

A Message From Co-Chair *Chris Ojakian*



Growing up with 50% of my family having multiple sclerosis (MS) was a very tough thing to wrap my mind around, as I could not quite comprehend how this could happen. My father Gene was diagnosed in 1974 after over a decade of experiencing symptoms in which no doctor could attribute a cause. He was in the prime of his life, just 44 years young, and over the next few decades I watched helplessly as MS took away his mobility and independence.

In 1990 my brother Paul was diagnosed, and in 1992 my sister Cathy was also diagnosed with MS. Once again I watched two more lives change. Today my father is confined to a wheelchair and sleeps in a hospital bed; my brother Paul needs a cane to get around and tires easily; and my sister has virtually no mobility left.



My family is not the only one hit hard with this horrible disease. The National MS Society, Southern California & Nevada Chapter alone serves more that 19,000 people living by MS.

I share my family's story with you not to make you feel sorry for us, but to tell you why finding a cure is so important, and why we constantly are striving to make a difference. Last year, my partner and co-chair Iran Daniel and I started the **Serve It Up to End MS** event. My brother Mark, the Deputy State Controller for the State of Connecticut, started his own gala event in Connecticut two weeks after ours. We are fighting the battle together with a joint fundraising effort: **TWO BROTHERS. TWO COASTS. ONE CAUSE.**

Iran and I are asking you to team up with us as a sponsor for this Serve It Up to End MS event, presented by Tracy Austin and John Austin, on October 15th at the prestigious Jack Kramer Club. By doing so, you demonstrate your commitment to those living with insurmountable physical, emotional and financial challenges. As difficult as it is to watch my family battle this disease, they inspire me every single day with their courage to work tirelessly to find a cure.

With the help and generosity of corporate sponsors and individuals, last year we raised a tremendous amount of awareness and funds to benefit the MS community. I know we can surpass this success. Thank you in advance for joining us in helping their lives and the lives of so many others with MS. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Multiple sclerosis may stop people from moving, but the National MS Society exists to make sure it doesn't.

Join the movement—make a difference!

Chris Ojakian
Co-Founder, Ojakian Tennis
Trustee, National MS Society, Southern California & Nevada Chapter

2 Brothers. 2 Coasts. 1 Cause.