

MS CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

GIVE HOPE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

BY ANNA HAASE

The National Capital Chapter has touched thousands of lives in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area through its programs and services. Whether it is providing family education, counseling, recreational activities, financial support, or society sponsored research, the chapter works to give hope for tomorrow to those living with multiple sclerosis. However, without generous financial donations these services and programs would not exist for the more than 6,500 people living with MS in our community. So this holiday season, why not give a gift of hope?



The chapter offers ways to give that allow individuals to choose. For some, planned giving through The Lawry Circle is the perfect way to ensure that the quest for a cure for MS continues. The Lawry Circle began with Society founder Sylvia Lawry, who worked relentlessly to cure her brother Bernard's MS. The Lawry Circle honors donors who have informed the Society of their intention to help create a better future for the MS community by including the society in their will, trust, or estate plans.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

05

UNDERSTANDING
CLINICAL TRIALS

09

CHECK UP
ON YOUR
HEALTH

12

WORKING
WITH MS

15

HOME
MODIFICATION

NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY

National Capital Chapter

1800 M St. NW
Suite 750 South
Washington, DC 20036
202-296-5363

Chapter President:

Chris Broullire

Contributed Writing:

Anna Haase
Michael Hennessy
Steve Nissen
Catherine Rothwell

Editors: Emily Rouse

Jessica Glasser

Design: Lynnette Nees

© 2012 National Multiple
Sclerosis Society, National
Capital Chapter

Information provided by the Society is based upon professional advice, published experience and expert opinion. Information provided in response to questions does not constitute therapeutic recommendations or prescriptions. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society recommends that all questions and information be discussed with a personal physician.

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.

Another way to leave a lasting impact is to donate to the Society's scholarship program. MS should never stand in the way of an education, and the chapter's scholarship fund exists to help people living with MS and their children pursue full-time post-secondary college or technical school education. Established in 2007 by Chapter Board Member Bruce Pearlman in memory of his wife, Ellen, the fund provides scholarships to local graduating high school seniors pursuing college degrees.

Funding research projects and programs can even be as easy as getting rid of an unwanted car sitting in your driveway. Through the program Autos-4-MS, it has never been easier to benefit the National MS Society by donating your car, truck, trailer, or motorcycle. As a gift to yourself, take advantage of an effortless tax deduction.

Holiday giving is not limited to these options. The chapter offers even more ways to give back to the Society that contributes so much to thousands of members of our community. It is never too early to start fundraising for next year's Walk MS or Bike MS events, or you can let your creativity flourish by hosting a Do It Yourself Event.

Bill and Cathy Onufrychuk serve as an example of individuals who embrace giving to its fullest extent through the Bill and Cathy Onufrychuk Challenge Grant. As part of the Society's NOW Research campaign, which focuses on stopping the disease, restoring what's been lost, and ending MS forever, the challenge grant will match dollar for dollar up to \$20,000 in research gifts through December 31, 2012.

Ultimately, no matter which way you choose to give, your donation will be helping to fund cutting-edge research, drive change and advocacy, and provide programs and services to those living with MS. Put simply, your donation will give those affected by MS hope to keep moving forward. ■

MORE WAYS TO GIVE:

Corporate Support: The National MS Society works together with many leading corporations to move us closer to a world free of MS through sponsorship, matching gifts, table sales, corporate teams at our events or teams of volunteers. Opportunities include sponsoring a special event, forming a corporate team, funding an educational program, and more.

DIY Fundraising: Let your creativity flourish by a hosting a Do It Yourself Event. DIY Fundraising is an opportunity for people committed to the MS cause to choose how they make their mark against MS in new and innovative ways. From happy hours to growing a mustache for MS, these community events bring together a diverse crowd of people to raise awareness and funds.

Workplace Giving: Through workplace giving programs, you can join the movement without ever leaving your desk. By signing up for your company's workplace giving campaign and using automatic payroll deduction, you can give back by making regular gifts to the chapter.

Memorial or Honorariums: Remember or honor your loved ones by making a memorial or honorarium donation to the chapter in their name. Your donation will help create a world free of MS, while celebrating your loved ones' birthdays, anniversaries, weddings or other events.

Golden Circle: The National MS Society acknowledges the support of individuals who make their mark against MS by giving an annual gift of \$1,000 or more through the Golden Circle membership program. Members have the option of restricting their gift to research support, local programs and services, or wherever the chapter needs the donation the most. Members also enjoy benefits, such as research receptions and exclusive teleconference opportunities.

Matching Gifts: Be sure not to miss an opportunity to potentially double or even triple the value of your gift! Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and will match their employees' charitable contributions, including monthly, annual or payroll gifts. To find out if your company has a matching gift program, visit www.nationalMSSociety.org.



STOP



RESTORE



END

MS NOW
An MS Research Revolution

Together, we will ensure that no potential solutions go unexplored, and no opportunity will be wasted in achieving a world free of multiple sclerosis. **Learn more at www.nationalMSSociety.org/NOW**

RESEARCH

UNDERSTANDING CLINICAL TRIALS

People with multiple sclerosis who participate in clinical trials help make new and better therapies possible. The National MS Society has updated information about ongoing clinical trials for MS at www.nationalMSSociety.org/2012trials. There, you can download PDFs on the following specific types of clinical trials:

- Trials funded by the National MS Society
- Large phase III trials in relapsing-remitting MS
- Trials in progressive forms of MS
- Trials of symptomatic treatments

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires therapies to undergo three phases of clinical trials before they can be approved to treat people with MS.

- **Phase I:** The first step is to determine safety. In a small number of healthy volunteers or people with MS, researchers investigate how the body reacts to a therapy.
- **Phase II:** If the therapy proves to be safe, studies begin to determine a drug's effectiveness in people with MS. These studies may last several months or several years, and involve larger numbers of people. The study is "controlled"—that is, the drug is compared with the standard treatment or a placebo.

- **Phase III:** If an MS drug shows effectiveness, an even larger study is conducted in hundreds of people to gain a better understanding of the drug's effectiveness and possible side effects.
- **Phase IV:** These are not required for FDA approval, but might be conducted afterward to assess long-term safety and effectiveness.

For more on clinical trials, visit the clinical trials registry created by the National Institutes of Health at www.clinicaltrials.gov. To find out about local research studies and trials visit www.MSandYOU.org and search "clinical trials." ■

Originally published in the Upper Midwest Chapter's **MS Connection**.

A CLINICAL TRIAL GLOSSARY

Here are a few commonly used terms in clinical trials.

Blind

A clinical trial is "blind" if participants are unaware whether they are in the experimental or control group.

Control group

In many trials one group of participants is given an experimental drug or treatment, while a control group is given either a standard treatment or a placebo.

Double-blind study

A clinical trial design in which neither participants nor study staff knows which participants are receiving the experimental drug and which are receiving a placebo (or another therapy).

Randomized

A study in which participants are randomly (by chance) assigned to one of two or more treatment groups.

LIVING WITH MS

COMMIT TO
EAT WELL

Take control of your health, starting with a commitment to eat well. Here are some suggestions for how to do that from the Can Do MS staff and Andrea Glenn, a Society volunteer diagnosed with MS in 2003.

- Eat three meals every day and **always** have breakfast. People who skip meals tend to overeat later.
- Make healthy snacks and meals ahead of time so you don't give in to temptations.
- Eat more vegetables and three pieces of fruit every day. Add leafy dark greens to your lunch. Snack on raw fruit and vegetables such as carrots, apples or celery.
- Be aware of portion size. Many restaurant meals are large enough to feed two people. Take half home for lunch the next day, or split an entrée with someone else.
- Eat whole grains such as brown rice, whole grain bread and whole grain cereals.
- Enjoy a couple of low-fat dairy products every day, such as 1% milk or yogurt.
- Use olive oil or canola oil (in moderation).
- Read food labels and pay special attention to saturated fats and trans fats.
- Drink plenty of water—it's calorie free!
- Enlist a friend or family member to share



your goals for better eating. It helps to be accountable to someone else.

- Keep a food diary. Writing down everything you eat will help you better evaluate whether you've improved your food habits.

NUTRITION TIPS FOR MANAGING FATIGUE

- Have a small snack every few hours to refuel. Pair a protein (low-fat cheese, 1 tablespoon of peanut butter, handful of almonds) with a fruit.
- Shrink meals and eat more frequently. For example, save half your lunch and eat the rest three hours later.
- A small protein snack in the afternoon, such as a cheese stick or peanut butter, can help you be more alert.
- Avoid large portions and desserts. Both will increase fatigue.
- Avoid too much caffeine. It can lead to restless sleep and increased anxiety.

Visit www.nationalMSSociety.org/diet for links to recent research, recipes and articles, brochures, videos, and more. ■

Originally published in the New York City-Southern New York Chapter's **MS Connection**.

LIVING WITH MS

GIVING CARE

BY TERRI KUCZYNSKI, M.DIV., CT

All of us give care throughout our lives, whether it is through holding a hand or helping with daily needs from transportation to bathing. We give care when we listen to another's sadness and when we fix a meal. We give care when we send a card or manage medication.

Giving care to a loved one with MS can be very rewarding and at the same time unbelievably challenging. In some ways being a caregiver is like using a battery-powered drill. At first the drill is fully charged and the task at hand seems to be manageable. As the charge dies down, the task becomes more difficult until the drill just can't continue. The only way to go on is to recharge the drill. If the caregiver does not recharge over time, even the smallest task becomes overwhelming.

JUDY, DIAGNOSED IN 1982



SOME WAYS TO RECHARGE ARE TO:

- 01 Ask for help. Even simple things such as getting a gallon of milk for you or providing respite care so you can take a walk around the block can make a big difference.
- 02 Join a support group or an Internet chat room set up for carepartners. (See 'Carepartners Connect' on following page for suggestions).
- 03 Take care of your body with proper nutrition, exercise, and sleep.
- 04 Do something — call a friend, write a letter, read — that gives you a daily break from the caregiving role.
- 05 Stay connected with community — don't become isolated.
- 06 Laugh. Watch funny movies or TV programs.

IF A CAREGIVER DOES NOT RECHARGE OVER TIME, EVEN THE SMALLEST TASK BECOMES OVERWHELMING.

Just recently I visited a friend who was caring for her husband. We talked about the many difficulties of caregiving. She talked about her feelings of helplessness and shared that at times she felt a lot of anger, which in turn made her feel guilty. She went on to tell me that her husband's physical care could be overwhelming, but keeping track of all the day-to-day activities of life sometimes seemed crushing. She felt weary and alone in this role that she was so

unprepared for. After we talked, I walked out of the room and, when I turned to say goodbye, I saw her struggling to help her husband transfer from the sofa to a wheelchair. I then witnessed the true meaning of giving care. In the middle of the transfer, I saw them share a loving embrace. It was very brief, but very intentional. At that moment I could not tell who was caring for whom. I saw two people caring for each other. What a great way for both to recharge. ■



Terri Kuczynski, M.Div., CT, is a patient/family counselor at the Rex Cancer Center in Raleigh, N.C.

Originally published in **CARE** eMagazine, Eastern North Carolina Chapter

CAREPARTNERS CONNECT

There are a wealth of ways for carepartners to connect online. Here are a few of them:

Those caring for someone with MS can create their own website or visit another's at www.CaringBridge.org. Here, carepartners can keep an online journal and photo gallery, ask for help with tasks, and post updates for friends and family who in turn can post messages of support.

Today's Caregiver at www.caregiver.com includes a map, clickable by state, of area support groups, and a special section where caregivers can post their tips for others. It also offers articles and information on everything from nutrition tips to long-distance care.

The Well Spouse Association at www.wellspouse.org is a nonprofit membership organization that offers peer-to-peer support and educates healthcare professionals and the general public about the unique challenges that "well" spouses face every day.

The National Family Caregivers Association at www.thefamilycaregiver.org provides an online forum for caregivers to post questions or talk to others in similar situations.

The Society's online community at www.MSconnection.org offers a secure place for carepartners to connect. Members can create a personal profile to share posts, updates, blogs, photos, videos and links, and search for other members by demographics, shared interests, and more. The Society also offers a page for carepartners at www.nationalMSsociety.org/carepartners with information and resources on accessible housing, hiring home help, and more. Carepartners can also participate in the Society's Online Peer Connections program, www.nationalMSsociety.org/onlinepeerconnections. Here they select a peer support volunteer from an online database and arrange to speak one-or-one via email or telephone on an agreed-upon topic. All conversations are confidential.

NEWLY DIAGNOSED

CHECK UP ON YOUR HEALTH



When I think of my health, multiple sclerosis dominates my thoughts. I run through my inventory of symptoms that are acting up and medications that are causing side effects. Usually, it's only when I have something like a cold or a stomach virus that it occurs to me that there is more to my physical health than my MS.

Unfair as it might seem, people with MS are subject to the same health problems as people who are not living with the disease. We have the same lifestyle and aging issues. We have to consider preventive care for things like heart disease, high blood pressure, and cholesterol as we age. Women need to get mammograms and pap smears on a regular basis. We need to keep up with immunizations, as well as visits to dentists and eye doctors. (Visit www.nationalMSSociety.org/preventivecare for preventive care recommendations.)

There are also special risks that we have that are directly or indirectly related to our MS, such as:

- **Osteoporosis:** People with MS are more likely to have osteoporosis (loss of bone density). This is due to a number of factors, including limited mobility, low levels of vitamin D (which is essential for calcium absorption), and excessive use of corticosteroids (for instance, many Solu-Medrol courses over a short period of time). Your doctor can order a bone scan to test for osteoporosis.
- **Depression:** Depression can be a primary symptom of MS. It can also be indirectly caused by the losses and unpredictability of MS. Your neurologist or general practitioner should be able to refer you to a psychologist or psychiatrist to treat your depression, preferably one with experience treating patients with MS.
- **Vitamin deficiencies:** People with MS tend to have low levels or deficiencies of vitamin D and vitamin B12. Ask your general practitioner about tests and a treatment plan if needed.

Make an appointment to see your regular doctor and get the rest of yourself checked out. The last thing that any of us needs is additional health problems that could have been caught early or prevented by taking action. ■



Diagnosed with MS in 2003, Julie Stachowiak, Ph.D., is the author of *The Multiple Sclerosis Manifesto* and www.ms.about.com. Originally published at blog.nationalMSSociety.org.

MONEY MATTERS

HANDLING A HIGH-DEDUCTIBLE PLAN

BY MARCELLA DURAND



In a trend that seems to be increasing, many employers will be offering high-deductible health plans to their employees for 2013. A Kaiser Family Foundation 2011 employer survey found a jump to 17 percent of covered workers enrolled in a high-deductible plan, compared to 8 percent in 2009.

Basically, high-deductible plans, or HDHPs, include a minimum deductible from \$1,250 for an individual to \$2,500 for a family. The maximum out-of-pocket amount, which includes the deductible and any coinsurance or

copays a member pays, in 2013 is \$6,050 for an individual and \$12,100 for a family.

If your employer is transitioning to one of these plans this fall, here are some things a person with MS or their partner might need to know.

THE MORE YOU KNOW

“Get **all** the information you can about the HDHP your employer is offering,” recommends Kris Erickson, senior health insurance manager at the Society. “Find out what the deductible amount is. Find out what the benefits are after the deductible is met.”

Most qualified high-deductible plans, meaning they meet government requirements, are accompanied by **Health Savings Accounts**, or HSAs. These allow people to pay for or reimburse themselves for medical services with pretax dollars and often include a contribution by the employer. “These are tax free, so contribute as much as possible,” says Erickson. In 2013, the annual maximum contributions are \$3,250 for an individual and \$6,450 for a family. Individuals who are at least 55 years of age can also contribute a \$1,000 “catch-up” contribution.

HSA VS. FSA

HSAs are not the same as Health Flexible Savings Accounts (FSAs). The law requires that the entire annual FSA election amount be available to an employee up front, but HSA funds are only available as deposits are made to the account. However, it is possible to reimburse

yourself for a claim later in the year once more funds have accumulated in your HSA.

The maximum annual contributions to an FSA are also different: in 2013, IRS rules will limit them to \$2,500 for an individual and \$5,000 for a family. In addition, unlike FSAs, there is no “use it or lose it” forfeiture on an HSA and if someone leaves their job, they can take their HSA with them. HSAs also can earn interest.

For a full list of the “qualified medical expenses” that money stored in your HSA can be used for, visit

www.irs.gov/publications/p502/index.html.

PREVENTIVE CARE

Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), private health insurance plans must cover certain preventive health services. (For more information on what is covered, visit www.healthcare.gov/prevention.) So, if someone is enrolling in a high-deductible plan, it's important to know that annual physicals and preventive screenings **are covered**. For added motivation, medical costs are less expensive if a problem is caught earlier. In addition, vaccinations and checkups for children under a high-deductible family plan are also considered preventive.

MS TREATMENT & CARE

Much of MS treatment and care is not considered preventive. For instance, MRIs are not considered as such, and the cost of having one will not be covered until one's deductible is reached.

But a person with MS who has a high-deductible plan may be hit hardest by prescription drug costs. With qualified high-deductible family coverage, the deductible for the family has to be reached before any non-preventive medical expenses or prescription drugs are covered. In other words, even if only one person is incurring medical expenses, the full family's deductible must be met by that individual before the insurance will pay for expenses.

In these cases, Erickson recommends looking into **patient assistance programs**. “If you qualify for assistance, it can make your medication affordable.” For more information, visit www.nationalMSSociety.org/PAPs, or call an MS Navigator® at 1-800-344-4867.

On the plus side, with traditional coverage, deductibles may or may not apply to the out-of-pocket maximum and copays never do. Knowing the true out-of-pocket maximum could be an improvement over traditional plans.

THE WAY FORWARD

The main reason employers are switching to high-deductible plans is lower premiums. “One improvement is that high-deductible plans are less expensive,” says Erickson, and sometimes these savings may be passed on to employees. While not every employer will be switching to a high-deductible plans, it's a trend to keep an eye on. ■

Marcella Durand is on the staff of **Momentum**, the Society's national magazine.

PROGRAMS

**WORKING WITH MS:
DON'T DO IT ALONE****RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO ASSIST YOU**

BY STEVE NISSEN



Are you considering changing jobs? Are you looking for that next step in your career ladder? Have you been out of the workforce but thinking about returning to work? Do you have questions about disclosure in the workplace or how to accommodate your symptoms on the job?

Employment issues can arise when there is a change in your work situation or a change in your MS. When faced with employment questions, it is important to know that there are several resources available to help.

The National Capital Chapter has an employment assistance and support program, **Operation Job Match (OJM)**. OJM staff can discuss your employment options and help to educate and inform you. Contact OJM at (202) 887-0136 or visit www.OperationJobMatch.org.

The **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)** is a free service of the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy. JAN provides technical assistance and support regarding accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), disclosure, and self-employment for people with disabilities. JAN can be reached at **1-800-526-7234** or visit <http://askJAN.org> for a wide variety of resources and publications.

Each state has a vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency whose goal is to assist individuals with disabilities to gain and maintain employment. The agencies that serve our tri-state area include the following:

- **DC Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA):** <http://dds.dc.gov/DC/DDS/Rehabilitation+Service+s+Administration>
- **Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS):** <http://www.dors.state.md.us/>
- **Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS):** <http://www.vadrs.org/>

OJM staff has trained VR counselors to be prepared to serve people with MS and OJM is available to help you advocate for services. Visit your state VR agency's website for field office locations or call the National MS Society at **1-800-344-4867** for contact information for your closest office.

Working with MS is possible but you don't have to do it alone. Get informed, get educated, and get connected. ■

PROGRAMS

EMPLOYMENT TELECONFERENCE SERIES

CAREER DECISIONS AND MS

BY STEVE NISSEN

The National Capital Chapter, in collaboration with the New York City-Southern New York and Greater Delaware Valley Chapters, is offering a six-part employment teleconference series. Topics and dates in the series include the following:

1/16/2013 – Should I Work from Home or Start My Own Business?

1/30/2013 – Is it Time? Deciding to Change Careers or Stop Working

2/13/2013 – How to Plan Your Job Search Employers Share How They Find Employees

2/27/2013 – Should I Work? Work from Home Options for Those on Social Security Disability

3/13/2013 – The Impact of Health Insurance on Career Decisions

3/27/2013 – How to Talk about MS to Your Employer

If you are interested in registering for any upcoming calls, please call the National MS Society at **1-800-344-4867** or register online at **www.MSandYOU.org**. ■

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Because MS shouldn't stand in the way of an education, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society established a scholarship program to help people with MS and their children pursue full-time post-secondary college or technical school education.

To qualify for the scholarship awards, applicants must be high school seniors who have been diagnosed with MS or who have a parent with MS; or a high school graduate of any age with MS or who has a parent with MS who will be attending an accredited post-secondary school for the first time.

In 2007, National Capital Chapter Board member Bruce Pearlman established the Ellen Carol Segal Memorial Scholarship Fund as the founding gift to the Chapter's Scholarship Fund.

Scholarship Applications for 2013 are available at **nationalMSSociety.org/Scholarship**. **The deadline to apply is January 15, 2013.**

To contribute to the Scholarship Fund, visit **www.MSandYOU.org/donate** or send a check made payable to **National MS Society Scholarship Fund, 1800 M St. NW, Suite 750 South, Washington, DC 20036**. ■

PROGRAMS

THERAPEUTIC HORSEBACK RIDING

BY ANNA HAASE

In its most basic sense, horseback riding is all about movement. It's about finding a shared rhythm between horse and rider, while at the same time continuing to move forward. People living with multiple sclerosis understand how essential movement is, which makes horseback riding a great therapeutic option.

By simply sitting on a moving horse, riders can improve stability and coordination. According to the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International, horseback riding moves a rider's body in a motion similar to a human gait, which helps riders with disabilities to improve flexibility, balance, and muscle strength. For riders living with MS, riding can help to relax spastic muscles and to improve core and pelvic floor muscle strength. In addition to physical benefits, interacting with horses can have positive social and emotional effects as well. Rehabilitation therapy becomes a joy, not necessarily a chore anymore. Therapeutic riding lessons are highly individualized and horsemanship skills are adapted to each rider's ability level. Lessons emphasize working toward independence through personalized goals, as well as the fun side that comes with working with horses.



On Sunday, October 14, the Great and Small Therapeutic Riding Center in Boyds, Maryland hosted an open house for individuals with MS and their families. Participants had the opportunity to watch a therapeutic riding demonstration and hear first-hand the benefits of riding from a student living with MS. After the demonstration and 'Horse 101' talk, participants interacted with the therapy horses at grooming and petting stations. For more information on Great and Small Therapeutic Riding Center visit their website at www.greatandsmallride.org.

To find a therapeutic riding facility in your area you can visit www.pathintl.org or call the National MS Society for a referral. ■

PROGRAMS

HOME MODIFICATION:

CONSTRUCTING A BETTER LIFE WITH MS

BY MICHAEL HENNESSY

The symptoms of multiple sclerosis can be challenging. Once simple tasks can become complicated. One solution to ease difficulties with mobility, fatigue, or assistive technology is custom home modification. Potential projects range from handrails in hallways, ramps for wheelchairs, and accessible bathrooms and kitchens to basic reorganization of furniture or a bedside refrigerator. Projects vary depending on the need and budget of the individual.

Judi Hasson, diagnosed in 2007, encountered problems with mobility and accessibility in her home. Soon after her diagnosis, Judi began using a walker that made climbing the single step at the entrance of her house strenuous. The second story of her house proved to be an impossible to reach. Judi's first round of modifications included removing the front step and raising the sidewalk to be level with the entryway, and installing an electric stair chair lift to transport her to the second floor. These minor adjustments resulted in a major impact on Judi's safety and independence.

Additionally, Judi also had issues getting in and out of the shower. "I couldn't get a wheelchair through my narrow bathroom doorway, and



even with a walker there was no clear path to the shower because it was partially blocked by the toilet," she recalled. Once she navigated across the tight space, she faced difficulties lifting her feet over the lip of the shower. She tried to resolve this issue with a shower chair and then a shower transfer bench, but still found it awkward and dangerous to maneuver in the space. Eventually, she decided to modify her bathroom.

Judi wanted to make her shower wheelchair accessible, so she spoke to several contractors and searched for the best price. "I hired a contractor to widen the doorway and reposition the toilet away from the shower," she explained. The doorway to the bathroom was widened, the



toilet was repositioned, the vanity was replaced with a pedestal sink, the lip to the shower was removed, and the shower floor was sloped slightly to allow the water to drain. “Now I can use a shower wheelchair to roll in and out of the bathroom and the shower without any danger or stress,” said Judi. “The job took less than a week, and now I shower daily without a problem.”

Judi’s experience demonstrates how home modification can be beneficial for accessibility and ease of living. Although options can be expensive, the Society and others, such as local government agencies, may provide financial support. In addition, the Society can provide a list of contractors who have completed modifications for other clients. At first, home modification might seem like a daunting task; however, even a few updates can have a significant impact on quality of life. ■

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Call the National Capital Chapter for more information regarding specific resources and limited financial assistance at 1-800-FIGHT-MS (1-800-344-4867)
- Check out the National MS Society’s website for more information regarding this subject <http://www.nationalmssociety.org/living-with-multiple-sclerosis/mobility-and-accessibility/index.aspx>
- Make sure to check with your local government agencies for help and aid in this process. They can provide grants or other help in the process.
- The cost of your renovation to ease the problems of MS may be tax deductible so be sure to check.
- Finally Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurance plans cover prescribed wheelchairs, ramps and lifts to some extent.

FUNDRAISING

MEET THE
RUN MS COACH

Kristen Jaremback first became involved with the National MS Society's fundraising efforts in 2004 when she trained with the former marathon group, Marathon Strides Against MS. Her mother lives with MS, and served as the inspiration Kristen needed to take on her first race. Now Kristen is an accomplished distance runner, setting a personal goal to run a marathon in all of the 50 states. Her passion for running combined with her motivation to create a world free of MS make her a highly qualified coach for the National Capital Chapter's new Run MS program. Read on to learn more about Kristen's journey.

1. How do you stay motivated to continue running and training?

When I first started training and found each run tough, I would think of my mom and all the other people living with MS who couldn't run, and dig through the pain and find inspiration through them. My mom

is my inspiration to continue working and training hard, to push myself to achieve greater challenges and to do everything with a positive attitude and loving spirit.

2. What is your training schedule like?

I run six or seven days per week with an average of about 80 miles per week. I do two long runs back to back on the weekends to prepare my body for two marathons in one weekend. I also make sure to get extra sleep in the nights before a big race weekend.

3. What do you hope to accomplish through volunteering with Run MS?

To help new (and seasoned) runners find happiness and enjoyment through the sport, and inspire people to continue running after finishing the marathon. We are all working together to find a cure for MS, one run at a time. Let's have fun doing it!

4. How do you reward yourself after completing a marathon?

Running for me is its own reward. I'm happy I have the ability to run. Chocolate milk comes in a close second.

5. MS stops people from moving. What words or messages do you have for someone who can no longer walk or run?

Movement is unique to that individual; a person never stops moving, but perhaps moves in a different way. MS might stop you from running or walking – but you never stop moving in a way that is special and right for you. ■

For more information on Run MS, visit www.MSandYOU.org/run.

FUNDRAISING

CAPITAL CHALLENGE WALK MS 2012

BY CATHERINE ROTHWELL

The National Capital Chapter's 10th Anniversary of Capital Challenge Walk MS presented by Secor Group hosted more than 170 fundraisers and 100 volunteers coming together to move closer to a world free of MS. With the support of our generous sponsors, we raised more than \$320,000!

We celebrated our tenth year with a new route that took walkers through both peaceful and lively neighborhoods in the D.C. metropolitan area. At the close of the first day, everyone gathered together for our annual Mission Ceremony – an opportunity to share stories about what it means to be affected by MS and how perseverance and hope motivates them to join the movement. With renewed inspiration to keep moving forward, walkers continued their journey on the second day and finished in front of the U.S. Capitol. The weekend was filled with smiles, hugs, tired feet, and strong spirits.

To all of our dedicated Capital Challenge Walk MS supporters, thank you for 10 years of inspirational moments and for a spectacular celebration of how far we've come in the movement to end MS. ■



FUNDRAISING

34TH ANNUAL AMBASSADORS BALL

REFLECTS INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT TO END MS



The National Capital Chapter hosted the 34th Annual Ambassadors Ball, which took place at The Ritz-Carlton, Washington D.C. on September 12. The evening welcomed newly-assigned Ambassadors and their spouses to the city, and honored the Washington Diplomatic Corps for their support of charitable activities and humanitarian endeavors.

This year's Ambassadors Ball raised more than \$850,000, contributing to the nearly \$17 million that the event has raised over its history.

The 2012 co-chairs for the ball were Mrs. Annie Coons, wife of Senator Chris Coons; Ms. Melodee Hanes, wife of Senator Max Baucus; Mrs. Nancy Camp, wife of Congressman Dave Camp; and Mrs. Judy McCarthy, wife of Congressman Kevin McCarthy.

The Ambassadors Ball is just one of many fundraising events held throughout the year by the National MS Society. For more information on these events, visit www.MSandYOU.org. ■



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

1800 M St. NW
Suite 750 South
Washington, DC 20036

CALENDER

SAVE THE DATE

NEWLY DIAGNOSED GROUP

January 10, 17, and 24
Washington, D.C.

Contact: Julie.Vallelunga@nmss.org

HEALTHY KITCHEN, HEALTHY YOU

January 9
Lanham, MD

Contact: Kelly.Schrader@nmss.org

STRETCH, BREATHE, RELAX, RESTORE – YOGA WORKSHOP

February 1
Georgetown Physical Medicine and
Rehabilitation Department

Contact: Kelly.Schrader@nmss.org

FREE FROM FALLS

8-week program, Spring 2013
Georgetown University Medical Center,
Department of Physical Medicine and
Rehabilitation

Contact: Kelly.Schrader@nmss.org

WALK MS 2013

Saturday, April 13

Bowie, MD

Manassas, VA

Rockville, MD

Waldorf, MD

Sunday, April 14

Reston, VA

Saturday, April 20

Washington, D.C.

Contact: DCWalkMS@nmss.org

BIKE MS: RIDE THE RIVERSIDE 2013

Saturday, June 8 – Sunday, June 9

National Harbor, MD

Contact: DCWBikeMS@nmss.org

CAPITAL CHALLENGE WALK MS 2013

Saturday, September 21- Sunday, September 22
Washington, D.C. metro area

Contact: DCWChallengeWalk@nmss.org