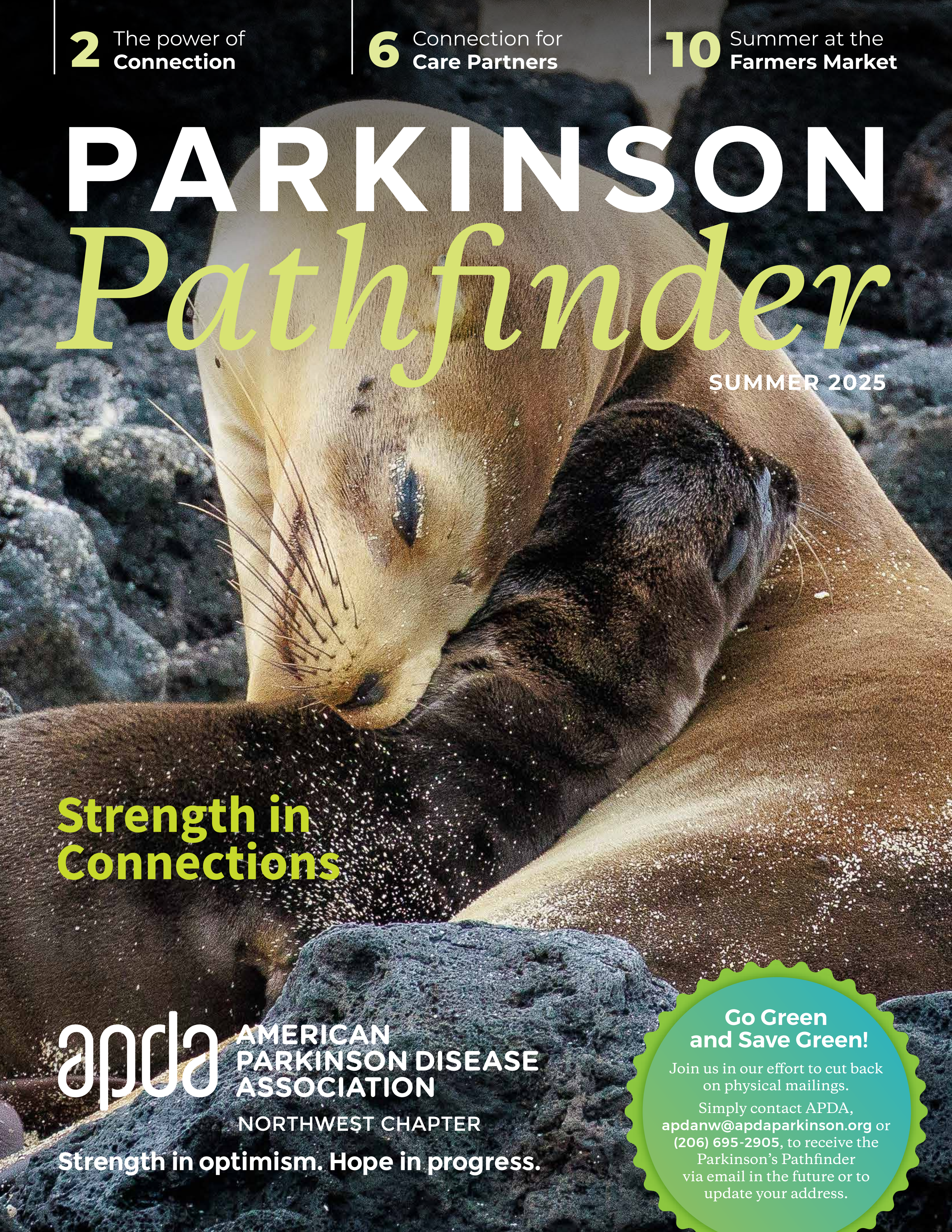

# PARKINSON *Pathfinder*

SUMMER 2025

## Strength in Connections

apda AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION
NORTHWEST CHAPTER

Strength in optimism. Hope in progress.

**Go Green and Save Green!**

Join us in our effort to cut back on physical mailings. Simply contact APDA, **apdanw@apdaparkinson.org** or **(206) 695-2905**, to receive the Parkinson's Pathfinder via email in the future or to update your address.

SUMMER 2025

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COVER
**John Cornicello.** Read John's story on page 16.

**OUR MISSION**

Every day, we provide the support, education, research, and community that will help everyone impacted by Parkinson's disease live life to the fullest.

apda AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION
NORTHWEST CHAPTER
**Strength in optimism. Hope in progress.**

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Even when we disagree, most of us are still looking for the same things: understanding, belonging, and a sense of connection.

In this month's issue we're exploring the power of connection—how it strengthens us in the toughest moments, supports those who care for us, and even plays a role in slowing the progression of Parkinson's. We're also spotlighting two upcoming events that embody this spirit: our Optimism Walks, where we'll walk together to raise critical funds and awareness, and YOPD-CON, a connection and education event for the Young Onset Parkinson's Disease (YOPD) community.

At APDA, we believe there is strength in optimism, and an even greater strength in connection. But we've been hearing more and more - how do we stay connected in a world that can feel increasingly divided? Thankfully, building connection doesn't require agreement on everything. In fact, meaningful connection grows when we stay curious about each other, make space for differences, and lead with compassion.

Connection can come at unanticipated times and in unexpected ways. At a recent education event in Boise, I was chatting with an attendee when our conversation turned to Vietnam (a common topic among veterans, given the strong link between Agent Orange exposure and Parkinson's). I mentioned the novel I was reading, a brutally realistic story about a young Marine lieutenant in the Vietnam War, written by a combat veteran. As it turns out, this gentleman owns a collection of more than 3,000 books on Vietnam—and he had read the very same book. He agreed it was a good one. Connection made.

Even when we disagree, most of us are still looking for the same things: understanding, belonging, and a sense of connection. Often, staying connected starts with a simple gesture: asking someone how they're really doing, and listening with openness. It might mean common ground in a shared experience, like connecting over your role as a care partner, a love for the outdoors, or the realities of a Parkinson's diagnosis. If a difference does arise, it could mean saying, *"I don't see it that way, but I'd like to understand more."* Or simply agreeing to disagree on one thing while still showing up for one another.

Living with Parkinson's teaches us a lot about resilience, adaptability, and compassion for others. These same qualities can help us nurture meaningful relationships, even across differences. When we lead with kindness, we create common ground. And from there, real connection can grow.

Together, we are stronger. And that's something we can all agree on.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Richards

**Kirsten Richards**
Executive Director

# The Power of Connection: How Friendships Slow Parkinson's Progression

## Insights from Dr. Laurie Mischley's research

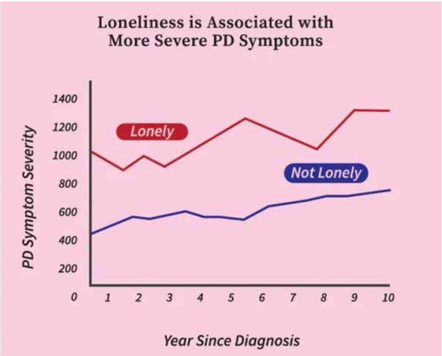
### Why Social Connections Matter So Much for People with Parkinson's

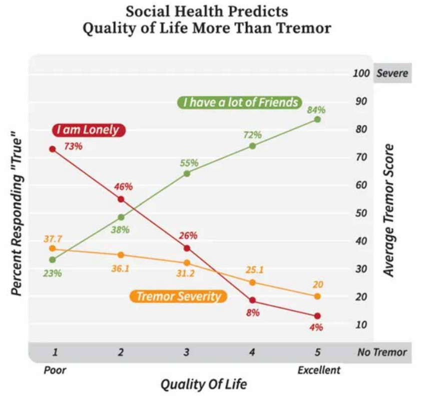
When you think about Parkinson's disease, you probably picture the physical symptoms, like tremor or trouble moving. But did you know that having friends and staying connected can be just as important as your medication or exercise routine? Dr. Laurie Mischley's research shows us that loneliness is associated with greater symptom severity. The next step in their research is to determine whether improvement in social connections translates to improvement in symptoms.

Let's explore what she found, why it matters, and how people with Parkinson's and those who care about them can use these insights to feel and live better.

### What Dr. Laurie Mischley Discovered About Loneliness and Parkinson's

Dr. Mischley and her team followed about 1,500 people with Parkinson's for five years. They used a detailed questionnaire called the PRO-PD, which measures 33 different symptoms, from movement problems to sleep and mood.





**Loneliness and friendships predict quality of life in PD.** According to patients, loneliness and friendships were a better predictor of quality of life than tremor severity score.

Here's what stood out:

- **Lonely people were more symptomatic.** People who marked the box: "I am lonely" had symptoms that were 55% more severe than those who marked that statement as false.
- **Quality of Life is associated with having friends.** The higher a person's quality of life, the more likely they were to mark the box: "I have a lot of friends." Among people with poor quality of life, only 23% have a lot of friends, whereas 84% of people with excellent quality of life report having a lot of friends.

The impact of loneliness was as big as (or even bigger than) the benefits people got from regular exercise. In fact, if someone were lonely, even a great exercise routine couldn't make up for it. The data in this study suggest that being lonely is worse for you than seven days a week of exercise is good for you!

This wasn't just about feeling sad or down. Both movement problems (like tremors) and non-movement issues (like trouble sleeping or thinking clearly) were associated with feeling lonely.

### Why Does Being Lonely Make Parkinson's Worse?

It turns out loneliness isn't just a feeling—it actually changes what's happening in your body and brain:

- **Stress hormones go up.** Feeling isolated raises your cortisol (the stress hormone), which can speed up the loss of important brain cells in Parkinson's.
- **More inflammation.** Being lonely increases certain chemicals that cause inflammation, which can make the disease progress faster.
- **Less motivation.** When you're lonely, the parts of your brain that help you feel rewarded and motivated don't work as well. That makes it harder to stick to healthy routines like exercise or eating well.

It's a tough cycle: Parkinson's symptoms can make it harder to get out and see people, but being alone makes those symptoms worse, which makes it even harder to connect. As Dr. Indu Subramanian, another expert in this field, says, "The parts of the brain that help us connect with others are the same ones affected by Parkinson's, so it's a double whammy."

### What Does This Mean for Treatment?

Most of the time, Parkinson's care focuses on medication and physical therapy. However, Dr. Mischley's research shows that social health deserves just as much attention.

### How Healthcare Providers Can Help:

- **Screen for loneliness** at regular check-ups, not just physical symptoms. "Do you sometimes feel left out?" is a screening question for loneliness, and a great conversation starter.
- **Social Prescribing:** Teach patients the importance of social connection; encourage them to join a club, center, take a class, etc.
- **Encourage Parkinson-Specific Groups**: In the Pacific Northwest, we have many support groups and PD-specific classes for boxing, rock climbing, dancing, yoga, jazz, etc. Encourage patients to connect with other people with PD in their area.

### How the Pandemic Made Things Worse

COVID-19 made loneliness an even bigger problem. After 2020:

- Reports of loneliness among people with Parkinson's went up 42%.
- Symptoms like trouble speaking and walking got worse when people couldn't socialize.
- Only about a third of people managed to keep up with support groups online.

Dr. Subramanian calls this "a crisis within a crisis"—the disease, the isolation, and the pandemic all hitting at once. But it also pushed people to try new things, like outdoor "walk-and-talk" groups or using technology to keep in touch.

### Practical Ways to Build Connections

So what can help? Here are some ideas that really work:

#### Make Social Plans Stick

- Use shared calendars with friends or carepartners to schedule regular calls or meetups.
- Combine exercise and social time by joining a walking group or dancing class.

#### Communicate in New Ways

- Try "voice banking" (recording common phrases) if speech is tough, so you can still join conversations.
- Join art or music groups to help you connect even when words are hard.

#### Find Community Spaces

- Look for Parkinson's-friendly cafés or meetups (Amsterdam has a great model).
- Try intergenerational programs, pairing up with students or young people for shared activities lifts everyone's mood.

### Moving Forward: Making Social Health a Priority

As one research participant said, "My medication manages my symptoms, but my book club manages my soul; both keep me moving." That sums it up perfectly. Staying connected isn't just "nice"— it's necessary for living well with Parkinson's. By treating friendships and social activities as essential parts of care, we can help people with Parkinson's feel better, stay healthier, and enjoy life more together.

**Laurie Mischley, ND, PhD, MPH,** *studied naturopathic medicine (ND) at Bastyr University and epidemiology (MPH) and nutritional sciences (PhD) at the University of Washington, and she maintains appointments at both Universities. Her work is focused on identifying the nutritional requirements unique to individuals with Parkinson's Disease (PD) and has published on coenzyme Q10, lithium, NAD+, and glutathione deficiency (www.lauriemischley.com).*

*She is Principal Investigator of the Modifiable Variables in Parkinsonism (MVP) Study (MVP-study.com), which attempts to explain why some people with PD progress more slowly than others. She is working on ways to study, package, and deliver evidence-based lifestyle modification as a therapeutic strategy.*

*Dr. Mischley maintains a clinical practice at Seattle Integrative Medicine focused on nutrition and neurological health of patients with Parkinsonism.*

# Finding Joy Together: How Community Uplifts Life with Parkinson's

Q & A with **Deborah Fulton-Kehoe**

**Can you tell us about a time when connecting with your local community made a meaningful difference in your life with Parkinson's?**

After being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD) last year, I met with Katie, the social worker at ADPA in Seattle. Katie is a great resource! Instead of a traditional support group, they connected me with the Seattle Young Onset Parkinson's Disease (SEAYOPD) Activity Group. Brian, who started and organizes SEAYOPD, is another great resource. He offers “coffee chats” with anyone who is newly diagnosed and is a wealth of information.

I have joined SEAYOPD for TopGolf, a walk around a park in Seattle, and a Mexican lunch. A new friend from SEAYOPD reached out, and we met twice at garden centers for coffee, chatting, and plant shopping. It also turns out that the pictures on the SEAYOPD website of people with PD hiking, cross-country skiing, boxing, and socializing were invaluable to me when I was first diagnosed. I needed to see that I could have PD and could be active and have fun!

I also attended the APDA conference in Seattle in January. In addition to meeting others with PD, I had the opportunity to meet Nate and Jenny, two physical therapists from The Parkinson's Fitness Project (TPFP). Their energy and enthusiasm during their presentations at the conference were infectious. I value their knowledge and optimism. Since the TPFP is not covered by my insurance, I am paying out of pocket for a few PT visits with them to optimize my exercise schedule. It's worth it!!

**What kinds of community activities or relationships have had the biggest impact on your well-being?**

Exercise, exercise, exercise. In addition to my usual exercise routine, I have tried a number of Parkinson's-based exercise programs. Rock Steady Boxing has caring and energetic instructors and dedicated participants. I love the classes, but they are far from where I live. I have also tried the online version of Seattle Theater Group's Dance for Parkinson's (also with great teachers and participants) and always feel better after a dance class. But what I really wanted was a local, in-person class that focused on trying to slow the progression of PD.

As far as I could tell, there were no Parkinson's-based classes in North Seattle. I met with Katie (from APDA) again and floated the idea of getting an in-person class going in the area. Katie agreed there was a need and had great suggestions for possible locations. I reached out to several local organizations and received a very positive response from TPFP. They had an instructor (France) who was interested in teaching an in-person class, and within weeks, France had a class up and running! France teaches an A.M.P. (Amplitude + Mental Agility + Power) Neurofitness class for individuals with early Parkinson's. France is energetic, enthusiastic, caring, knowledgeable, and very funny! The A.M.P. participants are hard-working, dedicated, and friendly. I am so grateful to have this class in the area!

**How has being part of a community affected your outlook on living with Parkinson's?**

As someone with newly diagnosed PD, it has been good for me to see participants in all these exercise programs who have had PD for 10-15 years, manage their PD, and exercise almost every day. Their strength and dedication are inspiring and motivating. And there is always someone to talk with if any Parkinson's questions come up — someone has been through this before me!

**What would you say to others with Parkinson's who might be hesitant about joining a group or reaching out?**

Try multiple groups and try them multiple times. See what groups are the best fit for you. Instead of worrying about the future, focus on the present and what you can do right now. Joining PD exercise programs and support groups is something positive to do now. I had no idea how common PD is and how highly variable the experience with PD can be. As a result of my PD diagnosis, I am meeting some great people and great communities!

**Need support building community in your neighborhood? Reach out to Katie to brainstorm ideas and get connected to local resources**

**kfreeman@apdaparkinson.org**

**206-507-4091**

**Bit.ly/ConsultationsWithKatie**

# YOPD-CON 2025:

## Connection, Opportunity and kNowledge

**Join us for an inspiring and transformative event designed BY and FOR the Young Onset Community (YOPD). This free event is more than just a conference — it's a space to find your community and gain valuable knowledge to feel empowered to take control of your health and future.**

**Saturday & Sunday**
**October 25 & 26, 2025**
**Bell Harbor Conference Center**
On the Waterfront in Downtown Seattle

## What to Expect

- **Invaluable Connections** – Meet others in the YOPD community who share your experiences, challenges, and triumphs.
- **Cutting-Edge Education** – Learn from leading experts about emerging treatments, nutrition strategies, and workplace accommodations.
- **Practical Strategies** – Discover tools to navigate daily life with confidence, from staying active to building a strong support system.
- **Inspiring Stories** – Hear firsthand from those who are thriving with YOPD and gain motivation to keep moving forward.

Our first YOPD-CON in 2023 welcomed attendees from across the US and Canada and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

“This has genuinely been a life-changer for us, or at least for me. As I've mentioned to several individuals, we literally have never met anyone our age with Parkinson's. Additionally, we have heard real, true and ACTIONABLE next steps. There's no way to quantify how beneficial this is.”

YOPD-CON 2025 is free to attend, so please join us!

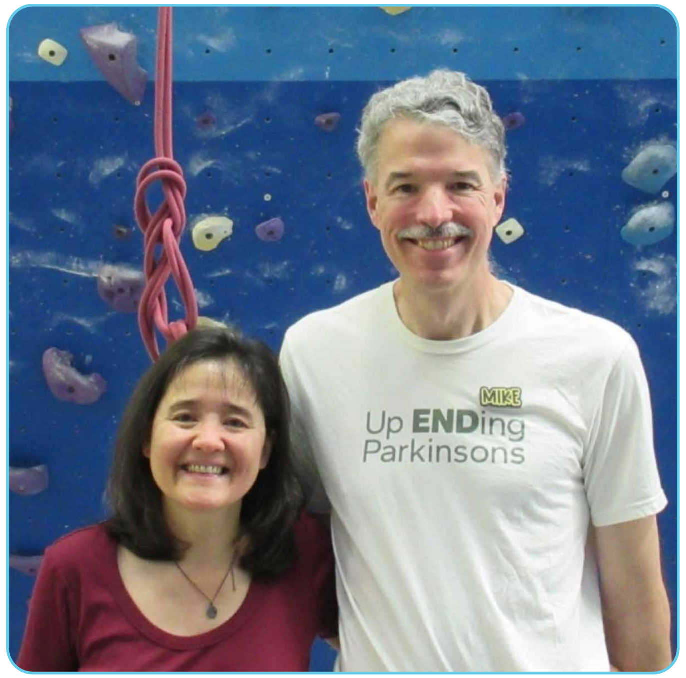
Whether you've been recently diagnosed or have been living with YOPD for years, this event is your chance to engage, learn, and grow. You are not alone—your community is here.

**Learn More & Save Your Spot at YOPD-CON by visiting**
**apdaparkinson.org/YOPDCON**

# Climbing Together:

## How Connection Fuels a Care Partner's Journey

An Interview with **Julie Calligaro**
by **Lianna Marie, APDA Regional Director of Marketing and Communications**



*I recently had the opportunity to chat with Julie about what it's like to be a wife and care partner of a person with Young Onset Parkinson's Disease (YOPD) and the value of connections in her life. Here's what she had to say:*

**Lianna Marie: Can you tell us a little about when your husband was diagnosed with Parkinson's and how the timing shaped your connection to the Parkinson's community? Have you found building connections challenging?**

**Julie Calligaro:** Mike started having symptoms in his late 30s/early 40s, but we really didn't start seeking to connect with the Parkinson's community until the past few years. (More on that below.) A lot of that had to do with early onset. It's a complicated dynamic.

First, his symptoms didn't exactly fit the textbook example, and we even had one doctor tell him it was not PD. So, it took about seven years before he was diagnosed, and we learned that we WERE a part of this community.

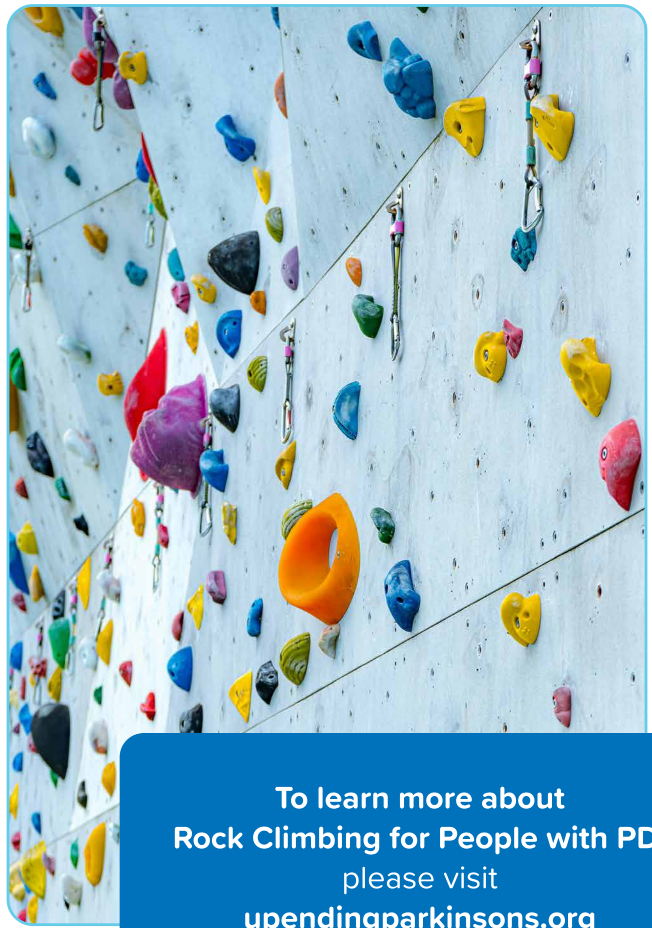
Second, like many others at that age, we were in the thick of raising a family and juggling busy work schedules. At the time, his symptoms were mild, so it was easy to put PD in the back seat and focus on everything else.

Lastly, Mike was very concerned about how this would affect his career. Open discrimination is prohibited by law, and his company does, in my opinion, make a concerted effort to ensure that it doesn't happen. But people are people, and you have to wonder if your immediate boss or coworkers will see or treat you differently once the chronic disease filter is applied. Would their assessment of your work change even if your work is the same? Would they assume you could no longer do certain tasks? So, for many years, he made the choice not to share his diagnosis with anyone.

But in the past two years or so, Mike has become very open about his diagnosis, and I think his desire to connect with others in the community has really come to the forefront. Luckily, last Fall, we found out about Up Ending Parkinson's (UEP)! That really fast-tracked the process.

**LM: Can you share a little more about UEP and how the connections you have made through it have affected both of you?**

**JC:** UEP is a charity that provides rock climbing opportunities for people living with PD for the purpose of improving their lives through safe exercise and community. Mike was rock climbing before PD was even on our radar, and he has long felt it has had a positive impact on the management of his symptoms. He wanted to share it with others in the PD community, but he wasn't sure how to go about doing that. So, when we watched a presentation on UEP last August, it was kismet.



To learn more about
**Rock Climbing for People with PD,**
please visit
**upendingparkinsons.org**

> **I think it's important for care partners to maintain connections OUTSIDE the PD community and find something for them. It can't be ALL about PD or the other person. You have needs and challenges too, and the surest way to burn out or become resentful is to ignore the fact that you are still here.**

The founder said it was her dream to bring it to every climbing gym in the country, so we decided to make that happen where Mike climbs — Edgeworks in Bellevue. Right now, we have an event once a month, but my hope is to expand opportunities as interest grows.

I think the impact has been profound on both of us. First time participants often worry they won't be able to participate, but then they see Mike experiencing an off time with lots of tremors, and he gets on the wall and shows them it can be done. Or they see another person with extreme balance issues on the ground reach the top of the wall. It's so inspiring. The climbers feel empowered, and the sheer joy and determination I have seen is amazing.

I cannot tell you how grateful and fulfilled this has made me feel. They often thank me for helping organize the events, but honestly, I am grateful to them for showing up and providing so much support for everyone there. And for Mike, I have long believed that he would benefit greatly from connecting with other PD individuals. It's so empowering and cathartic to speak with others who really understand what you're going through – all while sharing something you love and being of service to the community. It's a win-win.

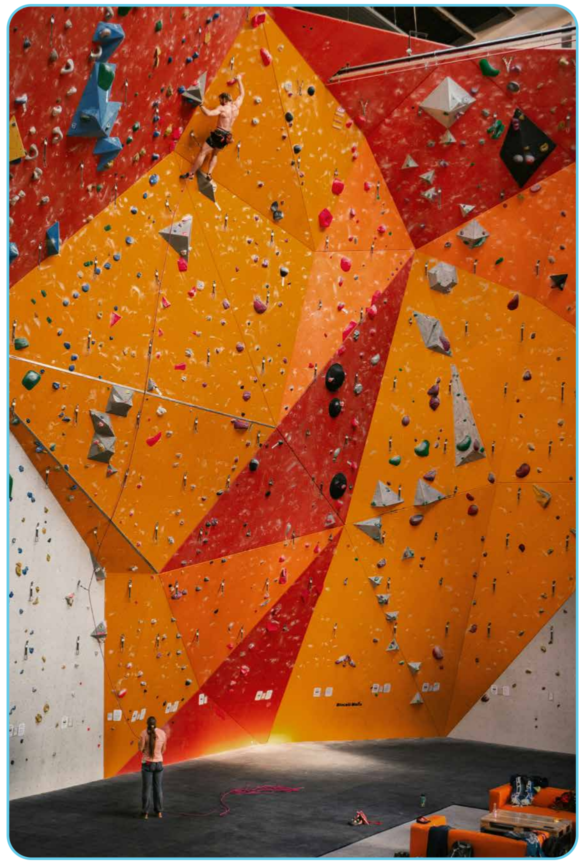
**LM: What has it been like for you navigating the role of both spouse and care partner, and how has that affected your sense of connection with your husband and others?**

**JC:** I guess it's been a real roller coaster. At times, it can be really difficult, overwhelming, frustrating, and heartbreaking. But at the same time, he's my person. In my opinion, taking care of your person is the best expression of your love and I'm grateful for so many things. It could always be so much worse, and he keeps going.

With regard to others, I think those who have not had to deal with a chronic disease or a serious medical issue might have trouble relating to you if you are trying to talk to them about it. They may mean to be supportive, but their lack of experience sometimes makes their responses the opposite of helpful.

**LM: Many care partners talk about feelings of loneliness, anticipatory grief, or uncertainty—have you experienced these emotions, and how have you found ways to cope or stay grounded?**

**JC:** Most definitely, I have felt all of that, especially fear around the uncertainty. We've been together since we were 17. For me, the list of possible cognitive symptoms is far more terrifying and heartbreaking than physical ones. Will he forget who I am and our life together? But you know, you can't live in a state of constant fear or negativity.



**Connect with someone sooner rather than later. People in the same boat know things. We don't have all the answers, nor feel the exact same thing, but there's a certain level of support and validation you feel just by talking to someone who truly gets it.**

So, I actually have two methods of dealing with this, and also, one tip for life in general.

First, I remember hearing an interview of the widow of the man who wrote "The Last Lecture". She said she would see her husband playing with their child and the thought "well, this might be the last time…." would pop into her head. You can't exactly control unwanted thoughts, but those thoughts can definitely leave you in a bad state and unable to find joy now. She said when those thoughts would pop up, she would just say loudly in her head, "Not helpful." That advice was life-changing to me.

Is this thought helpful? If it motivates you to deal with stuff you've been avoiding – like finishing the paperwork on wills and POAs or making that doctor's appointment or whatever, great. But at some point, there is no more planning to be done, and those thoughts and emotions are NOT helpful. So shut them down and try to appreciate what you have. Because at that moment, her child and husband WERE playing with each other. Focus on that. I know it sounds silly, but honestly, the more you do it, the easier it becomes to not dwell on the negative. Saying "Not helpful!" didn't really work at first. Now it does.

Second, give yourself permission to have a bad day. You don't want every day to be a bad day or constantly focus on the negative, but you don't have to always be Rebecca of Sunny Brook Farm! It's unrealistic and incredibly stressful to never be allowed to express sadness, fear, or anger. And it backfires. Never acknowledging usually means it just builds up inside of you. So let it out sometimes so you can let it go.

And finally, I guess my tip in general is that I think it's important for care partners to maintain connections OUTSIDE the PD community and find something for them. It can't be ALL about PD or the other person. You have needs and challenges too, and the surest way to burn out or become resentful is to ignore the fact that you are still here. I enjoy cooking and baking and reading mysteries, so I make time for that. And I've always felt very connected with nature, so I make sure I walk outdoors pretty much every day. That's actually how I maintain connections with friends and neighbors. We often walk the trails by our homes.

**LM: What advice would you give to other care partners or families affected by young-onset Parkinson's who are looking to build meaningful connections?**

**JC:** My biggest thing would be don't wait. I am not privy to one's family or work dynamics, but I think it's important you connect with someone sooner rather than later. People in the same boat know things. We don't have all the answers, nor feel the exact same thing, but there's a certain level of support and validation you feel just by talking to someone who truly gets it. And on a more practical level, it helps you navigate what is to come.

The book on Parkinson's would be longer than *War & Peace*. No one can cover it all. But I've learned so much in casual conversations with others in the community. It helps me feel more prepared and more capable of navigating this journey. So even if you are in the thick of being parents and partners and employees and whatever, carve out the time to take what you already love to make a connection.

## MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE APDA NORTHWEST TEAM!

**Hello! I'm Bee Williams**, and I'm excited to introduce myself as the **new Manager of Programs & Community Engagement at APDA Northwest.**

In this role, I'll be focusing on strengthening support systems and deepening connections within Parkinson's communities across Idaho and Montana.

This is a brand-new position, created as part of APDA Northwest's growing commitment to better serve the Inland Northwest. I'm here to help expand access to APDA's many valuable programs and resources, and just as importantly, to listen and learn from local communities about what additional support is needed.

I'm truly thrilled to be part of this effort and look forward to meeting and working alongside so many of you.

I'm a lifelong Idahoan, raised in a rural community by two U.S. wartime veterans. Growing up with a strong sense of service and resilience shaped my commitment to supporting others—especially in underserved and remote areas. My background includes years of nonprofit work, as well as personal caregiving experience for older family members facing Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Lewy Body Dementia, MS, and stroke.

I live in Boise with my partner (a state college administrator), our two beloved dogs, and a shared passion for community service—including volunteering to help train service dogs for people in need. I'm especially interested in how tools like telehealth and mobile programming can expand access to care for people living with Parkinson's in rural and remote areas.

**Whether you're a person with Parkinson's, a care partner, a medical provider, or a community leader, I'd love to connect. You can reach me anytime on my direct line: (986) 256-2833 or via email: bwilliams@apdaparkinson.org**

## APDA Northwest: Resources to help you Connect

**Local Parkinson's Support Groups**

### Support Groups

Connecting people through support groups is one of the foundational principles of APDA and it continues to be at the heart of our mission. On the APDA Northwest website, we list over 100 support groups in our 5-state region. These include in-person community groups, virtual groups that meet on Zoom, and specialized for care partners, veterans, women with PD, and others.

**FREE online Classes from APDA can be found on our Virtual Calendar**

### Exercise and Wellness Programs

Joining an exercise or wellness class is a great way to connect and help you feel your best. There are many options available both virtually and in-person, so find something you love and get moving.

**Or find a class in your community:**

### Join Smart Patients:

**A Parkinson's Disease Online Community**

Helping people with Parkinson's and their care partners connect with each other is the reason APDA has partnered with Smart Patients to create a new online discussion forum for people with Parkinson's disease and their loved ones. Members in this online forum share help, advice, and information about treatments, symptoms, and side effects.

**Join Smart Patients**

**You can join the online forum for free to share, interact, and learn from each other in a safe, supportive environment.**

# Farmers Market Finds: Eating Well with Parkinson's This Summer

Q & A with **Kelly Morrow, MS RDN, FAND**, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

## Embracing Summer's Bounty

### What summer fruits and vegetables do you recommend for individuals with Parkinson's, and how can these seasonal foods support their health?

Summer brings an abundance of colorful fruits and vegetables rich in phytonutrients—natural compounds found in plants' colors, flavors, and fibers with powerful anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects. These foods can support brain health, reduce oxidative stress, improve digestion, and enhance overall health. This aligns closely with the PRO diet*, the MIND diet, and Mediterranean dietary patterns, which prioritize plant-forward, nutrient-dense meals and have shown benefits for Parkinson's by reducing motor and non-motor symptoms.

## Recommended Summer Produce and Their Benefits:

**Berries *(e.g., blueberries, raspberries, strawberries)*:** Packed with flavonoids and anthocyanins, berries may help protect dopamine-producing neurons, support memory, and are associated with slower cognitive decline.

**Cherries:** Contain polyphenols with anti-inflammatory properties and melatonin, which may support better sleep quality, often disrupted in Parkinson's disease. They may also help reduce oxidative stress in the brain.

**Stone fruits *(e.g., peaches, nectarines, plums)*:** These summer fruits provide carotenoids and phenolic acids, which protect brain cells by reducing oxidative damage.

**Leafy greens *(e.g., arugula, kale, Swiss chard, spinach)*:** Rich in folate, lutein, and magnesium, greens have been associated with slower cognitive aging. Magnesium may also support muscle function and reduce cramping, which can be troublesome in Parkinson's.

**Zucchini and summer squash:** Gentle on digestion and hydrating, these are ideal for those with slower gastrointestinal motility. They provide beta-carotene and lignans, which may support the gut-brain connection and overall inflammation control.

**Tomatoes:** A good source of lycopene, an antioxidant studied for its neuroprotective effects. When cooked with olive oil, absorption is enhanced. Lycopene may help reduce neuroinflammation and support cardiovascular health.

**Bell peppers:** High in vitamin C and flavonoids, these colorful vegetables support immune function and reduce oxidative stress.

**Cucumbers and melons:** Their high water content makes them excellent for hydration, which helps with blood pressure regulation and can reduce fatigue and dizziness, common non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's. They also contain mild anti-inflammatory compounds.

**Fresh herbs *(e.g., basil, dill, cilantro, parsley, and garlic)*:** These aromatic additions are rich in polyphenols and essential oils that may ease digestion, reduce systemic inflammation, and boost flavor, which can help improve enjoyment of eating if you have a reduced sense of taste or smell.

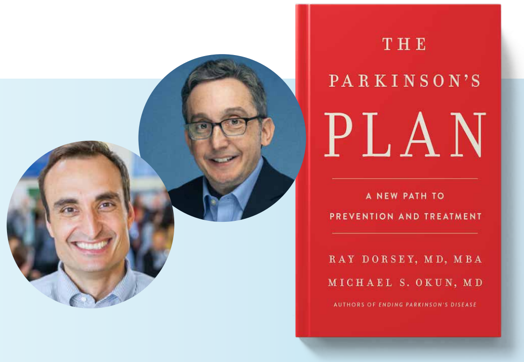
### How can visiting local farmers markets enhance the dietary habits of those managing Parkinson's disease?

Farmers' markets are a great way to add variety and freshness to the diet, which is especially important for people with Parkinson's. You'll often find fruits and vegetables you won't see in a typical grocery store, like unusual greens, heirloom tomatoes, or just-picked berries. Many farmers use organic or low-spray practices, which can help reduce exposure to pesticides and chemicals.

But it's not just about the food. Going to a farmers' market is also a chance to connect with others in your community. Social connection has been linked to fewer Parkinson's symptoms and better quality of life. Conversing with the person who grew your food, asking how to cook something new, or simply chatting with other shoppers adds something that a grocery store doesn't offer.

**Dr. Laurie Mischley developed the PRO Diet (short for Patient Reported Outcomes) based on research into dietary patterns associated with slower progression of Parkinson's symptoms. It emphasizes a whole-food, plant-forward approach with a high intake of vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and omega-3-rich foods while minimizing dairy, red meat, and highly processed foods. It overlaps in many ways with the MIND and Mediterranean diets.*

To learn more about Dr. Mischley's nutritional research visit https://educationismedicine.com/



## Excerpt from "The Parkinson's 25"

25 actions to lower your risk of Parkinson's. For those with the disease, some may even slow progression. Most apply to all of us regardless of age, sex, disability, or geography. These recommendations may be especially important for those with a family history of Parkinson's, those at genetic risk, or those who have been exposed to toxic chemicals.

—Adapted from *The Parkinson's Plan: A New Path to Prevention and Treatment*

by **Ray Dorsey, MD, MBA**, and **Michael S. Okun, MD**

### 1. Wash your produce, even your organic ones

Pesticides have contaminated our food supply. Remnants of pesticides are found in 20% of common foods. Organic produce, dairy products, and meat can reduce exposure but can still have unsafe residues of pesticides. So wash your produce at least with water and consider simple vegetable washes, vinegar, or salt solutions, too.

### 2. Change your diet

Individuals who eat a Mediterranean diet high in fruits and vegetables and low in animal products – may lower their risk of Parkinson's. Such a diet may also be beneficial for those who already have the disease. The reasons for the benefit are not certain and may include reduced exposure to pesticides, which can concentrate in meat and dairy as they make their way up the food chain.

### 3. Make sure your grocery store is safe

Perchloroethylene (PCE), the dry-cleaning chemical, can readily spread beyond the walls of a dry cleaner. In Germany, PCE, which dissolves in fat, has been found in dairy products in supermarkets near dry cleaners. Germany now prohibits supermarkets from being located close to dry cleaners. You may want to steer away from them as well.

## Navigating Organic Choices

### When shopping for produce, which items would you prioritize buying organic, especially for someone with Parkinson's?

Minimizing exposure to pesticides may be especially important for people with Parkinson's. Some research has linked long-term pesticide exposure to an increased risk of Parkinson's, so choosing organic can be a helpful way to reduce that risk where possible.

Prioritize buying organic versions of foods that are more likely to carry pesticide residues. The Environmental Working Group's "Dirty Dozen" list is a helpful reference, highlighting produce that tends to be more heavily sprayed. These usually include:

- Strawberries
- Spinach
- Kale, collard greens, and mustard greens
- Peaches and nectarines
- Apples
- Grapes
- Bell peppers and hot peppers
- Cherries
- Pears
- Celery
- Tomatoes
- Blueberries

### Are there specific fruits or vegetables where choosing organic is less critical?

The Environmental Working Group's "Clean Fifteen" list highlights fruits and vegetables that tend to have the lowest levels of pesticide residues, even when grown conventionally. These foods typically have thick skins or peels that protect the edible portion and are removed before eating. If you want to reduce your exposure to pesticides but stay within a budget, these are good options to buy non-organic when needed:

- Avocados
- Sweet corn
- Pineapple
- Onions
- Papaya
- Frozen sweet peas
- Asparagus
- Honeydew melon
- Kiwi
- Cabbage
- Watermelon
- Mushrooms
- Mangoes
- Sweet potatoes
- Carrots

### Do you have any advice for preparing meals that are easy to handle, considering potential motor challenges?

For individuals with Parkinson's who experience tremors, stiffness, or fatigue, simplifying cooking tasks can make a big difference. Here are a few helpful strategies:

- **Use adaptive tools**:
  - **Vegetable choppers and salad spinners** reduce the need for knife skills and speed up prep.
  - **Jar openers**, **non-slip cutting boards**, and **utensils with ergonomic grips** can make cooking more comfortable.
  - **Electric can openers** and **one-touch food processors** are useful if hand strength is limited.
- **Choose pre-prepped ingredients**: Pre-washed greens, pre-cut vegetables, bagged slaws, and frozen produce are great time-savers and reduce the physical effort of chopping and peeling.
- **Batch cook when energy is higher**: Cook larger portions of grains, roasted vegetables, or proteins that can be used over several meals. This reduces the number of cooking sessions during the week.
- **Go one pan or one bowl**: Sheet pan meals, soups, and grain bowls are easy to assemble, require less cleanup, and can be reheated with minimal effort.
- **Sit while you prep**: A sturdy chair at the counter or table can help reduce fatigue and increase stability while chopping, mixing, or assembling meals.

## Incorporating Integrative Nutrition

### How does your integrative approach to nutrition benefit individuals with Parkinson's during the summer months?

In the summer, I would focus on using fresh, seasonal foods to support the specific challenges of Parkinson's, such as fatigue, digestive issues, and nutrient absorption, while also addressing quality of life.

An integrative approach looks at the whole person, not just symptoms. This means using food to support the brain, gut, immune system, and mood. During summer, farmers' markets offer access to vibrant fruits, vegetables, and herbs rich in phytonutrients, antioxidants, and hydration, all important for slowing progression and feeling better daily.

I also focus on practical things: keeping meals simple, encouraging easy-to-digest foods like chilled soups and smoothies, and supporting hydration and electrolyte balance. For someone with Parkinson's, this might mean using frozen fruit for smoothies, making cold lentil salads with local veggies, or adding fresh mint to water to encourage fluid intake.

Summer is also a time to reconnect with joy around food. That might mean sitting outside for meals, trying a new seasonal recipe, or shopping at the farmers market for both nourishment and social connection. Research suggests that this may even help slow symptom progression.

Integrative nutrition during the summer means supporting the brain and body with fresh foods while encouraging daily habits that promote independence, community, and pleasure.

### Do you recommend focusing on any specific nutrients or supplements during this season?

During the summer, hydration becomes especially important for people with Parkinson's. Warmer weather, medications, and reduced thirst cues can all increase the risk of dehydration, worsening fatigue, constipation, and blood pressure drops. Drinking water consistently throughout the day is key. For some people, electrolyte supplements that contain sodium, potassium, and magnesium may also be helpful, especially if you're sweating more or feeling lightheaded.

Supplement needs are highly individual. I always recommend checking with your dietitian or doctor before starting anything new. A multivitamin is usually a good choice for a general supplement.

If you eat a variety of seasonal produce, stay hydrated, and get outside safely, you're already supporting your health in meaningful ways. Supplements can help fill gaps, but food and daily habits are the foundation.

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**Kelly Morrow, MS, RDN, FAND**, *is an affiliate instructor with the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Washington and a previous Associate Professor and Chair in the Department of Nutrition and Exercise Science at Bastyr University. She started her career over 20 years ago at the Booth Gardner Parkinson's Center at Evergreen Hospital in Washington State. She currently supports Parkinson's patients in meeting their nutrition needs at Seattle Integrative Medicine. Kelly can be reached at* kelly@kellymorrownutrition.com

# Practical Tips for Summer Eating

Here are some simple, nutritious meal ideas that incorporate summer produce and are suitable for individuals with Parkinson's

## Farmers Market Veggie Sauté with Eggs or Tofu

**Ingredients:**

- 2 farm **eggs** (or ½ block tofu)
- 2 large fistfuls of **greens** like kale, arugula, chard
- Handful of **cherry tomatoes** (halved)
- **Olive oil**, **sea salt**, **herbs** (like basil or dill)

**Instructions:**

Sauté greens and tomatoes in olive oil until soft. Add eggs or tofu and scramble. Top with fresh herbs. Serve with whole grain toast and avocado.

## Tomato Basil Salad

**Ingredients:**

- 2–3 ripe tomatoes (or 1 cup cherry tomatoes), sliced
- A handful of fresh basil leaves
- 1–2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Optional: splash of balsamic vinegar or a few thin slices of red onion

**Instructions:**

1. Slice the tomatoes and tear or chiffonade the basil.
2. Arrange on a plate or in a bowl.
3. Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and add optional ingredients if using.

## Roasted Veggies with Lemon Tahini

**Ingredients:**

- 1 **zucchini**, 1 **bell pepper**, 1 **small onion**, 1–2 **carrots** (or any mix of seasonal vegetables)
- **Olive oil**, **salt**, **pepper**

**Lemon Tahini Sauce**

- ¼ cup **tahini**
- 2 tbsp **lemon juice**
- 1 tbsp **olive oil**
- 1 tsp **maple syrup**
- 1 small **garlic clove**, minced
- 2–4 tbsp **water** (to thin)
- **Salt** to taste

**Instructions:**

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Chop veggies, toss with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Roast 25–30 min.
3. Mix sauce ingredients until smooth.
4. Drizzle sauce over warm veggies and serve.

OPTIMISM WALK
AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION

# 2025 OPTIMISM WALKS

## Walk with Purpose. Fuel Optimism.

Join us this fall for the APDA Northwest Optimism Walks and take meaningful steps to support people living with Parkinson's across Washington, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Alaska. Walk with us in Seattle (Sept 28), Lacey (Oct 4), or walk wherever you are!

Every step you take raises vital awareness and funds for local programs, support services, and research. Whether you're walking in honor of a loved one or on behalf of the more than 60,000 people living with Parkinson's across the Northwest, your participation makes a difference. Funds raised will keep people connected, informed, and moving forward, and YOU can make that happen.

Each Optimism Walk is part of a nationwide movement to inspire action and bring us closer to ending Parkinson's disease.

**Register today! Start a team, join a team, or walk as an individual!** Whether you're new to fundraising or a seasoned pro, we've got you covered. We provide all the tools and support you need to reach out to your network — and every dollar you raise makes **a powerful impact** by funding better support, accessible education, stronger community, and ultimately, a cure.

As a participant, you'll be **walking with purpose**, fueling optimism, and playing a vital role in APDA's mission to help everyone impacted by Parkinson's live life to the fullest. Fundraising is easier than you think — and it feels great to know you're making a difference!

Team Captains will receive Team Rally resources via email that will help you grow your team, provide motivation to fundraise, and generate excitement for the event. Together we can make an impact!

## APDA Northwest OPTIMISM WALKS

The Northwest Optimism Walks are an easy 1.5 mile walk.

Walkers of all abilities are welcome and can turn around at any time!

Bring the whole family!

### SEATTLE

Sunday,
September 28, 2025

**Ship Canal Trail**

**130 Nickerson Street, Seattle**

**Festivities begin at 9:30am**
**Opening Ceremony 11:00am**

**SIGN UP TODAY**
**to walk in Seattle!**

**bit.ly/APDANWWalk25**

### SOUTH SOUND LACEY

Saturday, October 4, 2025

**Woodland Creek Community Park**

**6729 Pacific Ave SE, Lacey, WA**

**Festivities begin at 10:30am**
**Opening Ceremony 12:00pm**

**SIGN UP TODAY**
**to walk in Lacey!**

**qrco.de/NWSouthSoundWalk**

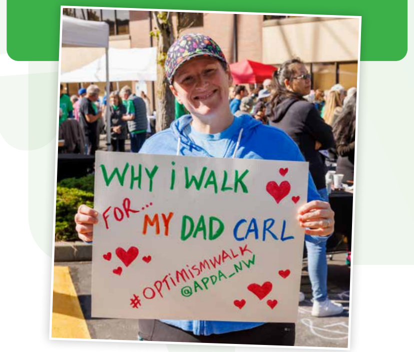
## REGISTER TODAY!

**Questions? Contact Heidi at (206) 798-3205**

### Can't attend in person?

**Contact Heidi at 206-798-3205 to learn more about how you can create a team and walk where you are!**

**Learn more and register at bit.ly/NWWalks2025**



**At this year's Northwest Optimism Walks we are excited to recognize two very special honorees who are both Veterans in our local Parkinson's community.**

Seattle
Optimism Walk Honoree

### Wayne Curran

**Wayne Curran** is a U.S. Army veteran who started his military career in 1969 with a year in Vietnam, and served until 1989. He was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2021. Wayne participated in the Optimism Walks in 2023 and 2024, and last year he didn't just lead the way in Seattle — **he was the top fundraiser across all APDA Walks nationwide!**

Want to know how much Wayne raised? An amazing $21,000!

Thank you, Wayne, for your service and for your incredible commitment to the Parkinson's community.

South Sound
Optimism Walk Honoree

### Bob Dixon

US Army Veteran **Bob Dixon** served in Vietnam from July 1970 to February 1972 and was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2018.

We featured Bob in our Winter 2020 issue of the *Parkinson Pathfinder*, where he shared his powerful outlook: "Life happens — so get out and live it! I know that I will not win my battle with PD, but I will give it one hell of a fight."

Bob has been a generous supporter of APDA through monthly giving and contributions to our fundraising events. We are grateful for his service, spirit, and continued support.We are grateful for his service, spirit, and continued support.

**Veterans may be at a higher risk of Parkinson's because of their service. APDA is committed to providing vital support and resources to veterans with PD.**

**To learn more, go to apdaparkinson.org/veterans**

# Creative Contributions Spotlight: **John Cornicello**

I was diagnosed with Parkinson's around 2012 when I mentioned to my general doctor that my typing skills were deteriorating and that my left arm sometimes shook. Here we are, 13 years later. My typing is worse, but the shake is about the same or maybe less (thanks, Carbidopa levodopa). Fine motor skills at my fingertips are getting worse. But through everything, I have not let PD interrupt my main passion in life, Photography.

I got my first 35mm SLR camera in 1973 and have had a camera in hand pretty much ever since. My first professional job involved using big studio cameras on big stands or tripods, so that set me up to be comfortable with tripods throughout my career. I "retired" a few years ago during the pandemic, but I continue to photograph in my little home studio in my basement. And sometimes I go outside.

One of those sometimes came together in 2024 when I got the opportunity to travel to the Galápagos Islands with a small group of photographers. We spent a little over a week on a 100-foot yacht with great food and two daily Panga expeditions to various islands. A Panga is a small Zodiac-like vessel to shuttle from the main ship to the islands, as the main ship never docks during the trip. They hold up to about eight people, and we used them as our base to take photographs from.

For this trip, I decided to pack light. I brought one camera body, one zoom lens, and a 1.4x tele-extender. The lens was a 100-400mm zoom, so with the extender, it was 140-560mm. I did not bring a tripod, but I did bring a monopod that doubled as a walking stick.

The photo of the tortoise was taken while on a short hike on our first full day on an island with a 400mm lens. My previous nature photography attempts have been the type where you go out and hope to find the creatures you are looking for, hope to get close to them, hope to not scare them away, and have to spend long periods of time waiting.

The Galapagos is a different experience. The creatures there don't fear humans; they sprawl across the walking paths, and you have to walk around them or jump over them. An hour or two at a location is plenty.

The other two photos were taken from the Panga on the water. For the flamingos, the lens was 280mm. We were out on the water in the Pangas and were ready to head back to the yacht when we were surprised by a flock of flamingos overhead. Even our guides were surprised when they landed nearby, and we got to spend some time photographing them in this lagoon.

The photo of the pelicans was also taken on the first full day before we landed on the Panga to get to the giant tortoises. This was also taken at 400mm from the bobbing and drifting Panga. The cover photo of the seals was also taken from a Panga with the lens and extender combined for 560mm.

Everyone's Parkinson's experience is unique, and I was fortunate not to experience many issues while traveling. I am one of the lucky few without intense symptoms.

I make an effort to stay active, and in November 2024 I started taking Chair Yoga classes online and in person at the Seattle APDA office, which has helped me with posture, stability, and relieving back pain from carrying a heavy camera. I highly recommend the classes. They have also allowed me to continue volunteering to photograph events such as the APDA Optimism Walk, the annual Gala, and events at the Seattle School of Acrobatics and New Circus Arts (SANCA).

Pacing myself and knowing when to sit down and take a breather is a learned skill that I am coming to grips with.

If you'd like to see more photos, go to my website at **https://cornicello.com/galapagos**, where you can find iguanas, crabs, and more.

From top: Pink Flamingos at Cormorant Point; Pelicans photographed from a Panga boat; Galapagos Giant Tortoise on Isobella Island

## CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS: Art from the APDA NW Community

Do you like to draw, paint, or take photographs? Are you a cartoonist or poetry master? If so, we'd love to share your work here!

Email apdanw@apdaparkinson.org with your creative submission today!

### Exercise Prescription… Or What One Neurologist Said

By Dotti Krist-Sterbick

When you sense the joy,
that is when it is
enough…

dancing,
boxing, pedaling,
walking, running, running, running…

No magic clock,
no 45-minute promise
at full speed
guarantees
a year, ten,
or keeps at bay
all that you fear.

Yes.

Move Today.
Keep moving.
Until joy finds you,
sweaty
out of breath,
gasping,

your heart singing,
ticking,
beating,
"Times Like These".

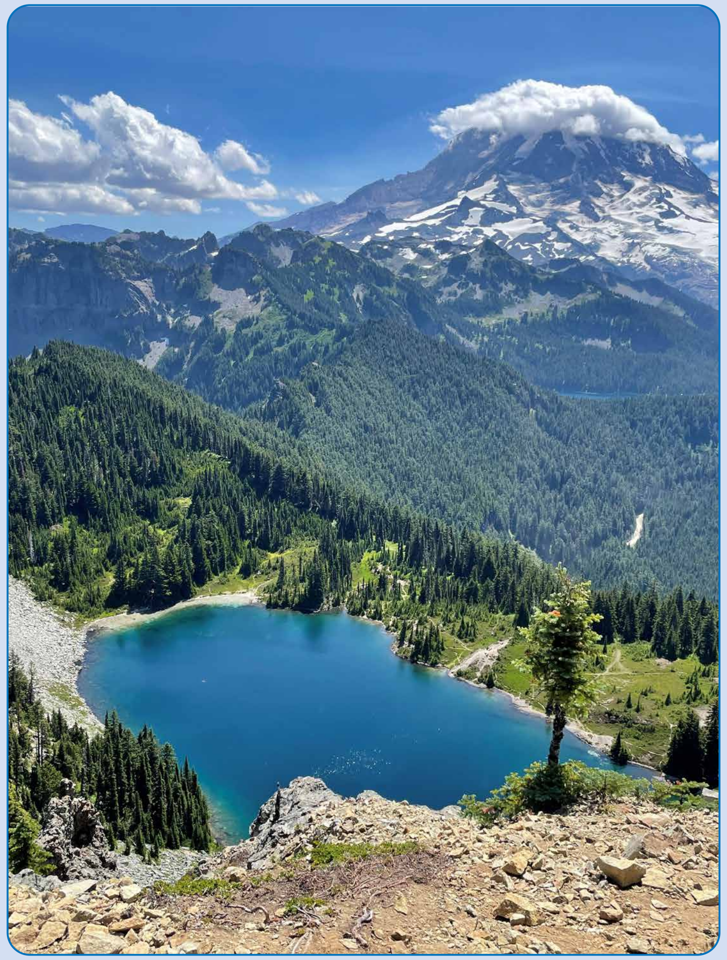
*("Times Like These," Song by Foo Fighters)*

"As a full-time caregiver for my husband, who has PD and PD dementia, I depend on my artwork as a way to reduce stress. I mostly make mixed-media stitch journals, but I also make voodoo dolls and emotion dolls.

One of the journals that I made is called *The Worry Book* because I tried to let go of my worries and anxiety as I stitched. This brought much-needed peace and comfort. I was thrilled that my journal was featured in Art Journaling Magazine.

I would encourage every caregiver to try creating as a way to manage stress and find calm."

**—Lynn Mourer**



*Mount Rainier from Tolmie Peak with Eunice Lake,* Photograph by **Phyllis Standahl**

AMERICAN
PARKINSON DISEASE
ASSOCIATION
NORTHWEST CHAPTER

**Strength in optimism. Hope in progress.**

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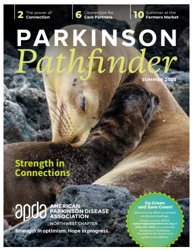

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PARKINSON
*Pathfinder*
SUMMER 2025

Strength in Connections

AMERICAN PARKINSON DISEASE ASSOCIATION
NORTHWEST CHAPTER
Strength in optimism. Hope in progress.

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Join us in our effort to cut back on physical mailings.
Simply contact APDA, **apdanw@apdaparkinson.org** or **(206) 695-2905**, to receive the Parkinson's Pathfinder via email in the future or to update your address.

Your *Parkinson Pathfinder* is locally produced by the Northwest Chapter!

## SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

Sign up for our newsletter by visiting our website **apdaparkinson.org/nw** or emailing **apdanw@apdaparkinson.org**

**APDA Northwest**
130 Nickerson Street, STE 300, Seattle, WA 98109

## Join **APDA's Legacy Society** and Leave a Lasting Impact

The American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) is committed to supporting people impacted by Parkinson's disease by increasing access to education and wellness, building community, providing support, and investing in research.

Including APDA in your will helps improve lives and costs you nothing today. Join other supporters in our APDA Legacy Society by including APDA in your will or trust, and invest in a brighter future for everyone living with Parkinson's.

**August is Make-A-Will Month**—a perfect opportunity to create your legacy.

**Take the next step:** Create your will online for free, contact an estate planning attorney, or reach out to us at apdanw@apdaparkinson.org or 206.695.2905 to learn more.

*Have you included APDA in your will?*
*Let us know and we can add your name to our Legacy Society!*