

Meet Team Synapse, Closing the Gap on a Cure



Bill Bucklew

Chicago, Illinois

Diagnosed in 2012

Bill has had the great honor of traveling the world and sharing his story about the impact that a positivity of purpose and holistic wellness has had on his life.



Joe Drake

Seattle, Washington

Diagnosed in 2018

Joe turned to running as a therapy for slowing the progression of the disease and, in 2019, he ran his first marathon. Since then, he has run 13 more marathons and recently published a book, "Run with It: A True Story of Parkinson's, Marathons, the Pandemic, and Love."



Steven Eury

North Carolina

Diagnosed in 2012

Steven has been managing his Parkinson's for the last decade by participating in routine exercise. He has competed in many obstacle course races and 5Ks and is the proud father of three kids.



Scott Fernandez

Chicago, Illinois

Diagnosed in 2021

Scott started running in 2001 in support of his daughter's fundraising and recovery from Leukemia. Since then, he has completed 18 full marathons, 23 half marathons and 2 Ironman triathlons. Fun fact: Scott is a pilot!



Rhonda Foulds

Texas

Diagnosed in 1999

Rhonda has run over 100 marathons and 200 half marathons since her diagnosis, inspiring people to approach life in a positive way and making regular exercise a part of life, to live better.



Jared Koch

Illinois

Diagnosed in 2013

Jared was prescribed cardio activities to get his heart rate above 140 for at least 30 minutes, each day. That activity for him was running. Since then, he successfully ran the Chicago Marathon twice, four half marathons, and multiple 5Ks.



Jason Kopacz

Shoreview, Minnesota

Diagnosed in 2013

After his diagnosis, Jason started down a path of living a healthy lifestyle, from working out a couple times per month to recently completing three marathons over a 7-month period. In 2018, Jason and his family started the Team Kopacz Foundation to support The Michael J. Fox Foundation and the University of Minnesota's Neurology department in their efforts to TKO PD!



Peter Leech

Chicago, Illinois

Diagnosed in 2018

Peter challenges himself to exercise every day, running his first marathon immediately after his diagnosis, and has a streak of exercising 700+ days in a row.



Christopher Lion

Austin, Texas

Diagnosed in 2018

Chris was Team Synapse's alternate runner. He runs a foundation called The Quiver and recently held an event featuring artwork done by people with Parkinson's.



Greg O'Keefe

Nevada

Diagnosed in 2013

A few years post-diagnosis, Greg got back into road races — including the Rock and Rock half marathon on the strip in Las Vegas, NV — and started running obstacle course races. Completing Spartan Sprint, Super and Beast events for trifecta status keeps him motivated to work hard.



Jacqui Sukie

Ohio

Diagnosed in 2012

Since Jacqui's diagnosis, she has ran the NYC Marathon and many half marathons, including NYC, Chicago, Akron and Napa to Sonoma. Jacqui is a spinning and fitness instructor who attributes exercise and nutrition as being the key to slowing the disease's progression.



Allison Toepperwein

North Carolina

Diagnosed in 2014

Allison is an American Ninja Warrior and has competed in a myriad of races from Tough Mudders to the Texas Freedom Relay. She spends her day helping people diagnosed with cancer.



Renee Trent

Evington, Virginia

Diagnosed in 2017

Since her diagnosis, Renee has ran 8 marathons including qualifying for Boston with a 3:52 time. Renee jokes that she had to have Parkinson's to find out her superpower, which is running. She has had some great success including winning her age group and several races.



Allison Toepperwein and Steven Eury

Married October 2022

Steven and Allison were married just a few weeks after the relay and have a YouTube channel about being #InLoveWithParkinsons.