



THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION  
FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

# THE FOX FOCUS

## ON PARKINSON'S

— SPRING 2014 NEWSLETTER —

## COLLABORATING FOR A CURE

Parkinson's Awareness month reminds us:  
We can take action today

BY KIMBERLY SAWICKI

**A**pril is Parkinson's Awareness month — the perfect time to take action in pursuit of a cure for Parkinson's disease (PD). Become one of the thousands of supporters and volunteers whose dedication, enthusiasm and positive energy embody the mission and message of The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (MJFF).

Since its formation in 2000, MJFF has never wavered from its mission to speed a cure for Parkinson's, the world's second most common degenerative brain disease, impacting nearly 5 million people around the globe. The Foundation today is the world's largest nonprofit funder of Parkinson's disease research, having made grants totaling more than \$400 million, all with one steadfast goal in mind — find the cure and “go out of business.”

But we cannot do it alone. “When we find the cure for Parkinson's...it won't be because of any single individual or because of the Foundation. It will be because of all of us, working together,” said Michael J. Fox.

It is only through your involvement that we can make a powerful impact on the Parkinson's status quo. With 2014 in full swing, take this opportunity to learn how you can become an agent of change for yourself or for your loved one living with PD.

### Fox Trial Finder

Participate in a clinical trial. More than 25,000 volunteers have raised their hands to participate in clinical trials by creating

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### This Parkinson's Awareness Month

share why you're taking action to speed a cure for Parkinson's on Facebook.



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# THE SHERER REPORT

## A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

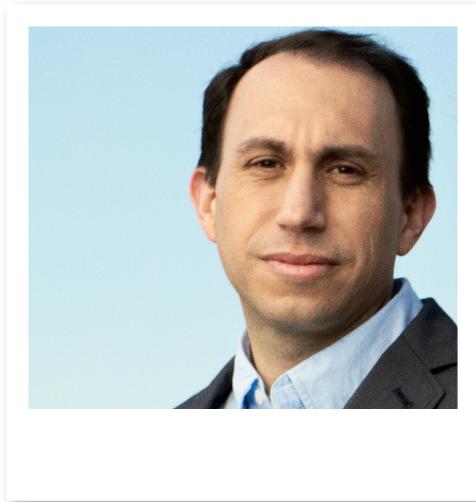
Todd Sherer, PhD discusses how protein alpha-synuclein may play a key role in pursuing other targets for drugs in development

### Pressing Charges Against Alpha-synuclein

The title of investigator may seem more at home on a television cop drama than in a laboratory, but we call research scientists “investigators,” too, and the job description fits: follow the clues, reveal new understanding and solve the crime. The case we’re on is the “whodunit” of Parkinson’s disease, and we’re solving for how we can slow, stop or prevent disease progression.

Thousands of medical investigators are researching the pathology of Parkinson’s disease in laboratories and clinics around the world, gathering evidence that will lead us to a cure for the millions living with PD and the many more who will soon be at risk as our population ages. Researchers feel the urgency and are working quickly and collaboratively toward a disease-modifying therapy, something that still eludes the field.

One of the challenges — or potentially helpful factors, depending on how you look at it — is that there is so much variability in Parkinson’s disease. There may be many genetic variants, proteins and pathways involved in the pathological process. This reality presents many opportunities to thwart the disease, but also presents many un-



knowns. The good news is that while scientists are learning more about the underlying biology of Parkinson’s, we have a prime suspect for drugs already in development. Furthermore, this suspect, the protein alpha-synuclein, can help us pursue other targets.

### Locking Up Alpha-synuclein

The protein alpha-synuclein clumps in the cells of Parkinson’s patients, which, investigators hypothesize, leads to dysfunction and cell death. The Foundation is driving work on several strategies to prevent or clear alpha-synuclein clumps in hopes this may stop the disease process. One approach is to use antibodies — those immune system “good guys” whose job is to keep us healthy — to clear out alpha-synuclein aggregates and halt the disease process. MJFF is supporting various efforts in this realm, either inducing the body to make antibodies against alpha-synuclein or developing and introducing those antibodies directly. A study by Austrian biotech AFFiRiS is already testing a vaccine to stimulate antibodies to clear out alpha-synuclein clumps. The Foundation has invested \$1.5 million in this Phase I study based on impressive

pre-clinical data, and results on its safety and tolerability are expected in 2014. Another research route is the prevention of alpha-synuclein aggregates in the first place. MJFF has recently funded multiple studies with this approach, including a repurposing project — testing drugs developed for one condition on another — trying a unique combination of a malaria drug and an anti-depressant to stop alpha-synuclein from clumping. Such a therapy could help prevent Parkinson’s disease progression.

### Alpha-synuclein as Informant

While toxic alpha-synuclein is a bad thing, we can use it for good. Alpha-synuclein levels may serve as a biomarker of disease risk, onset or progression. The Foundation is leading the charge to catch alpha-synuclein in the pathological act — detecting its toxic activity early and monitoring as Parkinson’s progresses.

The Parkinson’s Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI) a landmark biomarker study sponsored by MJFF, is enrolling people with the rare alpha-synuclein gene mutation (people with and at risk for Parkinson’s) to learn more about this protein and looks for biomarkers for use in developing therapies. (Read more on page 6.) This population can give researchers the inside scoop on what other gene variants, proteins and pathways might play a role in Parkinson’s disease risk, onset and progression.

MJFF is also leading efforts to develop an imaging test to visualize alpha-synuclein in the brain and are testing protein levels in tissue from different parts of the body: skin, salivary glands, and retina, for example. A Parkinson’s informant, like an alpha-synuclein biomarker, could help

diagnose earlier and is critical to the development of disease-modifying therapies.

### Other Proteins of Interest

While a promising target for drug development and biomarker validation, alpha-synuclein isn’t the only pathology we’re interested in. MJFF continues to pursue many avenues toward better diagnostics, improved symptomatic therapies and, ultimately, the cure. The LRRK2 gene — the greatest known genetic contributor to Parkinson’s — and its accomplice the LRRK2 protein kinase are a major focus of the Foundation. PPMI also is enrolling individuals with a LRRK2 mutation, and MJFF led a first-of-its-kind summit in January with industry groups working on LRRK2 therapies to discuss challenges and problem solve. We’re also looking at different proteins (tau and amyloid-beta) for their potential as biomarkers and at pathways, such as in inflammation, that may lead us to more targets for therapeutic development.

There are many reasons to be optimistic in all areas of Parkinson’s research, and especially around alpha-synuclein. The Foundation is avidly pursuing different leads on what treatment will break up the bad guys and keep the good cells from turning to a life of toxicity. Investigators around the globe are trying to keep proteins and pathways clean to slow Parkinson’s progression or, better yet, prevent it in the first place.

*Todd Sherer*

*Tell me what you think about these reports — and what you’d like me to cover in future editions. Email [theshererreport@michaeljfox.org](mailto:theshererreport@michaeljfox.org).*



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a profile on Fox Trial Finder, allowing the tool to continually match them with appropriate trials. Clinical trials are a final and critical step on the path to developing better treatments for Parkinson's patients and are in desperate need of volunteers, both with and without PD. This PD Awareness month, recognize the importance your role plays in the process of developing treatments by visiting [www.foxtrialfinder.org](http://www.foxtrialfinder.org).

**Parkinson's Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI)**

Participate in MJFF's landmark clinical study to better understand the progression of Parkinson's disease. PPMI aims to identify and assess biomarkers, objective measures of PD in people who have PD, people who do not have PD and those who may be at risk to develop PD. PPMI is currently enrolling participants with a known mutation in one of two genes that previous research has shown are associated with PD. Launched in 2010, the study is now taking place at 32 clinical sites around the world. For more information about enrolling, visit [www.michaeljfox.org/ppmi](http://www.michaeljfox.org/ppmi).

**Team Fox**

Join or support Team Fox! MJFF's grassroots community network to raise funds and awareness has welcomed more

than 1,600 members each year who have turned their passions into projects dedicated to finding a cure. Marathons, comedy nights, and mountain climbs are among the many creative ways Team Fox members have joined forces to raise funds totaling nearly \$26 million to date. Even if you cannot become a member, you can still support Team Fox by participating in an event in your community. Read more about one of our inspiring Team Fox members on page 10. For more information about how you can become a Team Fox member or support an event in your area, visit [www.teamfox.org](http://www.teamfox.org).

**Partners in Parkinson's**

This May, The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research and AbbVie will unveil Partners in Parkinson's — a new strategic health initiative that aims to fill in knowledge gaps and provide new educational tools and resources for the Parkinson's community, to help patients and caregivers optimize care at every stage of the disease.

"A cure won't be found unless you step up to the plate and take a swing," said MJFF guest blogger and PD patient Peggy Willocks. "You never know, you might just hit Parkinson's right out of the park."

To learn more about how you can become an integral part of The Michael J. Fox Foundation's mission, visit [www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org).



**Inosine May Hold Potential for Parkinson's, but Act with Caution**

Researchers studying inosine, a compound that raises levels of the antioxidant urate, published in JAMA Neurology in December that, with medical supervision, taking inosine is safe for Parkinson's patients. Higher urate levels were associated with slower rates of Parkinson's progression in previous clinical studies. MJFF invested more than \$5 million in the study in 2008. Listen to lead investigator Michael Schwarzschild, MD, PhD, discuss his research and next steps in MJFF Parkinson's Podcast Series at [www.michaeljfox.org/inosinepodcast](http://www.michaeljfox.org/inosinepodcast).



**Parkinson's Disease: What Else Goes Wrong?**

Some of the non-motor symptoms of Parkinson's are linked to the autonomic nervous system. "You can develop difficulties with vision; changes in various sweat glands, either dryness or excessive sweating; difficulties with the bladder; erectile dysfunction in men; blood pressure control; constipation and problems with the GI system," says Charles Adler, MD, PhD. Charles joined the Foundation for a Webinar on "Parkinson's Disease: What Else Goes Wrong?" in February that talked about these symptoms and what therapies are in development. Watch the Webinar at [www.youtube.com/user/michaeljfox.com](http://www.youtube.com/user/michaeljfox.com).



**Parkinson's Biomarker May Be Only Skin Deep**

The MJFF FoxFeed blog spoke with Roy Freeman, MD, who recently published in Neurology on his study looking at alpha-synuclein levels in the skin.

**MJFF:** Tell us about your study. What did you find?

**Roy Freeman:** We looked for the presence of alpha-synuclein in the skin and found higher alpha-synuclein levels within the autonomic nerves innervating the sweat glands and piloerector muscles of PD patients. We found also that there is a relationship between the amount of alpha-synuclein deposition in these nerves and Parkinson's disease severity. Read our entire q-and-a with Roy at [www.michaeljfox.org/freemanbiomarker](http://www.michaeljfox.org/freemanbiomarker).

**PARTNERS IN PARKINSON'S**

Launching on May 18 in New York City, Partners in Parkinson's will visit 10 cities in 2014, featuring a full-day schedule of panel discussions, breakout sessions and information about local Parkinson's resources. Stay tuned for the opportunity to register for an event in your community!

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|---|--|
| <b>MAY</b><br>New York City, NY<br>Cleveland, OH  | <b>OCTOBER</b><br>Washington, DC<br>Philadelphia, PA |
| <b>AUGUST</b><br>San Francisco, CA<br>Seattle, WA | <b>NOVEMBER</b><br>Chicago, IL<br>Denver, CO         |
| <b>SEPTEMBER</b><br>Atlanta, GA<br>Boston, MA     | <b>DECEMBER</b><br>Los Angeles, CA                   |

## IS PARKINSON'S DISEASE GENETIC? MAYBE...

BY MAGGIE MCGUIRE

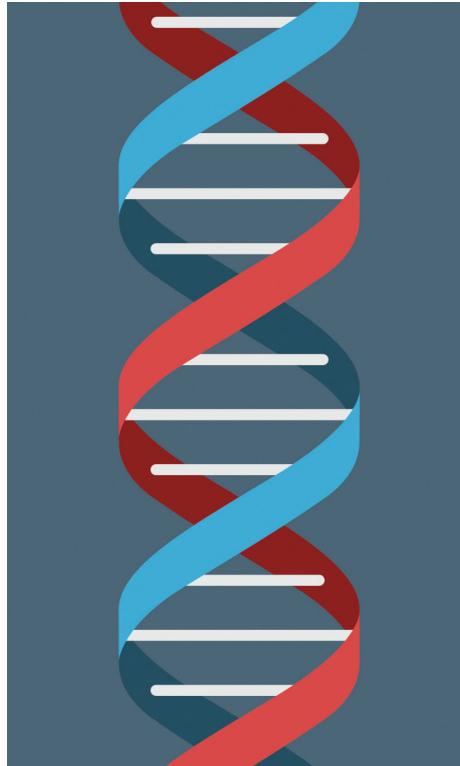
Everyone in the Parkinson's disease (PD) community likely has heard this question and asked it themselves. We say that PD is rarely caused by genetics, but what does that mean for those living with the disease today, their children and family?

There remain many more questions surrounding the genetics of PD than answers, but researchers have promising leads and good ideas of how to learn more. Scientists have identified two causal genes associated with Parkinson's, but — important to note — not all individuals with mutations in those genes will develop the disease. Researchers know of a handful of risk genes, too, which could interplay with other factors to lead to Parkinson's. The Michael J. Fox Foundation is driving research efforts to learn more about Parkinson's genetics and to speed the process of translating these findings into better treatments and a cure.

### Translating Genetic Discoveries into Therapeutics

"Focusing on PD patients and those at risk for PD with genetic mutations will allow us to track the disease process at the earliest stages of illness," says Ken Marek, MD, principal investigator of the Parkinson's Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI). "This population will teach us about the biology of Parkinson's disease and will accelerate our research toward a PD biomarker and more effective PD therapies."

As recently as the late 1990s, scientists thought there was no genetic component to Parkinson's. However,



through the study of one family with a high incidence of PD, in 1997 researchers discovered a genetic mutation that can cause the disease. While this mutation, in the SNCA gene, is incredibly rare, it led scientists to the hallmark pathology of PD. Researchers studied the SNCA gene and found that the protein it encodes, alpha-synuclein, clumps in the cells of all PD patients.

In 2004 Parkinson's researchers discovered the LRRK2 gene mutation, the greatest known genetic contributor to PD, which still accounts for only one to two percent of all PD cases. In some ethnic populations (e.g. Ashkenazi Jewish), more cases of PD are attributed to the LRRK2 mutation, but researchers do not yet know why. A mutation in the LRRK2 gene heightens activity of the LRRK2 kinase, which has become a major focus of drug development.

Investigators are pursuing, too, the risk genes they have identified thus far: GBA, Parkin, PINK1, DJ-1. Much like

how the SNCA mutation pointed to alpha-synuclein clumping, scientists hope to follow these genes to proteins and pathways that may be involved in idiopathic PD, too.

In addition, researchers are looking for more genes associated with PD by profiling the risk with a causal gene like LRRK2. We know that not everyone with this mutation gets Parkinson's. Could other genetic variants lead some people to develop PD? Are there protective factors that keep some people with the mutation from symptom onset? Such increased risk or protective factors could be seen in idiopathic PD patients, and lead scientists to new targets for treatments.



This population will teach us about the biology of Parkinson's disease and will accelerate our research toward a PD biomarker and more effective PD therapies.



### Contributing to Drug Development

These genetic findings have opened the door to a whole new avenue of PD research. While knowledge of Parkinson's mutations points to potential drug targets that will speed disease-modifying therapies, it does raise questions about the likelihood of PD among family. And, right now, knowing one's genetic makeup does not change the course of treatment.

However, those who know they have a genetic mutation associated with Parkinson's have a valuable role to play in research. They have the power to change the status quo. As it's been stated,

investigators can learn a lot by studying the biology of people with a PD mutation, and what they learn can translate to drug development to benefit all people living with PD.

PPMI, a landmark study sponsored by the Foundation, launched a genetics arm in February recruiting individuals with a LRRK2 or SNCA mutation — people with and at risk for Parkinson's. The study will collect data and biological samples over five years to look for PD pathology.

Learn more at [www.michaeljfox.org/ppmi-genetics](http://www.michaeljfox.org/ppmi-genetics).

We have much to learn, but looking back to that first SNCA mutation discovery, it is remarkable what we know now compared to 15 years ago. Furthermore, the Foundation is calling on the PPMI infrastructure, emerging technologies and a growing list of PD-related genes to hasten the pace.

For most families with Parkinson's, the heritability of the disease is extremely low. But those families with a higher inherited risk can help us solve for the unknowns around the genetics and likelihood of PD and lead us to answer the ultimate question: What is the cure?

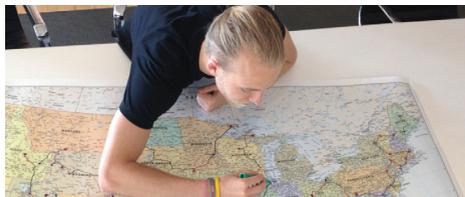


This spring, PPMI is studying the connection between PD and having a mutation on the LRRK2 gene. The study is looking for people with Parkinson's who are of Eastern European (Ashkenazi) Jewish, North African Berber or Basque ancestry. For more information, visit [www.michaeljfox.org/ppmi-genetics](http://www.michaeljfox.org/ppmi-genetics)

## SAM FOX IS ABOUT TO BIKE 5,000 MILES TO RAISE FUNDS FOR RESEARCH

And you can join him!

BY JASON RICE



Sam Fox maps out his Tour de Fox route set to begin May 22.

**T**his May, MJFF staff member Sam Fox (no relation to Michael J. Fox) will be taking on his third extreme endeavor for Team Fox: riding his bike 5,000 miles through 48 states (with one final stop in Vancouver, Canada) while climbing the highest peak in each state — all in three months' time. The Tour de Fox, which officially kicks off in New York City on May 22, aims to raise \$500,000 for Parkinson's research. But unlike his Pacific Crest Trail run in 2011, this adventure isn't a solo endeavor. As he did during his 2012 Hamptons Hundred Miler (running the 100 miles from New York City to Long Island's Hamptons beach community in 24 hours), Sam is encouraging others to join him — by hiking, biking or celebrating with him during the tour. Sam spared a few minutes from his training and trip-planning to talk about this year's mega-fundraiser with *The Fox Focus*.

**What inspired this challenge?** My mother, Lucy, was diagnosed with Parkinson's more than a decade ago. I hate that she has to deal with the frustrations of physical discomfort every single day. Having now worked at MJFF for more than three years, I've met so many incredible people, including Team Fox members, who have also become a source of inspiration. The opportunity to meet hundreds, maybe

thousands of people who have similar PD experiences, all while raising money to cure the disease, seems like something I'd be crazy to pass up.

### How do you train for an event like this?

I exercise twice a day, once before work and once after — spending hours each week riding a bike, running, swimming and lifting. I'm building cardiovascular endurance while strengthening certain parts of my body in a strategic effort to avoid injuries that are common for long distance bikers. I also try to get out of New York City on weekends and into some real wilderness to get my trail legs under me. But in a pinch, running stairs in Central Park is a pretty good substitute.

### If someone wants to join you on the tour and raise funds for MJFF, how can they get involved?

You can join me on one (or more!) of 49 different climbs across the country. You'll also have the option to join me on seven different bike stages, or to celebrate with me and the crew in up to 47 different towns and cities from Maine to British Columbia. Once signed up for the tour, you'll be able to tell your PD story and share your progress with the whole Michael J. Fox Foundation community. Go to [www.michaeljfox.org/tourdefox](http://www.michaeljfox.org/tourdefox) to get started.

**What are other ways people can show their support?** Maybe my schedule doesn't line up with yours, or my route doesn't come close enough to where you live. That's ok, because there are other ways to get involved. When you join the Tour you'll also have the option to plan your own climb, ride or social event

somewhere closer to home. You can still fundraise alongside all of the other Tour participants, and you'll be able to share news from your events with the community on the Tour de Fox website.

**What's the best way to follow your progress during the tour?** All Tour de Fox news will be available at [www.michaeljfox.org/tourdefox](http://www.michaeljfox.org/tourdefox). We'll be updating our location every day with tweets and other content from the road, and to track our location in near real time, just click on the 'Tour Updates' tab. I'll be tweeting about the trip from @SamFoxMJFF, and there will be regular news about the Tour on all of MJFF's existing online social channels.

### What do you think will be the most physically challenging part of the tour?

When I think about the individual challenges on this route I actually get excited. I love trying to push my limits and there will certainly be opportunities to do that. It's the totality of the project, the non-stop nature of the schedule, that I think will be the most challenging. There is no rest between peaks and rides. The crew and I will always be on the move,

eager to get to the next state, to the next mountain, and to meet the next dedicated group of Tour de Fox volunteer climbers and riders.

### This isn't your first time at an extreme adventure for Team Fox. How do you stay motivated on these long and challenging journeys?

This adventure is quite different from things I've done in the past, and with the schedule as packed as it is, I don't think I'll lack motivation. I'll have the pleasure of meeting new volunteer participants every day for three months, and a line of friends stretching from coast to coast. But, yes, on those high mountain roads, or while baking under the hot desert sun, I know that remembering I'm out here for my mom will keep me going.

To learn more about Sam's journey, visit [www.michaeljfox.org/tourdefox](http://www.michaeljfox.org/tourdefox).



## Team Fox Heads to Walt Disney World, January 2015



**R**unning enthusiasts and athletic adventurers — looking for a fun and unique week of family fun in support of Parkinson's research? Join your favorite Disney characters and Team Fox friends in sunny Florida this coming January (2015) for the Walt Disney World Marathon Weekend!

Run with Team Fox for the half marathon, full marathon or consider taking on the notorious two-day Goofy Challenge (Half Marathon and Full Marathon) or the four-day Dopey Challenge (5K, 10K, Half Marathon and Marathon).

Email [athletes@michaeljfox.org](mailto:athletes@michaeljfox.org) for information on registration and timing.

## Team Fox Member Creates “Safe Haven” for West Virginians with Parkinson’s

BY LIZ DIEMER



George Manaban with fellow Team Fox members

These days, Team Fox member George Manaban is an active, influential member of the West Virginia Parkinson’s community. Diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease (PD) nearly four years ago, George is the first to admit that circumstances were incredibly different back then: “I didn’t know a single other person with Parkinson’s, and without a local support group available, I didn’t know where to start. I quickly realized that proactivity was necessary.”

After doing some research, George engaged with The Michael J. Fox Foundation, joined Team Fox and began planning his inaugural Fox Trot 5K for Parkinson’s Research in his hometown of Charleston, West Virginia. George’s event brought together nearly 250 participants for a 5K walk and chili cook-off that raised over \$21,000.

Along with his success in raising money and awareness, George garnered the interest of his neighbors and friends with PD. “Throughout the event, people would pull me close and whisper ‘I have what you have!’ While not fully ready to publicly admit that they had PD, they sought the support of one another to talk openly about their symptoms.” Encouraged by

these connections, George formed a committee and established the West Virginia Parkinson’s Support Group, providing an outlet for people with Parkinson’s to share their experiences with one another. In just over a year, the group has gained incredible momentum with a roster of nearly 100 active members.

Missy Spangler — a Fellow West Virginian and Team Fox mentor to George — credits the success of the support group to George’s positive, contagious spirit: “Many people fear Parkinson’s, but George has created a safe haven for others to come together. There hasn’t been a support group meeting yet that we haven’t had to pull out extra chairs for new visitors!”

George hosted his second Fox Trot on March 15. With an early bid of sponsorships from local businesses, as well as the addition of a Friday evening reception and 5K run to the weekend festivities, the event raised close to \$35,000 for Team Fox as of February.

When speaking to what the coming years have in store for his Team Fox efforts, George proudly warns, “All I can say is, watch out for West Virginia! Our team is growing, and we’re excited that this is only the beginning.”

To learn more, search Facebook for “West Virginia Parkinson’s Support Network.”



George Manaban with West Virginia State Treasurer John Perdue

## A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

When Danielle Bradley’s mom, Manda Kazmier, of Ogden Dunes Indiana, was diagnosed five years ago with Parkinson’s disease, Danielle knew she needed every opportunity to help Manda stay positive and motivated. Initially, Manda struggled with her diagnosis. However, she soon sought support for and education about the disease and an opportunity to become involved in the PD community. Manda and her husband, Henry, began attending local fundraisers and symposia hosted by The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research. “My mom was touched by the personal approach the Foundation took when speaking with patients and families. Participating in these events began to give her a sense of control.”

Seeing that involvement with the Foundation was helping lift her mother’s spirits, in November 2013 Danielle decided to surprise her family with tickets to the Foundation’s gala benefit, “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Cure Parkinson’s.” She rounded up her husband, Ronald Bradley, and her parents, and the family headed to New York City. Sitting among other patients, doctors and Foundation supporters, Manda gained a

new appreciation for the urgent work being done to find a cure. “It was important for my mom to see the 1200 people in that ballroom, each helping in their own way to speed a cure for this disease. She’s not alone in this.”

“My mom was touched by the personal approach the Foundation took when speaking with patients and families. Participating in these events began to give her a sense of control.”

While Manda still feels the effects of the disease, Danielle has observed that her mother’s attitude grows more positive the more engaged in the community she becomes. After attending “Funny Thing,” Manda was inspired to volunteer for a clinical trial. “She used to keep thinking about the things she couldn’t do,” says Danielle. “But when you see Michael up on stage at an event, knowing he has had Parkinson’s much longer than you and he is still living his life, you get a different perspective.”



(L to R): Ronald M. Bradley; Danielle Bradley; Henry Kazmier; Denise Kazmier and Manda Kazmier



George and Mary Browne and their grandchildren

## “IT FEELS GOOD TO DO SOMETHING THAT’S VALUABLE TO OTHER PEOPLE”

BY ELIZABETH JOYCE

George Browne and his wife, Mary, first started getting involved in research studies soon after Mary was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease in 2005. They wanted to find out as much as they could about the disease and what they could do to help speed a cure. Regularly involved in their community, The Brownes felt participating in clinical trials would be the perfect fit. Says George, “It feels good to do something that’s valuable to other people.”

They participated in their first trial together, helping to test the effects of practicing Tai Chi, a blend of meditation and physical exercise designed for relaxation, on PD symptoms. “It was invigorating and uplifting,” says Mary, who still gets consistent exercise through dancing and swimming.

Today, George is enrolled in The Parkinson’s Progression Markers Initiative, a multi-year study sponsored by MJFF to identify a biomarker of Parkinson’s disease. George travels to Philadelphia for his

PPMI visits and enjoys working with the study’s coordinators and physicians. Mary has also participated in a LRRK2 genetic screening at NIH, which led to her participating in a trial testing Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS), which, she reports, has helped greatly with her motor symptoms.

Mary and George stress the importance of living positively with PD. A retired physical therapist, Mary has had

experience helping others through rough times. She channels this skill into speaking with others in her community about staying optimistic, keeping a positive attitude and taking an active role in the pursuit of a cure for PD. “We’re encouraged to find other ways to participate,” George says. “And we like to encourage others to join us, as well.”



## Fox Trial Finder Referral Challenge Garners Over 1,400 New Volunteers

The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research challenged 24 participating clinical trial sites from across the United States and Europe to refer research volunteers into Fox Trial Finder (FTF). The pilot “FTF Challenge” took place over the course of three months at the end of 2013 and resulted in an astounding referral of 1,400 volunteers into FTF.

The trial sites participated in a healthy competition, but the University of Colorado Hospital Movement Disorder Center proved victorious, referring 563 volunteers. Harnessing the power of social media and their network of patients and supporters, The Gardner-McMaster Parkinson Center at the University of Toledo Medical Center came in a close second, referring 505 volunteers into FTF.

To learn more about how you can participate in clinical trials to help speed a cure, visit [www.michaeljfox.org/clinicaltrials](http://www.michaeljfox.org/clinicaltrials).

## Holmes Trust Year-end Challenge Motivates \$275,000 in Support

At the close of December 2013, supporters of The Michael J. Fox Foundation had the opportunity to have their contributions doubled, thanks to the generosity of the Jack F. Holmes Living Trust. The Trust arranged a dollar-for-dollar match of every contribution to the Foundation from December 25 through December 31, up to a total of \$100,000.

According to trustees Theodore M. Sosin and Ralph McCormick, Mr. Holmes established the trust to ensure funding would be available to speed research toward a cure for Parkinson’s disease. A Parkinson’s patient himself, “Jack was not able to benefit from current medical knowledge, but was adamant about providing funding that would benefit

others facing the challenges of Parkinson’s disease,” the trustees write.

Mr. Holmes died at age 91, having led a full and rewarding life. He served on General Eisenhower’s general staff in World War II before lending his talents to a 50-year career in the insurance industry. Mr. Holmes also spent time in the oil industry in South America and earned a law degree.

Motivated by the dollar-for-dollar match, more than 700 individuals contributed in the final week of the year, and the Foundation exceeded its challenge goal, raising more than

\$275,000. The Trust is now planning for similar commitments in 2014.

“Jack always loved a good business deal, and would have been thrilled to know that this contribution was matched in full in the fight against Parkinson’s,” write Messrs. Sosin and McCormick. “As Jack’s trustees, we take great satisfaction in knowing that, when the Trust is closed, Jack’s resources will have been effectively increased by a factor of two for this very important cause.”



## ABOUT US

The Michael J. Fox Foundation is dedicated to finding a cure for Parkinson's disease through an aggressively funded research agenda and to ensuring the development of therapies for those living with Parkinson's today. MJFF publishes *The Fox Focus on Parkinson's* twice a year. To subscribe or unsubscribe, email [info@michaeljfox.org](mailto:info@michaeljfox.org).

Submit letters and questions to the editor below.

**Chief Executive Officer**  
*Todd Sherer, PhD*

**Founder**  
*Michael J. Fox*

**Co-Founder and Executive Vice Chairman**  
*Deborah W. Brooks*

Photos by Mark Seliger on pages 1, 2

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### YOUR EXCITEMENT FUELS RESEARCH:

#### Nikki Ourso

Great News! New Partnership seeks to better understand the similarities b/w #alzheimers & #Parkinsons

#### Adrian Berg

Exciting. RT @michaeljfox.org: New partnership seeks to better understand similarities b/w #alzheimers & Parkinsons

#### Erika Straatmann @eureekay

Way to go! \$5.9 million dollars raised by @TEAMFOX in 2013 to help speed a cure for #Parkinsons via @MichaelJFoxOrg



### THE #CLINICALTRIAL EXPERIENCE:

#### Sherri Vanek

My husband has had young onset PD for over 12 years. He has participated in several at the Cleveland Clinic including the cycling trial, the smell trial, two med trials including an inhaler med, and a genetics testing trial. Looking forward to the day we hear there is a cure!

#### Jessi Runaldue Keavney

My Dad and I are both part of the genetic registry for this study. We both have the Lrrk2 mutation. My grandfather had Parkinson's and now my Dad has it.



### OPTIMISM IN ACTION:

 **Dr Samantha Thomas @Doc\_Samantha**

Went on a 2 hour hike with Dad today. Who said #parkinsons should stop you from doing the things you love. Go Dad!

 **Nickie Pearl @NickiePearl**

For every set back, there is a comeback! #ThinkAble

 **Mirrya Mosier @mirrya**

My challenges don't define me. My actions do. I #ThinkAble to speed a cure for #Parkinson's with @MichaelJFoxOrg

 **Myrdin Thompson @MyrdinJT**

My #thinkable "Nothing is absolute, everything changes, everything moves, everything revolutionizes, all flies and goes"  
—*Frida Kablo*

 **Timothy M Freeman**

42 miles on a beautiful Sunday morning! My actions define me!



THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION  
FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

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