

# VIEWPOINTS



## Spring 2026

### VIEWPOINTS

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by Parkinson Society  
British Columbia

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## Your support is essential.

Parkinson Society BC would not exist without the support of our members, donors, and volunteers.

## OUR MISSION

Parkinson Society British Columbia exists to empower people with Parkinson's in British Columbia through providing resources and services to enable self-management, self-reliance, and self-advocacy.

## Here are a few of the ways you can support the Society:

### MEMBERSHIP

For an annual fee of \$25, your household benefits from unlimited access to our education and support services, events, and resources.

### DONATIONS

Contact us to set up monthly, quarterly or annual donations, or think of us when giving through United Way.

### PLANNED GIVING & BEQUESTS

Consider Parkinson Society BC as a beneficiary in your will.

### FUNDRAISING

Become a Champion for Parkinson's by organizing your own event benefiting the Society. For more information on how you can support us, visit [www.parkinson.bc.ca/donate](http://www.parkinson.bc.ca/donate).

### SUPPORT GROUPS

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### EDITORIAL STATEMENT

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**Phone:** 604-662-3240

**Toll Free:** 1-800-668-3330

**Fax:** 604-608-3311

[www.parkinson.bc.ca](http://www.parkinson.bc.ca)

[info@parkinson.bc.ca](mailto:info@parkinson.bc.ca)

### Address:

1021 West Hastings Street, 9th floor

Vancouver, BC V6E 0C3

### Charitable Registration Number:

11880 1240 RR0001



# Ask an Expert

## Sarah Robichaud discusses the benefits of dancing for people with Parkinson's



**Sarah Robichaud** is a classically trained dancer and choreographer who graduated from The Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow. Transitioning from dance, Sarah became a North American fitness expert on the CBS Early Morning Show and CBC's Steven and Chris. She is also a published health and fitness author. Sarah's passion for Dancing with Parkinson's (DWP) ignited in 2007, when working as a personal trainer with Andy Barrie to help him find ways to physically help his body manage his Parkinson's disease (PD) through movement. Inspired by the Mark Morris Dance Group's innovative PD dance class, she immediately trained with them in NYC. Sarah was the first certified Canadian in the Dance for PD® Method and is a founding member of the Dance for PD® Network Canada. Sarah was recently awarded a community hero award by the Raptors Foundation to recognize her work in keeping seniors connected during COVID-19, and, in 2024, received the King Charles III Coronation Medal for the positive impacts DWP has made in communities across Canada.

### What inspired you to found Dancing with Parkinson's?

I founded Dancing with Parkinson's because I witnessed, early in my dance career, how profoundly movement can shift someone's spirit. After retiring as a professional dancer, I wanted to give back to community with my art and provide people living with Parkinson's disease a place where they could feel expressive, able, joyful, and deeply connected. I was inspired by the idea that dance could blend art and science in a way that restores dignity and belonging. DWP grew out of love, hope, and a belief that everyone deserves a space where they can feel seen, celebrated, and fully themselves.

### What are the benefits of dancing for Parkinson's? What does the research say?

Dance offers physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits for people living with Parkinson's. Physically, dance can enhance mobility, posture, balance, gait, coordination, and motor control. It stimulates neuroplasticity and supports cognitive functions like memory, sequencing, and attention.



DWP in Penticton

Emotionally, dance lifts mood, reduces anxiety and apathy, and supports improved confidence and expression. Research continues to show that regular dance not only improves quality of life but may help slow functional decline all while offering something that feels creative, social, joyful, and empowering, rather than clinical.

**Social connection seems to be a major part of your programs. How do you foster community and connection?**

Connection is at the heart of everything we do. Every class begins with genuine greetings, check-ins, and moments to acknowledge one another. We use names, storytelling, shared imagery, and lots of humour to make people feel seen and human.

Whether dancers join us in-person or online, coming together as a group encourages collaboration and camaraderie. Our culture is built around acceptance and care – there is no right or wrong, only movement and community. Over time, friendships form, support networks grow, and people feel part of something larger than themselves. Our in-person and online classes and events help keep that sense of community alive every day.

**Do participants need dance experience to join?**

Not at all. Every ability is welcome – complete beginners, seasoned dancers, people using walkers or wheelchairs. Everything we teach is adaptable, and

the focus is always on joy, expression, and what feels right for each person's body. It's a space where you can simply come as you are and be celebrated for showing up!

**What role does creativity play in your classes?**

Creativity is central to the DWP method. We use imagination, storytelling, characters, and vivid imagery to spark movement and expression. Participants are encouraged to improvise, add their own ideas, and help shape the class experience. We believe that everyone is an artist, and the creative process often becomes as meaningful as the physical movement.

**Has anything surprised you about the relationship between dancing and Parkinson's?**

I am constantly surprised and moved by the transformations that occur – physically and emotionally! People seem to discover humour, hope, connection, and limitless possibility.

The physical changes can also be remarkable – steadier gait, reduced freezing, and smoother transitions. Loved ones often tell me they see more engagement, energy, or confidence after dancing.

And the depth of community that emerges – friendships that feel like family continue to inspire me. The combination of music, movement, imagination, and belonging is incredibly powerful. Dance is the perfect marriage of art and science for someone living with PD.

### How do you train instructors to ensure classes are safe, inclusive, and welcoming?

Our instructors undergo extensive training grounded in Parkinson's research, dance pedagogy, safety principles, and care. They learn adaptations for every mobility level and strategies to support balance and reduce fall risk. We emphasize person-centered teaching and a culture of warmth and inclusivity. New instructors shadow experienced teachers and continue with mentorship and ongoing professional development. Our goal is for every class to feel safe, supportive, artistic, and full of joy.

### How do classes address common symptoms such as freezing or gait challenges?

We use rhythm and music to support smoother initiation and walking patterns. Large, intentional movements help counter bradykinesia and rigidity – two common symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

Exercises that explore weight-shifting, directional changes, and transitions can improve overall mobility. Visualization like "stepping over a stream" or "moving like you're marching in a parade" often helps people move through freezing moments. We also incorporate dual-tasking exercises to mimic real-world movement challenges, all while keeping the experience playful and encouraging and artistically rooted.

### If individuals would like to try DWP, where can they learn more and sign up?

Our national online program (the Daily Dance Connect - DDC) is available every single day, free of charge at 8am PST, and is accessible from anywhere in Canada.

In British Columbia, we are expanding our in-person offerings. As of January 23, we have launched free weekly classes in Penticton every Friday. We will also begin offering weekly classes in Vancouver on Tuesdays starting April 14.

All details, updates, and registration information can be found at [www.dancingwithparkinsons.com](http://www.dancingwithparkinsons.com).

We suggest that interested dancers subscribe to our newsletter at <https://bit.ly/DWPnewsletter> for news and class launch information!



### Is there anything else you'd like to add?

I want to share how grateful I am for the incredible support we are receiving from Parkinson Society BC in helping us to spread the word that our free, evidence-based dance program is now available in British Columbia! Through the DDC, we have met so many dancers from all over BC who are ready to come together to dance every week, and we are thrilled to be able to share the joy and benefits of music and movement for people living with PD throughout the province.

Dancing with Parkinson's is built on love, care, artistry, and a belief in the transformative power of movement. Everyone who is part of the people living with Parkinson's care circle is welcome, and I hope you'll join us!





### RESEARCHER

Nicholas Silver  
University of Toronto

### FUNDING AMOUNT

Graduate Student Award,  
\$20,000 over two years

## Research

### Unlocking the Competitive Potential of Pluripotent Stem Cells: Towards Novel Stem Cell Therapeutics

The underlying cause of Parkinson's disease (PD) is thought to be the accumulation of abnormal clumps ("aggregates") of a protein called alpha-synuclein in brain cells. Aggregation of alpha-synuclein in the brain is also thought to be the cause of other neurodegenerative diseases such as Dementia with Lewy Bodies and Multiple System Atrophy (MSA). Collectively, diseases caused by the aggregation of alpha-synuclein are called "synucleinopathies."

However, in many people with synucleinopathies, other proteins will also aggregate in their brains. One of the most common secondary proteins to aggregate in synucleinopathies is amyloid-beta. Amyloid-beta is thought to be a major contributing factor to the development of Alzheimer's disease and, in persons with synucleinopathies, the aggregation of amyloid-beta alongside alpha-synuclein can exacerbate symptoms, worsen prognosis, or contribute to memory deficits. Nicholas Silver's research project tries to understand the interaction between amyloid-beta aggregates and alpha-synuclein aggregates in synucleinopathies. In particular, he is focusing on determining what influence alpha-synuclein aggregates may have on amyloid-beta aggregation.

Proteins are tiny machines in cells that have specific functions. The function of a protein is related to its specific shape ("structure"). If a protein forms an aggregate, it becomes abnormally shaped, resulting in a loss of its normal function. When alpha-synuclein aggregates, it can adopt multiple different abnormal structures. Each abnormal structure may cause a unique disease, with one structure causing PD and a separate structure causing MSA, for example. Each unique disease-causing structure is called a "strain". Given that the presence of amyloid-beta varies significantly between synucleinopathies, Nicholas predicted that only specific strains of alpha-synuclein would influence the aggregation of amyloid-beta.

To test this, he used mice that develop both alpha-synuclein and amyloid-beta aggregates in their brains. In these experiments, he introduced two different strains of alpha-synuclein into the mice. The first strain is similar to the strain that causes MSA in humans, referred to as the MSA-like strain, whereas the second strain has more PD-like properties and is referred to

as the PD-like strain. He found that the MSA-like strain reduced the amount of aggregated amyloid-beta in the brains of the mice, while the PD-like strain had no effect on amyloid-beta aggregation. This was confirmed via multiple different methods and was the same in both male and female mice. As predicted, the presence of amyloid-beta aggregation had no impact on the properties of the alpha-synuclein strains themselves.

**There are two important findings from this experiment. The first is that only specific strains of alpha-synuclein impact amyloid-beta aggregation. This could explain the different prevalence rates of amyloid-beta in synucleinopathy patients. For instance, the lower prevalence of amyloid-beta aggregation in MSA could be attributed to the MSA strain impairing amyloid-beta aggregation, similar to what Nicholas observed with the MSA-like strain in mice. The second important finding is that alpha-synuclein aggregation was not impacted by amyloid-beta. In other words, while alpha-synuclein could alter amyloid-beta aggregation under certain conditions, the opposite is not true based on his data.**

Nicholas' findings have two important implications. The first is that if one were to characterize the effect each human disease-causing alpha-synuclein strain has on amyloid-beta aggregation, it may be possible to identify people at high and low risk for developing amyloid-beta pathology, which would alter disease prognosis.

Secondly, his data suggests that therapies or treatments that target one of these proteins may not affect the other protein. For example, if a therapy were to reduce amyloid-beta aggregates, it would have no effect on alpha-synuclein aggregation.

Conversely, if a therapy were to reduce alpha-synuclein aggregates, especially in MSA, it could potentially increase amyloid-beta aggregation. Given that alpha-synuclein aggregation or amyloid-beta aggregation alone are likely sufficient to cause neurodegeneration, targeting only one of these proteins would likely be insufficient to completely stop the disease. This highlights the importance of holistic treatments for synucleinopathies that target the entirety of the underlying causes, instead of a single aspect of the disease.

Nicholas completed his Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Neuroscience at the University of Alberta, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Biochemistry at the University of Toronto, where he studies Parkinson's disease. After completing his PhD, he hopes to attend medical school and eventually become a neurologist working directly with individuals living with Parkinson's disease.

In addition to his academic work, Nicholas is actively involved in graduate student advocacy as the Vice President Academics for the University of Toronto Graduate Students' Union and as the Chair of the Graduate Students Caucus for the Canadian Federation of Students–Ontario.

# Stories

## One Man's Vision · Written by Terry Hume

2026 marks the tenth year of the annual Elk Valley Parkinson's Golf Fundraiser. This popular event is the brainchild of Merl Shelley, who continues to navigate the proceedings through unexpected challenges with relative ease. Just don't make the mistake of calling it a golf tournament, at least not around Merl.

"It's not a tournament," he insists. "In a tournament you keep score, and the focus is on winning. Our focus is twofold. One - to raise money for Parkinson's and two - to have fun."

And not only have we (he) raised \$130,000 so far, but boy, do we have fun. Anyone who knows Merl would not be surprised that the focus is on fun instead of winning. After all, Merl is a fun-loving guy who appears to have made it his mission in life to ensure everyone around him is happy.

Having known the man for the past 20+ years, I cannot recall a single time when he did not have a smile on his face and a couple jokes all queued up and ready for delivery. He even includes jokes about his fellow Newfoundlanders.

"If you can't laugh at yourself, then you have no business laughing at anyone else," he reasons.

Merl's positive energy is infectious, and I constantly find myself in need of some "Merl time" when the weight of my PD becomes overwhelming. There's nothing like a little comic relief when the going gets tough.

Merl was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2010 and was forced to leave a job he loved in 2015, after following the advice from his doctor. Leaving work left Merl with more time to spend on his favorite pastime, golfing. But it also afforded him more time to think, and the seeds of a golfing fundraiser were sown.



Merl Shelley



Carol and Merl Shelley



Merl Shelley and Adam Toner

When the fundraiser was in its initial stages, Merl knew instinctively that he needed to find someone to lead the group with the qualities he lacked. A person who could grab a microphone and host an event, a take-charge type of person. Enter Adam Toner. Adam became the perfect fit for the leader of the soon-to-be assembled committee. He brought to the group the qualities that Merl fell short on, and they complimented each other nicely. Being a full-time employee of the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC), Adam managed to secure RBC as a sponsor. Terry Hume joined in the first year and, along with Merl's wife Carol, the four of them organized the annual fundraiser until 2023. At that time, Terry left the group and was replaced with Tony Burns. Chuck Walker joined the organizing committee in 2025 after financially supporting the event since its onset. Initially, all the events took place at the Sparwood Golf Course, but several years ago it was moved to Mountain Meadows Golf Course in Elkford, giving the event a better Elk Valley "feel."

The group shows no signs of slowing down.

"Not until a cure is found or I die, whichever comes first", says Shelley. To date, a cure for Parkinson's remains elusive. But with a myriad of groups like Parkinson Society BC leading the effort, and motivated people like Merl Shelley providing funding, it's only a matter of time until this insidious disease is eradicated.



Long-time supporters, Conner and Gary Wittebolle

# April Awareness

Every year, April is recognized by the Province of British Columbia and Parkinson Society BC as Parkinson's Awareness Month. This provides us with the opportunity to expand the public's understanding of Parkinson's disease (PD) and the profound impact it has on the lives British Columbians affected by this illness.

This year, we are taking a moment to reflect on a decade of our April Awareness campaigns and revisit the special people and moments that made them possible.



## 2016 & 2017

### This is Parkinson's

Our "This is Parkinson's" campaign aimed to showcase the diversity of the Parkinson's community, highlighting individuals' hobbies, interests, and passions, demonstrating that Parkinson's disease affects people from all walks of life.

## 2018

### #PDANDME

Our 2018 campaign included an art display at the Vancouver Public Library's Central Branch, featuring artwork by individuals touched by PD. We also encouraged people to join the conversation about how Parkinson's has affected them personally using the hashtag #PDANDME on social media.

Artwork by R. Hombrebueno

## 2019

### 50th Anniversary: Parkinson's Disease Doesn't Discriminate

In 2019, we celebrated Parkinson Society British Columbia's 50th anniversary. Our Awareness efforts celebrated this major milestone, while continuing to highlight the diversity and lived experiences of our community.

## 2020

### #MoreThanATremor

Our #MoreThanATremor campaign aimed to dispel one of the most enduring myths about Parkinson's disease: that it is only a movement disorder. Through two powerful personal stories, we explored the multifaceted nature of PD. You can view our Awareness video featuring Larry and Rebecca Gifford at [bit.ly/MoreThanATremor2020](http://bit.ly/MoreThanATremor2020).

## REFLECTIONS: GARRY

I was diagnosed in February 2006 and was told that my party was over and that I would be in a wheelchair in five years. I said that I was athletic and was told that it would not help. I asked for a second opinion and was referred to Dr. Jon Stoessel at UBC. At our first meeting, he told me that exercise was key to slowing the progression of PD.

That gave me assurance that my athletic background would make a difference and I am here to tell you that it has. PD is a progressive disease that has worsened over the 20 years and has provided challenges. With that in mind, it is very important to get exercise on a regular basis and modify your approach but never just quit.

## REFLECTIONS: HENG

I have a couple of quotations I hang my coat on and use to help me make a point.

"Well done is better than well said."

– BEN FRANKLIN

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal. It's the courage to continue that counts."

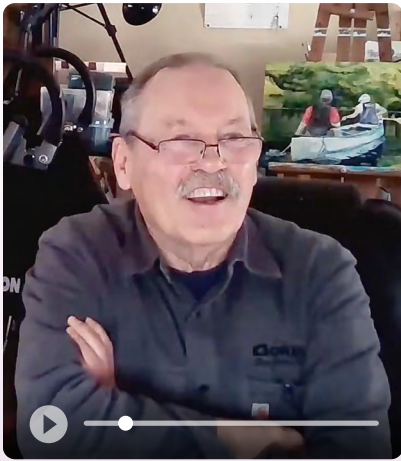
– WINSTON CHURCHILL

## REFLECTIONS: LARRY

A Parkinson's diagnosis doesn't define you. You are still you, with all your history, humor, talent, relationships, and purpose intact.

Occupational, physical, speech, and cognitive therapists can help you reclaim movement, motion, emotion, and voice you thought were gone for good. Some days you'll feel like you're making real progress; other days, not so much. On those days, focus on persistence instead of resistance. Keep showing up.

Community is as important as exercise. Ask for help; it's a sign of strength, not weakness. And remember: it's okay to not be okay. That, too, is part of living honestly and fully with this disease.



## REFLECTIONS: REBECCA

It's critical for carepartners to remember our value doesn't just come from how we care for others. We are humans experiencing something extremely challenging. We also need to be cherished and heard. It took me a few years after diagnosis to truly value the support of the Parkinson's community and making connections with my fellow carepartners. Over the years I've discovered and nurtured a very special community of support – wise, loving and hilarious people from all over the world.

In our home we remind each other that it's okay to not be okay. Be easy with yourself on this difficult journey. But most of all, offer yourself some patience and loving care, especially on the tough days.



2021

### #MoreThanATremor

We continued the #MoreThanATremor campaign, with adaptations for the COVID-19 pandemic. While we weren't able to connect in-person with our community members, we made sure their voices were front and center through impactful videos. One such video featured Garry Toop as he shared his experience living with Parkinson's disease and the importance of advocating for himself after his diagnosis. Watch at [bit.ly/MoreThanATremor2021](https://bit.ly/MoreThanATremor2021).

Our 2021 campaign also featured Letters to Our Younger Selves, a deeply personal and emotional reflection. To read, please visit [bit.ly/PDLetters2021](https://bit.ly/PDLetters2021).

We also collected messages from individuals with PD on our "What I Wish People Knew about Parkinson's" cards.

2022 & 2023

### #MoreThanATremor

We continued the conversation around PD to keep reminding everyone that every journey is unique. Watch one of our Awareness videos featuring Parkinson Society BC Board Member, Jim Wu, at [bit.ly/MoreThanATremor2022](https://bit.ly/MoreThanATremor2022).

In 2023, we developed a series of easy-to-understand illustrations to highlight lesser-known Parkinson's symptoms, including mental health, sleep, and communication challenges that are often overlooked.

2024

### Parkinson's Awareness Video Project

We partnered with a local videographer to develop professionally-produced videos that conveyed compelling personal narratives. We wanted to ensure the carepartner perspective was central to the campaign, as Parkinson's affects loved ones profoundly.

Watch our video featuring Sandra Alexander, carepartner to her husband, Gary here: [bit.ly/PDAwareness2024](https://bit.ly/PDAwareness2024).

2025

### Parkinson's is Not What You Think

Diversity was at the center of our 2025 campaign, guiding every aspect of our storytelling as we highlighted the wide-ranging experiences of our community. We had the privilege of telling eight people's unique stories, each offering a fresh perspective on life with Parkinson's.

Our campaign also featured the Tree of Hope. Participants shared a note of hope, gratitude, or encouragement, which was written on a leaf. Each message was then added to the tree, creating a powerful visual of support.

# 2026 Campaign

**Our campaign this year intends to highlight how Parkinson Society BC (PSBC) is there for individuals and loved ones touched by this disease, with our Awareness activities being centered around educating the public about the Society's programs and resources.**

We are proud to support people at every stage of their Parkinson's journey, with services such as:

## IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL EDUCATION EVENTS



We bring the Parkinson's community together through educational events held across the province and online. Our sessions connect people with leading experts in research, treatment, and supportive care, and create space to ask questions and learn alongside others.

## NETWORK OF OVER 50 SUPPORT GROUPS



We coordinate a province-wide network of more than 50 peer-led support groups for people with Parkinson's and carepartners. These groups offer connection, shared understanding, and the reassurance that no one has to face Parkinson's alone.

## ONE-ON-ONE CONSULTATIONS



We offer personalized support by phone, email, or in person at our Vancouver office on Wednesdays during our weekly drop-in from 9am to 4pm. Our staff are here to listen, share information and resources, and provide guidance with planning and problem-solving.

## HEALTHCARE NAVIGATION



We help people understand and navigate the healthcare system, offering support from the point of diagnosis onward. Through our PD Connect® program, healthcare professionals can refer patients directly to us for education, resources, and ongoing support.

## VIRTUAL PHYSIOTHERAPY



We believe everyone with Parkinson's deserves access to physiotherapy – especially care from professionals trained in movement disorders. To help remove financial and geographic barriers, we offer virtual physiotherapy with our neuro physiotherapist, Shelly Yu, by phone or video. For people who meet certain criteria, this service is available free of charge.

## EXERCISE PROGRAMS FOR ALL ABILITIES



We offer virtual exercise programs designed to help people with Parkinson's manage symptoms and live well. Our programs are inclusive of all ability levels and thoughtfully adapted to ensure participants can move safely and confidently, meeting individuals where they are.

## FREE SHORT-TERM NON-CRISIS COUNSELLING



We offer free, short-term counselling for people affected by Parkinson's, available in person or by phone. This service provides emotional support and a safe space to talk through challenges and changes related to the disease.

## LENDING LIBRARY OF BOOKS & RESOURCES



We provide access to a lending library of Parkinson's-related books and resources, so people can learn at their own pace.



## Look!

Look out for our **Awareness activities** throughout the month of April, including:

- **Various landmarks** throughout the province lit in mid-toned blue in collaboration with the PD Avengers' "Spark the Night" project
- **Transit advertisements** in the Lower Mainland: Skytrain (*interior train advertisements, station posters at Commercial Broadway, Vancouver City Centre, and King George*), bus (*interior bus advertisements*)
- **Digital billboards** and screens all over the Lower Mainland in various locations
- **Public displays** in 20 libraries across the province, featuring informational brochures, posters, and book displays with content related to Parkinson's disease
- **Posters** in almost 30 community centres across BC
- An **Awareness Community Kiosk** at Orchard Park Shopping Centre in Kelowna, on World Parkinson's Day (April 11)



## Listen!

We have secured **30-second PSAs** on the following stations in April:

- **AM 1150, 101.5 GO FM, and 99.9 SUN FM** (Kelowna)
- **K97.5, New Country 103.1, and Radio NL 610 AM** (Kamloops)
- **104.3 The Breeze and Z95.3** (Lower Mainland)
- **99.3 Rewind Radio and 101.3 The River** (Prince George)
- **100.3 The Q and 91.3 The Zone** (Victoria)

We have also secured an interview on **Voices 4 Ability Radio**, a Canadian radio station for individuals with disabilities, featuring our CEO, Joanne Baker on April 10!

Listen online at [www.v4radio.com](http://www.v4radio.com)

## Other Ways to Get Involved

Let others know that April is Parkinson's Awareness Month, and use the hashtag **#MoreThanATremor** on social media to tell your story. Be sure to follow the Society online, and tag us in your April Awareness Month posts:



**Facebook:**

@ParkinsonSocietyBritishColumbia



**Instagram:**

@ParkinsonsBC



**YouTube:**

@ParkinsonSocietyBC

The above activities are only a sampling of our initiatives. For a complete listing of our **Parkinson's Awareness plans**, the most up-to-date information, **or to make a gift in honour of Awareness Month**, please visit:

[www.parkinson.bc.ca/awareness](http://www.parkinson.bc.ca/awareness)

## Share Your Story



This April, we are encouraging British Columbians affected by Parkinson's to submit content that tells their story, their way. Whether it is through painting, poetry, or some other medium, we believe that the unique voices of our community members deserve amplifying.

Share your story at [bit.ly/PDStory2026](http://bit.ly/PDStory2026)

# Newsworthy

## Upcoming Education & Exercise Events

**Bi-weekly, starting Monday, January 12  
from 11:00–11:30am**

### **Mindfulness Mondays** 🌐 **Online**

Join Registered Clinical Counsellor Sara for virtual mindfulness designed for anyone living with or affected by Parkinson's disease. These 30-minute guided sessions offer a supportive space to pause, reset, and reconnect. Through the practices, participants will explore strategies to cultivate calm, manage stress, and support emotional wellbeing. Whether you attend every session or drop in when you can, all are welcome.

**Thursdays, April 2–30 from 10:00–11:00am**

### **Parkinson's Exercise: Strong, Stable, & Mindful – Level 2** 🌐 **Online**

Join us for this five-session series designed to help you build core strength, increase flexibility, improve balance, and relieve stress. Each session includes a warm-up, yoga poses, mindfulness, and rest. Using the support of a chair, this class encourages independence while promoting safe, mindful movement. Ideal for individuals seeking a supportive, accessible yoga practice that builds strength and emphasizes the body-mind connection.

**Mondays, April 13–27 from 10:00–11:00am**

### **April Challenger – Level 3** 🌐 **Online**

Let's get moving! Kick-start Parkinson's Awareness Month with the April Challenger! Join PSBC's neuro physiotherapist, Shelly Yu, as she leads you through a fast-paced exercise circuit class aimed at challenging your stamina, balance and coordination. No equipment is needed.

**Friday, April 17 from 3:00–4:00pm**

### **Building Self-Advocacy Skills in Healthcare: A Conversation with Dr. Sheila Wijayasinghe**

🌐 **Online**

Join us for a practical and empowering conversation on building confidence in healthcare settings. You will learn clear, actionable strategies to ask effective questions, communicate concerns, and advocate for yourself or someone you care about during medical appointments.

**Tuesdays, May 5–June 30 from 10:00–11:00am**

### **Hand & Dexterity Exercise Series – Level 1** 🌐 **Online**

Join Shelly Yu for an exercise series focused on hand and dexterity challenges associated with Parkinson's. Exercises in this series will target upper extremity movement, hand dexterity, grip strength, hand-finger coordination and handwriting. All exercises will be done sitting.

**Tuesdays, May 5–June 9 from 12:30–1:30pm**

### **Mime Over Mind** 🌐 **Online**

Join Sarah Martens for a therapeutic program designed for people living with Parkinson's. Drawing from the art of mime, this creative class promotes mindfulness, movement, and self-expression while supporting motor and emotional well-being. Through guided, imaginative exercises, participants will strengthen the brain-body connection by exploring coordination, visualization, and body awareness. No previous experience is required.

**Thursdays, May 21–July 23 from 1:00–2:00pm**

### **SongShine** 🌐 **Online**

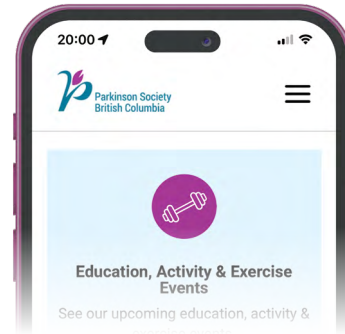
This program helps participants reclaim their voices through brain, breath, and emotion. Joani Bye leads engaging sessions using singing, breath work, diction, articulation, and creative imagination to strengthen voices affected by Parkinson's and other neurological conditions.

**Wednesday, May 27 from 10:00–11:00am**

## Self-compassion in the Caregiving Journey

🌐 **Online**

Caregiving can bring up powerful emotions, including shame, guilt, and regret. You may second-guess decisions, replay difficult moments, or feel the weight of trying to do everything “right.” These experiences are deeply human, yet often hard to talk about. Join us for a compassionate conversation with UBC Movement Disorders Clinic social worker, Olivia Bauer. Together, we’ll explore how these feelings can show up in the caregiving journey and how self-compassion, courage, and connection can help you move forward with greater gentleness toward yourself.



**For registration and a full list of upcoming events, visit us online at**

[www.parkinson.bc.ca/events](http://www.parkinson.bc.ca/events)

## Thank You to Our Fundraisers & Donors

### CELEBRATING OUR SUPPORTERS

We are deeply grateful to the organizations, donors, and third-party event organizers whose ongoing generosity and dedication help strengthen PSBC and the community we serve.

#### Thinking about hosting a fundraiser for Parkinson’s Society?

We’d love to support you. Reach out to us at [events@parkinson.bc.ca](mailto:events@parkinson.bc.ca) with any questions, we’re here to help. *Thank you for your generosity, time, and unwavering dedication to making a meaningful difference in our community.*

**Want to support Parkinson Society BC?  
Visit our donation page at**

[www.parkinson.bc.ca/donate](http://www.parkinson.bc.ca/donate)

### Sabbathon

A huge thank you to the organizers of *Sabbathon* in Prince George for raising more than \$6,000 in honour of Ozzy Osbourne – an incredible achievement!

### Dine and Dance for Parkinson’s

More than \$20,000 was raised through the *Dine and Dance for Parkinson’s* event in Chetwynd, BC, organized by 17-year-old Ella Strachan in honour of her grandpa, Brian. We look forward to sharing more about this incredible fundraiser in our Winter edition of Viewpoints.

### Ozzy’s Birthday Bash

A big shoutout to the Rickshaw Theatre for hosting an unforgettable tribute concert with six bands celebrating Ozzy Osbourne’s birthday! The event raised more than \$11,000 for PSBC programs and services – thank you for the amazing support.

## Save the Date

# 2026 Annual General Meeting

We welcome all members of Parkinson Society British Columbia (PSBC) to join us for our 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) this spring, which will be held virtually.

### DATE

Tuesday, April 21

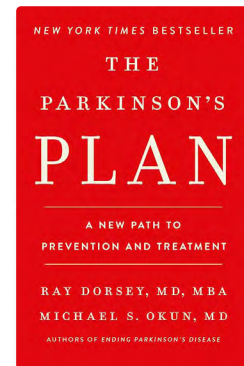
### TIME

12:00 – 2:00pm PT

### LOCATION

Online via Zoom

This year's meeting will feature an intimate fireside chat with world-renowned neurologist, Dr. Ray Dorsey. Rather than a formal keynote, the discussion will be guided by thoughtful questions inspired by his latest book, *The Parkinson's Plan: A New Path to Prevention and Treatment*.



Non-members interested in attending must sign up to be a member of PSBC, and pay the \$25 annual membership fee at [www.parkinson.bc.ca/membership](http://www.parkinson.bc.ca/membership). *Should you wish to obtain more information on becoming a member, please contact:*

**Susan Atkinson,**  
Office Manager  
satkinson@parkinson.bc.ca  
1-800-668-3330 ext. 263

Register today for our AGM! Visit our website [www.parkinson.bc.ca/agm](http://www.parkinson.bc.ca/agm)



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