Counts educational program featuring cutting-edge speakers and information that will leave you inspired, motivated and empowered to fight Parkinson's!

Thank you for your support!

Annie Long - Parkinson's Foundation Georgia
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November Is National Caregiver Month

In honor of National Caregiver Month, we wanted to feature a couple that is new to the PD Gladiators Fitness Network.

Meet Charles and Suzanne Aloisio! The couple graciously agreed to sit down and invite us into their 28-year marriage, life and Parkinson’s journey that began 5 years ago when Charles was diagnosed.

How did you guys meet? “We had both been married for a long time and had spouses that chose to get a divorce. We are doing pretty well for a couple of rejects!” Suzanne joked. Charles recalls the first time they met was through mutual friends at a dance. “I commented on Suzanne’s outfit. She told me that
she was wearing a sundress because she didn’t have AC at home. I don’t know why but that caught my attention.”

**Has Parkinson’s changed you as a couple?** “Not really. Logistically, however, there are things about the PD that make outings and travel more difficult. We focus on activities that we can do together at home like watching movies, reading books and doing things around the house,” said Suzanne. “We also love going to the opera and just give ourselves more time to get there and settled before the crowds form.”

“All Charles has always been a good listener but he’s an even better listener with Parkinson’s. One of the challenges for me is how much to encourage and how much to suggest because I don’t want to be his mother, I want to be his wife. The physical therapist says things like ‘remind him to stand up straight and take bigger steps.’ I don’t always feel comfortable doing that and his response isn’t always very positive," Suzanne laughed. “I think PD brought us closer together. Charles is very appreciative of all that I do. He is always thanking me. I really love that.”

**When did you get involved with the PD Gladiators Fitness Network?** “The Monday before the 4th of July we went to our first boxing class,” Charles noted. "Now we go to the LDBF Boxing Training for PD class three times a week. Suzanne is in the I/II class and I’m in the III/IV. The different class times and distance make it an all-day affair but it’s worth it.”

"Boxing is something we do together to beat Parkinson’s. I love that spouses are invited to attend!” said Suzanne.
How do you guys help each other around the house? “Emptying the dishwasher is Charles’s job and he’s always consistent with it, even if he’s tired. He also helps me fold laundry which he didn’t do when he was still working.”

What do you do to take care of yourself Suzanne? “I’ve kept up with a lot of things that I did before the Parkinson’s diagnosis,” Suzanne recalls, “It’s important for me to take care of myself. I have friends in the neighborhood—we walk every morning for an hour. I belong to two book clubs. I lead a singing group with children at church on Wednesday evenings. Charles encourages me to do things. Sometimes I feel guilty leaving the house, but he’s always so understanding.”

"We are excited to be part of the PD community. It is wonderful to be able to support and encourage each other. It’s such a great group of folks. Charles and I appreciate all that you and others do on our behalf,” said Suzanne.

The Fight of a Lifetime

Written by Denise Formisano, Vice Chairman - LDBF

At the age of 16, LDBF Boxing Training for PD coach Bryan Jensen was diagnosed with generalized dystonia (Parkinson’s-like symptoms), which caused uncontrollable muscle spasms, muscle tightness and pain. His symptoms first began at the age of 10. It took years for Bryan to be diagnosed, which was finally made by Dr. Delong, the
pioneer of Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) from Emory University.

Up until the age of 16 and through the painful diagnosis process, Bryan was trained by Paul Delgado, founder of LDBF and Nate “Pops” Livramento, the namesake of LDBF, in technical boxing. Upon diagnosis, Dr. Delong recommended non-contact boxing for dexterity, range of motion, fine motor skills, balance and confidence.

Even though Bryan could not contact box anymore, he was inspired by people like Mohammed Ali and Freddie Roach, who both had Parkinson’s, to continue to persevere. Bryan continued training and was later hired by Paul Delgado and trained to teach Parkinson’s specific boxing classes for the LDBF Boxing Training Program for Parkinson’s. LDBF is a member of the PD Gladiators Fitness Network and is sponsored by Parkinson’s Foundation and Parkinson’s Foundation Georgia.

_Bryan realized that while growing up he just wanted to be normal, but that as an adult his story actually gave people hope._

And, here the journey came full circle, and he now coaches boxing to people living with Parkinson’s full time. Bryan has his Advanced MDT Training in Community Exercise for Parkinson’s disease certification, and USA Boxing Coach certification. He also teaches for-credit boxing at Emory University and is an adult and youth boxing trainer. As Bryan continues to box, he loves watching old boxing fights and MMA fights To reach Bryan, message him through his Instagram at @atlantaboxingcoach.
New “Inside the Ring” Specialty Class - Fridays at 11 a.m. in Sandy Springs

Bryan’s new “Inside the Ring” specialty class is held on Fridays at 11 a.m. in The Fight Club, 195 Hilderbrand Drive (next door to Fitness Firm Studio-location of LDBF’s Boxing Training for PD classes in Sandy Springs). This unique boxing class will focus on footwork, balance, lateral movements, full range of motion, coordination, deep-breathing techniques, and whole-body movements. Classes include warm ups, inside the ring training, speed bags, double end bags, heavy bags and cool down stretching exercises. Come join Bryan and let him help you improve your footwork and movements!

Pioneering Exercise Research Inspired by a Gladiator

Written by Larry Kahn

Has your neurologist or physical therapist told you to “exercise outside your comfort zone” to maximize the neurological benefit of your workout? While the effect had been demonstrated in animal studies, a study published in 2009 by Parkinson’s disease researcher Jay Alberts and his colleagues was among the first to support a finding that “forced” exercise improved motor function in human PD patients more than “voluntary” exercise did. The inspiration for Dr. Alberts’ groundbreaking research was none other than PD Gladiator Cathy Frazier.
“I met Jay when I participated in his PD study on arm movement at Georgia Tech in 2001,” says Frazier, who was diagnosed in 1998 and participates in Dawn Benson’s Yoga for PD class. “I introduced him to my husband’s cycling group, Frazier Cycling Partners, and he quickly became an avid cyclist.”

While none of the four neurologists Frazier had seen recommended exercise as therapy for her PD, Dr. Alberts was already an advocate when they met. They were biking across Iowa together in 2003 to raise awareness and promote exercise in general as a PD therapy when the inspiration for Alberts’ research on the effect of forced exercise on Parkinson’s disease struck.

“I was not a cyclist so I don’t recall exactly how or why I came to agree to cycle 464 miles in 7 days from one end of Iowa to the other,” Frazier says. “I started training on the bike but it soon became apparent that I had a balance issue and kept falling--that’s when Jay came up with riding the tandem which is where the forced exercise comes into play.”

On the tandem bicycle, the person in back is forced to pedal as fast as the person in front. Frazier was forced to pedal harder and faster than she could have on her own because Alberts was a strong cyclist. The ride through the Iowa countryside was grueling for Frazier, and she expected her symptoms would be exacerbated due to fatigue and stress. But to her surprise, her handwriting improved dramatically, and she had no tremors or stiffness.

“I remember telling Jay at the end of the week that I felt like I didn’t have PD,” she says.
Dr. Alberts was inspired to conduct a series of clinical trials in which he had people with PD ride tandem bicycles, solving the ethical dilemma of how researchers could “force” people to exercise. While the question of the optimal intensity of exercise for people with PD has yet to be conclusively resolved, the results of Alberts’ studies have been cited as support for some high intensity programs. (Check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program!)

Dr. Alberts was so encouraged by the positive results that he founded Pedaling for Parkinson’s, a non-profit organization whose mission is to raise awareness and funds for PD research and caregivers. The PFP Cycling Team is made up of PD supportive cyclists and PWP riders from all over the country who come together for one week in July to ride across Iowa fundraising and educating. Cathy Frazier is the organization’s vice president. For more information go to www.pedalingforparkinsons.org.

Fitness Counts: The Real Deal on Exercise

On Friday, November 30, 2018, we are hosting our fall educational symposium - "Fitness Counts: Managing Your Parkinson's with Exercise" at Heritage Sandy Springs from 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. We are thrilled to offer a program that's cutting-edge and one that will reinforce our message of hope, empowerment and positivity!

Together we will learn more about the important role exercise plays in maintaining balance, mobility and activities of daily living. Hear from local
experts as they discuss the latest research findings on exercise, the role exercise should play in your treatment plan and how to stay active longer with therapies, medication and assistive devices. We will also look at the benefits of group-based exercise and how your neurologist, physical therapist and fitness instructor can help address certain barriers to exercise for you and your loved ones.

Lunch will be provided (thanks to our generous sponsor ACADIA). You can also interact with our other event sponsors, including US WorldMeds, AbbVie, UCB, Impax and Adamas.

You will leave with all of the tools you need to start or continue exercising for better health! And every attendee will get a copy of the Parkinson's Foundation "Fitness Counts" publication as well as other free resources.

www.parkinson.org/atledu

Thank You for Your Support of Moving Day Atlanta!

Thanks to the dedication and support of our incredible community of donors, volunteers, participants and community supporters, the 6th annual Moving Day Atlanta walk was a huge success. Over 1,000 people came out on Saturday, October 27, 2018, to the Piedmont Park Promenade to dance, box, walk and celebrate the power of movement. Funds are still
coming in but to date, we've raised over $220,000 to make life better for people with Parkinson's. Truly something to celebrate! Please feel free to post and share your photos to our Facebook page album.

Upcoming Events

**November 19, 2018 – Living Well with Parkinson's - Meditation**

Join the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta on November 19, 2018, from 1-2 p.m. Learn how mindfulness programs demonstrate positive reactions, like reducing stress levels, combating depressing, and redefining body image. Join Valerie Chambers, certified through the Veda Center, as she teaches how to practice mindfulness and broaden your awareness of your body and mind.

Care partner support group available. This program is supported by a community grant from the Parkinson’s Foundation. [Click here for more information.]

**November 30, 2018 – Educational Symposium – “Fitness Counts: Managing Your Parkinson’s with Exercise”**

Join the Parkinson's Foundation for this free educational symposium on Friday, November 30 at Heritage Sandy Springs. Hear from local experts Jorge Juncos, MD, Joash Lazarus, MD, James Annesi, PhD, and Amy Morse, DPT, as they discuss the evidence-based benefits of exercise on Parkinson’s disease (including mobility, mood change and quality of life) and show you how preventive and rehabilitative therapy, medication and devices can help PD patients exercise at
effective levels at any stage of the disease. The symposium is free and lunch will be provided, but seating is limited. Sign up today for this must-see event!

- **Date/Time:** Friday, November 30 (10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.)
- **Location:** Heritage Sandy Springs - 6110 Blue Stone Rd, Sandy Springs, GA 30328
- **RSVP:** [www.parkinson.org/atlenu](http://www.parkinson.org/atlenu)

**March 23, 2019 – "Good Vibrations: A Night of Comedy and Inspiration"

Tickets are now on sale for "Good Vibrations: A Night of Comedy and Inspiration!" Special guest and comedian Max Fine will join us. Laugh until you cry and help support the Parkinson’s Foundation in Georgia – now operating the PD Gladiators Fitness Network and programs. Support our mission to make life better for people with Parkinson's. Your gift will help us improve care and advance research toward a cure. Together, let’s deliver a knockout punch to Parkinson’s disease!

[GET YOUR TICKETS](http://www.laugh4parkinsons.org)
Special Thanks to Our Sponsors!