2018 was a pivotal year for the Parkinson's Foundation in Georgia! Read on to bask in the memories and learn more about what the Parkinson's Foundation is doing to make life better for people with Parkinson's disease (PD).
Ellie and Larry Kahn founded PD Gladiators in 2013. With the guidance of a passionate Board of Directors, the Kahns led PD Gladiators to increase awareness of the benefits of vigorous and varied exercise for people with PD, ultimately creating the PD Gladiators Metro Atlanta Fitness Network, an affiliation of independent fitness instructors offering exercise classes adapted for people with PD. To discuss the merger and what it means for the Gladiator community, PD Gladiators founders Larry and Ellie Kahn sat down with Parkinson’s Foundation Georgia chapter Development Director Annie Long.

**Annie:** Why was the merger with the Parkinson’s Foundation the right thing to do?

**Larry:** There are several great reasons — the Foundation’s national platform and eliminating inefficiencies to name two — but to me the key was sustainability. It gives me great comfort that a powerhouse organization like the Parkinson’s Foundation will build on the good work we started here.

**Annie:** Going back five years, what motivated you to take on such an ambitious project?

**Larry:** Back in 2013, we saw a hopeful body of clinical research showing the benefits of exercise on PD and a lack of awareness in the Parkinson’s community. For us, it was about more than just making these classes available. We had to convince neurologists to use valuable patient time to educate them about exercise and convince people with PD to overcome difficult barriers to exercise like fatigue, depression, and transportation that make them statistically less likely to join group fitness classes.

**Ellie:** We knew that the key to closing this gap was to convince neurologists to prescribe exercise as a way to potentially delay symptom onset. And we had to convince fitness instructors to dedicate time and resources to get PD-specific training to ensure participants were safe — and to reassure neurologists that the network was a safe place to send their patients!

**Annie:** PD Gladiators — and now the Parkinson’s Foundation — keeps the community operating as a team, allowing our website and promotional materials to be the one-stop shop for PD-specific group exercise in Atlanta. Promoting the network creates easier access for patients and ultimately greater participation in programs.

**Ellie:** We need to keep the doctors and physical therapists on the team, too — they’re the key to creating a pipeline of new Gladiators to fill our classes. I used to go door-to-door telling neurologists about the network and exercise research. I’m thrilled to see the progress we’ve made over the past five years!

**Larry:** Together, we’ve built a strong team that is taking on some exciting new projects and streamlining our procedures.

**Annie:** Thank you both for your dedication to this community. It’s been an honor learning from you.

To learn more visit Parkinson.org/Georgia.
Inaugural “Good Vibrations” Comedy Night Proves Laughter Is the Best Medicine

In March 2018, we hosted the inaugural “Good Vibrations: A Night of Improv and Inspiration” event at the Village Theatre in Atlanta, GA, featuring longtime radio personality Steve McCoy, who is living with Parkinson’s, as the emcee. Comedian Max Fine opened for the improv show. Music, food and hilarious entertainment made the event a roaring success. Together we raised more than $30,000 to support our local programs.

Tickets are now on sale for the second annual comedy event, featuring headliner comedian Max Fine. This night of laughter is taking place:

Saturday, March 23, 2019
Monday Night Brewing — The Garage.

In addition to side-splitting entertainment, we will also have live music, dinner and a silent auction.

Purchase tickets at Laugh4parkinsons.org before they sell out!

Reaching More Metro Atlanta Neurologists Than Ever

After founding PD Gladiators and getting the first boxing program off the ground, Ellie and Larry Kahn embarked on a mission to convince neurologists to send their patients to exercise programs. We are fortunate to now have a Clinical Outreach Committee of volunteers who are dedicated to getting our information into the hands of every metro Atlanta neurologist. Lloyd Spann, with the help of volunteers like Mark Claude and Martha Farrell, is committed to getting our fitness information into neurology offices and is making tremendous progress.

“We continue to find that neurologists are aware of and are embracing the vital role that exercise plays in the health and quality of life for people living with Parkinson's,” said Lloyd Spann, committee chair.

If you would like to get involved and help us reach more neurologists and people with PD, please consider joining us as an Exercise Ambassador! You'll receive an information packet you can share at your next doctor's appointment. You can also help us distribute brochures at clinics around town.

Learn more about becoming an Exercise Ambassador at Parkinson.org/Georgia/Clinical.
Spring Educational Program Highlights Healthy Lifestyle Interventions

More than 200 people from the Atlanta PD community enthusiastically attended “Living Well with Parkinson’s: Nutrition and Neuroplasticity” on April 14, 2018. The crowd filled the exhibit hall at the Lenbrook Life Plan Community in Buckhead, hoping for inspiration from featured speakers Laurie Mischley, PhD, ND, MPH, and Giri Krishnamurthy, PhD. They were not disappointed.

Dr. Mischley, a path-blazing researcher from Seattle, WA, explained how people with PD can influence their outcomes with a heavy investment in self-care, exercise, diet, sleep and other lifestyle modifications. Dr. Krishnamurthy explained how a healthy brain guides movement and took a deeper look at how neuroplasticity offers proactive people with Parkinson’s hope for delaying disease progression and compensating for impairments with exercise and other activity.

On behalf of the thousands of people living with Parkinson’s and their care partners we serve in Georgia, we would like to thank everyone who participated in Moving Day Atlanta on October 27, 2018. More than 1,000 participants came out to walk, dance, box and move to beat PD. The excitement and passion of everyone who attended was truly inspiring! Save the date for our next Moving Day, taking place October 19, 2019 at Piedmont Park.

For more information or to make a year-end contribution to your Moving Day team, please visit MovingDayAtlanta.org.

Shout-out to Our Network Instructors

Thanks to all of our PD Gladiators Fitness Network instructors and volunteers who make these programs safe, effective and life-changing. You are the heart of this operation and we can’t thank you enough for the time you’ve dedicated to keeping our Gladiators safe and active at any stage of the disease.

Interested in joining the Network as a fitness instructor? Contact Annie Long at Along@Parkinson.org or 770-450-0792.
Gladiator Guide Program Builds Relationships While Strengthening Our Community

In 2018, we launched our Gladiator Guide program — a volunteer-run initiative dedicated to connecting individuals (Gladiators) within the PD Gladiators Fitness Network — all to strengthen our community and encourage people to start or continue their exercise journeys. Additionally, the Gladiator Guide program introduces people to the Parkinson’s Foundation and provides a personal contact to those who are newly diagnosed or new to our programs and resources.

Valeria Gary, a Gladiator Guide, told us why she’s involved in the program. “It allows me to pursue all of my passions,” Valeria said. “As a speech-language pathologist with almost 30 years of experience, I have come to love helping people with Parkinson’s find their voice. As an ACE-certified health coach, I enjoy helping people who are looking to add more joy and wellness into their lives. As a competitive powerlifter, I know the benefits of exercise and want to encourage people to move more. As a lifelong learner, I find that the stories that others share of their journeys give me the inspiration to face my own challenges.”

For more information, please visit Parkinson.org/Georgia/Gladiator or call us at 770-450-0792 to connect with one of our volunteers today!

Parkinson’s Foundation Sponsors Training for 26 Local Fitness Professionals

As part of our commitment to expand our PD Gladiators Fitness Network, the Parkinson’s Foundation awarded a grant to MDT Education Solutions, LLC, in 2018 to train 26 fitness professionals to work with people living with Parkinson’s.

We are excited to see more people serving our Parkinson’s community and look forward to giving more of you access to classes and programs that will help you fight Parkinson’s disease. New classes will be announced in early 2019!

Visit Parkinson.org/Georgia and click on the “PD Gladiators Fitness Network” tab for class information.

Fitness Counts Program Focuses on Staying Active at Any Age or Stage

On November 30, 2018, nearly 200 attendees joined us for our fall educational symposium "Fitness Counts: Managing Your Parkinson’s with Exercise."

The stellar lineup of local experts delivered an empowering program that helped participants learn more about the real benefits of exercise and how to exercise safely and effectively at all stages of the disease. The speakers described a new paradigm for treatment, with neurologists referring patients to a physical therapist (PT) upon diagnosis; the PT designing an exercise regimen including PD-specific fitness classes; and trained fitness instructors referring clients back to the medical team, creating a continuum of care focused on maintaining and improving mobility leading to a better quality of life.

Stay tuned for more information on our spring educational symposium, in partnership with the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta (MJCCA). For updates and information, please visit Parkinson.org/Georgia/Events.
Special Thanks to the Parkinson’s Foundation - Georgia Advisory Council

Our achievements this year would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our incredible Advisory Council members. These individuals have gone above and beyond in their service to the Parkinson’s community, meeting monthly (and sometimes more) to help plan and execute projects and programs that the Parkinson’s Foundation is working on in Georgia.

We are honored to have such an accomplished team involved. We thank them for their service:

Larry Kahn, JD  
Advisory Council President and Grant Writing Committee Co-chair  
Co-founder of PD Gladiators, Inc.

Ellie Kahn  
Secretary and Treasurer  
Co-founder of PD Gladiators, Inc.

Sarah Blanchard, MS  
Network Evaluation Committee Co-chair

Andrew Friede, MD, MPH  
Grant Writing Committee Co-chair

Madeleine E. Hackney, PhD  
Research Advisor

Wendy Haggerty, C-IAYT  
Consumer Outreach Committee Co-chair

Kelly Hayes  
YMCA Liaison

Eric J. Joiner, MBA  
Advisor

Dave Jones  
Advisor

Jorge L. Juncos, MD  
Medical Advisor

Bill McFerrin  
Affiliate Relations Committee Chair

Amy Morse, PT, DPT  
Network Evaluation Committee Co-chair

Tim Nantz, MSEE  
Governance Committee Chair

Lloyd Spann  
Clinical Outreach Committee Chair

Paul Tucker, MBA  
Fundraising Committee Chair

Local Success Stories

Tom & Judy Dorn and Paul & Beth Berghoff

Paul and Beth

Paul Berghoff has been a member of the LDBF Boxing Training for PD program since 2016. After a diagnosis of Parkinson’s in 2003, he underwent Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) in 2009 to improve freezing of gait and several years later began using assistive devices. In a recent Saturday morning class, Paul surprised everyone by standing up with help from a volunteer. Tears of joy filled the room as Paul beamed from ear to ear with pride. Ever since that day, Paul attempts to stand with assistance during every boxing class, even getting some punches in on the speed bag!

Paul’s wife Beth attributes Paul’s improvement to a combination of factors, including regular appointments with his neurologist, frequent visits to his physical therapist and other therapeutic activities like speech therapy, music therapy, and boxing to name a few.

We love hearing from our Gladiators. Please send your inspirational story to Georgiainfo@Parkinson.org.

Tom and Judy

Tom Dorn has been taking PD Dance classes at Still Pointe Studio since September 2015. After a diagnosis of Parkinson’s in 2012 and a re-diagnosis of Parkinsonism in 2016, Tom was told that exercise was the best thing he could do. PD Dance classes were the perfect fit.

Every Tuesday, Tom, along with Judy, his wife of 52 years and care partner, attend the classes under the professional direction of Rob and Eleanor Rogers. Rob and Eleanor are encouraging and fun, as they teach exercises and steps to people who thought they were unable to do so — and it’s all done to music.

Paul and Beth

Paul Berghoff has been a member of the LDBF Boxing Training for PD program since 2016. After a diagnosis of Parkinson’s in 2003, he underwent Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) in 2009 to improve freezing of gait and several years later began using assistive devices. In a recent Saturday morning class, Paul surprised everyone by standing up with help from a volunteer. Tears of joy filled the room as Paul beamed from ear to ear with pride. Ever since that day, Paul attempts to stand with assistance during every boxing class, even getting some punches in on the speed bag!

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We love hearing from our Gladiators. Please send your inspirational story to Georgiainfo@Parkinson.org.
Looking Ahead – What’s in Store for 2019?

As we reflect on the tremendous year we’ve had and celebrate the hopeful, proactive community we’ve built here in Atlanta, here is what we have planned for 2019 and beyond!

**PD GLADIATORS FITNESS NETWORK EXPANSION**
We look forward to adding more fitness professionals and programs to our PD Gladiators Fitness Network! In January we will announce new programs coming soon to the metro Atlanta area and beyond.

*Interested in joining the PD Gladiators Fitness Network as an instructor? Looking for more resources in your community? Please contact Annie Long at Along@Parkinson.org or 770-450-0792.*

**CUTTING-EDGE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**
As part of our commitment to serving the Parkinson’s community here in metro Atlanta, we look forward to offering more cutting-edge educational programs in the spring and fall. We will also host smaller-scale educational, social and fundraising events throughout the year to encourage you to engage with your peers and get the support you need to fight PD!

**INTRODUCING THE NEW “EXERCISE AMBASSADORS” PROGRAM**
*Help Us Reach More Individuals Affected by Parkinson’s!*
Our Clinical Outreach Committee is looking for new volunteers to help support their efforts to reach every local neurologist. Wouldn’t it be great if all of those who are newly diagnosed immediately received information about the benefits of exercise and our fitness programs without having to look for it? That’s our goal and we need your help! Those who are interested in learning more should visit Parkinson.org/Georgia/Clinical or call 770-450-0792.

Volunteering could be as simple as taking an informational folder to your next neurology appointment or as involved as visiting with different offices around town to distribute materials.

**COMMUNITY GRANTS TO CREATE MORE LOCAL RESOURCES**
Thanks to the generous support of donors like you and the success of Moving Day, A Walk for Parkinson’s, the Parkinson’s Foundation is now accepting applications for local Community Grant programs.

**$1.2 Million Available for Community Grants**

Parkinson’s Foundation community grants further the health, wellness and education of people with Parkinson’s across the nation. These community-based grants help fund education and outreach programs — like the PD Gladiators Fitness Network — along with local research initiatives that address unmet needs in the Parkinson’s community. Since 2011, the Parkinson’s Foundation has funded more than 220 community-based programs that make life better for people living with PD. From June 2018 to July 2019, the Parkinson’s Foundation will award $1.2 million in community grants, ranging from a minimum of $5,000 to a maximum of $25,000 per grant application. All Parkinson’s-related programs are eligible to apply.

Apply online at Parkinson.org/CommunityGrants by January 31, 2019.
JOIN THE PD GLADIATORS FITNESS NETWORK
If you aren’t already exercising for better health and for a better quality of life, check out the Parkinson’s Foundation PD Gladiators Fitness Network — currently offering 60 classes per week for people with Parkinson’s disease. We will soon expand into new locations with new offerings.

Visit Parkinson.org/Georgia and click on the “PD Gladiators Fitness Network” for details about fitness programs, our weekly schedule and to find classes nearest you. Call us for help finding the right program at 770-450-0792.

QUESTIONS?
Contact the Parkinson’s Foundation Georgia chapter today!
Annie Long, Development Director
Along@Parkinson.org
770-450-0792

Celeste Tennant, Development Manager
Ctennant@Parkinson.org
404-397-1014

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