

MAY 2009

Exercise is a Gift you can Give Yourself to Improve your Quality of Life

Nina Brown

HAPS improves the quality of life for those affected by Parkinson's disease through services, education and advocacy. This can only happen if you are willing to make HAPS' mission, your mission. So let this be your mantra:

"I can improve my quality of life by taking advantage of the services HAPS offers; I will educate myself about the disease; and I will be an advocate for myself and others."

Exercise and creativity were the underlying themes of the HAPS Symposium that was held jointly with the Parkinson Disease Foundation (PDF). It's not "new" news that exercise is good for us. Studies have shown that people who exercise live longer, manage stress better, and maintain flexibility and mental acuity.

The "new" news is researchers are finding exercise has a positive effect on dopamine levels by offering stimulation to the various neurological pathways, increasing the capacity to counteract the progression of symptoms. In addition, more and more studies are focusing on the relationship between creativity, dance, music, meditation and Parkinson's and what they are finding is:

- ✓ Exercise drives neuroplasticity in the brain and modifies the basal ganglia in PD
- ✓ Exercise with enrichment, such as music, can restore dopamine to the brain
- ✓ Social connectedness has health benefits
- ✓ Rhythm can affect motor functions in profound ways and can stimulate motor processing areas in the brain
- ✓ Long-time social dancers have better balance and walking
- ✓ Creative activities can improve brain function and can be as easy as observing your environment and imagining

So exercise often, exercise with others and find new things to do that enrich your life. Take charge of your Parkinson's! All you have to do is check the HAPS Group schedule and decide how HAPS can help you best. And don't forget your mantra.

HAPS Educational Symposium 2009

-- A Unique Event --



On April 4, 2009, Houston Area Parkinson Society (HAPS) along with the Parkinson's Disease Foundation (PDF), cosponsored an important symposium titled, "**Taking Charge of Your Parkinson's.**"

The symposium was held at the United Way of Greater Houston and was simultaneously webcast live on the World Wide Web. Its original format with the webcast and the topics presented contributed to this year's symposium being a particularly unique event. The presentations provided fresh and innovative approaches to managing

Parkinson's disease with information on current research related to the positive effects of exercise, creativity, music, dance, social connections, meditation and relaxation and new findings about the plasticity of the brain.

The program included the following presentations:

Julie H. Carter, R.N., M.S., A.N.P. of the Oregon Health and Science University - *Improving Brain Function with Exercise and Creativity: You Too Can Do It*

Giselle Petzinger, M.D. of the University of Southern California - *Does Exercise Influence Parkinson's Disease?*

Gammon M. Earhart, Ph.D., P.T. of the Washington University School of Medicine- *Taking Charge of Your PD Through Music and Dance - Shall We Dance? Benefits of Tango for People with Parkinson's Disease*

Concetta M. Tomaino, D.A., MT-BC, LCAT of the Beth Abraham Family of Health Services - *I've Got Rhythm: The Power of Rhythm and Music to Benefit Those with PD*



As someone living with Parkinson's who attended the event, I would like to thank all who played a part in this symposium: Robin Elliott, Executive Director of PDF, the PDF staff, the HAPS staff, Board members, volunteers and the outstanding faculty from around the nation who assembled for this event. The symposium was an unqualified success, which outlined literally hundreds of rays of hope for all Parkinsonians.

The faculty members gave freely of their time and superb talents, and brought joy and the possibility, if not the actual prospect, of better days to all of us. Without exception, each faculty member gave a memorable, timely, state-of-the-art presentation. Their news was breath-taking and incredibly exciting to all of us whose lives are affected by PD. More than 250 people were present at the symposium itself and more than 1,300 people around the world watched and participated in the webcast in real time.

If you have PD or if you know someone who has PD—watching these presentations could be life altering. You can see and hear them any time during the next twelve months by going to the HAPS Web site at

www.hapsonline.org and clicking on the link. It is not necessary for you to watch the whole symposium at one time. You may surf and sample the presentations and return at a later date to review material you have already examined or to view new material.

Houstonians are very fortunate to have excellent Parkinson's care and resources available through the combined efforts and skills of organizations such as HAPS, hospitals, medical schools, clinics and medical professionals at area clinics. We all remain grateful for the outstanding support of the Houston medical community represented on the HAPS Medical Advisory Board and Board of Directors.

Aubrey B. Calvin
Chairman, HAPS Advisory Board





DO YOU FALL FROM PARKINSON'S DISEASE?

If you **fall** due to Parkinson's disease, you may be eligible to participate in a study on an exercise program being conducted by researchers at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, the Parkinson's Disease Research, Education, and Clinical Center at the Michael E. Debakey VA Hospital, and the Movement Disorders Clinic at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

If you have Parkinson's and have problems with walking and balance and would like more information regarding the study, please call **Mon Bryant at 713-791-1414 ext. 4043.**

Imagine...



**If The Best Treatment For Parkinson's
Turned Out To Be As Easy As Riding A Bike**



A researcher at the Cleveland Clinic discovered what appears to be strong evidence that tandem bike riding can reduce tremors in someone with Parkinson's.

One group of Parkinsonians pedaled on their own at 60-80% of their target heart rate zone, while the other group pedaled on a tandem bike with a trainer who was responsible for keeping the bike between 80-90 RPM.

The forced exercise on the tandem bikes was faster than what the patients would do on their own - and tremors and other symptoms improved by about 35% after eight weeks of pedaling for an hour a day, three days a week.

The study also noted that the improvement slowly went away if the activity wasn't continued.

NEWLY DIAGNOSED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

FOR THOSE DIAGNOSED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2009

8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL
KATHLEEN CRIST, LMSW 713-626-7114

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Your donation is much appreciated. Your thoughtfulness helps HAPS continue to provide much needed services to people with Parkinson's and their families.

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~All donations are tax deductible~

I love Parkinson's because I am convinced that a love of nature, combined with regular exercise, is part of the cure. I thrive on warm sunshine, cold spring waters, and the changing of the seasons.

.....Jon Kalb

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HAPS HAPPENINGS is published monthly by **Houston Area Parkinson Society** Editor: **Nina P. Brown**

HAPS does not provide diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or pharmacist with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or drug interactions.