

Live it!

A Resource for Iowans with Parkinson's Disease and those who care for them.



Always up for a Challenge

Lyle Gibson



Daring to Be an Educator

Keith Fritz

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ONLINE

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Also, follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/lowalandR) and Twitter (twitter.com/lowaParkinson)



Reader Submissions

Live it! magazine is intended to be a voice for the Parkinson's disease community, and we are pleased to consider article, art, and photo submissions for future issues from our readers. Please send your submission requests to Iowa Parkinson Disease Information and Referral at UnityPoint Health – Des Moines, 1200 Pleasant St. E-524, Des Moines, Iowa 50309, with *Live it!* on the attention line, or email them to informreferral@apdaiowa.org. Please note: The decision to include reader submissions is at the discretion of the editorial staff. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit or otherwise alter any material submitted. If you would like submission material returned to you, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

letter from the **Live it!** staff

Live it! Staff

Medical Director: Lynn Struck, MD

Managing Editor: Crissanka Christadoss

Editors: Hannah Crawford, Vicki Ingham and
Linda Jordening

Contributing Writers: Gary Johnson and
Trina Radske-Suchan

Art Director: Patrick Vaassen

Live it! Editorial Board

Lynn Struck, M.D., Medical Director

Crissanka Christadoss, Coordinator,

Iowa Parkinson Disease Information and Referral

Vicki Ingham

Linda Jordening

Patrick Vaassen

Request for Submissions:

The staff would like to invite words and photographs from you. Share with us photographs of you, your artwork, your words – anything that shows how you *Live it!* Please see submission guidelines on the bottom of page 2.

Disclaimer:

All material related to Parkinson's disease contained in this magazine is solely for the information of the reader. It should not be used for treatment purposes, but rather for discussion with the patient's physician. Specific articles reflect the opinion of the writer and are not necessarily the opinion of the editorial staff, the Information and Referral Center, the medical director of the Center, The Iowa Chapter of APDA, or the APDA.

Greetings *Live it!* Readers,

On behalf of the *Live it!* staff, we hope you've had a wonderful year and are looking forward to spending the holidays with your family and friends. We give thanks this holiday season for the many committed and generous individuals who have helped raise funds for our organization—you can read more about them on pages 11 and 14-17.

In this issue, we focus on solutions to issues faced by those with Parkinson's—both tools you can use right now in your everyday lives, as well as technology that promises to deliver benefits in the near future.

In her letter on page 4, Dr. Lynn Struck, MD, examines recent developments in smartphone applications that have the potential to revolutionize the way we detect and assess Parkinson's disease symptoms. Gary Johnson, ATP, offers practical solutions for everyday dining dilemmas (page 7). He reviews a number of different dining utensils and kitchen tools that can make life easier for someone with Parkinson's—just in time for the holiday gift-giving season.

Trina Radske-Suchan, PT, CSCS, member of the Iowa Falls Prevention Coalition, brings to our attention the rise of unintentional fall-related injuries and deaths in Iowa (page 5). She provides some great ideas to help Iowans improve their flexibility and balance, reduce their fear of falling, and decrease their likelihood of experiencing a fall.

We also bring you the stories of three unique individuals: an athlete, an artist, and an educator. Lyle Gibson, author of *A Lifetime in Motion*, describes how his love of sports has developed over a lifetime and how he continues to stay active after his diagnosis (page 8). Chris Brackett creates unique floral garden ornaments—she tells the story of how she first got started with this fun idea (page 6). Keith Fritz, high school principal in Northwood, Iowa, explains why he loves his job and how he keeps up with the demands of both work and family (page 12).

We hope you enjoy their inspiring stories. And of course, we wish you a joyful holiday season!

From *Live it!* Staff

contact us:



Iowa Parkinson Disease
INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

American Parkinson Disease Association
Iowa Parkinson Disease Information and Referral Center
UnityPoint Health – Des Moines
1200 Pleasant Street E-524, Des Moines, Iowa 50309
(877) 872-6386 | www.apdaiowa.org 

from our medical director



Lynn K. Struck, MD
Neurologist
Physician Specialty Clinic
UnityPoint Health – Des Moines

The Iowa Parkinson Disease Information and Referral Center and Live it! magazine are privileged to have board-certified clinical neurologist Lynn Struck, MD, as our advisory medical director.

Dr. Struck is on staff with UnityPoint Health Physicians, Des Moines, and is a leading expert in movement disorders in Iowa. She has focused her career on advances in treatment of her many patients with Parkinson's disease and ongoing research to find better treatments and, ultimately, a cure.

Detecting and Monitoring Parkinson's Symptoms Using Smartphones

Recently there has been a significant interest in being able to monitor an individual's Parkinson's disease by using smartphones. There are several studies ongoing to allow patients to do this. Various applications are being investigated. Speech can be abnormal in Parkinson's. There are ways to characterize the loudness, pitch, and fluency of speech. A tremor can also be detected in the voice.

In regard to posture and gait, there have been some studies that can analyze body motion. For finger tapping, which is an indicator of fine motor control, there are applications that can assess whether there is any hesitancy or freezing in a tapping pattern. Also speed, rhythm, and whether there is any fatigue can be analyzed. Finally in regard to reaction time, we can measure the time between a stimulus and the corresponding response.

It is still to be determined whether these applications on smartphones are an effective tool for detection and assessment of Parkinson's disease. Further research is necessary. It is a novel approach to monitoring a person's detection and assessment symptoms, though, and further research is necessary. ■

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Falls Prevention

in Iowa



By Trina Radske-Suchan, PT, CSCS, member of the Iowa Falls Prevention Coalition

Did you know that every 15 seconds an older adult is treated in an emergency department for a fall-related injury? Did you also know that every 29 minutes an older adult dies from a fall? According to the Iowa Department of Public Health, unintentional fall-related injuries and deaths are on the rise in Iowa. For those over the age of 65, it is the leading cause of death.

With adults over the age of 65, many falls are related to chronic disease and deconditioning. The total charges for fall-related hospitalizations in Iowa average \$92 million per year. In addition to medical costs, falls also contribute to a decreased ability to perform household tasks, a reduced quality of life, and may result in loss of independence.

Falls are a frequent complication of Parkinson's disease, and preventing falls is very important. Recent studies have confirmed the high rate and high risk of falls of patients with Parkinson's disease, even when compared with other fall-prone populations. The impact of falls is considerable, often leading to an incapacitating fear of renewed falls.

Two really important things are to work with your doctor to ensure that your treatments are optimal and to consult with a physical therapist who can assess your walking and balance. Physical therapists can help recommend assistive devices or specific exercises to improve safety.

The Iowa Falls Prevention Coalition provides education and information to help Iowans improve their flexibility and balance, reduce their fear of falling, and decrease their likelihood of experiencing a fall.

One of the goals of the coalition is to increase the number of older adults and adults with disabilities at risk for falls participating in evidence-based fall prevention programs around the state.

Three programs have been recognized specifically for their evidence-based fall prevention qualities as endorsed by the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Classes are offered throughout Iowa on an ongoing basis and there is a continued effort to increase the number of those classes offered in as many communities around the state as possible.

Matters of Balance: An evidence-based falls prevention program for older adults who have sustained falls in the past, have limited physical activity due to concerns about falling, and are interested in learning more about preventing future falls. Classes are held twice a week for four weeks and are taught by trained leaders in the community.

Stepping On: An evidence-based falls prevention program that empowers older adults to carry out healthy behaviors that reduce the risk of falling. Community workshops are offered once a week for seven weeks. In a small group setting, participants learn balance exercises and develop specific knowledge and skills to prevent falls. Workshops are highly participative and expert professionals are brought in from the community to address certain areas of fall risk.

Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention: Tai chi consists of slow, relaxed movements. Studies show that tai chi improves balance, functional mobility, and flexibility, increases strength, reduces risk of falling, decreases pain, and increases psychological well-being.

For more information or to find a program near you, visit www.iowaaging.gov or www.lifelonglinks.org.





Art Springs From Unlikely Places

Chris Brackett creates unique floral garden ornaments

Chris Brackett

Chris Brackett doesn't consider herself an artist. "Heavens no, I'm not artistic!" she protested. Her creations, though, tell a different story. Chris makes garden art—flowers crafted from ceramic plates and saucers with stems made of stair railing spindles.

Though born in northwest Iowa, Chris moved away for many years before settling in Spencer to work for Morton Buildings. She met her husband, Jim, who also worked at the company, though in a different town. She claims what drew her to him was his Harley, and for many years the couple loved to take motorcycle trips. In fact, it was on one of those trips that Chris saw the flowers made out of plates at a craft show. They were too big to take home on the motorcycle, but she asked Jim if he thought they could make them, and with his help she decided to give them a try.

Most of the plates Chris uses to make her flowers come from Goodwill and garage sales. She drills the holes in the center of the plates to attach them together, and Jim helps by attaching the spindles to put in the ground. Friends who know about her creations collect plates for her as she finds them.

She has made these flowers for about three years now, and they are currently for sale in the Shoppes at Bradley Hall in Centerville. "I enjoy putting them together from things I find all over Iowa, so none of them are the same," said Chris. "Maybe that's why I like it—these different things go together and look like art."

In the beginning, Chris tried selling them at craft shows herself, but gave that up. "I always think people should think they are as cute as I do, and should buy them," said Chris. "It drove me crazy."

Chris was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2003, though now that she knows what she has, she recognizes symptoms going back as far as 1999. She had stopped working at Morton Buildings and was working part time in a flower shop. The owner of the shop had a husband with Parkinson's, and she said Chris's symptoms sounded like those he had experienced, which helped lead Chris to the correct diagnosis.

While Parkinson's does change several things about her life, Chris is able to manage her symptoms by working closely with her doctor. "My doctor has me on such a wonderful drug regimen right now that I don't have tremors," said Chris. "I have what I call a stuttering foot, and there are days that I get real tired, but it doesn't affect my thinking about what I want to put together for the flowers. The only thing is I can't get holes marked in the center of the plates for drilling because I can't use a ruler. But Jim helps with the marking."

Chris now lives on Lake Rathbun near Moravia, Iowa, with Jim and their shih tzu, Bricka.





Options for Common Dining Dilemmas

By Gary Johnson, ATP - Iowa Program for Assistive Technology, University of Iowa

Good Grips Utensils - Weighted

A buildup handle and an additional six ounces of weight in the handle provide more control for persons with limited hand control due to Parkinson's or spasticity. The shaft is bendable to allow for customized right or left-handed usage. Dishwasher safe. I have also had people tell me that switching to a heavier silverware helps.



Knives and Peelers

Good Grips make a line of knives and peelers for persons who appreciate their ease of grasp. It's not just the buildup, pressure-absorbing handle but the fact that you have options on how you accomplish your kitchen tasks.



Placemats: Make Your Own

Non-slip pads are available for purchase, but you can easily make your own customized pads using rubberized shelf liner. The non-slip material grips on both sides to secure objects such as plates, cups, glasses, and utensils. Shelf liner is readily available from local retailers.



Weighted Insulated Cup

Like weighted silverware, the weighted cup can lessen the intensity of tremors or shaking. A steel weight is contained in the base to increase the weight. It is insulated to help maintain liquid temperature and insulates your hand from the heat or cold. NOT microwavable.



Plates and Dishes

Plates and dishes are available for purchase that have non-skid bottoms. The non-skid bottom limits plate movement while getting food on utensils. The built-up rims or raised sides provide a stop while pushing food onto a utensil.



Liftware Utensil

I describe this as a "smart" spoon or fork. It is a stabilizing handle and a selection of attachments that include a soup spoon, everyday spoon, and fork. The base automatically stabilizes the attached utensil so it shakes less than your hand. A full battery charge can last through several meals so you don't always have to bring the charger along.



Five-Way Ergonomic Opener

Frustrated with pull-tabs and bottle caps? This ergonomic opener solves that problem. Use it for twisting off water and soda bottle caps, vacuum sealed jar tops, metal bottle caps, and pull-up tabs on cans. This might be the handiest tool in your kitchen! A great gift—buy one for those you know it can help!



Great! Where can I get these items? Some of the Good Grips items and shelf liner/placemats are available from local retailers. Most of the rest will have to be ordered from online retailers. I've listed three sources below:

- www.caregiverproducts.com
- www.disabilityproducts.com
- www.liftware.com

Remember—if an item works for you, share that information with your family, friends, and support group.

The Iowa Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) supports Iowa Compass, a free service for all Iowans, to provide information on types of available assistive technology devices and possible funding sources. Contact them by phone at (800) 779-2001 or log on to www.iowacompass.org.

Always Up For a Challenge



Lyle Gibson

After Parkinson's diagnosis, lifelong athlete still loves to move



Lyle with his wife Janice and four grandchildren.



Lyle at a Kansas City Chiefs game with his two oldest grandchildren, Carsen and Conner, and two oldest sons, Justin and Jason.



Lyle with his son Jonn after coaching a high school game at Busch Stadium in St. Louis.

When you complete a five-mile run at the age of four, people begin to have certain expectations—such as that you might grow into a formidable athlete. This was the case with Lyle Gibson, who when four years old left the yard of his West Burlington, Iowa, house and ran through the busy city streets to his father's office in downtown Burlington.

This is one of the many stories Lyle relates in his new book, *A Lifetime in Motion: Lessons Learned From a Student of the Game(s)*. The book goes on to describe Lyle's lifelong love of athletics, both as a participant and a coach.

"As far back as I remember, I just loved anything to do with athletics," Lyle said. "That has stayed with me for 62 years. But baseball is my favorite." Like many boys, he graduated from tossing balls in the yard to Little League, then played throughout high school. Unlike many boys, he became a two-time all-state second baseman and received a scholarship to play college baseball.

While he continued playing in college, he discovered a new passion—tennis. During his sophomore year, a friend invited him to play. "I found out I had an ability for it," said Lyle. "You're constantly hitting the ball, constantly on the move. I was hooked."

After graduation, Lyle made tennis his career through coaching and teaching, and entered tournaments throughout his 20s. A career highlight was playing a doubles match against Ken Flach Jr., who would go on to win Wimbledon and a gold medal at the Olympics. At around 30, Lyle stopped playing in tournaments, though he still played recreationally, and moved on to the next stage of his athletic life.

It came about unexpectedly when a friend asked Lyle if he wanted to train for a marathon with him. While Lyle had done some running throughout his life as conditioning for other sports, he'd never enjoyed it. "I'm not sure why, but I told him I'd train with him," said Lyle. "That was in January. We decided to run the Drake Relays—only three months away."



Left to right: A game-winning hit in the National 50 and Over Baseball Tournament in Las Vegas, 2005. 50 and Over National Baseball Champs, 2005. Lyle working with Dennis Van Der Meer, coach of Billie Jean King during the famous Billie Jean/Bobby Riggs tennis match.

Lyle trained hard, and in April, ready or not, he traveled with his family to Des Moines. “I can still remember at mile 23 thinking that this was the stupidest thing I’d ever done,” said Lyle. “I thought, ‘God, if you can get me to the finish line I’ll never do this again.’ When I got to the finish line I saw my three little boys and my wife with tears in her eyes—it was very touching. Afterwards, all I wanted to know was how I could go faster to qualify for the Boston Marathon.” Lyle would go on to run in 15 more marathons, including in Boston 2 times.

“I was still running well into my 40s, though my times were slowing. I thought age was meaningless and I could keep going forever,” said Lyle. By his late 50s, he was having some trouble with his toes curling under on longer runs. Eventually he went to the University of Iowa Hospital, and they diagnosed him with runner’s dystonia, a condition characterized by involuntary muscle spasms. The doctor prescribed medication that helped, and Lyle returned to running. He was also coaching high school baseball at that time.

During the summer of 2013, Lyle began experiencing dizziness, memory problems, and other abnormal symptoms. However, he was able to ignore it until one typical Iowa summer day—95° and humid—when his baseball team had a double header. Before the games, he felt extremely dizzy and lightheaded. “On my way from the third base dugout to coaching first base I found myself weaving and running sideways,” said Lyle. “My biggest worry was that the fans would think I was drunk!” After the games, he couldn’t remember where he had parked his car. Anxious and embarrassed, he waited until everyone else left so that no one would see him wandering around.

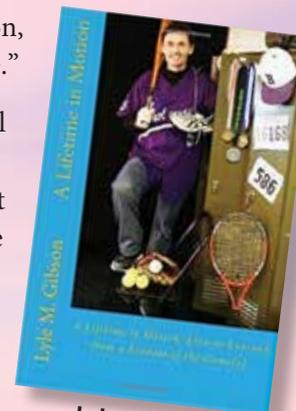
Spurred into action, he researched his symptoms on the internet and decided he had Parkinson’s disease. After more testing, the doctors agreed, diagnosing him with PD just before Christmas 2013.

“Running a marathon is a tough challenge, but nothing compares to having an incurable disease,” said Lyle. “The diagnosis hit me hard at first, but I’ve come to realize that my love for movement continues.” He has exercised every day since the diagnosis, normally doing 10 minutes of yoga and stretching in the morning followed by 45 – 90 minutes of running or biking. “I’m not a scientist, but I believe that it has helped. The doctor at the University of Iowa told me he doesn’t see any progression, though I know it could happen at any time.”

Lyle continues to coach high school baseball—he attempted to retire a couple years ago, but just couldn’t stay away. At first he didn’t want his team and others to know about the diagnosis: “It was almost embarrassing, but now I want to show people that I can still have a good life, and there are lessons to be learned every day,” said Lyle.

His family continues to support him—his wife of 42 years, Janice, three grown sons, Jason, Justin, and Jonn, two daughters-in-law, and four grandchildren. His father, who has passed, was a fantastic athlete as well as his mother who is in her 80s – she still works out twice every day. “I’ve been pretty fortunate as far as my family goes,” said Lyle.

A Lifetime in Motion, Lyle’s book, was started before he was diagnosed at the encouragement of his wife, who thought he had plenty of stories to tell. He later added an unplanned final chapter about Parkinson’s. He is currently using the book to help him speak to others about PD, especially focusing on encouraging them to exercise. The book is available for purchase on Amazon.com and has been endorsed by the Michael J. Fox Foundation. “It’s just been a lot of fun, and has taken my mind off the disease itself,” said Lyle. “I’m hopeful I can do some good.”



Lyle’s book

Delay the Disease/Neuro Wellness Classes

Delay the Disease is a fitness program designed to empower people with Parkinson's disease by optimizing their physical function. For more information on Delay the Disease, visit delaythedisease.com or apdaiowa.org/exercise-groups-in-iowa.

Black Hawk County/Waterloo

Covenant Wellness Center, 3421 W 9th St, Waterloo, IA 50702. **Cost:** Classes are \$20 for an eight-week session. Contact class instructor Timi Brown, Med-Fit Facilitator at Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare-Iowa, at (319) 272-1755 for more information.

Carroll County/Carroll

St. Anthony's Hospital, 311 S Clark St, Carroll, IA 51401. Classes are held every Thursday at 11 a.m. **Cost:** Free. Contact class instructor Melanie Hundling at (712) 792-3581 or Melissa Schultes at (712) 794-5815.

Cass County/Atlantic

Heritage House, 1200 Brookridge Cir, Atlantic, IA 50022. Classes are held every Monday from 1–2 p.m. **Cost:** Free. Contact class instructor Jon Jordan at (712) 243-1850 or JJordan@wesleylife.org for more information.

Clay County/Spencer

Spencer YMCA, 1001 11th Avenue West, Spencer, IA 51301. Classes are held Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:15–11:15 a.m. **Cost:** Free if a Spencer YMCA member; payment required for non-members. Class instructor is Josh Kelly. Contact the Spencer YMCA for more information at (712) 262-3782.

Des Moines County/West Burlington

Great River Medical Center, Hawkeye Room, 1221 S Gear Ave, West Burlington, IA 52655. Classes held every Thursday from 12:30–1:30 p.m. Class instructor is Matt Kelley. Contact the Great River Medical Center High Performance Center at (319) 768-4112 for more information.

Burlington Area YMCA, 2410 Mt. Pleasant St, Burlington, IA 52601. Classes held every Monday and Wednesday from 1–2 p.m. **Cost:** Free for YMCA members; \$5 a class for non-members. Contact the Burlington Area YMCA at (319) 753-6734 or cara@burlingtony.org for more information.

Iowa County/Williamsburg

Highland Ridge, 100 Village View Cir, Williamsburg, IA 52361. Classes held every Wednesday from 9–10 a.m. **Cost:** Free. Contact instructor Kris Cameron at (319) 361-7673 or email renuyourlifep@gmail.com for more information.

Johnson County/Iowa City

Iowa City Senior Center, 28 South Linn Street, Iowa City, IA 52240. Classes are held Wednesdays and Sundays from 12:45–1:45 p.m. **Cost:** \$5 per class, punch card available. Contact instructor Kris Cameron at (319) 361-7673 or email renuyourlifep@gmail.com for more information.

Jones County/Anamosa

UnityPoint Health – Jones Regional Medical Center, 1795 HWY 64 East, Anamosa, IA 52205. Classes are held Monday and Wednesday from 3:15–4:15 p.m. at the therapy department. **Cost:** FREE Contact class instructor John Wagner, PT, DPT at 319-481-6195 or John.Wagner@unitypoint.org

Kossuth County/Algona

Algona Family YMCA, 2101 E. McGregor, Algona, IA 50511. Classes held every Tuesday from 1–2 p.m. at the Algona Family YMCA. Every third Tuesday of the month the class meets at Van Buren Terrace, 520 S Blackford St., Algona. **Cost:** \$12.00 for a six-week session or \$3.00 for a one-day pass. Contact the Algona Family YMCA at (515) 295-7701 or email jeni@algonaymca.org for more information.

Linn County/Cedar Rapids

Stonebridge Church, 1829 Stoney Point Rd, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404. Classes are held Mondays and Fridays from 10:30–11:30 p.m. **Cost:** Free. Contact instructor Kris Cameron at (319) 361-7673 or email renuyourlifep@gmail.com for more information.

Starting Tuesday, May 5: The Church on Northland, 5200 Northland Ave NE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404. Classes are held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. – Noon. **Cost:** Free. Contact instructor Kris Cameron at (319) 361-7673 or email renuyourlifep@gmail.com for more information.

Muscatine County/Muscatine

Hillcrest Baptist Church, 1613 Bidwell Road, Muscatine, IA 52761. Classes are held twice a week: Rotating schedule of Tuesdays and Thursdays for four weeks followed by Mondays and Wednesdays for four weeks. **Cost:** \$5 per class. Contact instructor Anthony Krumbholz at (319) 981-3321 or AnthonyKrumbholz@yahoo.com.

Polk County/Clive

YMCA Healthy Living Center, 12493 University Ave, Clive, IA 50325. Classes are held Tuesdays 1–2 p.m. and Fridays from 1:15–2:15 p.m. **Cost:** Free if a YMCA member; payment required for non-members. Instructors are LaDona Molander and Jennifer Voorhees. Contact the YMCA Healthy Living Center at (515) 226-9622 for more information.

Polk County/Des Moines

Wesley Acres, 3520 Grand Ave., Des Moines, IA 50312. Classes are held every Wednesday from 1–2 p.m. **Cost:** Free. Pre-registration is required. Call (515) 271-6500 for more information and to register.

Scott County/Bettendorf

Scott County YMCA, 3800 Tanglefoot Ln, Bettendorf, IA 52722. Classes are held Tuesday and Thursday from 11:15 a.m. – 12 p.m. **Cost:** FREE for YMCA members; \$30 for 16 weeks for non-members. Contact The Scott County YMCA at (563) 359-9622 or class instructor Marli Apt at (563) 345-4287.

Scott County/Davenport

Genesis West Medical Center, 1401 W Central Park Ave, Davenport, IA 52804. Classes are held Monday and Thursday from 12:15–1 p.m. **Cost:** \$35 for an 8-class card. Contact class instructor Katie Kosticheck at (563) 421-4540 for more information.

Union County/ Creston

Southern Prairie YMCA, 1201 W Townline, Creston, IA 50801. Classes are held Mondays and Wednesday from 9–10 a.m. **Cost:** Free for Southern Prairie YMCA members; \$25/month for non-members. Class instructor is Mandy Henderson. Contact the Southern Prairie YMCA at (641) 782-9622 for more information.

Woodbury County/South Sioux City, Nebraska

Norm Waitt Sr. YMCA, 601 Riverview Dr, South Sioux City, NE 68776. Classes are held Mondays and Wednesdays 11 a.m.–Noon. **Cost:** \$5 per class; \$50 for a 10-class punch card. Contact instructor Jacque Perez, wellness programs coordinator, at jperez@nwsymca.org or call (402) 404-8439.

Cycle for Neuro Wellness Class

YMCA Healthy Living Center, 12493 University Ave, Clive, IA 50325. Classes are held Monday & Thursdays from 5:45–6:30 p.m. Contact YMCA Physical and Aquatic Therapy clinic at (515) 645-3350 for more information.

Music and Movement Class

Story County/Ames

First Baptist Church, 200 Lynn Ave., Ames, IA 50014. Classes are held Tuesday from 4–5 p.m. On Wednesdays there is a singing class from 3–4 p.m. **Cost:** FREE. Contact class instructor Dr. Elizabeth Stegemoller at (515)294-5966 or esteg@iastate.edu.

kudos

PD Walkers Participate in the Des Moines Marathon

The PD Walkers have participated in the Des Moines Marathon since 2008 and have had over 300 people participate while raising over \$90,000 to help the APDA in their mission to ease the burden and to find a cure for Parkinson’s. The funds PD Walkers raise allows the Iowa Chapter of the American Parkinson Disease Association to offer instructor training for Parkinson’s exercise classes to be brought to communities across the state. This is the last year that the PD Walkers will participate in the Des Moines Marathon.



Special thank you to Iowa Chapter APDA Board Member LaDona Molander for organizing this special team for the past 8 years!

This year the PD Walkers raised over \$15,000 – thank you to all who donated and participated.

Daring to Be an Educator

Principal Fritz helps students and raises family in small-town Iowa

“I didn’t have a lifelong dream to be a teacher,” said Keith Fritz. In fact, Keith intended to major in biology in college, but he’d barely started his freshman classes before he understood it wasn’t the path for him. “I realized I’d never make it out alive! So I shifted to something I’d always enjoyed and been good at.”

Keith graduated from college with a degree in English and public speaking, then naturally gravitated towards teaching, because he had always enjoyed working with kids—“I wanted to help teach kids how to think and write about what they are reading.”

Married to his high school sweetheart, Laura, with their first baby on the way, Keith applied to 30 schools. He only got two interviews: one was in South Dakota and the other was in the small town of Northwood, Iowa. During that interview process, he got to know that town, eating at the local restaurants and meeting the parents of kids who might become his students. He got the job, and began teaching in 1994.

Keith and his family settled in to their lives in Northwood, and for the next eight years Keith taught English and public speaking to 7-12th graders. He went back to school to receive his master’s degree in educational leadership in 2002, and then began looking for open principal positions. Through a stroke of luck, he ended up interviewing to become the secondary (7-12th grade) principal in his home district of Northwood-Kensett. “I had loved working there as a teacher,” said Keith. “This way I didn’t have to move my family and could continue working with kids I knew and loved.”

The life of a principal is certainly not a calm one, but for Keith, it’s a blast, because it’s all about the people. His days might be spent helping secure resources for teachers’ professional development, counseling parents about their children, talking to students about difficult situations like a divorce or tough decisions like choosing the best college, making sure incoming seventh graders are settling in to their

new school, or handling public relations. With a high academic achievement level and participation rate in school activities, Keith and his students, teachers, and entire district have a lot to be proud of—though it doesn’t come easy. “It’s one heck of a job of providing comprehensive education for kids!” said Keith.

And of course, Keith’s family continues to be a priority. He and his wife Laura have been married 26 years. His oldest, Evan, is now a senior at Iowa State University, majoring in health care administration and minoring in business. His daughter, Ella, will be entering 7th grade this fall, which means she’ll be in Keith’s building for the first time—though Keith has noticed he seems far more enthusiastic about this fact than she does.

About eight years ago, Keith began to notice a little tremor in one of his fingers, as well as some shoulder pain in the same arm. He went to the Mayo Clinic, where they attributed the symptoms to neck compression and prescribed cortisone shots and chiropractor visits. Far from curing him, the tremor became more noticeable, and kids at school even began noticing that he walked different. In the fall of 2012, a neurologist had him try Parkinson’s medications. “To my great sadness, it worked and I felt better,” said Keith. “In January 2013 I got the official diagnosis at age 42. My wife was with me and got teary eyed, but I just did the Midwestern head nod and went down to the parking lot. Then I asked my wife, ‘Honey, do you know how many people I’m going to let down now that I know I have this? How am I going to provide for you, our son in college, and our daughter? I’ve got a lot of people depending on me.’”



Keith with his daughter Ella.

“Whoever came up with the stages of grief—they knew what they were talking about. Denial, sadness—though not anger, because who do you get mad at? But then you have to look for ways to make it better.” For Keith, this meant searching for the most reliable ways to slow down the progression of the disease as much as possible and keep its presence in his daily life to a minimum. A healthier lifestyle has been the focus of his efforts. While he hadn’t been very active before the diagnosis, now he runs in 5Ks that benefit various causes. “If I stop running, Parkinson’s is going to pass me by, and I can’t let that happen,” said Keith. “Running and biking are becoming more of a part of my treatment plan.”

His voice has also been affected. As a principal, speaking publicly is a necessary skill, and it is something Keith has always taken pride in—he coached speech during the years he taught, and his team was all-state eight times. “When I’m not doing well, my voice will crack, or it can be difficult to pull the right word out of my mouth. It’s one of my most frustrating symptoms,” said Keith. To help, he enrolled in Lee Silverman Voice Treatment, which uses voice exercises to strengthen the vocal muscles. He has found that when he does these exercises, his voice is better the rest of the day.

“I acquired Parkinson’s early, like so many of the things in my life—I became a principal at 31—so I’m going to work on keeping it at a minimum and being as productive as possible.

“I’m jealous of people who say they were blessed with Parkinson’s. I’m not big enough to be that way. I am a man of faith who believes in a God who has a plan, and I’m a part of that . . . whether as an educator, husband, father, or person with Parkinson’s, I have to do my best job at that role.”

Keith with his son Evan at a 5K they both ran.



Keith with his wife Laura on their 25th anniversary trip to Ireland.

Thank You to the Lost Cause Riders Motorcycle Group

They raised over \$30,000 for the Iowa Chapter of the American Parkinson Disease Association at their 2015 Annual Shake, Rattle and Roll Fundraiser held on August 29.



We are grateful for your advocacy and generosity! Special thank you to Chad "Beads" and Kristen "Teen" Pierson for their support.



Eastern Iowa Parkinson's Golf Classic 2015

The Cedar Rapids Parkinson's Foundation held its annual golf classic on Saturday, August 22, 2015. Participants raised more than \$10,000 for the Iowa Chapter of the APDA and had a wonderful golf-filled day.



Grey Out Night

Thank you to the East Sac High Girls' Varsity Volleyball Team in Sac City, Iowa, for their annual Grey Out Night!

They raised more than \$3,000 for the Iowa Chapter of the APDA on October 1, 2015.

This is the seventh year the team has held the fundraiser in honor of their coach, Dave Waggle, who has Parkinson's and is a teacher at East Sac High.



Davis Phinney Foundation Victory Summit – Des Moines

This year the Victory Summit organized by the Davis Phinney Foundation for Parkinson's replaced our regular Iowa Parkinson's conference. There were 600 people in attendance from Iowa and all over the Midwest. Speakers covered topics on medication, exercise, sleep, fall prevention, caregiving, and non-motor symptoms.



upcoming events

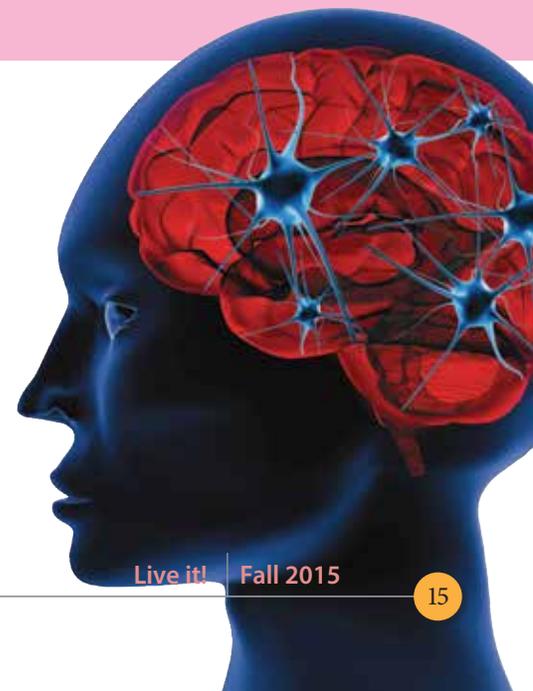
what's coming up?

APRIL

- *Parkinson's Awareness Month*
- *Parkinson's Research Forum*
Thursday, April 7, 2016, Iowa State University

JUNE - SAVE THE DATE

- *Iowa Parkinson's Conference 2016*
Friday, June 17, 2016



donors

May – September 2015

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www.apdaiowa.org 

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links

and other resources



Web Links

Here are a few helpful websites.

Parkinson's Disease - Iowa Statewide Resources

Assistive Technology and Possible Funding Sources.....	www.iowacompass.org
Caregiving Information	www.iowafamilycaregiver.org
Easter Seals Iowa Assistive Technology Center	www.eastersealsia.org
Iowa Prescription Drug Corporation (Prescription Aid).....	www.iowapdc.org
LifeLong Links.....	www.lifelonglinks.org
Senior Health Insurance Information Program	www.therightcalliowa.gov
The Iowa Area Agencies on Aging	www.iowaaging.gov/iowas-area-agencies-aging

Parkinson's Disease - General

American Parkinson Disease Association	www.apdaparkinson.org
American Parkinson Disease Association, Iowa Chapter	www.apdaiowa.org
American Parkinson Disease Young Onset Center	www.youngparkinsons.org
Parkinson's Action Network	www.parkinsonsaction.org
American Academy of Neurology	www.aan.com
The Movement Disorder Society	www.movementdisorders.org
Living Well with Parkinson's Disease	www.pdplan4life.com
National Institutes of Health: Parkinson's Disease	nihseniorhealth.gov

Caregivers

National Family Caregiving Association.....	www.nfcacares.org
Iowa State University Extension Family Caregiving	www.extension.org/family+caregiving
Lotsa Helping Hands.....	www.lotsahelpinghands.com
Caregiver Action Network	www.caregiveraction.org
AARP Caregiving Resources.....	www.aarp.org/caregiving

sign language

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Sorry

The sign for “sorry” is made by forming an “A” with your right hand. Rotate your hand on your chest using a couple of clockwise motions.

This sign can be also used to mean “apologize” or “regret.”





support groups

A special Thank You to all support group facilitators and members for all they do in spreading awareness across Iowa. Thank you for all you do!

Algona/Kossuth County
Jen Carr
jeni@algonaymca.org
(515) 295-7701

Ames/Story County
Becky Erickson
(515) 239-2323

Anamosa/Jones County
John L. Wagner
John.Wagner@unitypoint.org
(319) 481-6195

Atlantic/Cass County
Jon Jordan, JJordan@wesleylife.org
(712) 243-1850

Burlington/Des Moines County
Tim Zimmerman
T.S.Zimmerman1022@gmail.com
(319) 753-0550

Carroll/Carroll County
Melissa Schultes
mschultes@stanthonyhospital.org
(712) 794-5815

Cascade/Dubuque County
Brenda Williams
circleb@netins.net
(563) 590-4364

Cedar Rapids/Linn County
St. Luke's Hospital Resource Center
Jen Jenatscheck
Jennifer.Jenatscheck@unitypoint.org
(319) 369-7331

Cedar Rapids/Linn County
John Krumbholz
krummy68@gmail.com
(319) 350-7482

Centerville/Appanose County
Katy Dykes
kdykes@mercydesmoines.org
(641) 437-3432

Charles City/Floyd County
Carol Quade, carol@fiai.net
(641) 228-5053

Council Bluffs/Pottawattamie County
Molly George
mcampbell@foxrunassisted.com
(712) 256-2741

Creston/Union County
Myra & Chuck Spindler
chuck.spindlerii@gmail.com
(641) 344-6629

Davenport/Scott County
Eugene Kenyon
ekenyon@aol.com
(563) 549-7890

Decorah/Winneshiek County
David Dobson
davidpauldobson@hotmail.com
(563) 382-6477

Des Moines/Polk County
Valerie Stickel-Diehl
vstickel-diehl@mercydesmoines.org
(515) 358-0002

Dubuque/Dubuque County
Gerry Osterhaus
gerryosty@mchsi.com
(563) 582-7313

Dyersville/Dubuque County
Catherine Tegeler
spikesina123@yahoo.com
(563) 875-7029

Estherville/Emmet County
Eric Erickson
eerickson@seasonscenter.org
(712) 209-1159

Fort Dodge/Webster County
Andrew Duarte
aduarte@jmcmfg.net
(515) 570-0360

Independence/Buchanan County
Betty Orr
jorrb@indytel.com
(319) 938-2825

Iowa City/Johnson County
Ed Pierson
e.pierson2325@gmail.com
(319) 430-8512

Marshalltown/Marshall County
Dennis Eige
(641) 753-8463

Mason City/Cerro Gordo County
Janelle Nevermann
leallenn@mchsi.com
(641) 424-4277

Muscatine/Muscatine County
Wayne & Pat Corriell
pat.corriell@gmail.com (563) 649-2285
John & Karen Schaub
jschaub@machlink.com (563) 263-1866

Newton/Jasper County
Eloise Prater
jeprater@iowatelecom.net
(641) 791-1018

Pella/Marion County
Natasha Nikkel
nnikkel@wesleylife.org
(641) 621-0316

Sioux Center/Sioux County
Glenda Vanlaren
Glenda.VanLaren@schospital.org
(712) 722-8256

Sioux City/Woodbury County
Jack Sherrman, jespas@juno.com
(712) 277-9337

Spencer/Clay County
Betty Groen
kbgroen@smunet.net
(712) 262-3653

Storm Lake/Buena Vista County
Bonnie Hunter
bjhunter6@mediacombb.net
(712) 732-3383

Vinton/Benton County
Stacey Hodges
shodges@vghinc.com
(319) 472-6372

Waterloo/Black Hawk County
Terry Hertges
Beno08@aol.com
(319) 239-6865

Waverly/Bremer County
Jennifer Wolff
jdwot01@hotmail.com
(319) 290-9402

West Des Moines/Polk County
Mary Adkins, bjamla@aol.com
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