

**“You are  
not alone.”**



**Parkinson Partners' Mission Statement:**  
**To encourage, educate and support those with Parkinson's disease, their caregivers and loved ones as they cope with the challenges of disease. Exploring better resources, services and outcomes for people with PD.**

**Inside This Issue:**

- 2. Free Caregiver Book**
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*Please remember Parkinson Partners in your estate planning. Your gift can ensure that local services and support continue for the Erie PD community.*

## Erie Spring PD Wellness Program

Parkinson experts and current PD research all indicate that exercise is vital in the treatment of PD. If you are only taking medicine, you are missing an important step you can take to make your journey with PD easier.

According to the Michael J. Fox Foundation, "There is evidence that exercise may hold specific benefits for people with Parkinson's in staying active and relatively limber, and improving balance and motor coordination."

So, are you exercising? Would you like to participate in activities specifically designed to help address PD symptoms supervised by a physical and occupational therapist? Would you feel more comfortable exercising with others who understand the challenges of PD rather than having to explain symptoms to others? Would you appreciate having help available if you need it?

Our Purposeful Movement and Wellness Classes will start up again on **Tuesday, February 4th** and will run for 8 weeks on Tuesdays from 2:30-4:00 PM at the Salvation Army Senior Center at the corner of West 11<sup>th</sup> and Liberty Streets. Cost is \$100.

Each participant will be partnered with students from Gannon University's Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy or other Health Science Programs. The students provide additional safety and personalized instruction. They can also help modify the group exercises for your specific needs, under the supervision of current and retired Gannon faculty: Physical Therapist Courtney Roca, Physical Therapist Connie Lewis and Physical Therapist Tom Hudson.

This session will feature a wide variety of exercise and activities, including boxing which has become a huge hit with our regular participants. There will also be an emphasis on walking, cardio fitness and strength building using hand weights.

The classes provide a great opportunity to exercise and to meet others in the PD community. Spouses and family members who accompany participants are welcome to stay and relax in the lounge or are free to run errands or join other spouses/caregivers who go out for coffee or walk during the classes.

The application can be downloaded from our website [www.parkinsonpartners.org](http://www.parkinsonpartners.org). You can also call 814-899-3030 or email Lynne at [info@parkinsonpartners.org](mailto:info@parkinsonpartners.org) for an updated application. **All local neurology offices have a copy of the required medical release. You should be able to call or message your neurologist's office and request that their office email or fax the medical release directly to us.**

**Space is limited so get your paperwork in as soon as possible to reserve your spot. No spots will be held. Your reservation is complete once we have received your application, waiver, payment and your neurologist signed medical release. You will receive a letter/email when you have been accepted into the program.**



## News and Notes

🎵 **Caregiver Book Donation:** We had special donation from ISM of Erie and would like to use the funds to order books for interested caregivers. Let me know if you are interested. Here is PD caregiver Karen Locke's review: "A very good friend of mine gave me a book recently, **The Light in the Middle of the Tunnel**, by Susan Gangsei. It's short stories about what caregivers of family members with Parkinson's Disease have to cope with. At first, I wasn't sure I wanted to read it, but I started it anyway. It made me realize that I was not alone in how I was feeling, being relatively new to this. And it gave me some hope. I really enjoyed this book and I hope you will too."

🎵 **Meeting Cancellations:** Now that winter is upon us, there is always the possibility that we will need to cancel a meeting due to weather. If we need to cancel, an email will be sent out alerting the community to the change. If you are not signed up for our email alerts, sign up today: <https://www.parkinsonpartners.org/home-2/contact-us/> We will also post the information on our Facebook page. If in doubt, you are always welcome to call the office at 814-899-3030.

🎵 Don't forget about the **Mead Transportation Grants** which provide a \$100 gift certificate to Hansen's Errand Service to help with transportation or errand service needs. For more information or to request and application call or email our office. If you have received a grant in the past and are interested in applying for another one, please reach out to our office.

## Do You Know About These Local Resources?

- **Speech and Language Services:** PennWest University-Edinboro is home to the Governor George Leader Speech & Hearing Center where we offer speech and language therapy services for both children and adult. As part of our clinic, we offer the Parkinson's Voice Project's SPEAK OUT!® and LOUD Crowd® Programs. The mission of this program is to help individuals with Parkinson's and related movement disorders to regain and maintain their speaking abilities. As Parkinson's is a progressive, degenerative condition, those with Parkinson's Disease oftentimes find the muscles involved in both speaking and swallowing can become weak. During our speech sessions, we encourage our members to not only speak with intent but live with intent in their daily lives. The SPEAK OUT!® program consists of individual therapy sessions followed by membership in the LOUD Crowd®- a group maintenance program. The key components that make up the LOUD Crowd® program are daily vocal exercise, the conscious use of INTENT, ongoing instruction from a speech language pathologist, and support and encouragement from care partners and peers. If you or someone you know would be interested in this therapy program at no cost – please contact the Governor George Leader Speech & Hearing Center at (814)-732-2433 or email: [leadercenter-edn@pennwest.edu](mailto:leadercenter-edn@pennwest.edu). You can also contact Chris Shumaker, Clinical Instructor, at PennWest for additional information at [cshumaker@pennwest.edu](mailto:cshumaker@pennwest.edu).
- **Memory Café:** 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month – 1 to 3 p.m. (closed for summer in August) Caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease or dementia of any kind, can take its toll physically, emotionally and financially. Opportunities for all involved to enjoy the company of others in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere are few. A Memory Café provides just such an opportunity, and Erie now has such a place. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie hosts a Memory Café on the first and third Thursday of each month from 1 to 3 p.m. The church is located at 7180 Perry Highway in Erie, just one mile north of the I-90 & State St. interchange. Attendance is free and open to the public. With dementia, caregivers and the afflicted have little opportunity to experience each other socially. At the Memory Café, participants can socialize, learn and share their experiences with others in similar circumstances in a stigma-free environment. More than 5 million Americans are living with dementia, and support is greatly needed in our community. The friendships and joy that resonate from these cafés bring light and life to both people with dementia and their caregivers. Reservations are preferred but not necessary and can be made by calling 814-864-9300.

## Best Wishes for those with Special Celebrations

Happy Birthday and  
Happy Anniversary!

To have your birthday or  
anniversary added to our  
list call 814-899-3030 or  
email:  
[info@ParkinsonPartners.org](mailto:info@ParkinsonPartners.org)

### January

1—Robin Caravaglia,  
Dave Yarnell  
7—Paul & Debbie  
Goodwin Anniv.; Sandra  
Barron  
9—Mary Kirkpatrick  
15—Bill Mason  
25—Patricia Hall  
31—Dave Cooney

### February

16—Corrine  
Dyakon



# Michael J. Fox Receives Presidential Medal of Freedom

Posted on January 4, 2025 at <https://www.michaeljfox.org/news/michael-j-fox-receives-presidential-medal-freedom>



*Editor's Note: This press release was sent out by the Michael J. Fox Foundation. Because of the extraordinary efforts of Michael J. Fox and his foundation to champion research looking for the cause, treatments and cure for PD, I thought it was important to share this story with you. He has helped to put a face on PD and advocate for the entire PD community. How fitting it is for him to receive this high honor.*

Today, our founder Michael J. Fox was awarded [the Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), the nation's highest civilian honor. The award recognizes individuals who have made exemplary contributions to the prosperity, values, or security of the United States, world peace, or other significant societal, public or private endeavors.

During a conferral ceremony at the White House, Michael was recognized as “one of the most beloved actors of our time with remarkable wit and charm.” He was honored for his boundless determination to change the future for millions living with Parkinson's: “With undaunted resilience and optimism, he also warms hearts and captivates audiences as a fearless advocate for those with Parkinson's disease.

Channeling his endearing personality to advance treatments that move us closer to a cure and remind us of the power of American possibilities.”

President Biden awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to 19 honorees including leaders in sports, entertainment, civil rights, fashion, science and philanthropy. “These nineteen individuals are great leaders who have made America and the world a better place. They are great leaders because they are good people who have made extraordinary contributions to their country and the world,” read the White House press release.

“Receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom is humbling, an honor I could never have anticipated,” said Michael. “I’m grateful for this recognition, which I share with the patients, families and researchers who have brought us closer than ever to ending Parkinson's disease once and for all.”

Since it was founded in 2000, The Michael J. Fox Foundation has become the world's largest non-profit funder of Parkinson's research, deploying more than \$2 billion to high-impact research programs. The Foundation's high-risk, high-reward model has enabled key breakthroughs in Parkinson's science and policy, including the 2023 discovery of a [Parkinson's biomarker](#) and the first-ever federal initiative to end Parkinson's, the [National Parkinson's Project](#).

*Note: If you are reading this online, you can click on the underlined words to access more information.*

## Parkinson Partners of NW PA, Inc.

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814-899-3030

E-MAIL:  
info@ParkinsonPartners.org

**DONATIONS:**  
Checks should be made payable to "Parkinson Partners" and mailed to the address above. Donations can also be made via PayPal on our website.



Parkinson Partners of NW PA, inc.  
PO Box 10547  
Erie, PA 16514

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We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[www.ParkinsonPartners.org](http://www.ParkinsonPartners.org)

**DISCLAIMER:** The material presented in this issue is solely for the information of the reader. It is not intended for treatment purposes, but rather as a basis for discussion with the patient's physician.

## Support Group Meeting Schedules

Remember: all events are also listed on our Events Calendar on our website including live links to Zoom meetings. **Make sure to sign up for our emails so you are alerted to any last-minute changes.**

### ZOOM MEETINGS:

- **Parkinson Partners Support Group Meeting on Wednesdays, Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> and Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> Wed. of the month) at 1:00 PM.** Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/93010770942?pwd=bzhTYTgxVEIXV0pONnYwbEt5TnZzZz09>
- **Caregiver Only Zoom Meeting on Thursdays, Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> and Feb. 27<sup>th</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> Thurs. of the month) at 1:30 PM.** Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/96391675305>

### IN-PERSON MEETINGS:

- **Eastside YMCA PD Support Group: Wed., Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> Wed. of the month) at 1:00 PM** at Eastside YMCA, 2101 Nagle Road. All are welcome!
- **Care Partner Only Lunch: Monday, Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> Mon. of the month) at 11:30 AM** at Peach St. Wegman's Café
- **Evening PD Support Group: Tues., Feb. 11<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> Tues. of the month) at 6:00 PM** at Springhill Retirement Community, 2323 Edinboro Road (Community Room). We will have a potluck so let us know what dish you'll bring and bring your own drink. All are welcome!