

PROMISES MADE, PROMISES KEPT, PROMISE 2010

Nearly six years ago the Society made a bold promise: Beginning in 2005, we would raise \$32 million over five years through the Promise: 2010 campaign to support four targeted research initiatives that would improve the care, treatment and understanding of multiple sclerosis. Promise: 2010 proved to be a challenge and an inspiration — a promise that is not only being kept, but one that has profoundly impacted MS research as it moves forward. In five short years, significant progress has been made in understanding MS and advancing treatments.

THE STUDIES AND THEIR MAJOR MILESTONES INCLUDE:

- **Pediatric MS Centers of Excellence:** Established six Pediatric MS Centers of Excellence, and developed nationwide standards of diagnosis and care for kids with MS; setting the stage for deeper research into the triggers of MS in young children, which may clarify the cause of MS in adults as well
- **Nervous System Repair and Protection:** Laid the groundwork for clinical trials of nerve-protecting drugs and for advanced studies of cell transplantation and other strategies for stimulating repair in MS; a novel concept just five short years ago
- **The MS Lesion Project:** Changed the way researchers think about MS and ushered in new approaches for research toward understanding the cause and ultimate cure

- **The Sonya Slifka Longitudinal MS Study:** Supported state advocacy for legislation to improve care for those with progressive MS; used by the Social Security Administration in preparation for the introduction of the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit, enhancing access to MS therapies

KEEPING THE PROMISE ALIVE

- There's still time to be part of the Promise: 2010 achievements and support the ongoing work that has been spurred by this benchmark campaign. Your support will help ensure that the next five years will advance as rapidly as the last. Contact your chapter at 1.800.344.4867 today and find out how you can help keep the promise alive.

PEDIATRIC MS CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Though MS is rare in children, there may be up to 25,000 individuals under the age of 18 who have symptoms that may be MS or may mimic MS. Multiple sclerosis is notoriously hard to diagnose in adults, and the disease is even more difficult to identify in children, where it often mimics other childhood neurological disorders. Even if a child is properly diagnosed, doctors often have limited experience treating children with MS and the drugs currently available for MS have not been extensively tested in children.

With Promise: 2010 funding, the Society established the first-of-its-kind network of six Pediatric MS Centers of Excellence to provide comprehensive evaluation and care to children with MS and related central nervous system demyelinating disorders.

The network is also gathering critical data for deeper research worldwide into the triggers of MS in young children, which may identify the cause of MS in adults as well.

MAJOR MILESTONES

- The six Pediatric MS Centers of Excellence have provided multidisciplinary care to more than 1,150 kids and their families, with a plan to expand even further.
- Consensus has — for the first time — been achieved on how to diagnose and care for kids with MS.
- Specialized programs and resources for kids, parents, school personnel and health-care professionals have been developed.
- Over 170 medical presentations and publications have been made by pediatric center staff to raise awareness and improve treatment and quality of life for kids with MS.
- The network of Pediatric MS Centers of Excellence in the U.S. is central to the international movement committed to optimizing care, education and research into pediatric MS worldwide.
- The Society's commitment to supporting data collection extends through 2012; new and promising research projects are expected as a result.

NERVOUS SYSTEM REPAIR & PROTECTION INITIATIVE

For those already living with MS progression, repairing damage to restore lost function and protecting against future damage is crucial. Promise: 2010 provided the largest grants in Society history to launch an international effort to address this underexplored area of research; with the ultimate goal of new commercial treatments. These grants have engaged nearly 80 researchers from around the world and facilitated the utilization of the highest level of technology and development of new technologies. Four international teams, led by the scientists below, are working aggressively, setting the stage for clinical trials.

- Professor Peter A. Calabresi (Johns Hopkins University) and collaborators are searching for better ways to detect and quantify tissue injury in MS and testing agents that may protect the nervous system from further damage.
- Professor Charles ffrench-Constant (University of Edinburgh and University of Cambridge, UK) and colleagues are focusing on restoring myelin by identifying and amplifying natural repair factors in the brain and by attempting to transplant replacement cells.
- Professor Gavin Giovannoni (Queen Mary University of London, UK) and collaborators are attempting to turn cells into vehicles that will deliver repair molecules to sites of injury in the brain, and screening molecules for their protective properties as a prelude to clinical trials.
- Professor Ian D. Duncan (University of Wisconsin-Madison) is leading a multidisciplinary team to develop better imaging technologies such as PET and MRI to visualize myelin and nerve fiber damage, and to detect its repair. They are also exploring techniques for transplanting cells to promote repair.

MAJOR MILESTONES

- Clinical trials of potentially neuroprotective agents are already underway and additional trials are about to launch.
- Progress has been made in developing cell transplantation techniques that may ultimately enable nervous system repair.
- Better imaging methods have been developed to track the success of attempts at repair and protection in clinical trials.
- 'Stalled' myelin-making cells in lab dishes were successfully induced to begin producing myelin using molecules that have potential as future therapies.
- Knowledge for further research has been advanced by the collective publication of more than 150 research papers on nervous system repair in MS.
- Major research projects to advance critical research findings beyond 2010 are already in development and are being submitted for funding.

THE SONYA SLIFKA LONGITUDINAL MS

To move us closer to a world free of MS, the National MS Society takes a leading role in advocacy, research, and treatment for people living with the disease; the Sonya Slifka Longitudinal MS Study is proving invaluable in all these areas. In the same way that the legendary Framingham Heart Study revolutionized the way we look at heart disease, the Sonya Slifka Longitudinal MS Study tracks a large, diverse sample of people with MS, looking for patterns that will lead to better treatments and possibly even an ultimate cure. Initiated with a gift from Society friend, Richard Slifka, and named in honor of his mother, the study follows participants for years.

THE INFORMATION BEING GATHERED IN THIS STUDY FUELS MANY ASPECTS OF OUR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE WITH MS:

- Increase understanding about access to MS therapies, and other issues related to health care;
- Facilitate data sharing with the scientific community and foster partnerships with MS researchers worldwide.
- Equip advocacy groups with the information they need to influence policy with regard to long-term care, prescription drug coverage, and disability rights.

MAJOR MILESTONES

- Findings have been used by the Society Security Administration in preparation for the introduction of the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit, enhancing access to MS therapies.

- Study results helped in the passage of state legislation, resulting in better health care and assistance for severely disabled people with MS.
- Created greater understanding of unmet needs of people with MS; facilitated new initiatives such as outreach to enhance community-based care for those living with the disease, with others being planned for the future.
- The study has entered a second phase with a new sample of over 2,500 people with MS who will be followed annually. In order to more accurately reflect the MS population, the study recruited more African-American and Hispanic individuals, recently-diagnosed, and 18- to 24-year-olds. These results will continue to help advance efforts on behalf of all those living with MS.

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