There was a lot of excitement at the annual meeting of the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis, or ECTRIMS, in October 2015, about the emergence of new treatment approaches for all forms of MS — including progressive MS.

Perhaps the biggest “buzz” was around results presented on studies of the monoclonal antibody ocrelizumab in relapsing-remitting and progressive MS. Ocrelizumab targets a protein that appears on immune B cells during specific stages of their life cycle. B cells make antibodies to help fight infection and perform other functions to stimulate the immune system. Scientists believe ocrelizumab destroys the group of B cells that include those that contribute to MS, but leaves other B cells intact that are fighting infections or are prepared to fight new ones.

A highly anticipated presentation described the results of a clinical trial of ocrelizumab involving 732 people with primary-progressive MS. Participants were given either ocrelizumab or placebo by in-vein infusions about every six months. Results showed that compared to placebo, ocrelizumab significantly reduced the risk of progression of clinical disability by 24 percent, and had other positive outcomes. The main side effects were reactions to the infusions, and the incidence of serious infections was relatively low. This is the first large-scale clinical trial to show positive results in people with primary-progressive MS.

In addition, results were presented from two phase III trials of ocrelizumab in relapsing MS. In both trials, the treatment performed very well against Rebif in people who had never been on any MS therapy, as well as those who had tried other therapies. The reported results showed that ocrelizumab reduced the risk of relapse by 46 to 47 percent compared to Rebif, reduced the risk of disease progression by 40 percent, and had other positive outcomes. The sponsor, Genentech (a member of the Roche Group), stated that it plans to apply for marketing approval from the FDA in early 2016.

Another intriguing trial result came from a group of investigators led by Dr. Luanne Metz (University of Calgary) who conducted a Phase III trial of a relatively inexpensive oral antibiotic called minocycline. Minocycline has been on the market for decades and is often prescribed to treat acne, and in addition to its bacteria-killing action, it reduces inflammation.

The trial tested minocycline against placebo in...
LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Friends,

People affected by multiple sclerosis know that being stronger than MS can take many forms. Medications, physical therapy, counseling, yoga, diet, the list goes on. Colleen K. from Bronson, Florida finds her strength by riding horses.

Each month Colleen joins 10 other riders living with MS at the Marion Therapeutic Riding Association thanks to funding provided by the National MS Society’s Financial Assistance Program and other partnering organizations. “I have always had a strong connection with horses,” Colleen says. “Having the wonderful opportunity to bond with them and gain strength and balance from them is such a gift.”

The Society’s Financial Assistance Program offers guidance, leverage and resources to help contain the financial impact of MS. The program was developed to bring meaningful financial assistance to people living with MS, with emphasis on helping people maintain their independence, safety, health and quality of life with initiatives such as the adaptive riding program.

“When I ride all my worries and stress slip away,” shares Colleen. “I am so very thankful to the Society for providing funding for my equine therapy.”

We want to thank our fundraisers and donors for making the assistance program possible. We’ve launched our powerful new awareness campaign – Together We Are Stronger – and people like Colleen are sharing experiences and solutions they’ve uncovered to live their best lives at www.WeAreStrongerThanMS.org. We invite you to visit the site and upload your own story!

Corrina Madrid
President
WELCOME TO THE TEAM

NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHT

We are proud to welcome the newest members of our Development Team! Dana Troeger, Director of Development, and Elli Miles, Development Coordinator, are the two newest faces here at the North Florida Chapter and together they work to strengthen the fundraising efforts of the Chapter.

Dana joins our team with a vast amount of experience in the non-profit sector. Dana received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communications from The University of North Florida. Dana began her Fundraising career at United Way of Northeast Florida and then served as a Development Director at the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, for almost 10 years. For the past four years, Dana was the Corporate Relations & Special Events Director at the YMCA of Florida’s First Coast. In her free time, Dana enjoys exercising, being outdoors, baking, and cheering on her daughters’ soccer team. At the National MS Society, Dana’s daily focus is building relationships with community and corporate partners, as well as leading the Development team in special events and raising funds.

Elli joins our team as the Development Coordinator and will be focusing predominately on our Bike MS: PGA TOUR Cycle to the Shore. Elli received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Recreation, Parks and Tourism with a specialization in Event Management from the University of Florida. Elli recently moved to Jacksonville from Gainesville, where she formerly worked with the Five Points of Life, a foundation of LifeSouth Community Blood Centers. During her time at Five Points of Life, Elli was involved in the planning of numerous fundraisers including golf tournaments, galas and the Five Points of Life Race Weekend. In her free time, Elli enjoys watching the Florida Gators, running, CrossFit and spending time with her husband and two dogs. Elli is responsible for coordinating the event details of Bike MS. She will be working with team captains, cyclists and participants.

We are thrilled to welcome Elli and Dana to the team and look forward to you getting to know them. Call or stop by our Jacksonville office to meet Dana and Elli and to find out how you can get involved!

SAVE THE DATE: BIKE MS 2016
30TH ANNIVERSARY RIDE

October 22-23, 2016
Registration is open at bikeMS.org.
## SELF-HELP GROUPS

Self-help groups bring people together who share common life experiences for support, education and mutual aid. National MS Society self-help groups focus on support, advocacy, education, wellness or may be more social in nature.

The North Florida Chapter offers a total of eleven volunteer led groups and also partners with UF Health at their professionally led support group. For more information, visit www.nationalmssociety.org/FLN or call an MS Navigator at 1-800-344-4867.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ft. Walton Beach Area Group</strong></td>
<td>4th Saturday, 11am</td>
<td>NW FL State College - Niceville</td>
<td>Jennifer: 850-217-6459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The F.R.O.G.S. Group - Gainesville</strong></td>
<td>4th Monday, 6pm</td>
<td>Trinity United Methodist</td>
<td>Sarah: 352-367-9660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southside/Mandarin - Jacksonville</strong></td>
<td>2nd Saturday, 2pm</td>
<td>Jewish Community Alliance</td>
<td>Susan: 904-396-1082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3rd Tuesday - Jacksonville</strong></td>
<td>3rd Tuesday, 6:30pm</td>
<td>Memorial Hospital</td>
<td>Walt: 904-221-6810 or Peggy: 904-424-2293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Westside - Jacksonville</strong></td>
<td>1st Saturday, 10am</td>
<td>Webb Wesconnett Library</td>
<td>Gary: 904-502-8894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UF Health Jacksonville MS Support</strong></td>
<td>6 Thursdays Each Year, 11am</td>
<td>UF Medical Center Banquet Room, Tower 2, 10th Floor</td>
<td>904-244-9538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beaches Group - Jacksonville</strong></td>
<td>3rd Tuesday, 6:00pm</td>
<td>Baptist Beaches Hospital</td>
<td>Stacey: 904-477-8891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lake City Group</strong></td>
<td>2nd Tuesday, 11am</td>
<td>CC Public Library West Branch</td>
<td>Karen: 386-288-6217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Panama City Group</strong></td>
<td>3rd Tuesday, 6pm</td>
<td>Suntrust Bank Building</td>
<td>Jennifer: 850-814-5126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moving Steadily Group - Pensacola</strong></td>
<td>1st Saturday, 11am</td>
<td>Rehab Center of West FL Hospital</td>
<td>Diana: 850-436-8809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>St. Augustine Group</strong></td>
<td>4th Tuesday, 6pm</td>
<td>Anastasia Library</td>
<td>Susan: 904-377-3231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living with MS - Tallahassee</strong></td>
<td>2nd Saturday, 2pm</td>
<td>Lafayette Community Center</td>
<td>Jane: 850-222-8980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VOLUNTEERS MAKE WALK MS POSSIBLE

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society, North Florida Chapter is hosting seven Walk MS events across North Florida in April and is in need of volunteers. Event volunteers provide event support, have fun and make a difference in the lives of people living with multiple sclerosis.

Walk MS is the rallying point of the MS Movement and relies on the help of numerous volunteers to step toward a world free of MS. Walk MS participants and volunteers give hope to more than 3,500 people living with multiple sclerosis in North Florida. Dollars raised through Walk MS support life-changing services for people affected by MS as well as cutting-edge research for a cure.

Each year, thousands of people across the country join the Walk MS volunteer team. There are many areas that require volunteer support, including check-in for both volunteers and participants, rest stops, route support, cheerleaders at the start/finish, set up, hospitality, parking, tear down and more.

Families, corporate groups and individuals are encouraged and welcome to volunteer. We are always looking for youth clubs, corporate, and service-oriented community groups to lend a hand before, during, and after our events.

Interested in volunteering? Visit us at www.walkms.org for more information on a location near you and to register online.

WALK MS 2016 EVENT DETAILS

April 9th:
- Walk MS: Ft. Walton Beach, Uptown Station
- Walk MS: Pensacola, Bayview Park
- Walk MS: St. Augustine, First United Methodist Church

April 16th:
- Walk MS: Gainesville, Kanapaha Veteran’s Memorial Park
- Walk MS: Orange Park, Fleming Island Plantation Amenity Center
- Walk MS: Tallahassee, Lake Ella Park

April 23rd:
- Walk MS: Jacksonville, Unity Plaza

Visit walkMS.org for more information.
The Donald C. McGraw Foundation has announced a second $1 million gift to help achieve breakthroughs in MS research, and in hopes that they will inspire others to give as well.

The foundation’s president, Donald (Josh) C. III and his wife, Sacha, live in Ponte Vedra, Florida. They became engaged with the Society six years ago after the MS diagnosis of their daughter. Josh’s brother, Robin, had been a Trustee and event volunteer with the Greater New England Chapter for even longer. Since that time, the family has become even more engaged. Robin traveled the country as a member of the “No Opportunity Wasted” fundraising cabinet. Josh became a Trustee in North Florida and has been the #1 fundraiser for our annual Bike MS event for the past three years. In 2015, he raised more than $38,000 for Bike MS.

“We are so grateful for this donation for the McGraw family’s continued generosity and passion toward fueling progress and engaging other donors. Their donations will have a remarkable impact on current and future research initiatives to change lives and end MS forever,” said Corrina Madrid, Society President in North Florida. “We share the family’s desire that their ongoing support encourages others to act with urgency and give what they can.”

The Society mobilizes people and resources so that everyone affected by multiple sclerosis can live their best lives as we stop MS in its tracks, restore what has been lost and end MS forever.

To fulfill this mission, the Society funds cutting-edge research, drives change through advocacy, facilitates professional education, collaborates with MS organizations around the world, and provides services designed to help people with MS and their families move their lives forward. Last year alone, through our comprehensive nationwide network, the Society devoted $122.2 million to help more than one million individuals connect to the people, information and resources they need. To move closer to a world free of MS, the Society also invested $54 million to support more than 380 new and ongoing research projects around the world.
ON THE HORIZON

...continued from page 01

144 people across Canada who had clinically isolated syndrome (CIS) — which means they have early possible signs of MS but haven’t yet shown enough signs or symptoms to be diagnosed with definite MS. The goal was to determine if minocycline, taken orally at a dose of 100 mg twice a day, could reduce the proportion of participants with CIS who converted to MS over a six-month follow-up period.

The secondary objective was to determine whether the effect could last up to two years. Their results showed that over six months, those taking twice daily minocycline had a 44.6 percent reduced risk of developing definite MS, compared to those taking placebo. There were no unexpected side effects reported from the trial — the most common include potential for diarrhea, dizziness or light-headedness, grey discoloration of the skin or tissue in the mouth or teeth, sun sensitivity, and secondary infection due to fungi.

These results bring up a lot of questions, such as: What are the longer-term benefits or side effects? Would this help people who already have MS? Would regulators approve a generic drug like this? Would its price alone influence doctors to prescribe it?

MORE TO COME

These are only a few of many new approaches being explored to stop the MS process and restore function. If you are interested in these and the many other reports from ECTRIMS, visit www.ectrims-congress.eu to browse hundreds of abstracts to get an idea of what solutions are on the horizon for people with MS. One important caveat — everything presented as ECTRIMS is considered preliminary until it has been thoroughly peer-reviewed for publication in a respected journal — so the information shared here is based only on the information we’ve heard so far.

Mark Allegretta, PhD, is associate vice president at the National MS Society, leading commercial research including partnerships developed through Fast Forward.

Originally published on: www.MSconnection.org/blog

To stay up to date on MS research, sign up for MS eNews at www.nationalMSsociety.org/signup.

TRIBUTES AND MEMORIALS

In Memory of Steve Dickson
Marian Dickson

In Memory of Kim Lee Granger
Jacqueline Gilman

In Honor of Kim Maddox
Martha Maddox

In Honor of Ellen Matza
Susan Matza

In Honor of Jan & Mitch Owens
Jane Pope

In Honor of Pamela Shrestha
Deborah La Grasse

In Honor of Cheryl Russell
David Foertsch
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

This month’s volunteer spotlight is Beth Berry from Jacksonville. Beth has been a longtime supporter and volunteer with the North Florida Chapter. She first became involved with the National MS Society at Walk MS in 1996 as a participant and volunteer. Beth has a strong connection to the MS community, as both her father and aunt both lived with multiple sclerosis.

When asked why she volunteers, her response is “To find a cure.” Her dedication to helping end MS forever is evident in her roles with the organization, including Walk MS Committee member, Walk MS Team Captain and MS Activist. Additionally, Beth has volunteered with many events and programs such as Bike MS, Kids Camp, Teen Expression, Deliver the Dream and various Retreats.

In addition to volunteering with the National MS Society, Beth also gives her time to other organizations, including Community Hospice. In her free time, Beth trains and socializes her four Chihuahuas and gives back to others through Pet Therapy. Beth says, “I love to share my dogs with people who need some comfort.” Beth is such a great part of our organization and we appreciate all of her hard work and dedication to the MS Community!