



# ACCELERATING THE CURE

The newsletter for friends and supporters of  
The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research

Fall 2007

## MJFF and New York Academy of Sciences to Co-Host First Major PD Drug Development Symposium

**LATER THIS MONTH THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION FOR PARKINSON'S RESEARCH AND THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES WILL CO-HOST THE INAUGURAL PD THERAPEUTICS CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK CITY. THE MEETING IS THE FIRST AND ONLY MAJOR SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM EXCLUSIVELY FOCUSED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE DRUGS TO TARGET PARKINSON'S DISEASE.**

"The time is ripe for a drug development conference in Parkinson's disease, and as a strategic convener for the Parkinson's field, The Michael J. Fox Foundation is the right organization to make it happen," says Sohini Chowdhury, associate director of research programs for the Foundation. "The Foundation sits at the nexus of activity in Parkinson's research, and this conference will provide a vital opportunity to bring together a wide range of stellar researchers for networking and strategic assessment of next steps toward improved therapeutics and a cure."

The conference, to be held on Thursday, October 25, will convene academic and industry scientists to assess and discuss how current promising scientific advances can be applied in a goal-oriented and timely way to the development of innovative therapeutic interventions for Parkinson's disease. Select MJFF-funded investigators will present research on topics including novel neuroprotective agents, innovative mechanisms to address disease symptoms and improvements in relevant animal models, and biomarker discovery/development.

The conference will be chaired by C. Warren Olanow, MD, the Henry P. and Georgette Goldschmidt Professor and Chairman of the Department of Neurology and Professor of Neuroscience at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, as well as Chief of the Neurology Service at the Mount Sinai Hospital.

"Our primary objectives for the PD Therapeutics Conference are twofold: to discuss scientific progress on drug discovery initiatives aimed at better treating Parkinson's disease, and to provide a new networking opportunity for scientists to share information and resources," says Dr. Olanow. "The conference will feature the latest updates on ongoing research, as well as highlight new studies and concepts."

The meeting is targeted toward a multidisciplinary network of academic, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry researchers. Registration has been brisk, and about 100 scientists are expected to attend from around the globe. Due to limited space, registration priority is being given to those whose research priority is PD or an allied neuroscience discipline.

The Foundation's co-host for the event, The New York Academy of Sciences, is the third-oldest scientific society in the United States. Its goal is to advance the understanding of science, technology, and medicine, and to stimulate new ways to think about how scientific research is applied in society and the world. The Academy is widely recognized as one of the world's foremost organizers of scientific conferences and symposia, and publisher and communicator of scientific information.

**More information on the conference is available on the NYAS Web site at [www.nyas.org/pdconf](http://www.nyas.org/pdconf).**

**Leadership funding for the PD Therapeutics Conference has been provided by Elan Corporation, plc (NYSE: ELN).**

## NEWS FROM THE CEO

This fall the Foundation is co-sponsoring the first and only major scientific symposium exclusively focused on therapeutics development for PD. It will bring together top PD researchers for strategic assessment of next steps toward improved therapeutics. (Find more detail at left.)

The conference is just one example of what we call "funding for patient impact" — four words that get at the heart of how the Foundation goes about its business every day.

This phrase encompasses the rigorous assessment we conduct before spending a single dollar, to ensure every penny you contribute has the greatest chance to speed development of treatments that can affect patients' everyday lives. It includes the prioritization we build into our selection process, because there's no shortage of research into interesting questions about PD, but we are here to answer the crucial questions. It is shorthand for every system and safeguard we've put in place in our short history for targeting resources toward our one definition of success: better treatments and a cure for Parkinson's.

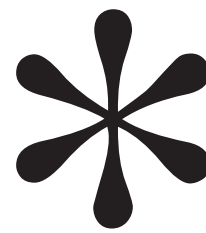
We're so grateful for the continued commitment of you, our supporters and friends, and we take our accountability to you seriously. I hope you'll browse this newsletter and read about more of the ways we're pressing forward toward the impact whose urgency is so clear to us, to you and to the millions of people whose lives are touched by Parkinson's.

Katie Hood  
Interim CEO

P.S. See page seven for more information about my recent appointment as interim CEO. While CEO transition is not a trivial matter, I assure you we are as focused and committed as ever to pressing forward to a cure!

## In this issue

- P 2 Foundation Announces up to \$3.2 Million in Funding to Advance Development of Drug Targets for PD
- P 3 Lisa Shulman, MD, talks to MJFF about Exercise and Parkinson's Disease
- P 5 Foundation to Launch PD Research Consortium, Web-based PD Working Group



## Foundation announces up to \$3.2 million in funding to advance development of drug targets for Parkinson's

**In two separate initiatives announced over the summer, The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research committed \$3.2 million in total awards to research teams working to further therapeutic targets for PD along the drug development pipeline.**

The funding was awarded under the Foundation's annual *Target Validation* initiative and under the new *Novel Approaches to Drug Discovery for Parkinson's Disease* program. The latter has been made possible by generous leadership funding from Elan Corporation, plc (NYSE: ELN), a neuroscience-based biotechnology company.

"For successful translation into real-world PD therapies, therapeutic approaches must be chaperoned through the necessary preclinical and clinical stages of drug development," said Katie Hood, interim CEO of The Michael J. Fox Foundation. "*Target Validation* and *Novel Approaches* are two excellent examples of creative strategies the Foundation employs toward this end.

"Through *Target Validation*, MJFF capital can help confirm the therapeutic potential of a given drug target, which in turn may elevate it from 'possibly interesting' to 'clearly important' and reduce the investment risk for biotech and pharmaceutical firms to take it into later phases of drug development," Ms. Hood continued. "*Novel Approaches* provides the opportunity for researchers working

on novel therapeutic strategies to partner with a first-class, large industry organization. If projects funded under this program warrant further development, Elan has the option to participate more actively and further the progress made by the awardees. Both programs aim for the same ultimate goal: bringing new treatments to patients faster."

Target validation is an essential phase of drug development in which researchers conduct highly specific studies to determine whether a molecule of interest is a true drug target — that is, whether it is critically involved in a disease and whether manipulating it impacts disease symptoms and progression. While researchers have continued to identify novel targets in recent years through genetic, biochemical and epidemiological studies, a dearth of funding for validation studies has historically been one roadblock to the efficient translation of these targets into patient-relevant therapies.

Whereas *Target Validation* supports initial work to determine the validity of cellular proteins and pathways as potentially promising drug targets, *Novel Approaches* seeks to push work forward in developing therapies against targets that already have some promising initial data. Both programs provide critical resources for underfunded stages of the drug development process and reflect the Foundation's emphasis on bridging early discov-

ery work and late-stage translational research to reduce industry's risk around investment in new PD therapeutics.

The *Novel Approaches* program is also an important element of the Foundation's increasing engagement with pharmaceutical and biotech company partners. This engagement is multi-pronged, including not only funding industry researchers under any Foundation initiative, but also working with companies as strategic partners to accelerate the rate at which new PD therapeutics are brought to market. Awardees under *Novel Approaches* include both academic and industry scientists.

"We are very pleased to work side by side with The Michael J. Fox Foundation in the pursuit of effective treatment options for patients suffering from Parkinson's disease," said Dale Schenk, PhD, Elan's chief scientific officer. "We congratulate the awardees and are impressed that the *Novel Approaches* program has attracted such high-quality proposals for potential treatment of Parkinson's disease. We look forward to working together to move us closer to a therapy that can slow or stop progression of this terrible disease."

**More information on projects funded under both programs, including grant abstracts and researchers' bios, is available on the Foundation's Web site at [www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org).**

## Foundation Hosts Drug Development Workshop

In May The Michael J. Fox Foundation hosted a drug development workshop convening representatives of large pharmaceutical companies, smaller biotechnology companies, venture capital firms, other nonprofit disease foundations and academia. The meeting had two primary goals: to bridge communications among different actors in the therapeutics development process and to identify additional mechanisms through which MJFF may be able to accelerate development of novel PD therapies.

"The workshop provided a rare opportunity for drug development stakeholders to come together for the sole purpose of discussing Parkinson's therapeutics development," said Todd Sherer, PhD, the Foundation's vice president of research programs. "By creating a forum in which the varied players could educate each other on the challenges of therapeutics development from each of their unique perspectives, we hoped to identify common roadblocks that hinder progress — and to begin brainstorming potential future action steps the Foundation could take to tackle them."

Discussion centered on how decisions are made about potential therapeutics at each stage of the development process, as well as the role various stakeholders (research scientists, equity investors, and corporate management) play at each stage.

### Participants' recommendations and suggestions included:

**1** Feedback on the Foundation's strategies to alleviate industry risk around investment in Parkinson's was positive. Some participants recommended that MJFF further prioritize its resources toward tool development (biomarkers, standardized clinical trial design and animal models), with the goal of fundamentally and permanently lowering the level of risk for industry investment in PD.

**2** Participants underscored the importance of addressing non-motor symptoms of PD and were enthusiastic about the possibility of an MJFF role in convening key

stakeholders to build consensus on the definition of these indications and their importance as an unmet medical need. Greater clarity in this arena could lead to a more straightforward path to FDA filing and approval for companies working on areas including sleep disorders, mood disorders, constipation and fatigue.

**3** It was recommended that MJFF play a proactive role in addressing methodological hurdles that affect the predictive value of Phase II clinical trials for disease-modifying interventions. Historically, results from these trials have been poor predictors of success in the larger and costlier pivotal Phase III trials. This has fed into an industry perception that developing and successfully testing a PD intervention is a high-cost, high-risk endeavor.

The Foundation's Research Programs staff are now formulating and refining strategic next steps to prioritize and act on these recommendations and suggestions.



## Lisa Shulman, MD, Talks to MJFF about Exercise and Parkinson's Disease

Scientific evidence exists to support the hypothesis that physical activity can have a beneficial effect on people with Parkinson's disease. There is even reason to believe that exercise may be neuroprotective — that is, that it may slow progression of the disease in the brain. The Foundation spoke with Lisa Shulman, MD, the Rosalyn Newman Distinguished Scholar in Parkinson's Disease and associate professor at the University of Maryland, to gain an understanding of what is known — and what remains unknown — about the role exercise can play in the life of a person with Parkinson's.

**You are currently conducting an MJFF-funded clinical study on the role of treadmill training on gait and mobility in people with Parkinson's. Can you describe the study?**

First of all, it is very important to make the point that we are studying exercise in PD patients — not just treadmill training. In our study, there are three groups of patients, and two groups are walking on the treadmill, while the third group is doing muscle strengthening and stretching. However, it's important to understand that this third group is not a "control group." Our study is structured to observe and quantify their outcomes just as actively as that of the other two groups.

We're interested in increasing understanding of how exercise may prevent problems with gait and mobility. The onset of gait and mobility problems is the pivotal event that triggers disability in people living with PD. There is genuine uncertainty as to what form of exercise is best to delay these problems, so we are looking at three different forms of exercise. This point applies to other symptoms of Parkinson's disease as well; we do not know what form of exercise might be best to delay other symptoms of PD in addition to gait and mobility. But there is reason to believe exercise may have an effect on many symptoms including PD-related depression, cognitive dysfunction and fatigue.

**What kind of information can a PD patient expect to receive from his or her physician about starting an exercise regimen?**

Currently the information people get from their doctors is anecdotal — the doctor may say, "I have noticed that patients who exercise seem to do better." We just don't have the research-based

**Note: The medical information contained in this article is for general information purposes only. The Michael J. Fox Foundation has a policy of refraining from advocating, endorsing or promoting any drug therapy, course of treatment, or specific company or institution. It is crucial that care and treatment decisions related to Parkinson's disease and any other medical condition be made in consultation with a physician or other qualified medical professional.**

evidence that the doctor can use to make an informed recommendation about what kind of exercise is best. Once we have that kind of evidence, physicians will be able to provide much more targeted advice.

**Why don't we know more at this point?**

Well, the studies to date have been small, and the methodology used hasn't allowed us to answer the question of whether any exercise is helpful in Parkinson's. If exercise does have a beneficial effect, we don't understand exactly how it does that. And if it is protecting brain cells from dying, we don't know how it is doing that. But that is where our current study, and others, come in.

**Given the limitations of our current knowledge, if someone living with PD is feeling inspired to start exercising today, what can he or she do?**

Well, it depends on the individual's overall fitness level, but a good first step is to talk to your primary care physician and have a thorough checkup before starting any activity. For many people it's important to start slowly, and one good way to start is with a physical therapist. This way you can get an "exercise prescription" and work with an expert to determine what you can (and can't) do safely. Especially if you haven't been regularly exercising, it may be best to begin under the supervision of a professional who has access to professional equipment.

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**"Personally I believe it's quite likely that exercise will be more beneficial than some of our pharmaceutical agents."**

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The field is now working toward answers to very important and fundamental questions, such as: What type of exercise seems to be most beneficial to patients? Is it best to begin an exercise regimen before or after the development of certain symptoms? How long do you need to exercise to receive benefit, and how long can you expect that benefit to last? Is it best to focus on the upper body, or lower? And could exercise be neuroprotective?

**What evidence supports the idea that exercise may be neuroprotective?**

The key information raising our hopes comes from animal studies. Researchers have done studies in which they've put laboratory rats through an exercise regimen for some period of time, then exposed those rats to a toxin that creates symptoms similar to Parkinson's. What we have seen in these studies is that the exercising rats lose fewer dopamine neurons than rats exposed to the same toxin that were not exercising. Again, we don't understand exactly how or why this works. But it is very exciting, and it is drawing more researchers into the field.

For those already exercising, and not experiencing advanced symptoms, it would be good to generally evaluate what the types of exercise that you are doing. You may want to ensure that you are being exposed to a range of types of exercise — a variety that covers the bases of gait repetition (walking), aerobic activity, stretching and strength training.

**Are there barriers that prevent people with PD from starting an exercise regimen?**

Resistance is one factor. After all, exercise has been shown to be beneficial in so many diseases — heart disease, diabetes and stroke, to name just a few — but let's face it, not everyone is rushing off to the gym. The work for physicians in this area is to find new ways to motivate their patients, and even to validate exercise as a "serious" intervention, because all of us, as patients, sometimes have a tendency to take a prescription for pills more seriously than a prescription for exercise.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>



## NEWSBRIEFS

THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION ROUTINELY POSTS UPDATED INFORMATION ABOUT FUNDED PROJECTS ON ITS WEB SITE, [WWW.MICHAELJFOX.ORG](http://WWW.MICHAELJFOX.ORG). FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ANY OF THE PROJECTS LISTED BELOW — INCLUDING GRANT ABSTRACTS, RESEARCHER BIOS AND SUPPLEMENTAL GRANT INFORMATION (WHERE APPLICABLE) — PLEASE SEARCH OUR FUNDED GRANTS DATABASE LOCATED IN THE RESEARCH SECTION OF OUR WEB SITE AT [WWW.MICHAELJFOX.ORG/RESEARCH.CFM](http://WWW.MICHAELJFOX.ORG/RESEARCH.CFM).

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In June a partnership was announced between MJFF awardee Ceregene, Inc., and Genzyme, one of the world's leading biotechnology companies, for the development and commercialization of Cere-120, Ceregene's proprietary gene therapy delivery technique to deliver the trophic factor neurturin directly to the brains of Parkinson's patients. Under the agreement, Genzyme will pay \$25 million to Ceregene in exchange for specific partnership-related expenses. Ceregene is also entitled to development-related milestone payments of up to \$125 million and reimbursement of 50 percent of worldwide Phase III development costs.

The partnership is a successful example of MJFF's strategy to reduce industry's investment risk in early PD therapeutics development, thereby increasing the likelihood of follow-on funding from industry actors with the resources to shepherd ongoing development. Genzyme's contribution will provide resources that can accelerate Cere-120's Phase III development.

For more information on this project, search the funded grants database at [www.michaeljfox.org/research.cfm](http://www.michaeljfox.org/research.cfm) by institution name Ceregene.

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The ProteoTech *LEAPS* project, funded in 2005, seeks to develop therapies that can stop the clumping of the protein alpha-synuclein, a pathological hallmark of Parkinson's disease. The researchers theorize that blocking this protein clumping could prevent further cell loss and stop Parkinson's disease progression.

In July the project met its first milestone when the researchers announced that they had identified four candidate compounds that disrupted clumping in cell-based experiments and would begin testing these compounds in mice the following month. In parallel, three to four new compounds are undergoing additional screens to find more candidates for in vivo testing.

*LEAPS* are multi-year, multi-million-dollar, multidisciplinary projects to address questions that will have significant practical impact on the treatment of Parkinson's disease. Every project funded under the *LEAPS* initiative is structured with milestones that researchers must meet to receive continued funding.

For more information on this project, search the funded grants database at [www.michaeljfox.org/research.cfm](http://www.michaeljfox.org/research.cfm) by institution name ProteoTech.

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At the one-year assessment of the *Prescott Family Initiative at the Arizona Parkinson's Disease Consortium* in September, investigators reported a major finding: People with a possible precursor condition of PD (called "incidental Lewy body disease") have brain dopamine loss already, at a stage prior to developing any symptoms. Further study of this subset of individuals may help identify laboratory and/or clinical signs that are predictive of the development of PD.

A large portion of the remainder of the meeting was devoted to identifying analyses the consortium can undertake with the data it has collected to date and continues to amass. In the bioinformatics core, the database is being refined so investigators can optimally sift through data and perform analyses to identify predictors of Parkinson's disease and PD-related dementia. The investigators also have established an ongoing collaboration with external investigators to identify the most sensitive methods for detecting alpha-synuclein clumping. Following analysis and comparison of nine methods, preliminary results indicate that one method is clearly superior. (The results of this study were submitted for publication earlier this month.)

For more information on this project, search the funded grants database at [www.michaeljfox.org/research.cfm](http://www.michaeljfox.org/research.cfm) by program name Prescott Family Initiative at the Arizona Parkinson's Disease Consortium.

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## Foundation to launch PD Research Consortium, Web-based PD working group

This summer the Foundation began formal development of the PD Research Consortium (PDRC), a collaborative, Web-based working group of Parkinson's and allied neuroscience researchers, to be launched in 2008. A global work-group facilitating communication among Parkinson's researchers from all sectors, PDRC will include scientists from academia, government, industry, and nonprofit research institutes. The site will allow researchers from around the globe to come together quickly to compare notes on research innovations, challenges or setbacks; discuss work in progress; pair up with short- or long-term collaborators; and more. The project will be led by Michael T. Rogan, PhD, who joined MJFF as associate director of PD Research Consortium in August.

"Communication is critical to moving science forward," says Dr. Rogan. "The idea of PDRC is to exploit the power of online communities to maximize the exchange of information and ideas among Parkinson's scientists, speeding the rate at which ideas progress into action steps and new treatments."

### 'Social networking' technologies to bridge scientific communication

In the past 10 years, says Dr. Rogan, there has been a great deal of interest and success in harnessing the Web's 'social networking' potential. This has resulted in Web resources such as MySpace and Match.com that are designed to help users establish and deepen personal relationships.

While from a user's perspective these sites may have little to do with scientific research, similar approaches can be applied to connecting scientists in cyberspace for the purpose of forwarding their research. This development has given rise to various sites, often linked to particular diseases or research journals, that use social networking technologies to foster communication between researchers in the field — even if they work in entirely different labs, institutions or scientific disciplines.

Currently, one of the most widely used scientific forums is AlzForum ([www.alzforum.org](http://www.alzforum.org)), a site targeted to researchers studying Alzheimer's disease.

"AlzForum is a highly successful model and a point of departure for us as we begin to structure the PD Research Consortium," says Dr. Rogan.

"There is overlap between Parkinson's and Alzheimer's research, and there are areas where we can join forces with AlzForum and other similar organizations to maximize our efficiency."

### Bipartite site structure and Semantic Web

At launch, PDRC will consist of two main elements. The first will function as an interactive research news site devoted to posting PD developments, alerting members to the news, and providing a forum for users to comment on and discuss them. This area of the site will also provide searchable access to compendia of various neuroscience tools and resources, as well as information and reports on scientific conferences.

The second element of the site will be a comprehensive knowledge base of current scientific understanding of Parkinson's disease and the entire range of factors believed to play a role in its onset, progression and potential prevention and cure. The knowledge base will be written by experts selected by the larger PDRC community, and will be deeply and continually integrated with the newest advances as they occur.

Additionally, the Foundation is working toward the goal of integrating a cutting-edge information storage and retrieval system called Semantic Web. By coding information in a sophisticated way as it is posted, this system allows users to search not only by keywords and phrases, but by relationships between different pieces of research evidence, such as whether a certain finding supports a given hypothesis about the causes of PD.

Dr. Rogan cautions patience, however. "Semantic Web promises to be a transformative step in the evolution of how knowledge is organized and transmitted," he says. "But so far it has been implemented only in simple and limited ways. We will be fostering the expansion of this technology into PD research."

### Speeding progress

"Given MJFF's characteristic emphasis on increasing the speed and efficiency of research," Dr. Rogan continues, "it is natural that the Foundation would conceive of PDRC and work to provide the field with a high-powered resource to accelerate progress toward improved therapies and a cure for PD."

The Internet is about speed and connectivity, he says, and the advent of e-mail alone has made communication so fast that people want everything to move faster. This has affected research in ways that are relatively new but that scientists already take for granted.

"For example," he concludes, "no one is satisfied with the length of time it takes to publish a scientific paper, but everyone accepts that some kind of peer review is indispensable. So we've come up with online versions of research journals, which get the information into people's hands much faster than is possible with print. The evolution of such systems has contributed to the current groundswell of interest in similar online resources that can speed up the processing of information from all points in the field."



Michael T. Rogan, PhD

## Bloom Where You Are Planted



Mary Anne and James Ostrenga at the Team Fox Garden Walk and Sunset Reception.

On Sunday, June 24, Mary Anne Ostrenga hosted a Team Fox Garden Walk and Sunset Reception in Naperville, Illinois. Mary Anne joined Team Fox in January after meeting other members at a Young-Onset Parkinson's Network Conference in Chicago.

The walk attracted over 200 participants — including the Mayor of Naperville, George Pradel — to tour four beautiful homes. The tour included Mary Anne's property, graced by a one-acre spring-fed pond and a swimming pool surrounded by hundreds of flowers. Each home contained its own unique trappings, including two beautiful waterfalls, terra cotta pots and plants that made you feel like you were in Italy, and charming vignettes and a shade garden.

This wonderful, one-of-a-kind event was followed by a sunset reception and silent auction. Inspired by Mary Anne's personal battle with Parkinson's, and her passion for gardening and volunteering, her team of community members and volunteers helped raise over \$28,000 for Parkinson's disease research. Mary Anne said she was proud to have been able to make a difference through Team Fox. "We had a very successful day, and hope to do even better next year!"

## Paul Ruby Makes Fundraising for PD Research a Family Affair

In July 2006, Paul Ruby was diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson's disease. Determined to take a proactive approach and do whatever he could to help find a cure, Paul created the Paul Ruby Foundation for Parkinson's Research less than a year later, in February 2007. The Ruby Foundation's mission is to increase awareness, raise money and support research to find a cure for Parkinson's disease.

Paul and his wife, Linda, quickly signed the Ruby Foundation up for Team Fox. "We wanted to combine our efforts with those of others to create a force that could do the most good possible, as quickly as possible. Knowing that The Michael J. Fox Foundation is as impatient for a cure as we are, we concluded that joining Team Fox was the best possible way to maximize our Foundation's impact for the millions of PD patients worldwide." On August 17, they hosted their first Team Fox Golf Extravaganza and Concert for a Cure at the Mill Creek Golf Club in Geneva, Illinois. The couple's son, Wes Ruby, 11, also pitched in by gathering some friends together to caddy for the event.

The golf outing sold out quickly, after which the Rubys continued to promote the Concert for a Cure. The day was a huge success with the Ides of March headlining the concert with additional performances by Hoss, Greg Boerner and The Mark Ruby Jazz Quartet. With an entire community of devoted friends and supporters, they were able to surpass their fundraising goal and raised \$70,000 for Team Fox and Parkinson's research.



Paul Ruby (left) and Jim Peterik of Ides of March perform to raise funds for PD research at the Ruby Foundation's Concert for a Cure.

## Fall Fundraising Ideas for Team Fox

Autumn is a wonderful time to get involved in the fight against Parkinson's disease or to shift your current fundraising into high gear. As the leaves change, the holidays approach and the weather turns colder, you'll feel warm and snug knowing that your support of The Michael J. Fox Foundation is making a difference.

### "Rake Away PD"

We all love the leaves as they change color, but once they fall most people would prefer to avoid the work it takes to clean them up. Wear an orange t-shirt or scarf to show your Team Fox colors, put together crews, grab some rakes and go around the block offering to clean up neighbors' yards for a donation to Team Fox.

### "Are You Ready for Some Football!?!"

Everyone can be part of a winning team when you turn your Sunday football party into a fundraiser. Charge friends a fee to participate, provide some snacks and have your guests pick the teams they think will win on any given Sunday. Half of the pot goes to the winners and the other half goes to Team Fox.

### "The Easy-as-Pie Fundraiser"

Nothing says autumn like a warm pie bursting with apples, pears or other seasonal fruits. Call friends and family who love to bake and organize a friendly pie-baking contest. Charge a fee to participate in the tasting, or set up a table on the lawn and sell the pie by the slice. Have everyone vote for the best pie in

different categories ("Best Overall," "Most Original," "Flakiest Crust," etc.) and every entrant can go home with a ribbon!

### "Party to End Parkinson's"

Plan a party around Halloween and organize a 50/50 raffle. Half the money you collect comes to Team Fox; the other half can go to a prize winner for the best costume (allow guests to vote, then announce the results with a flourish). You can also sell tickets for tries at apple bobbing stands and scary piñatas, or for a tour of a "haunted" attic.

For more creative fundraising ideas or to learn more about Team Fox, The Michael J. Fox Foundation's grassroots community fundraising program, please visit [www.teamfox.org](http://www.teamfox.org).



## Foundation Introduces Recurring Giving

An increasing number of donors are choosing a different way to impact The Michael J. Fox Foundation's urgent mission toward improved treatments and a cure for Parkinson's disease: through monthly gifts. Aligned with our mandate to make the research funding process as streamlined and efficient as possible, these monthly donors provide MJFF with solid, predictable cash flow that doesn't require mailings or other outreach to secure — allowing us to allocate more money to critically needed Parkinson's research.

As many of our friends and supporters know, the Foundation does not stockpile funds in excessive reserves, but commits funding straightaway to the most promising Parkinson's research worldwide. Recurring gifts are an important element in our ability to uncompromisingly pursue our mission without the safety net of an endowment.

Donors tell us that recurring gifts make it easy and painless to support a cause that is central to their well-being. It is as easy as paying a regular household bill — like your utility or phone bill. In our case you

even get to choose the frequency of your gift, down to the day of the month you would like your credit card charged. You will receive a monthly receipt from MJFF (either electronic or hard copy), and your credit card statement is additional record of your contribution. And canceling a monthly gift is as simple as calling or emailing the Foundation.

Most important, our recurring donors appreciate that monthly gifts allow them to contribute more than they thought they could. While a donation of \$10, \$20, \$50 or \$100 a month or more is achievable with little difficulty in many household budgets, such gifts add up to significant annual contributions that will advance critical research to beat this disease.

Thank you for considering a recurring gift to help us win the fight against Parkinson's disease. For more information, visit our Web site at [www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org), e-mail Leslie Fleisch, associate director of annual giving, at [lfleisch@michaeljfox.org](mailto:lfleisch@michaeljfox.org), or call (800) 708-7644.

## Breaking PARkinson's Raises Almost \$800,000



(L-R): Lee Mikles, Board member Edwin Levy, Founder Michael J. Fox, Vincent Tese and Board member Shad Rowe at the Breaking PARkinson's Golf Outing to benefit The Michael J. Fox Foundation, an event co-founded by Levy and Robert R. Greenberg (not pictured). This year's event, which took place on September 17 at Deepdale Golf Club in Manhasset, New York, honored Thomas E. Constance and raised close to \$800,000 for Parkinson's research. The Foundation's deepest thanks to the event committee — Board member Holly Andersen, MD, Myron Ginsberg, Greenberg, Rory Greenberg, Gene Gurkoff, Adam Katz, Levy and RJ Nemer — and everyone who joined us on the links.

## Katie Hood Appointed Interim CEO

On October 1 the Foundation announced that Katie Hood, deputy CEO and former vice president of Research Programs, had been appointed interim chief executive officer. Ms. Hood, who joined the Foundation in September 2002, has played critical roles in shaping its strategy of intervening aggressively to close critical gaps in the process of moving potential treatments from the laboratory to Parkinson's patients, as well as in building a team of in-house research experts needed to implement that strategy.

Ms. Hood replaced former CEO Sarah Orsay, who left MJFF to devote more time to her three children.

MJFF Founder Michael J. Fox said, "The Michael J. Fox Foundation has grown enormously in our sophistication and in our capability to work with everyone from academic researchers to industry in plugging the many gaps in the process that keep promising science from advancing to effective, life-changing treatments for Parkinson's. Katie Hood has played a big part in that evolution, and we're confident that with her at the helm, we will not only maintain our momentum but will continue to build our reputation for not just throwing money at the problem, but truly taking a leadership role in helping identify and cultivate research breakthroughs."

Ms. Hood stated, "After five years working with management and staff at all levels of MJFF, as well as our scientific advisors, grantees, industry partners and donors, I am looking forward to working with Michael, our Board and our entire team to further advance the mission and strategy of a foundation that is increasingly setting the standard for effectiveness and best business practices."

As interim CEO, Ms. Hood provides day-to-day management and oversight of all Foundation activities and specifically oversees fundraising, the Foundation's research team and communications, administration and financial management. Ms. Hood will report to the Board of Directors. Debi Brooks continues to serve as co-founder with a focus on principal-gifts fundraising and outreach to key external audiences, reporting to the Board of Directors.

The Foundation stated that Ms. Hood will be a candidate to assume the CEO position on a permanent basis.

To read a biosketch of Ms. Hood, please visit the Staff page of our Web site at [www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org).

## MJFF Announces Winners of Its Web Site Raffle

Following the May 5 launch of the Foundation's redesigned Web site, more than 3,000 people registered for the MJFF Online Community and subscribed to receive our FoxFlash e-newsletter alerts. Those who signed up by July 9 were entered in a raffle to win MJFF memorabilia autographed by Michael J. Fox. Congratulations to the three lucky winners, who will receive autographed copies of Michael J. Fox's best-selling memoir, *Lucky Man*:

Jeanne Corduck, Wells, Maine  
Sherry Inman, Fort Plain, New York  
Jonathan Jurkiewicz, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania

Our deepest thanks to everyone who signed up. If you haven't registered at [www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org) yet, don't wait another minute! And if you're already a member of our online community, spread the word to friends and family. Let them know how important it is to you to raise funds and awareness for PD research and to support the vital work of The Michael J. Fox Foundation.



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## Fall 2007 Newsletter

# Lisa Shulman, MD, Talks to MJFF about Exercise and Parkinson's Disease (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

Needless to say, for people who are more advanced in their Parkinson's, there may also be physical limitations. There are issues of safety, particularly in unsupervised exercise. Balance can be impaired in PD, and you do not want to risk falling. In our own current study, we are also seeing that there may be blood pressure concerns for those with advanced PD. Since each person with PD has their own profile of symptoms, we hope that one result of our study will be increased understanding of what type of effort is required for a beneficial effect. Do you need to reach some critical threshold of exercise to get a good effect?

Or does the optimal speed and duration vary for each person?

### When it comes right down to it, can physical activity really be as beneficial as a medication?

This is a crucial point. For decades, there has been work on pharmaceutical interventions to treat Parkinson's. And there are many drugs we've put a lot of time and effort into that have mild symptomatic effects at best. Personally I believe it's quite likely that exercise will be more beneficial than some of our pharmaceutical agents. If we can show these

types of effects in PD, it will be important to the overall management of the disease.

Additionally, exercise is a very practical intervention in the sense that it's something many patients can do for themselves, something that can restore a sense of control and reduce feelings of helplessness. Having a chronic disorder doesn't mean you need to be a "passive patient"; you don't have to throw in the towel.

**Read more about Dr. Shulman at [www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org). If you live in the Baltimore area and are interested in enrolling in her MJFF-funded clinical study, please call study coordinator Terra Hill at (443) 827-0677.**

**ACCELERATING THE CURE** is published three times a year by The Michael J. Fox Foundation. The spring and summer issues are mailed to donors of \$25 or more within the past 12 months. The fall issue is mailed to all MJFF friends and supporters. All issues are available on our Web site, [www.michaeljfox.org](http://www.michaeljfox.org). To subscribe or unsubscribe, or with questions or feedback, please e-mail the editor at the the address at right.

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