



# Fox Flow: Taking Parkinson's to the Mat — and Beyond

For Shelley Gilbert, yoga isn't just a practice — it's a way to take action. A Healdsburg, California resident living with Parkinson's, she leads Bubble of Love Yoga, donation-based classes where all proceeds support Team Fox. Her passion quickly inspired those around her, and in 2023, friends and local leaders came together to launch **Fox Flow, Inc.** and host the first Taking Parkinson's to the Mat yoga event.

What started as a small fundraiser with a \$12,000 goal quickly turned into something much bigger. More than 200 attendees showed up, and with overwhelming community and sponsor support, they raised over \$50,000.

One year later, Fox Flow was back at Bacchus Landing Cellars with an even bigger goal: \$100,000 for Parkinson's research. By the end

of the event, they had raised over \$80,000 — and with nearly \$20,000 more from their participation in the Tour de Fox Wine Country Ride, they officially hit their \$100,000 goal. Another incredible achievement powered by their growing community, proving that their impact continues to grow.

“Fox Flow brings satisfaction to me in so many ways,” said Shelley. “Increasing awareness of the need for research dollars through fun, community-building events is a joy. I feel proactive in my personal fight against Parkinson's at the same time as I am educating the people around me.” With every yoga session, every mile and every dollar raised, Fox Flow continues to grow, bringing more people into the mission and strengthening the community around Parkinson's research.





# ***Together, Fighting Parkinson's: The Mac Pack's Unstoppable Start***

**The Mac Pack** didn't just show up to The Michael J. Fox Foundation's 2024 Boston Run/Walk — they arrived with purpose, energy and a team that had grown faster than anyone expected. What started as a single group text quickly became something much bigger. In just a few short months, 24 family members and friends rallied behind Laurie McAnespie, determined to support her and Parkinson's research.

For Laurie, the decision to take action was immediate. "Joining the Boston Run/Walk was a no-brainer," she said. "After being diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2024, my choices were to hang around and wait to see what happens or face it head-on and try to make a difference!" That mindset set the tone for The Mac Pack's first event — and they made an unforgettable impact.

They didn't just meet their \$17,000 fundraising goal — they soared past it, raising \$25,000 and securing their place as the top fundraising team for the 2024 Boston Run/Walk. Dressed in matching green shirts emblazoned with their tagline, *Together, Fighting Parkinson's*, they radiated strength, hope and the power of community.

And they're just getting started. "We are looking forward to this year's walk and hoping to top what we raised in 2024!" Laurie said.

With their first event behind them and their sights set even higher, The Mac Pack has proven that when a team comes together with heart and purpose, there's no limit to what they can achieve.





# Ski for Parkinson's: Turning Miles Into Milestones

Since 2017, a group of dedicated skiers has turned their passion for cross-country skiing into something even bigger: a movement to speed Parkinson's research. What started with two friends, Bill Brown and Mark Gherty, has grown into a team of six, raising funds and awareness for Team Fox.

For both Bill and Mark, this cause is deeply personal. Bill was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2015, the same disease his father lived with. Mark has been fundraising for Team Fox since 2007 in honor of his siblings with Parkinson's. For Mark, skiing and fundraising have long gone hand in hand: "There are hills that seem insurmountable, but it is through internal determination and the support of friends, family and others that one is able to succeed."

When Bill and Mark met at the 2017 American Birkebeiner, the biggest cross-country ski race in North America, their shared experiences turned into a shared mission, and **Ski for Parkinson's** was born. "Fundraising has helped me talk more openly about living with Parkinson's," said Bill. "It gave me a way to turn my diagnosis into something positive."

In 2024, they helped make history when Team Fox was named the first-ever Official Charity Partner for the American Birkebeiner's 50th anniversary. Because of their efforts, their team reached an extraordinary milestone — \$1 million raised for Parkinson's research. With more visibility and support, Bill and Mark pushed their mission even further, bringing more skiers and supporters into the cause than ever before.



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# Team Miles for Mitch Leads with Every Step

For **Team Miles for Mitch**, the Parkinson's Unity Walk has always been about more than just raising funds — it's about coming together for Mitch Konichowsky, who was diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson's in 2009 at the age of 42. Led by his wife, Sharon, their team of 25 family members, friends and loved ones has been a force at the Unity Walk for over five years, consistently ranking among the top fundraising teams.

After a brief pause during the COVID years, they came back strong in 2024, determined to reclaim their spot on the leaderboard and help make it the biggest Parkinson's Unity Walk yet.

Their commitment started early, with a poker tournament at their synagogue in November, dedicating a portion of the proceeds to the Unity Walk. By April, their efforts paid off in a big way. They not only exceeded their \$30,000 goal — raising over \$36,000 — but also secured their highest fundraising year to date, earning them a top-four spot among all fundraising teams.

Even more incredible, this milestone pushed their lifetime fundraising total past \$125,000. Through every hand dealt, every step walked and every dollar raised, Team Miles for Mitch has proven that their dedication to Parkinson's research is stronger than ever.





# From Coast to Coast, Team SuzeRiders Keeps Moving

**Team SuzeRiders** has been pedaling with purpose since 2021 when they first joined The Michael J. Fox Foundation's Virtual Tour de Fox. Made up of family and friends of Susie Epstein, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2019, the team rides with a deep commitment to speeding a cure.

Since joining, they've raised an impressive \$135,000 for Parkinson's research, hitting a major milestone in 2024 by raising \$50,000 — nearly 50 percent more than the previous year. Their fundraising success made them one of the top teams at the 2024 Tour de Fox Wine Country Ride in Sonoma, California, where they helped make the event's first in-person ride in five years a resounding success.

But for Team SuzeRiders, the ride isn't just about one location — it's about community. When some family and friends couldn't attend the Wine Country Ride, they took the mission into their own hands, organizing a local ride closer to home in Orinda, California. Their daughter Avery even led an East Coast version, rallying supporters for a four-borough ride through New York City.

Their dedication and determination reflect the very heart of the Tour de Fox community — resilient, driven and committed to making a difference. With every mile ridden and every dollar raised, Team SuzeRiders proves that no matter where they are, they're always moving forward for Parkinson's research.



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# 150 for 50: Vivek Puri's Biggest Birthday Gift Yet

For years, **Vivek Puri** kept his Parkinson's diagnosis a secret, only sharing it with his wife and a few close friends. But as the disease progressed, hiding it became impossible. When he finally shared his diagnosis, he was met with overwhelming support — an unexpected and uplifting response. A few years later in 2022, inspired by that outpouring of kindness, he launched his first fundraiser for Team Fox.

Motivated by the progress being made in Parkinson's research, Vivek set his most ambitious goal for 2024: raising \$150,000 in honor of his 50th birthday. "I set high targets because even if I fall short, I'm still making a significant impact," he said. For this milestone fundraiser, he chose to support both Team Fox and UpENDING Parkinson's, a nonprofit he is part of that provides guided rock climbing

for people with Parkinson's — a therapy that has benefitted him tremendously.

He reached out to his network in every way he could, from personal outreach to fundraising on Facebook, where about half of his donations came in. At first, fundraising was slow, and he adjusted his expectations. "I resigned myself to maybe hitting \$80,000," he admitted. But as UpENDING Parkinson's was featured on *CBS Sunday Morning* and *The Today Show*, donations began rolling in. "Next thing I knew, I had raised about \$185,000! I still get the jitters (not the PD kind!) when I tell this story."

Through every milestone, Vivek's journey is proof that bold goals, resilience and the power of both community and connection — online and off — can turn one person's story into something much greater.



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# MMP

## From Handmade to Handpicked to Hands-On: Fundraising in Unique Ways

Across the country, Team Fox fundraisers are thinking outside the box, transforming their talents and passions into powerful ways to support Parkinson's research. Whether crafting holiday ornaments by hand, putting a fun twist on bowling or turning a working farm into a platform for giving, these fundraisers prove that creativity has no limits — and that every unique effort moves us closer to progress.

### A Labor of Love, One Cork at a Time

For more than 20 years, **Joe Williams** has been crafting reindeer ornaments out of wine corks. In 2010, after his son, Speed, was diagnosed with Parkinson's, Joe began donating all proceeds to Team Fox. His first donation was a few hundred dollars, but as demand grew, so did his impact. To date, Joe has raised over \$50,000, with longtime supporters helping spread Speed's story one reindeer at a time.

### Planted with Care, Grown with Purpose

In 2024, **Donaldson Farms** in Hackettstown, New Jersey dedicated their season to supporting Team Fox. Inspired by loved ones with Parkinson's, they wove fundraising and awareness into farm events, social media and radio interviews — all while donating a portion of proceeds to the cause. By turning their bustling farm into a hub for giving, they found a way to make every harvest, hayride and market visit part of something bigger.

### Knocking Down Pins, Raising the Stakes

Donna Rzasa started a duckpin bowling fundraiser in honor of her late brother, later shifting the event's focus when her wife, Sally, was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2017. **Shake, Rattle & Bowl** now raises up to \$12,000 annually for the Parkinson's Unity Walk. They also organize a yearly bus trip from Connecticut to Central Park, ensuring loved ones can walk alongside them.



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