



Winter 2023 - Issue 8

Education
Advocacy
Resources
Support

**SUPPORT
GROUPS**

Page 3

**PARKINSON'S AWARENESS
MONTH**

Page 5

**VOLUNTEER
SPOTLIGHT**

Page 7



MISSION STATEMENT

Parkinson Society Nova Scotia helps to ease the burden through education, advocacy, liaising care providers, and support research aimed at finding a cure.

BOARD

Chair - Jack Waller

Executive Secretary - Ken Saunders

Research and Development - Evan Matthews

Social Media Officer - Sophie Girouard

Media Relations Officer - Hudson Barr

Special Events Coordinator - Dennis Potharst

Member at Large - Hazel Hubley

To Our Readers

Dear Readers,

As the winter continues, we are filled with excitement to share our upcoming events for the warmer months of 2024. Before diving into those details, however, we want to take a moment to reflect on the remarkable year we've had. Our journey, enriched by activities ranging from engaging dance sessions to collaborations with dedicated researchers, has been a testament to our collective growth and success. We extend our deepest gratitude to you, our supporters, for your unwavering faith and encouragement in our mission.

Looking ahead, we have several inspiring initiatives lined up. We're delighted to continue our visits to care homes, which have proven to be not only beneficial for the residents but also deeply therapeutic for us. These experiences reinforce our belief in unity and the significance of celebrating every achievement, and taking each day one at a time.

A notable highlight for January was the launch of our support groups, led by a highly skilled facilitator. We are eager to embark on this new chapter, further expanding our spectrum of services and impact.

None of these endeavors would be possible without the phenomenal dedication of our volunteers. Their ever-growing numbers empower us to dream bigger and achieve more. In line with this, we are thrilled to announce our most ambitious event to date: the Parkinson's Walkathon, tentatively scheduled for April 27th, 2024. For more details about the Walkathon and how you can be a part of this landmark event, please read on.

As always, your continued engagement, fervor, and affection for our community are the key ingredients to our success. We value every single one of you deeply and eagerly look forward to forging more wonderful moments together.

With warm wishes,
Jack Waller and Ken Saunders



Jack Waller (left), and Ken Saunders (Right)

Parkinson's Support Groups

We are delighted to invite you to our Parkinson Support Group in Dartmouth, facilitated by our experienced and dedicated Support Group Facilitator, Sharron Paattinen. Sharron combines her extensive experience as a nurse with her valuable background working with the Alzheimer's Society. This blend of professional expertise and personal understanding equips her with a deep insight into the needs of our group. Having had loved ones who lived with Parkinson's, Sharron possesses insights regarding the varied challenges and victories experienced on this journey, making her an empathetic and knowledgeable guide for our support group.

These support groups are designed to provide a supportive and enriching environment where members can share experiences and strategies, fostering a sense of community. Each month, we delve into various activities tailored to our members' needs and interests. From engaging group discussions that allow for sharing and learning from each other's lived-experiences to active movement sessions designed to promote physical well-being, our activities are diverse, adaptable, and inclusive.

Understanding that every individual's journey with Parkinson's is unique, we make the most of the resources available to us at each meeting. Whether it's exploring new exercise routines, or simply enjoying a relaxed chat over coffee, our focus is on creating a space that is both helpful and enjoyable for all participants.

We recognize the worth and rewarding work ahead of us. Our support group is more than just a monthly meeting; it's a growing community of individuals who understand the challenges and triumphs of living with Parkinson's. We believe in empowering each other through shared knowledge, encouragement, and the collective strength of a supportive community.

We warmly welcome anyone affected by Parkinson's to join us in our next gathering. Whether you are newly navigating this journey or have been living with Parkinson's for some time, your presence and perspective are valuable to our group. Together, let's continue to build a network of support and friendship in Dartmouth, guided by our experienced facilitator and driven by our shared commitment to supporting each other.

For up-to-date information regarding our support groups and other events, please look below

 @ParkinsonSocietyNovaScotia

 <https://www.parkinsonsocietynovascotia.com/>



Revolutionizing Parkinson's Treatment

Stem Cells

In the realm of medicine, stem cells are akin to magical building blocks of life. They are cells that have the remarkable ability to transform into various types of cells in our body, from muscle to brain cells. This incredible versatility makes them a beacon of hope in treating a range of conditions, including Parkinson's.

The Parkinson's Culprit

In Parkinson's, a specific type of brain cell called mesencephalic dopaminergic (mesDA) neurons is most affected. These neurons are crucial for controlling movement and coordination. Traditionally, generating these neurons from human stem cells was a challenge, yielding only a small proportion of the desired cells.

The Discovery

A groundbreaking development has changed the game. Scientists have created a new type of stem cell called lineage-restricted undifferentiated stem cells (LR-USCs). These LR-USCs are tailored to be more effective in turning into the neurons needed for Parkinson's. In a specialized process, an astounding 69% of LR-USCs successfully transform into these vital neurons, a significant increase from the 25% efficiency seen before.

But Wait, There's More!

The breakthrough doesn't stop there. When these advanced LR-USCs were transplanted into rats with a condition similar to Parkinson's, they not only survived but also helped restore functions typically affected by Parkinson's. This marks a major step forward compared to older methods, which showed less promising results.

Put Plainly

This innovation in stem cell technology opens up exciting new possibilities in the journey of Parkinson's. By more efficiently creating the neurons that are crucial for movement and coordination, this technique holds the potential for developing more effective interventions, bringing hope and optimism to those navigating Parkinson's.

For the full article, visit:

[nature.com/articles/s41467-023-43471-0](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-023-43471-0)

For more news in Parkinson's research, visit:

www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/12/231205114759.htm



Ken's Comedy Corner

Why don't scientists trust atoms?

Because they make up everything!

April is Parkinson's Awareness Month

This April, as part of **Parkinson's Awareness Month**, we are thrilled to invite you to our Parkinson's Walkathon, taking place at the scenic Point Pleasant Park in Halifax. This event is not just a walk in the park – it's a stride towards making a difference in the lives of those affected by Parkinson's in Nova Scotia and beyond.



April is a month dedicated to raising awareness about Parkinson's. With an estimated 100,000 Canadians, including 8,500 in Nova Scotia, living with Parkinson's, and around 6,000 new cases diagnosed annually nationwide, the need for awareness and support has never been greater.

Our walkathon offers a unique opportunity to show solidarity with those impacted by Parkinson's. We have designed two routes at Point Pleasant Park – one shorter and one longer. Whether you are experiencing Parkinson's or simply want to show your support, this event is perfect for individuals and families to come together, enjoy the beauty of Halifax, and contribute to a vital cause.

By participating, you are not only supporting the Parkinson Society Nova Scotia but also contributing to a larger global effort to shed light on the experiences and needs of those living with Parkinson's.

This **April 27th**, let's join hands in support of the Parkinson's community. Remember, chances are high that you know someone affected by Parkinson's. Your participation in the walkathon is more than just a walk – it's a powerful statement of support and awareness.

Stay tuned for more details on this upcoming event. We eagerly look forward to welcoming you to Point Pleasant Park on April 27th. Together, let's take steps towards a better understanding and support system for those living with Parkinson's.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteer Coordinator

As the Volunteer Coordinator, you'll be the pivot around which our volunteer activities revolve. You'll ensure smooth program implementation — from in-person visits, educational initiatives, to fundraisers. Plus, you're our global ambassador, connecting Parkinson Society Nova Scotia with the community.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Recruit the Best:** Attract a diverse pool of volunteers. Spread the word on online platforms, social media, and community gatherings.
- **Orient and Guide:** Make sure our volunteers feel at home. Guide them, support them, and ensure they're clear on their roles.
- **The Perfect Match:** Assess and place volunteers where they shine the most.
- **A Guiding Hand:** Offer supervision, address concerns, and most importantly, celebrate their contributions.
- **Community Connect:** Foster partnerships with community entities and represent us at events.

Head of Fundraising

The Head of Fundraising is instrumental in moulding our fundraising landscape. By identifying funding opportunities and ensuring our financial growth, you'd be helping thousands across the province.

Key Responsibilities:

- **Strategize for Success:** Craft and initiate fundraising strategies that resonate with our mission.
- **Donor Relationships:** Cultivate bonds with individual donors, corporate giants, and foundations. Every contribution, big or small, is precious.
- **Majors and Megs:** Engage donors making significant contributions. Create special events, nurture bonds, and personalize your approach.
- **Forge Corporate Alliances:** Partner with corporate entities and foundations. Whether it's sponsorships or cause-driven campaigns, you'll lead the charge.
- **Event Maestro:** Plan and execute grand fundraising events. Attract, engage, and dazzle our supporters.



Are you or someone you know perfect for these roles? If so, and for more details, visit our website <https://www.parkinsonsocietynovascotia.com> or email us at parkinsonsocietynovascotia@gmail.com

Volunteer Spotlight:

Hudson Barr

A bit about me!

Hello, everyone! I'm Hudson. I was born and raised just outside of Vancouver BC, and made the move to Nova Scotia in the summer of 2020. A decision which has been and continues to be the best life decision I've ever made.

Before the move, I studied Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of British Columbia with a focus in neurodegenerative and psychiatric disorders. This focus was not just academic, it was deeply personal. I've seen family members and friends undergo neurodegeneration, and while challenging to watch, I can only imagine the struggle it is to personally go through it.

After completing my undergraduate studies, I pursued a Master of Science in Rehabilitation Research at Dalhousie University (research as pictured). It was during this time that I crossed paths with Jack and Ken upon my arrival in Halifax, marking the beginning of an incredible chapter with the Parkinson Society Nova Scotia (PSNS). Now, three years into my journey with PSNS, I have had the privilege of serving as the editor and curator of our newsletter. This role has been a source of immense joy and fulfillment, connecting the Parkinson's community with essential resources and services.



What I'm working on!

Presently, I am a research assistant at IWK. My dream is to delve deeper into the mysteries of the brain and medicine, continuing my engagement with both the healthcare sector and the Parkinson's community at large.

I'm deeply thankful for the chance to share my journey with you in this volunteer spotlight. As I continue on this journey, my commitment is to use my passion and expertise to make a meaningful, concrete impact on the lives of those affected by Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative disorders.

Connect with us!

To keep up to date with future Parkinson's related news and updates for Nova Scotians as well as future events such as fundraisers, be sure to follow us on our social medias and website!



@ParkinsonSocietyNovaScotia



@parkinsonsocietyns



Parkinson Society Nova Scotia



<https://www.parkinsonsocietynovascotia.com/>



Please consider donating!
By becoming a donor, you are investing in our mission of assisting all Nova Scotians affected by Parkinson's and helping to find a cure within our life times!
For more information about fundraising events and how to donate, please visit <https://www.parkinsonsocietynovascotia.com/donate/>

...Or, contact us directly!

To get in contact with us directly, please give us a call or send an email to:



parkinsonsocietynovascotia@gmail.com



(902) 404-0792

Our Affiliates and Links

U-turn Parkinson's <https://www.uturnparkinsons.org>

David Phinney Foundation <https://www.davisphinneyfoundation.org>

Michael J. Fox Foundation <https://www.michaeljfox.org>

Neuro Challenge Foundation <https://www.neurochallenge.org>

Parkinson's International <https://parkinsonsintl.org>

Halifax Health Walk and Talk <https://www.meetup.com/halifaxtalkwalk/>

Tim Hague <http://www.timsr.ca/>