



Capital Area Parkinson's Society

March 2016 Newsletter

P.O. Box 27565, Austin, Texas 78755-2565

www.capitalareaparkinsons.org

Powering Forward

Richard Laliberte, Neurology Now, February/March 2016 issue – partial reprinting due to space limitations

Brian Grant is used to being in control. As a power forward for the Portland Trail Blazers and four other National Basketball Association (NBA) teams—the Sacramento Kings, the Miami Heat, the Los Angeles Lakers, and the Phoenix Suns—from 1994 to 2006, he made life tough for opponents close to the basket, leaping for rebounds, denying positions, closing up passing lanes, blocking shots. But sitting in a neurologist's office in Portland, OR, in 2008, as a doctor told him he had early-onset Parkinson's disease, he felt absolutely helpless. His neurologist told him the disease, although chronic and progressive, was not fatal and could be managed with medication, but Grant couldn't process it.

As word got out about his diagnosis, Grant started hearing from others who had the disease. The actor Michael J. Fox, founder of the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research, called to discuss what challenges Grant could take on as an advocate. "He said, 'It's not a death sentence,'" Grant says. "You can join the fight and use avenues available to you or keep it to yourself. There's no right or wrong way."

For Grant, sitting out wasn't an option. His first thought: Start a foundation and website that would filter and reduce the flood of material on the Internet to a spigot of high-quality information about Parkinson's for those newly diagnosed. But he noticed something as he met more people with the disease and learned about their struggles: For many, the disease seemed to progress faster than his. Even today, seven-plus years after diagnosis, his main symptoms are a tremor in his non-dominant left hand, occasional tremors in his right hand, and a small amount of tremor in his left foot. Although he eventually started taking levodopa, a dopamine replacement drug, he's been on it for just three years. "My gait is pretty good," Grant says. "I consider myself lucky."

Grant credits that difference to his years as an athlete. Research suggests he may be onto something, says Mark A. Hirsch, PhD, a senior scientist in the department of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Carolinas Medical Center, part of Carolinas HealthCare System in Charlotte, NC. Dr. Hirsch is also the senior author of a 2016 research review in *Parkinsonism and Related Disorders* on how exercise affects the brain in people with Parkinson's. "Walking or running on a treadmill, balance training, and interval training using a stationary bike triggered improvements in anatomy and function within key brain areas affected by Parkinson's disease," Dr. Hirsch says, summarizing the findings of eight studies involving 144 patients. Grant's experience got him thinking. "Exercise and nutrition are about the only things we can control," he says. With that in mind, he launched the Brian Grant Foundation in 2010 as a clearinghouse for information related to exercise and nutrition and a go-to destination for resources, including community programs and how-to workout videos tailored to people with Parkinson's disease.

Motivating others has been an upside to Grant's diagnosis. In Bjornsgard's view, Grant's athleticism, history of depression, and down-to-earth frankness give him power to effect change. "When Brian stands up in a room and says, 'this is hard for me, too, but you don't have to do this alone. Come join me. Come exercise,' there's such strong energy you can almost touch it. That's a huge contribution to the Parkinson's community." ■

WE'RE HIRING!

CAPS is interviewing for an **Office Assistant**

If you know of a friend or family member who is looking for a part-time office position, please encourage them to submit a resume to the CAPS office: P.O. Box 27565, Austin, TX 78755-2565. Requirements include: 2 years of office experience, knowledge of Microsoft Office software, with an outgoing, flexible, detail-oriented personality. Position will be 10-20 hours/week, with a salary of \$15/hour.

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SPRING HEALTH FAIR

presented by
Capital Area Parkinson's Society

Saturday, April 16, 2016
St. David's Main, Medical Office Building
3000 N. IH-35, 5th Floor Conference Room
2:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m.

Health Screenings!
Information on Area Health Care Resources!
Giveaways & Door Prizes!
This event is FREE to the community, so bring a friend!



www.capitalareaparkinsons.org

Area Outreach Support Groups

Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) – 3rd Friday @ 2pm

Neurology Solutions Office
12201 Renfert Way, Suite 360
Austin, TX 78758

Lakeway – 1st Tuesday @ 2pm

Vibra Rehabilitation Hospital of Lake Travis
2000 Medical Drive, Lakeway, TX 78734

Marble Falls – 2nd Wednesday @ 2pm

Seton Marble Falls Healthcare Center
700 U.S. 281, Marble Falls, TX 78654

Northeast Austin – 3rd Tuesday Bimonthly @ 4pm

(Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec)
Legend Oaks of North Austin
Healthcare & Rehabilitation
11020 Dessau Road, Austin, TX 78754

Participant Organized Parkinson's Singing Group – Wednesdays 12:30-1:30pm

Unity Church of the Hills, Unity Oaks Bldg.
9905 Anderson Mill Road, Austin, TX 78750

Querencia/Barton Creek Southwest – 4th Wednesday @ 2:30pm

Plaza Building, 2nd Floor, Lantana Room
2500 Barton Creek Blvd. Austin, TX 78735

Round Rock – 4th Tuesday @ 3pm

Wyoming Springs Assisted Living
7230 Wyoming Springs Drive
Round Rock, TX 78681

Simultaneous Care Partner and Patient – 2nd Tuesday @ 10:15am

Covenant Presbyterian Church
3003 Northland Drive, Austin TX 78757

Young Onset Parkinson's Disease (under 55)

Contact: Bob Sahm at 512-914-2132

or rsahm99@gmail.com

Alex Andron at 610-389-4316

or alexander_andron@yahoo.com

For more information, visit www.capitalareaparkinsons.org.

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March Membership Meeting

Saturday, March 19 ■ 2:00 p.m.

Medical Office Building, St. David's Medical Center

5th Floor Conference Room, 3000 N. IH-35

This month three panelists will discuss several key issues for those living with Parkinson's. **Dr. Britt Stone** is a movement disorder neurologist with Baylor Scott & White. She hails from Tupelo, Mississippi, completed her Bachelors in neuroscience at Vanderbilt University and received her Medical Degree from Meharry Medical College. She completed her neurology residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and the Lily Safra-endowed movement disorders fellowship at New York University Medical Center. **Sarah King, DPT** is the owner of Invigorate Physical Therapy & Wellness in Austin. She holds a B.S. in exercise science, a doctorate of physical therapy, is an American College of Sports Medicine certified personal trainer and certified health fitness specialist. **Elise Siprelle** is a Speech Therapist with Central Texas Rehabilitation Hospital and certified in the LSVT/Loud therapy for Parkinson's.

Medtronic will provide our lunch following the meeting.