A message from our Co-Directors

April is Parkinson’s Disease Awareness Month!

Over the past year, the Parkinson Research Consortium (PRC) has continued to successfully reach out to the Parkinson’s community to raise awareness and funds that go directly to the advancement of innovative, leading edge research into causes and possible treatments for Parkinson’s disease.

We would like to especially thank the Partners Investing in Parkinson Research (PIPR) group who this year raised $140K at Ottawa Race Weekend to reach their goal of $1M in seven years. An incredible achievement!

One of these incredible individuals was Sharon Pickle who passed away on July 26, 2015. Sharon was an ambassador and great friend of the PRC. She was always willing to participate, volunteer and support us in any way she could. From conquering the challenge of cycling the Lap the Gats loop, and tirelessly volunteering at events she will be greatly missed and her memory always cherished.

On behalf of all of us, whether you are living with Parkinson’s, a caregiver, volunteer or working behind the scenes in finding a cure for this debilitating disease... We thank you!

Dr. David Grimes
Chief of Neurology, Director of the Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Disorders Clinic, The Ottawa Hospital, Co-Director Parkinson Research Consortium

Dr. David Park
Director, uOttawa Brain and Mind Research Institute, Co-Director, Parkinson Research Consortium, Professor, University of Ottawa
Integrating Parkinson’s Care Network (IPCN)

On September 14, 2015 as part of Brain Health Awareness Week the past year results of IPCN were presented by Dr. David Grimes.

This initiative will coordinate and provide the best and most appropriate hospital and community resources for the personalized needs of each patient, while at the same time producing valuable clinical data.

We aim to personalize Parkinson’s Care by integrating healthcare options so that patients are connected to hospital and community services that treat all their motor and non-motor Parkinson’s symptoms.

Healthcare plans are designed by a neurologist and overseen by a nurse coordinator who links patients to the appropriate services.

Progress in Motion—what we’ve achieved to date:
1. Identified a clinical care nurse coordinator,
2. Created an Access database that contains contact information for a comprehensive (>100) list of healthcare resources,
3. Established the parameters to monitor patient progress, health benefit and quality of life within this program.
4. Started enrolling patients in this program in July 2015!

The 2015 PRC Fellowship recipients were presented their awards at BHAW. The awardees include:

**Crabtree Family Fellowship**
Awarded to: Carolina Cieniak (post-doctoral fellow)
Title: Translational lipidomics: A new perspective on understanding and treatment of dementia with Lewy bodies, Parkinson’s diseases and other neurodegenerative diseases.
Mentor(s): Dr. Steffany Bennett & Dr. Michael Schlossmacher

**Toth Family Fellowship**
Awarded to: David Lu (graduate student)
Title: Optimizing deep brain stimulation electrode placement by real-time identification of subcortical structures.
Mentor: Dr. Adam Sachs

**Audrey Grant Parkinson’s Research Fellowship**
Awarded to: Jacqueline Tokarew (graduate student)
Title: Investigating the role of Parkin in oxidative stress mitigation and dopamine metabolism
Mentor: Dr. Michael Schlossmacher

**Bonnie & Don Poole Parkinson’s Research Fellowship**
Awarded to: Kyle Farmer (graduate student)
Title: GM-CSF and CTEP as novel therapeutics in an early stage murine model of Parkinson’s disease.
Mentor: Dr. Shawn Hayley
The FUN in fundraising!

Throughout the year, the PRC benefits from the tremendous work, time and energy of many in the community who want to help find a cure and a treatment to prevent the progression of this devastating disease and improve the quality of life of those suffering. In the past year, the following community events were successfully organized by our many volunteers and all the funds raised went to support our scientist trainees and development of better integrated personalized strategies for our Parkinson’s patients.

In 2015 these events raised:
- Audrey Grant’s Better Bridge Event raised $12,750
- Annual Parkinson’s Benefit Concert at Greenfield’s Pub raised over $6,500 and
- Lap the Gats for Parkinson’s raised $84,000

Very special thanks to Audrey Grant who gives of her time year-after-year and Dave and Jill Hogg who lead the planning of the benefit concert who together have raised over $90K for Parkinson’s disease research!

Lap the Gats for Parkinson’s

Lap the Gats for Parkinson’s, our annual fundraising cycling event to help raise awareness and funds for Parkinson’s research, was held on May 30, 2015 in the beautiful hills of Gatineau Park in Chelsea, Quebec.

The event took place on the 21 km loop and attracted over 300 riders, supporters and volunteers who together raised over $84,000.

The event is designed for cyclists of all levels. Participants seeking a challenge competed for Fastest Cyclist and Overall Hill Climber in male and female categories. A King and Queen were also awarded the coveted yellow jersey for Fastest Cyclist and a red and white jersey for Overall Hill Climber.

Our next event is taking place June 19, 2016 as part of Nokia Sunday Bike Day in cooperation with the NCC. We are always looking for volunteers and of course riders to participate!

Special Thanks to Bron Vasic

This past year we’ve welcomed Mr. Richard Shantz as new Chair of the PRC Advisory Board. Richard has been involved in Parkinson’s Investing in Parkinson’s Research (PIPR) and has a history working in the Parkinson’s community.

As we welcomed Richard we’ve also taken the opportunity to thank Bron Vasic, Past Chair for his years of commitment, support and leadership of the PRC Advisory Board. Bron has been involved in the PRC since 2007 and was Chair for 5 years. He was integral in helping the PRC transition from startup to the success it is today. We are honoured that he continues to be a esteemed member of our Advisory Board.

Thank you Bron!
Levodopa pump gives new life to Ottawa Parkinson’s patient

Retired teacher Nick Kaethler, 75, was the first person in Ottawa to receive a newly approved treatment for advanced Parkinson’s disease that delivers drugs directly to the small intestine. He says the pump has reduced his symptoms and given him back his life.

His neurologist at The Ottawa Hospital, Dr. Tiago Mestre, is running the Duodopa program at the Ottawa Hospital, and says Kaethler’s response to the levodopa pump was expected.

The Ottawa Hospital began offering the pump to patients with advanced-stage Parkinson’s in early 2015, after it was approved by Health Canada and covered by provincial healthcare, in a joint effort involving Dr. Tiago Mestre from Neurology and Dr. Alaa Rostom from Gastroenterology.

Like deep brain stimulation, the levodopa pump is an option to consider once pills become ineffective at treating the symptoms of Parkinson’s disease. Dr. Mestre notes that the treatment is invasive and not for all Parkinson’s patients, and those interested in learning more should speak to their neurologist or family doctor and consider a referral to the Duodopa program at The Ottawa Hospital.

While the levodopa pump relieves his symptoms for now, Kaethler doesn’t know what new limitations may be on the horizon. Today he’s grateful to be able to attend concerts and social events, to win bridge trophies again and to be able to sing with his choirs.

As I get weaker, I’m glad to see there are strong people out there working on this,” said Kaethler, whose doctor, Dr. Mestre, is part of the Parkinson Research Consortium, a group of Ottawa researchers investigating mechanisms and new treatments for this devastating disease.

“Research is part of the business of finding life again.”

Written by Amelia Buchanan