LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

BONNIE HIGGINS

At the National Leadership Conference this past November, a new campaign was launched by our CEO, Cindy Zagieboylo: Together, we are stronger.

I get inspired each time the society kicks off a new theme. Whether you attend the conference in person, watched on Livestream at home or hear the phrase “together, we are stronger” during our events and programs, I hope you will feel the power of the words and how you directly have an impact on ending MS forever.

Looking back at 2011, I vividly remember when the “MS Kills Connection => Connection Kills MS” campaign kicked off. I was sitting at home, watching the conference on my computer when the phone rang. A close family friend wanted to put me in touch with a colleague of hers in India who had recently received a diagnosis of MS. A connection was created. That connection led to numerous emails, early morning phone calls and a wonderful friendship. By connecting, we were able to share our MS story, our knowledge and erase the isolated feeling that comes with the disease. The campaign of four years ago ties directly to our campaign today. My new friend and I became stronger through our shared experience.

But our individual connections are only the start. We need to engage our connections who want to do something about MS to fuel progress. We are all in this together, on the same quest. Together we are stronger. And together, we can end MS forever.

Bonnie Higgins

On the Cover: Tammy Quasius accepting an award from Cindy Zagieboylo.
NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY

New Jersey Metro Chapter
Aspen Corporate Park I
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Woodbridge, NJ 07095

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The Society does not endorse products, services or manufacturers. Such names appear here solely because they are considered valuable information. The Society assumes no liability for the use or contents of any product or service mentioned.

MS CENTERS IN NEW JERSEY

The New Jersey Metro Chapter and the MS Centers in NJ have collaborative relationships that enhance the services provided to those living with and affected by MS. The MS Centers provide clinical care and medical expertise while the chapter complements that care by offering a variety of educational and support services. The five MS Centers in NJ are listed below:

Bergen County
The MS Comprehensive Care Center at Holy Name Hospital
718 Teaneck Rd., Teaneck, NJ
201-837-0727
http://www.holyname.org/MSCenter

Essex County
MS Comprehensive Care Center at Barnabas Ambulatory Care Center
200 South Orange Ave., Livingston, NJ
973-322-7484
http://bit.ly/1AlKKxK

Rutgers-NJMS Multiple Sclerosis Center
90 Bergen St., Suite 8100, Newark, NJ
973-972-2550
http://bit.ly/12zldGd

Middlesex County
Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Center for MS
125 Paterson St., New Brunswick, NJ
732-235-7733
http://bit.ly/1GpUEk3

Monmouth County
The Linda E Cardinale MS Center at CentraState Hospital
Star and Barry Tobias Ambulatory Campus
901 Main St., Freehold, NJ
732-294-2505
http://bit.ly/1wDYruM

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PARTNERS IN MS CARE
The National MS Society recognizes and supports quality MS care through a program called Partners in MS Care. All five of the MS Centers in NJ are recognized with this distinction.

In the photo above, Dr. Amos Katz, clinical Director of the Linda E Cardinale MS Center at CentraState Medical Center, displays the Center’s Partner certificate. He is joined in the photo by staff members Linda and Rita.

In the photo below, Dr. Jalbut, Director of the Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson MS Center, displays the Center’s Partner certificate. He is joined by his team members, Ms. Yaritza Rosario, Dr. Konstantin Balashov and Dr. Vikram Bhise.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN MS
AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING
At the Chapter’s annual meeting on November 14, the fiscal state of the Chapter was summarized and two presentations discussed contemporary issues in MS:

- “The Intestinal Microbiome and MS: Could the gut and the brain be related?” Presented by Ilana Katz-Sand, MD, Assistant Professor of Neurology, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, Associate Medical Director, Corinne Goldsmith Dickinson Center for MS, The Mount Sinai Hospital, NYC (photo below).
• “Medical Marijuana and MS – is it for you?” Presented by Amos Katz, MD, Clinical Director of the Linda E Cardinale MS Center at CentraState Medical Center, Freehold, NJ (photo below).

Educational materials provided at the meeting can be found on the chapter website at www.nationalmssociety.org.

CAMP FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED LOSS

Comfort Zone Camp is a nonprofit organization that provides free therapeutic programs for children ages 7-17 who have experienced the death of a parent, guardian or sibling. The free camps include confidence building programs and age-based support groups that break the emotional isolation grief often brings. These programs empower children to be able to grieve, heal, and grow in healthy ways.

A strengths-based approach is used at Comfort Zone; grieving children are a resource to be developed, not a problem to be fixed. Comfort Zone helps children find their voice, develop coping skills, and become resilient in the face of challenge.

To learn more, visit the website, www.comfortzonecamp.org.

IMPORTANT SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

The New Jersey Metro Chapter has unified its Scholarship program creating one unique opportunity to apply for a scholarship award (we no longer have separate Chapter and National programs). The deadline for the 2016 National Scholarship program is January 15, 2016. To learn about the National MS Society Scholarship program, please visit our website: www.nationalmssociety.org/scholarship
NEW PHYSICIAN JOINS THE HOLY NAME MS CENTER

Karen Blitz, DO has joined the MS Care Team at the Holy Name MS Center in Teaneck, NJ. In her new role as the Medical Director of Rehabilitation, she looks forward to providing care that focuses on restoring and maximizing functional ability in patients with various neurologic conditions. Individual treatment plans may include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, swallow evaluations, assistive devices, bracing, splinting, mobility devices or cognitive remediation. All treatment

Dr. Blitz is board certified in Neurology. After graduating from SUNY Stony Brook as a physical therapist, Dr. Blitz graduated from New York College of Osteopathic Medicine. With a keen interest in MS, she received fellowship training in Neuro-rehabilitation at NYU/Hospital for Joint Diseases. She is the former director of the North Shore / LIJ MS Care Center and Director of Neuro-rehabilitation at North Shore Hospital, Glen Cove, NY.

To make an appointment with Dr. Blitz or any MS physician at Holy Name, call 201-837-0727.

HOLY NAME WHEELCHAIR CLINIC

The wheelchair seating and mobility clinic at Holy Name Medical Center provides evaluations and determination of appropriate wheelchairs or mobility devices for individuals with a variety of disabilities and physical functional challenges. Our goal is to maximize the comfort, posture, breathing, pressure distribution and overall independent functioning and mobility of the individuals we treat.

Evaluations are performed by an experienced team consisting of a physician, occupational therapist, and equipment specialist. During your assessment we will discuss your home, work and leisure lifestyle. We will assess your physical skills and abilities and recommend appropriate equipment to meet your needs. If you already have equipment we will evaluate how well it is working and determine if it needs to be modified or replaced.

We provide personalized care and will evaluate your needs and your experiences with mobility equipment. Equipment recommendations may include:

- Manual or powered wheeled mobility systems
- Specialized seating components, including seat cushions, backrests, trunk supports, headrests and upper extremity supports
- Additional equipment to maximize your independence

To help you get the right equipment from qualified equipment suppliers, we complete all of the necessary paperwork.

If you would like to find out more about the wheelchair clinic, or would like to schedule an appointment please contact the Center for Physical Rehabilitation at 201-833-3085.
LOCAL ACTIVIST IS INDUCTED IN TO NATIONAL MS SOCIETY’S VOLUNTEER HALL OF FAME

Chapter volunteer and MS Activist, Tammy Quasius, was recently inducted in the National MS Society’s 2015 Volunteer Hall of Fame for Advocacy. A few years after she was diagnosed with MS, Tammy Quasius attended an MS State Action Day at the New Jersey State Capitol, and since that day she has been a passionate MS activist. By sharing her personal experience of living with MS, Tammy has persuaded legislators to support the MS movement. As a District Activist Leader, she has formed relationships with her members of her state delegation that have led to increased support of such priorities as federal medical research and the MS Caucus.

Tammy and her family support many Society events, including Women on the Move and Bike MS, and she regularly invites legislators to attend and to become more connected to our mission.

Tammy was presented with her award at the Society’s Leadership Conference at Fort Worth, Texas from November 5 to November 7. Each year, hundreds of outstanding volunteers and Society staff leaders from across the country join together at the Society Leadership Conference to celebrate, motivate, inspire, educate share and network to advance the important work still needed to end MS.

Tammy’s dedication and commitment to our mission is inspiring. We applaud her on her much deserved recognition by the Volunteer Hall of Fame and thank her for her service.

In the photo on the cover of this edition of MS Connection, Tammy (pictured middle) is accepting the Volunteer award from Cyndi Zagieboylo, President and CEO of the National MS Society, and Eli Rubensteing, Chair of the National Board of Directors.

I’M DISABLED, NOW WHAT?

Navigating through the steps necessary to secure disability income benefits when your symptoms prevent you from continuing to work can be an arduous process. It is vital to submit your claim to the insurance company with strong proof of your disability, or your claim will be denied or a decision delayed.

You are invited to attend this workshop to learn the best practices for filing private disability benefits from your employer’s long term disability plan, or policy you purchased. Discussion topics will include: “The Top Ten Basics for Filing a Successful Disability Claim”, “How to Interpret the Disability Policy”, “How to Obtain Support From Your Treating Doctor for Your Case”, and “Typical Hazards To Avoid That Will Derail Your Claim”. A social security attorney will also be present to provide answers regarding filing a claim for SSDI benefits.

What: I’m Disabled, Now What
When: Wednesday, March 30, 2016, 6-7:30pm; light refreshments will be served.
Where: Bonny G. Rafel LLC, 17 Hanover Road, Suite 410, Florham Park (973)845-2600
Presented by: the disability law firm of Bonny G. Rafel LLC (www.disabilitycounsel.com)

Registration Required: call 1-800-344-4867 or http://njmmain.nationalmssociety.org/site/Calendar?id=356026&view=Detail
WAYS TO GIVE

NOW: SOLUTIONS AND HOPE

Melissa Martin can personally attest to the incredible impact that MS research can have on a person’s life.

Diagnosed in 2009 with secondary-progressive multiple sclerosis, Martin joined a double-blind clinical study co-funded by the National MS Society and the National Institutes of Health for a promising new medication in 2014.

“My hopes weren’t very high that the study would do anything for my symptoms,” says Martin, whose mobility issues and fatigue became so severe that she had to leave her home and husband to live with her parents. “I was falling all the time, bumping into walls, sleeping 16 hours a day. I wasn’t able to bathe or dress myself,” she remembers.

“Mainly what I was hoping for was that the research could be used to help other people,” she says. But to her surprise, the research had a personal impact. “Now, I can do everything but drive. And I’ve moved back home with my husband.” While not every study has such a dramatic personal effect, many lead to a deeper understanding of the disease and make progress toward stopping MS in its tracks, restoring function and ending MS forever.

LIFE-CHANGING IMPACT

Incredible research advances have changed the landscape of MS treatments and strategies for living one’s best life with the disease. Take Nancy Speer, diagnosed with MS in 1993 — before the first disease-modifying therapies (DMTs) were introduced. “For the first five or six years after my diagnosis, there wasn’t any kind of treatment,” she remembers. “The only thing my doctors could recommend was a vitamin and mineral regimen.” When DMTs became available, Speer was ecstatic. However, she found that the side effects that she experienced were a major drawback.

But newly available infusion-based and oral MS medications became available, making a major difference in Speer’s life. “It’s absolutely amazing,” she says. So, she and her husband Ray Anderson are devoted to ensuring that other people with MS will benefit from research as much as she has. Toward that goal, they are dedicated donors to the Society’s No
Opportunity Wasted (NOW) MS Research campaign, which has funded Society research initiatives to stop MS, restore function and end MS since 2011, and is now drawing to an end.

**UNPRECEDENTED PROGRESS**

In just five years, the NOW campaign is responsible for more than a quarter of the nearly $900 million the Society has raised for MS research since the Society was founded in 1946. As a result, the promise of MS research is more apparent than ever, with three potential myelin repair treatments now in clinical trials and more potential treatments for MS – including progressive MS – in the pipeline than at any other time in history. Our understanding of the causes of the disease has also deepened significantly, with more than 100 genetic variants identified and several risk factors for developing MS confirmed. In addition, five new treatments became available, dramatically increasing the range of options for people with MS.

In partnership with MS Societies of Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Canada and the MS International Federation, the Society founded the International Progressive MS Alliance, which brings together a growing number of MS organizations and international experts to hone in on the causes and treatments of progressive MS. The Alliance has thus far awarded 33 grants to MS researchers and developed a global MS research portfolio to understand where research is most needed.

“One thing I like about the NOW campaign,” says Lisa Sailor, a mother of three diagnosed with MS in 1993, “is that it helps people like me who live with a progressive form of MS. It’s exciting to live in this time because I think we will soon see some major breakthroughs in MS research. There’s hope on the horizon and that in itself is huge.”

**LASTING IMPACT**

Make a lasting impact and celebrate our achievements over the last five years by helping us reach the $250 million NOW Campaign goal by December 31, 2015, to accelerate breakthroughs that will change lives and end MS forever.

- Make a NOW gift today
- Share your story on the impact that MS research has had on your own life
- Ask friends, family, coworkers and other members of your community to give

Together, we can stop progression of MS, restore lost function and end MS forever. Visit [www.nationalMSsociety.org/NOW](http://www.nationalMSsociety.org/NOW).
EVERY CONNECTION COUNTS

People affected by MS share a wide range of powerful stories and reflections that demonstrate the true power of connecting with others. Every Connection Counts.

National MS Society connection programs bring together people who share common life experiences for support, education and mutual aid.

Benefits of participating in a connection program include:

- Learning new information and strategies for managing your MS.
- Finding support from others.
- The opportunity to help others.
- New power and confidence in facing the challenges of living with MS.

You can connect with trained volunteers who understand your experiences through in-person groups, online groups, or one-on-one contact through telephone or email.

To learn more about these programs, visit: www.nationalmssociety.org/Resources-Support/Find-Support.

ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS

MSconnection.org support groups have different purposes and serve specific populations, such as young adults, care partners, or people who are newly diagnosed.

CONNECT THROUGH LOCAL SELF-HELP GROUPS

National MS Society self-help groups focus on support, advocacy, education and wellness, or they may be more social in nature. Some groups also serve specific populations, such as young adults, parents with MS, care partners or African-Americans. Other groups have a specific focus, such as physical activity, wellness or healthy living.

In self-help groups, people lift each other up by sharing personal struggles and encouraging one another to try new things and lead more fulfilling lives.

For more information about SHGs, contact Lisa at that Chapter at lisa.torre-janssens@nmss.org or at 732-508-4431.

Additional information can be found on the Chapter website: http://www.nationalmssociety.org/Chapters/NJM/Find-Resources-and-Support/Programs/Self-Help-Group calls to their offices.

SPRING 2016 WELLNESS

The National MS Society, NJ Metro Chapter will be offering wellness classes in the spring including Yoga, Tai Chi and Aquatics. Classes will begin in March 2016. A class schedule will be available in February 2016. Visit www.nationalmssociety.org/njm for more details about the Wellness program!
NATIONAL MS SOCIETY AND CAN DO MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS WEBINAR & TELELEARNING SERIES

Learning from the comfort of your home through webinar and telelearning opportunities is coming! More information will soon be available for these programs which will take place on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm ET (with the exception of the employment mini-series). Topics* will include:

- How Exercise Affects Cognition
- Employment
- Managing Symptoms
- Mood
- Traveling with MS
- Stress Management and Relaxation
- How Treatment Decisions Are Made
- Research Updates
- Health Insurance
- Support Partners and Families
- Debunking Diets
- Importance of Sleep

* Schedule and topics are subject to change.

For more information visit: www.nationalmssociety.org/telelearning.

SPRING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Mark your calendars with these volunteer opportunities! Registration is now open for Walk MS and Bike MS! To register as a volunteer, go online or contact Aubrey at 732-660-1005, option 2.

**Walk MS**
April 16 & 17, 2016
11 Walk Sites in NJ
walkms.org

**Bike MS: Coast the Coast**
May 21 & 22, 2016
Long Branch – Little Egg Harbor – Cape May, NJ
bikems.org

**Muckfest MS-Save the Date!!**
June 25 & 26, 2016
South Mountain Reservation,
West Orange, NJ

Can’t make it to our events? We could still use your help!!

Community Outreach Volunteers: We’re seeking volunteers to spread the word about our chapter and upcoming events. Volunteers will receive materials from the chapter and distribute them to their local community hot spots.

Club Stuff! Join the Club Stuff team! We’re looking for volunteers to stop in the chapter office Monday through Friday, anytime between 9 AM - 5 PM. Set aside a few hours and join us!
DO YOU FEEL LIKE A **MS CHAMPION**?

The MS Champions program strives to connect people living with MS and event participants to foster education, gratitude, and most importantly, hope. Champions provide additional inspiration to those who have joined the movement.

Champions are paired with event participants and receive a packet of information that includes their bandana. The Champion signs the bandana and writes a personal message to send to their matched participant. Champions are encouraged to connect with their participant before, during, and after the event. Please contact Aubrey for more details and to sign up to be a MS Champion at: aubrey.donovan@nmss.org or 732-660-1005, option 2.
WALK MS WEEKEND: APRIL 16-17, 2016

11 Walk Sites. 10,000 People. One Mission. A World Free of MS.

Walk MS is the rallying point of the MS Movement, a community coming together to raise funds and celebrate the progress we’ve made and hope for the future.

We are happy to announce Walk MS 2016 registration is open! The NJ Metro Chapter will be hosting 11 walks across northern and central NJ on April 16 & 17, 2016. Here is a list of our 2016 sites and locations. To learn more about these walks and to register, visit WalkMS.org, click Find an Event and select New Jersey. We look forward to seeing you at Walk MS!

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2016
Ocean County:    Seaside Park Boardwalk, Seaside Park
Hudson County:   Liberty State Park, Jersey City
Union County:    Oak Ridge Park, Clark
Hunterdon County: Solberg Airport, Readington

SUNDAY, APRIL 17, 2016
Bergen County:  Overpeck County Park, Ridgefield Park
Morris County:  Horseshoe Lake Recreation Complex, Roxbury Twp
Essex County:   Orange Reservoir, West Orange
Middlesex County: Parsons Elementary School, North Brunswick
Mercer County:  Veterans Park, Hamilton
Monmouth County: Battlefield State Park, Manalapan
Monmouth County: Bar Anticipation, Lake Como

For more information email njmwalk@nmss.org or call 732.660.1005 (option 2).
WOMEN ON THE MOVE LUNCHEON

The New Jersey Metro Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society held its 12th annual Women on the Move Luncheon and Fashion Show on Friday, November 13, 2015 at the Westmount Country Club in Woodland Park, NJ. The MS Women on the Move Luncheon is a unique fundraising experience that creates an inspiring, motivational and empowering environment. The event creates a social environment for like-minded people to gather, learn about multiple sclerosis, and raise funds for local programs and services, as well as accelerate the national research effort.

Chris Wragge, of CBS 2 News, is the event Ambassador and was the emcee for the event. Event partners who have joined our mission and are committed to the success of the luncheon were Adora Bella Salon and Pizzazz! Guests were treated to a gourmet lunch and fashion show with fashions provided by Dressed by Lori in Millburn. One of the highlights of the afternoon was a Designer Handbag Auction.

The Women on the Move Luncheon series in northern NJ has been attended by approximately 300-400 women each year. These women are business professionals and executives who work for major New Jersey companies, law offices, and self-owned businesses, as well as clients with MS or caregivers to those that have MS. These women are community leaders who want to share and give back to the region where they live. The MS Women on the Move Luncheon creates an opportunity to empower each other to create a better future for those living with MS.