



ACCELERATING *the* CURE

SPRING / SUMMER 2006 NEWSLETTER

FOUNDATION EARMARKS UP TO \$2 MILLION FOR “DOPAMINE-NON-RESPONSIVE” SYMPTOMS OF PARKINSON’S

LESSER-KNOWN SYMPTOMS FREQUENTLY CITED BY PATIENTS AS MOST DISRUPTIVE TO QUALITY OF LIFE

The Michael J. Fox Foundation has announced a new \$2-million initiative addressing the wide array of Parkinson’s disease symptoms not effectively managed by existing dopamine replacement therapies. These symptoms include cognitive dysfunction, sleep disorders and fatigue, depression, constipation, pain, and gait and postural problems.

Public awareness of Parkinson’s disease typically centers around the motor and movement symptoms that originate with the loss of dopamine from the brain region known as the substantia nigra. People living with Parkinson’s, however, often report that the so-called “dopamine-non-responsive” symptoms are some of the disease’s most debilitating — robbing patients of their quality of life and ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

“To date, focus on these aspects of Parkinson’s has been limited,” said Deborah W. Brooks, Foundation president and CEO, “even though people with Parkinson’s frequently cite them as more disruptive than the motor symptoms predominantly targeted by current therapies. The Foundation is launching this initiative to stimulate research at both the preclinical and clinical levels and drive development of therapies with the potential to make a major impact on patients’ lives.”

At present, the anatomic and biological basis of the symptoms that do not respond to dopamine replacement therapy — many of which are non-motor — remains poorly understood, creating a roadblock to the development of therapies to alleviate them.

“The fact that so many Parkinson’s symptoms

are not effectively managed by dopamine replacement therapy almost certainly points to the fact that the disease extends far beyond dopamine degeneration in the substantia nigra,” said Katie Hood, vice president of research programs. “But to date this aspect of the disease remains understudied and, as a result, not well understood.”

There is also reason to believe that, with a better understanding of their origins and biological basis, some of these symptoms may have potential to serve as reliable markers for early detection of Parkinson’s. Their relationship to disease prognosis is currently not known.

Several of these ailments, such as depression and sleep disturbances, are represented in the general population and are the subject of considerable research outside the Parkinson’s field. Frustratingly, however, the PD community doesn’t currently benefit from this work because few efforts have been made to “connect the dots” and determine whether or how the results apply to people living with PD. For this reason, in launching this initiative the Foundation encouraged the submission of proposals involving multidisciplinary teams and including experts from both within and outside the field of Parkinson’s research.

Funding is anticipated by October 2006. As with every proposal submitted to the Foundation, researchers are required to explicitly state their projects’ potential impact on the lives of people living with Parkinson’s. In keeping with the Foundation’s emphasis on accountability, the program requires the designation of time-dependent milestones. Continued funding will depend on successful completion of these milestones.

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Photo by Mark Seliger

A vital part of our work is to identify and invest in research areas that are underfunded despite great potential patient impact. This issue highlights some of our latest efforts to

improve the status quo for the estimated six million people living with Parkinson’s disease.

We have just earmarked funds for research into the troubling array of “dopamine-non-responsive” symptoms of Parkinson’s, including depression, pain and digestive disorders. Patients have told us time and again that these symptoms, mostly non-motor, take more away from their quality of life than do the disease’s better-known motor symptoms. Yet there is relatively little research targeting them.

We’re also supporting the development of a unified clinical scale to accurately measure dyskinesias. Like a modern Rosetta Stone, this scale will provide clinicians across trials, disciplines and institutions with a shared language to compare notes on dyskinesias. Without such a tool in place the results of every trial are weakened, and it’s patients who lose.

And see page 4 to learn about PD patient registries in Nebraska and California that will allow scientists to observe and understand trends as they emerge in a particular population.

Thank you for helping us make headway toward our only measure of success — jump-starting progress to bring patients better treatments and, ultimately, a cure.

Warm regards,

Debi Brooks

Deborah W. Brooks
President and CEO

IN THIS ISSUE

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FOUNDATION JOINS WITH COMMUNITY FUNDERS TO AWARD \$1.9 MILLION FOR NEW AND NOVEL APPROACHES TO PD THROUGH COMMUNITY FAST TRACK 2005

Investigations of serotonin neurons, cellular iron levels and an approved diabetes drug are three of 15 research projects awarded nearly \$1.9 million in total funding from The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research and other U.S. Parkinson's organizations under the annual *Community Fast Track* initiative. The funding will drive new and novel research to advance scientific understanding of Parkinson's disease in the coming year.

Community Fast Track is a pipeline for innovative concepts in basic Parkinson's research. The 2005 program departs from previous years in duration of funding, which has been shortened from two years to one, with the possibility of supplemental funding if research teams meet certain one-year milestones and have a plan in place to address next steps. The change was implemented to encourage greater scientific risk-taking and accountability.

"With *Community Fast Track*, the Foundation casts a wide net for new ideas every year," said Deborah W. Brooks, president and CEO. "By limiting initial grant funding to one year and increasing the focus on rapid deliverables, we've enhanced our ability to identify and quickly push forward the studies with the greatest promise to yield meaningful new therapeutic interventions."

The majority of awardees will work to generate new neuroprotective strategies with potential to yield the "holy grail" of Parkinson's research: therapies to slow or stop disease progression. Marina Emborg, MD, PhD, will test pioglitazone (Actos), an approved type-II diabetes drug, for possible neuroprotective effects in animal models of Parkinson's. James Connor, PhD, will study mice lacking the gene that regulates iron levels in cells to determine whether iron imbalance can result in dopamine neurodegeneration. Baoji Xu, PhD, will test the hypothesis that reduced levels of the growth factor BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor) can result in loss of dopamine neurons in mice. Chenjian Li, PhD, will look for nigrostriatal deficits and progressive dopamine neuron death in mice genetically engineered to express mutated forms of the LRRK2 gene. Mutations in LRRK2 have been linked to both familial and sporadic forms of Parkinson's.

Other awardees will investigate potential new approaches to alleviate the symptoms of Parkinson's and/or reduce levodopa-induced dyskinesias. Anders Björklund, MD, PhD, will test whether the presence or absence of serotonin neurons affects dyskinesias in a rodent model of Parkinson's. Angela Cenci-Nilsson, MD, PhD, will investigate if and how levodopa and dopamine agonists affect growth of new blood vessels in the

brain and/or disrupt the blood-brain barrier, and whether these effects in turn play a role in causing dyskinesias.

One awardee, Susan McConnell, PhD, aims to improve outcomes for cell transplantation therapy in Parkinson's. Dr. McConnell will work to identify factors the brain uses to guide dopamine neurons' axons to their target areas in the striatum. This knowledge could help improve the ability of transplanted dopamine cells to incorporate, survive and function in a host brain.

Twelve national and local Parkinson's disease groups teamed together with the Foundation to fund *Community Fast Track* 2005. Contributors to the program include the Parkinson's Unity Walk, The Parkinson Alliance, Inc., the Lawrence County Parkinson's Association, Parkinson Association of Northern California Sacramento, the Parkinson's Association of the Rockies and Parkinson's Resources of Oregon. Many are annual supporters of the program. Other past donors include the Parkinson's Disease Foundation and the National Parkinson Foundation.

Launched in 2001, the *Community Fast Track* program has awarded approximately \$15 million to support 86 research projects.

Community Fast Track 2005 Awardees

For researchers' biosketches, please visit www.michaeljfox.org/research

Veerle Baekelandt, PhD

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium
Pathophysiological role of PINK1 in rodent brain

Flint Beal, MD

Weill Medical College of Cornell University
Novel therapeutic approaches for Parkinson's disease

Anders Björklund, MD, PhD

Lund University, Sweden
The role of serotonin neurons in the induction and maintenance of dyskinesias in grafted and L-Dopa-primed animals

Angela Cenci-Nilsson, MD, PhD

Lund University, Sweden
Neoangiogenesis and blood-brain barrier in L-DOPA-induced dyskinesia

James Connor, PhD

Pennsylvania State University
A novel animal model to identify the contribution of iron mismanagement to neurotoxicity and alpha-synuclein deposition in basal ganglia

Marina Emborg, MD, PhD

University of Wisconsin, Madison
Activation of Nrf2 neuroprotective pathways for Parkinson's disease

Raul Gainetdinov, MD

Duke University
Evaluation of the role of trace amine 1 (TA1) receptor in the actions of antiparkinsonian drugs using TA1 receptor knockout mice

François Gonon, PhD

University of Bordeaux, France
Role of corticostriatal neurons in provoking the imbalance between the direct and indirect striatal output pathways after dopaminergic degeneration

Tong Joh, PhD

Weill Medical College of Cornell University
Pathogenesis of PD in alpha-synuclein cleavage by matrix metalloproteinase-3

Chenjian Li, PhD

Weill Medical College of Cornell University
Park8 mouse models and LRRK2 kinase substrates

Susan McConnell, PhD

Stanford University
Guidance of midbrain dopaminergic neurons in development and disease

Gregory Petsko, DPhil

Brandeis University
Specific inhibition of nucleation of alpha-synuclein aggregation as a therapeutic strategy

Horst Simon, PhD

University of Heidelberg, Germany
K-ATP channels and their role in the survival of nigral dopaminergic neurons

Stephen Traynelis, PhD

Emory University
Use of NR2D-selective NMDA receptor modulators in the Treatment of PD

Baoji Xu, PhD

Georgetown University
Nigrostriatal dopaminergic degeneration and alpha-synuclein aggregation in mice with reduced TrkB signaling

DISCOVERY OF KEY DOPAMINE NEURON "INGREDIENTS" COULD LEAD TO ADVANCES IN PD CELL REPLACEMENT THERAPIES

Have you ever set out to recreate a favorite restaurant dish in your own kitchen? If so, you know that one or two ingredients can mean the difference between success and failure. And in much the same way as a chef working in the kitchen, our bodies must follow “recipes” requiring highly particular “ingredients” to produce the wide variety of cell types needed for life. These ingredients make a crucial difference in how well a heart cell, for example, carries out its specific duties — or doesn’t.

Now, Foundation-funded researchers have identified two key proteins in the cells that produce dopamine neurons in the developing brain. For scientists working in the lab to engineer dopamine neurons, including these ingredients could be vital. Cell replacement therapies for Parkinson’s potentially hold great promise for slowing or stopping disease progression, but so far have not yielded new treatments. Scientists have successfully created dopamine neurons from stem cells in the lab, but these neurons have failed to perform once transplanted into animal models.

Thomas Perlmann, PhD, and Johan Ericson, PhD, of Sweden’s Karolinska Institute, hypothesized that a key ingredient might be missing from the “recipes” scientists had been using to generate dopamine neurons in the lab. They set out to better under-

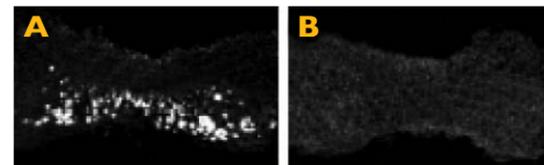
stand how dopamine neurons are normally generated in the developing brain.

The researchers studied the developing brains of embryonic mice for genes expressed in dopamine progenitor cells (cells that give rise to dopamine neurons). They discovered two proteins, Lmx1a and Msx1. Both are transcription factors, a class of proteins whose job is to turn other genes in the cell on and off.

“Drs. Perlmann and Ericson found that Lmx1a and Msx1 are required for certain molecular events to occur,” said Brian Fiske, PhD, the Foundation’s associate director of research programs. “These events play an important role in dopamine neuron differentiation. Expression of Lmx1a also resulted in much more robust generation of dopamine neurons than had been seen before.”

To follow up on the promising findings, the Foundation quickly approved supplemental funding for the researchers. These funds will support new experiments to establish whether the stem cell-derived dopamine neurons generated using Lmx1a and Msx1 yield improved transplantation results in rodent models of Parkinson’s.

“Results could be in hand by this summer,” said Dr. Fiske, “and could reveal new ways forward for cell transplantation strategies in Parkinson’s.”



These images show the importance of Lmx1a for the generation of dopamine neurons in the developing brain of an embryonic mouse. Image A, at left, shows the normally developing midbrain region with the transcription factor Lmx1a present. The constellation of white dots are dopamine neurons in early stages of development. In image B, at right, the researchers have “silenced” (canceled) the expression of Lmx1a, and the brain cannot produce dopamine neurons. (Images courtesy of Thomas Perlmann and Johan Ericson)

Brush up your biology:

Definitions of terms used in this story

gene expression: The process by which a gene’s coded information is converted into a protein that performs a specific job in the cell.

developmental biology: The study of the process whereby a single fertilized egg cell becomes a differentiated multicellular organism.

differentiation: The process in embryonic development during which cells become specialized for particular functions (e.g. neurons, skin cells, etc.).

in vivo: In a living organism. Compare to *in vitro*, literally Latin for “in glass,” which refers to work done in the test tube or culture dish.

EUGENE JOHNSON, PhD, NAMED CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR



Eugene Johnson, PhD, has been named the Foundation’s chief scientific advisor. Dr. Johnson is professor of molecular biology and pharmacology in the Department of Neurology at the Wash-

ington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri.

“Gene Johnson is a scientific leader who shares the Foundation’s strategic focus on driving and facilitating translational research,” said Debi Brooks. “We will benefit tremendously from his insight and perspective on research that can yield advances for patients sooner rather than later.”

As chief scientific advisor, Dr. Johnson will counsel the Foundation’s research staff as they identify priority research areas in need of funds and award grants to advance the science in those areas. He will contribute to ongoing efforts to build strong

collaborative relationships with industry, the scientific community, governmental agencies and other private funders. In addition, he will help lead the search for the Foundation’s first full-time, on-staff scientific director. Filling this newly created position will allow the Foundation to work even faster and better in key areas including application review and active milestone management.

Dr. Johnson takes the reins from Kenneth J. Olden, PhD, former director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences at NIH, who held the position in 2005. Prior to Dr. Olden’s tenure, J. William Langston, MD, CEO of The Parkinson’s Institute, was chief scientific advisor from 2000 until April 2005. The Foundation continues to benefit from the leadership of both Dr. Olden, who now sits on the Foundation’s board of directors, and Dr. Langston, who continues to serve on the scientific executive committee and full scientific advisory board.

Dr. Johnson is renowned for his research on the

death of nervous system cells during normal development and in response to disease. In collaboration with his Washington University colleague Jeffrey D. Milbrandt, MD, PhD, Dr. Johnson’s team discovered three neurotrophic factors: neurturin, persephin, and artemin. Neurotrophic factors (also called trophic factors or growth factors) are molecules critical for the development and maintenance of the nervous system. They are a Foundation research priority because they can protect and restore nerve cells, and may provide a basis for preventing and treating Parkinson’s and other neurodegenerative diseases.

“I am delighted to work more closely with the Foundation’s talented staff and scientific advisory board,” said Dr. Johnson. “I share their extraordinary commitment to establishing funding channels that allow basic discoveries to be rapidly tested and validated, providing funds without delay, and developing a research infrastructure that promotes collaboration and speeds information dissemination.”

FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTES FUNDING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF UNIFIED SCALE FOR MEASURING DYSKINESIAS

You say tomato, I say tomahto.” So goes the famous song by George and Ira Gershwin. Unfortunately, it’s a lyric Parkinson’s scientists conducting clinical trials can too easily relate to. When it comes to measuring a new therapy’s effects on dyskinesias — the involuntary, uncontrollable, and often excessive movements that are a common side effect of drugs used to treat Parkinson’s — different clinicians observing the same evidence can come to very different conclusions. And no standardized tool exists to make the judgment easier. Practitioners work with disparate scales and rely on their own subjective observations. But to a patient whose ability to carry out day-to-day activities may be compromised, the difference between “tomato” and “tomahto” is potentially vast.

Researchers Christopher Goetz, MD, and John G. Nutt, MD, didn’t think the status quo was good enough. And The Michael J. Fox Foundation agreed. This spring, the Foundation awarded funding for the researchers to complete the development of a comprehensive clinical scale to standardize the way dyskinesias are measured in clinical trials. This tool, called the Unified Dyskinesia Rating Scale, will allow Parkinson’s practitioners to more effectively compare outcomes across trials, thus making the results of all trials more robust.

“Dyskinesias have such a large impact on patients’ day-to-day lives that nearly every Parkinson’s clinical trial measures them — even trials that don’t explicitly involve a dyskinesia therapy,” said Todd Sherer, PhD, the Foundation’s associate vice president of research programs.

“But the resulting body of evidence lacks cohesion because there is no common set of metrics for reporting on dyskinesias. Practitioners agree on the strong need for a ‘common language’ if we are to successfully address this difficult complication of Parkinson’s treatment.”

Dyskinesias can be lurching, dance-like or jerky, and are distinct from the rhythmic tremor commonly associated with Parkinson’s. They are a research priority for the Foundation because patients often cite them as one of the most disabling aspects of living with the disease.

Dr. Goetz, a faculty member at the Department of Neurology at Rush Medical College in Chicago, and Dr. Nutt, director of the Parkinson Center of Oregon at Oregon Health and

Continued on Page 8

FOUNDATION SUPPORTS PARKINSON’S REGISTRIES IN NEBRASKA AND CALIFORNIA

The Michael J. Fox Foundation recently announced that it would provide funding for Parkinson’s disease patient registries in Nebraska and California. The registries will collect data from physicians and pharmacists on Parkinson’s cases and prescriptions for drugs used to treat Parkinson’s. In Nebraska, individuals may also self-report.

“A registry is an excellent way to help identify trends and get a better idea of the number of people living with Parkinson’s disease,” said Katie Hood, the Foundation’s vice president of research programs. “Registries can also help determine whether the incidence of Parkinson’s or young-onset Parkinson’s is increasing, as well as the influence of factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, environmental factors, and place of residence on the likelihood of getting the disease.”

“The Nebraska and California registries will make it possible for researchers to collect data on how the disease varies geographically,” added J. William Langston, MD, president of The Parkinson’s Institute and chairman of the executive committee of the Foundation’s scientific advisory board. “This is a vital source of information that could help lead to the discovery of the cause of Parkinson’s disease.”

The Foundation is co-funding the Nebraska Parkinson’s Disease Registry with the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) for three

years. The funding has reinstated the Nebraska Registry, the first operational U.S. registry for the disease, which was suspended in October 2004 for budgetary reasons.

In California, a three-year pilot program will develop and implement procedures for data collection on all Parkinson’s cases in two counties that will be selected to include patients of diverse race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and residence. Selection will also take into account availability of other local research databases. The California registry pilot project will be led by The Parkinson’s Institute in collaboration with the California Department of Health Services. The team will also include investigators from the University of California, Los Angeles, and Kaiser Permanente Northern California, as well as patient advocates. Additional funding for the registry was provided by The National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS).

“California’s rich diversity provides an ideal climate to investigate PD risk factors,” said Caroline M. Tanner, MD, PhD, director of clinical research at The Parkinson’s Institute. “For several decades, the state has mandated reporting usage of a wide range of chemicals that are leading environmental suspects as causes for PD. Combining this chemical usage data with PD incidence and dispersion may yield highly relevant information about who is getting this disease and why.”

Information for Nebraska and California residents

All information in the Nebraska and California databases is kept confidential and released only to approved researchers.

Nebraska

In Nebraska, only new Parkinson’s cases diagnosed since January 1, 1997, are required to be reported, but the registry also includes data on persons who had a diagnosis of Parkinson’s prior to that time. For more information or to self-report, visit www.hhs.state.ne.us/ced/parkinson/index.htm, call (402) 471-0147 or e-mail parkinsons@hhs.ne.gov.

California

As of this writing, the California counties that will be included in the registry have not been determined. To learn more, visit www.theipi.org/site/parkinson/section.php?id=101 or e-mail Sauda Yerabati at syerabati@theipi.org.

**TO LEARN MORE
PLEASE VISIT US AT
WWW.MICHAELJFOX.ORG**

OVER 3,000 ATTEND INAUGURAL WORLD PARKINSON CONGRESS IN WASHINGTON, DC

In February The Michael J. Fox Foundation was an organizational partner at the inaugural World Parkinson Congress in Washington, DC. This first-of-its-kind international gathering brought together over 3,000 guests including Parkinson's researchers, health professionals, patients and caregivers. The PD community is large and diverse, and the Congress was a unique opportunity for individuals to come together and interact as a group — and to share knowledge to improve the lives of people living with Parkinson's.

On the event's opening evening, Michael J. Fox took center stage to offer welcoming comments. Reflecting on the current status of Parkinson's science, Fox encouraged attendees to consider how far PD research has come to date — and how much further there is to go. His optimistic and inspiring remarks touched listeners, who gave Fox a standing ovation. Many audience members also made a point of stopping by the Foundation's booth in the exhibit hall throughout the five days of the event to let staff know how much Fox's words had meant to them. (To read the full text of the speech, visit www.michaeljfox.org.)

Over the course of the Congress, nearly 300 speakers from across the globe presented the latest cutting-edge scientific advances in Parkinson's, current treatments, and information on disease management from the perspec-



Following his talk, Michael J. Fox met with audience members including Orly Segal (left), chairman of the Israel Parkinson Committee

tive of patients and caregivers. Science sessions on topics including Genetics and the Environment, Non-drug Approaches to Slow PD, Clinical Trials, and The Future of Gene Therapy gave attendees the chance to hear about new research and to meet PD scientists.

The Congress also offered attendees some unusual educational and interactive opportunities. One exhibition called Creativity and Parkinson's consisted of museum-quality artwork created by people living with PD. Art selections from 14 countries were showcased, and "Meet the Artist" tours, performances and demonstrations took place nightly — providing a glimpse of the dynamic and important role of the creative process in the lives of Parkinson's patients.



Stanley Fahn, MD, PhD, steering committee chair of the World Parkinson Congress, with Michael J. Fox before the opening ceremonies

Attendees were also offered ways to pamper and nurture themselves. Yoga, meditation and dancing were among various programs that focused on rejuvenating the mind, body and spirit. Additionally, more than 50 interactive workshops provided the opportunity to learn first-hand from experts and ask questions about specific topics ranging from speech treatment to depression and anxiety.

Press releases and media briefings from the Congress are available at www.worldpcongress.org. The second World Parkinson Congress will be held in Paris in 2009.

SAVE THE DATE

BREAKING PARKINSON'S
Monday, September 18, 2006
Deepdale Golf Club
Manhasset, New York

For more information, e-mail
events@michaeljfox.org or
call (800) 708-7644

BETTING ON A CAUSE AND A CURE



(L-R) Denis Leary, Gavin DeGraw, Cam Neely and Michael J. Fox

The Cam Neely Foundation for Cancer Care recently hosted its fourth annual "Betting On a Cause and a Cure" Monte Carlo-style charity event at The Charles Hotel in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The evening was hosted by Paulina and Cam Neely, with special guests Denis Leary and Michael J. Fox. New York-based rock artist Gavin DeGraw performed for the guests at midnight. More than \$575,000 was raised, with proceeds to be split by The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, The Cam Neely Foundation for Cancer Care and The Leary Firefighters Foundation.

The event's biggest winners received a 2006 Dodge Charger, a \$10,000 Roberto Coin and Cento Diamond shopping spree and a 52-inch Mitsubishi high definition television — all generously donated back to the auction. Other high rollers won luxury travel packages to Las Vegas, New York City, Boston and Atlantic City.

The event was sponsored by Harrah's Entertainment, Tudor Investment Corporation, American Airlines, Dav El Chauffeured Transportation, Long's Jewelers, Sullivan Brothers Auto Mall and The Charles Hotel.

GETTING MARRIED?

In lieu of traditional favors, honor your guests or memorialize a loved one with a donation to the Foundation. Personalized favor cards will share your spirit of loving commitment with your guests.

For more information visit www.michaeljfox.org/help/donations/weddinggifts.php or call (800) 708-7644.

Learn about Parkinson's clinical trials

PDtrials
WWW.PDTRIALS.ORG

A MOTHER'S LOVE RAISES THOUSANDS FOR PD RESEARCH



Tracey Earl (left) and Lynn Brown

Lynn Brown of Bradley, California, is both a Team Fox member and a proud mother. Her only daughter, Tracey Earl, was diagnosed with Parkinson's in December 2005. Since then, this mother-daughter pair has embarked on a journey that neither of them expected or planned for.

Tracey, her husband, Steve, and their three sons live in a home built by Tracey's grandfather, just a couple of hundred yards away from her parents. Tracey spends her days devoted to her boys and experiencing the thrills of life with them. She and her husband Steve live a life full of devotion to each other and their sons. "It is truly a heartwarming sight to watch them interact as a family," Lynn says.

But eight days before her 31st birthday, Tracey's life changed instantly when she noticed a twitch in her right hand and learned of her Parkinson's diagnosis.

However, everything Tracey had loved and cherished did not change — and neither did her outlook on her life. Lynn and Tracey became active in the PD community, learning as much as they could about the disease and monitoring The Michael J. Fox Foundation Web site daily for research and news updates.

Lynn also realized she could make a difference for Tracey and the millions of others living with Parkinson's just by doing something that comes naturally: telling the world about her wonderful daughter. Lynn joined Team Fox and created her own Web page, which not only inspires others with Tracey's story, but also raises money for research. In fact, Lynn has raised over \$2,000 to date just by telling Tracey's story to friends, family and even strangers who want to make a difference.

"From the day she was born, Tracey has had an infectious smile and a sparkle in her eyes," Lynn says. "Parkinson's cannot take that away."

"BEAT THE BLUES" GIRLS' NIGHT RAISES \$2,000 FOR PD RESEARCH

Anyone who has been to Chicago in February knows that the weather is cold, the colors are dull and all anyone can think of is the coming spring. Having a loved one with Parkinson's makes it even tougher to cope during this gloomy month. But this year, Team Fox member Jenny Murino of Western Springs, Illinois, decided to "Beat the Blues" with over 100 of her girlfriends to raise the spirits of her mother, Mary Jo Lancione, who is battling the disease. To warm things up even more, Jenny decided to make the event a way to raise money for PD research.

Mary Jo, who was diagnosed five years ago at age 65, is a woman who has always gone out of her way for others. Even after her diagnosis, she never lost sight of what was important to her, and she has continued to put others before herself. Mary Jo helps take care of her ill sister, travels from Cleveland to Chicago frequently to visit Jenny and her grandchildren and never forgets anyone's birthday. For all these reasons and so many more, Mary Jo has been an inspiration to her daughter, who thought a "Beat the

Blues"-themed girls' night would be the perfect way to give back to her Mom. "One of my life-long goals," Jenny says, "is to show my mother how much I appreciate her."

Jenny hosted a get-together at her home to give Mary Jo the opportunity to meet all Jenny's friends and to enjoy a "girl's night" together. One of Jenny's friends, a jewelry boutique owner, attended the party and sold a collection of jewels to the women. Twenty percent of the proceeds were donated to the Foundation. Jenny also organized a raffle. By the end of the night, these enterprising girls had raised \$2,000 for Parkinson's research.

This was only the first of many fundraisers Jenny is planning as a member of Team Fox. She and her friends plan to "Beat the Blues" every Chicago February from now on, and she's brimming with ideas for other ways to raise money too. "I want to help the Foundation find a cure," this creative and generous fundraiser concludes. "My goal is to always do my best to raise more money than I did the previous year."

60TH BIRTHDAY BASH "CELEBRATES LIFE," RAISES FUNDS FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

Hunter Smith of Charleston, West Virginia, is an inveterate optimist who is determined to "celebrate life" with every chance he gets — in spite of the Parkinson's diagnosis he received seven years ago. In an effort to be true to this goal, last winter Smith decided to throw himself a party to mark his 60th birthday.

With the help of his wife, Hunter planned the party and invited the guests, asking them to make charitable contributions to a number of organiza-

tions in lieu of bringing birthday gifts. On February 4, about 200 of the Smiths' closest family and friends gathered at the Charleston Marriott to take part in his celebration. Guests enjoyed refreshments and danced the night away to live music.

The party was not only a huge hit with everyone who attended, but raised over \$3,000 for Parkinson's research. The Foundation thanks Mr. and Mrs. Smith and everyone who joined their party to raise funds for the cure.

SAVE THE DATE

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO CURE PARKINSON'S

Saturday, November 11, 2006
Waldorf-Astoria
New York City

For more information, e-mail
events@michaeljfox.org or
call (800) 708-7644



TEAMFOX

FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH

TEAM FOX GREEN THUMB RAISES \$5,000 (AND COUNTING) FOR PD RESEARCH



"This is what a sago should look like in a pot!" says Tom Kurtz

You might be familiar with animal rescues, but have you ever heard of a sago palm rescue? Do you even know what a sago palm is? Team Fox member Tom Kurtz is an expert. These majestic plants belong to the cycad family and are found in warm climates such as California and Florida. They are also found in Tom's hometown of Hilton Head, South Carolina, where he has come to be known as "the Sago Rescuer."

For 15 months, Tom has been rescuing sago palms, which can wither and die if they find themselves in iron-deficient soil or under attack by scale insects. Tom specializes in rescuing such specimens, nursing them back to health and finding them new homes, just as an animal rescuer might do for man's best friend.

But when he identifies an owner for one of his restored sago palms, Tom doesn't collect payment. Rather, he requests that the recipient make a contribution to The Michael J. Fox Foundation. In this way he has raised close to \$5,000 for the Foundation to date — and he continues to prune, fertilize, transplant, recover and distribute his beloved sago palms.

Tom has had a love for plants and farming ever since he was a child. Over the years, he's put his green thumb to work growing camelias, bonsai trees and orchids. When he moved to Hilton Head, he discovered sago palms in his backyard and found that he had a knack for taking care of them and recovering them to full health. And that wasn't the only discovery he made. Diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2000, Tom has a right hand resting tremor that affects all the muscles in his right forearm — except when he sleeps or uses the muscles. Because these are the muscles he needs to operate hand pruners, working with his beloved sago palms also causes Tom's tremor to subside.

"Not only is rescuing sago palms something I enjoy," Tom says, "but it stops my tremor and raises money for a cause close to my heart. It's a great way to spend my time."

PUBBIN' FOR PARKINSON'S

What could be better than having a good time for a good cause? That was Adam Kutas's idea. Ever since his mother was diagnosed with Parkinson's eight years ago, Adam has spent his time fundraising in her honor. When researching his next fundraising idea, he heard of a group in Chicago that had started a get-together called "Pubbin' for Parkinson's." Adam thought this would be a perfect event to bring to Boston, a city known and loved for its pubs.

Last February, Adam rounded up 30 friends and began Boston's very first "Pubbin' for Parkinson's" event. Some of the attendees had family members

living with Parkinson's, while others simply came to contribute to accelerating the cure. It was an evening full of socializing, talk of Parkinson's issues and good, old-fashioned fun.

The event raised over \$2,000 for The Michael J. Fox Foundation. Adam's mom couldn't attend the event, as she resides in Toronto, but she continues to be "overwhelmed with happiness" by her son's efforts to help cure her disease.

"My mom is the core of my family," Adam says. "She holds us all together and is one of the most important people in my life."

Frequently Asked Questions about TEAM FOX

What is Team Fox?

Team Fox is a brand-new grassroots community project to raise funds and awareness for Parkinson's research. Members get special resources and tools that turn special events into opportunities to raise much-needed funds for Parkinson's research. There are countless fun and creative ways to get involved — you can even make a difference just by asking friends and family for support.

What will I get when I register?

Just to start: online access to your own fundraising e-mail center and customizable Web page, incentive prizes, exclusive Team Fox Playbook materials, Team Fox stickers and posters, and an invitation to the annual Team Fox MVP (Most Valuable People) Awards dinner in New York.

Is there a minimum fundraising goal I'll have to meet?

An initial contribution of \$100 is required to join, and you can fundraise to get there. Once you're a member, there's no minimum fundraising goal or time limit.

How do people raise money?

You would be amazed at the creative and generous ways that have already been dreamed up by members of your community to raise funds. People have walked, blogged, jogged, paddled, pedaled, eaten, drunk, shopped, danced, and flipped pancakes for Parkinson's. We have the pictures to prove it.

How can I find athletic events in my area?

We recommend www.active.com, a searchable online database of more than 100,000 events and activities in over 50 sports in 5,000 cities nationwide, from 5K runs and marathons to cycling races and triathlons.

Is there someone I can talk to for more information?

We're here to help you every step of the way. If you've explored www.teamfox.org and still have questions, contact Special Gifts Officer Amanda McDorman at amcdorman@michaeljfox.org.



Grand Central Station, P.O. Box 4777
New York, New York 10163
www.michaeljfox.org

SPRING / SUMMER 2006 NEWSLETTER

“UNIFIED SCALE FOR MEASURING DYSKINESIAS...” CONTINUED

Science University, have already consolidated elements of existing dyskinesia scales into a working draft of the unified scale. Funding from the Foundation will allow this draft to be finalized, tested and presented to the movement disorder community.

The validation studies will be done in several steps. The researchers must first test the consistency and reliability of the scale. To do this, they will videotape examinations of about 70 Parkinson's patients with varying dyskinesia severity levels. The videotapes will be distributed to clinician testers

along with a preliminary version of the scale, which the clinicians will use to rate the taped patients' dyskinesias. Drs. Goetz and Nutt will look for variations in the testers' ratings of these identical cases to refine the scale and the instructions for using it.

Drs. Goetz and Nutt will then prepare a teaching tape for widespread distribution to clinicians. The teaching tape will include segments featuring at least four patients at each level of dyskinesia severity. The teaching tape will come with an “answer key” — ratings made by three interna-

tionally recognized dyskinesia experts. Clinicians learning to use the scale will be able to watch the tape, make their own assessments, and then compare their ratings to the experts'.

The researchers plan to present the Unified Dyskinesia Rating Scale, together with all instructions and teaching tools for its use, to the movement disorder community by early 2008.

Additional funding for this project was provided by EMD Pharmaceuticals.

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THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH IS DEDICATED TO ACCELERATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CURE FOR PARKINSON'S DISEASE THROUGH AN AGGRESSIVELY FUNDED RESEARCH AGENDA.