



4th Quarter 2009 | Our vision: A world Free of MS



Farewell, Leigh Gilmore -- A Local, National Hero



Greater Illinois Chapter Friend and fellow multiple sclerosis activist Leigh Gilmore, who was diagnosed with MS 20 years ago, became critically ill and died on Saturday, Dec. 19, 2009. She was 50 years young. While some across the nation may remember her most for her media-celebrated September 11th survival story ([ABC News](#), [New York Daily News](#), [Chicago Tribune](#), [LA Times](#)), her near-death experience in 2001 may have further inspired an even greater legacy she left behind closer to home.



She was instrumental in all of our

advocacy achievements over the past 14 years.



Leigh's contributions to the chapter included Chapter Programs, Advocacy/Government Relations and Clinical Advisory Committee memberships; support for Walk MS, Bike MS: Tour de Farms, Women on the Move, Multiple Solutions' Cocktailin' event and more, says Leigh's close friend Maureen Howard, who serves on the chapter's board of directors. "She was instrumental in all of our advocacy achievements over the past 14 years, especially the [Chicago taxicab ordinance](#) requiring wheelchair accessibility [and] the inclusion of emergency evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities in all emergency plans." Similar state legislation (cosponsored by then Senator Barack Obama) was also signed into law. In fact, Maureen says, Leigh "personally researched the most commonly prescribed medications for persons with MS, along with the annual cost, and created an Excel spreadsheet that was critical in [for the] state legislature's addition of MS as a diagnosis eligible for Illinois pharmaceutical assistance."

Leigh "was an eloquent speaker and smart businesswoman, and a member of the National MS Society Advocacy Hall of Fame," Maureen says. Leigh is survived by her mother, Faye, and her brother, Peter. Her [obituary](#) in the *Chicago Tribune* can be found [here>>](#)

Thank you, Leigh, for everything you've done to move us toward a world free of MS, and for making the world we live in a better one. We'll miss you.



2010 CALENDAR

January 2
Multiple Solutions' [13th Annual Pub Crawl](#).

February 19
[Eighth Annual Carnivale](#)
(Peoria, Ill.)

March
MS Awareness Month

March 23-24
[MS Action Day](#) (Springfield, Ill.)

March 27
[MS Half-Court Classic](#) **New date!**

May 27
[Women on the Move](#)

May 2
[Walk MS](#) (12 locations)
[Register Now>>](#)

June 12-13
[Bike MS: Tour de Farms](#)
[Register Now>>](#)

July 12
[Cohn Weil Golf & Bridge Tournament](#)

Summer
[Regional Research Symposium](#)
(Peoria, Ill.)

September
[Dinner of Champions](#)

September 12
[Walk MS -- Peoria](#)
[Register Now>>](#)

October
Annual Meeting, [Research Symposium](#) & [Volunteer Recognition Event](#)

Also, check out these [community events](#) benefiting the National MS Society. Community Events are volunteer-coordinated events independently run by interested groups who want to make a difference through fundraising.
[read more ▶](#)

New: 'Golden Circle'

The Greater Illinois Chapter is excited to announce its launch of the National MS Society [Golden Circle](#) campaign. The Society created this exclusive, yearly membership program to acknowledge the important support of individuals who truly make their mark against MS through direct, non-event contributions.

[Learn more about the program](#), about the people whose lives have been changed by [Golden Circle](#) member contributions and how you, too, can qualify for [Golden Circle](#) members-only benefits. [Read more ▶](#)



[Living with MS](#)

DePaul Univ. Student Shares Her Story



I never thought I would be a college student dealing with having MS and trying to... live.



Click here for [upcoming community events>>](#)

Planning an MS fundraising event of your own? [View our guidelines](#), then download and complete [this form](#) so we can help you spread the word!



FUNDRAISING EVENTS



Put Resolutions in Gear: Register Now for Bike MS

Registration is open for Bike MS: Tour de Farms 2010! The event is scheduled for June 12-13. Returning participants can re-up for only \$10 by using their alumni discount code by December 31st. If you missed the e-mail with your discount code, ask your team captain, or ask for someone on the Bike MS team at 1.312.421.4500.

[read more >](#)



Facelift Planned for Walk MS Online Participant Center

The Walk MS online participant center Web pages will be getting a facelift in mid-January, promising greater simplicity and ease of use, with a modernized look. More information will be provided in January - stay tuned! In the meantime, team captains take note, and save the date: The first Walk MS team rally is scheduled for January 14, 2009. Details to come.

[read more >](#)

March Launch Set for 3rd MS Instant-Win Tickets

It's Double Time - Illinois Lottery Instant Win Ticket

[read more >](#)

Chapter Raises 900 Votes in Chase/Facebook Promo

Meet Cecilia Reyes, a recent Social Work graduate from DePaul University with a personal connection to MS. Cecilia shared her story about living with MS with the Associated Press through an interview, and with the world via YouTube. Click on the YouTube screen capture above to hear her story, and [read the related article>>](#).

More recently, Reyes has been sharing her time with the Greater Illinois Chapter as a volunteer in the office and as an MS ambassador in the community. Working in the chapter's office up to three days a week, she's focused on helping us further develop the [James Cantalupo Growth and Empowerment Camp](#) program.

What's your story about living with MS? Share your stories by posting a YouTube video of your own and letting us know, or send an e-mail and photo to us at marketing.department@ild.nmss.org. Not all stories will be chosen for publication.



SERVING OUR CLIENTS

Aid Requests Quadrupled in 2009

Grant Increases Helped Meet Greater Need



Mary Bisconti had trouble sleeping for more than 1 1/2 years -- then someone introduced her to the Greater Illinois Chapter.

[read more >](#)

For more than a year and a half, the pain associated with Mary Bisconti's MS kept her from getting a full night's sleep -- then someone told her about the Greater Illinois Chapter. "The people at the Society were very friendly and accommodating to me, and informed me that I may be eligible for [an in-home] hospital bed. I was able to get a bed and get it in a rather quick timeframe. The results have been that I have been able to sleep without constant pain, and the ability to raise my legs has brought me much comfort."

Positive stories like [this](#) wouldn't be possible, of course, without funding -- especially during a year that saw financial assistance requests more than quadruple, so the Greater Illinois Chapter was delighted to receive increased support in the form of grants during its 2009 fiscal year, from generous foundations and corporations across the country,

Grants from pharmaceutical corporations, such as those received in 2009 from EMD Serono, Biogen Idec and

Teva Neuroscience, enable the chapter to provide high-quality programs such as Midwest Regional Teleconferences and research symposiums.

[read more >](#)



FINDING A CURE

Local Research

Lottery Tickets Benefit Illinois Research

A \$2 lottery ticket, created in 2008 by the Illinois Lottery and the National MS Society, has led to a windfall for MS researchers in Illinois. This is the first ever lottery ticket in the United States where 100% of the net proceeds go to fund MS research, prevention, or treatment. From the sales of the first ticket, It's Double Time, the Greater Illinois Chapter has received more than \$2.6 million for research.



After three weeks of rallying supporters for the Facebook/ Chase Bank

Community Giving challenge, the National MS Society, Greater Illinois Chapter fell short of the votes needed to make the list of top 100 charitable organizations, who will each receive a \$25,000 donation. How short was our count? Can't really say -- Chase stopped posting vote counts last week, before voting closed, making it impossible to tell. But just before it closed, we had raised about 900 votes and a lot more awareness for our cause. Not bad!
[read more ►](#)

The \$2 Illinois Lottery Instant for MS concept was made a reality through the hard work of MS activists (volunteers) from the Greater Illinois and Gateway chapter who collaborated with advocacy specialists to craft the legislation and see the "Scratch Out MS" bill signed into law in October 2007.

[read more ►](#)

National Research

45+ New National Research Projects Funded in '09

Last summer, the National MS Society launched 45 new MS research projects, including 21 grants, two healthcare delivery and policy contracts, 19 fellowships and other training awards, making multiyear commitments of \$15.8 million. These new projects included four Pilot Research Awards — short-term projects to investigate new, untested ideas and attract researchers to the MS field. The projects are part of a comprehensive research program that was to provide about \$40 million in 2009 alone to propel MS research forward, including funds for about 345 new and ongoing MS investigations in the U.S. and abroad. Learn more -- lists of all Society-supported research projects are available [here](#).

[read more ►](#)



IN THE NEWS

► [UPDATE: Research into Blood Flow in the Brain and Venous Insufficiency, or CCSVI, in Multiple Sclerosis](#)

► [Technology Collaborative Launches Online Game to Exercise Brain Power Of People with Multiple Sclerosis](#)

► [Leigh Gilmore \(1959-2009\): Advocate for disabled who escaped 9/11 attack in N.Y.](#)



LEADERS' PERSPECTIVE



Read this [personal Golden Circle message](#) from Chairman of the Board Chad Smith.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE



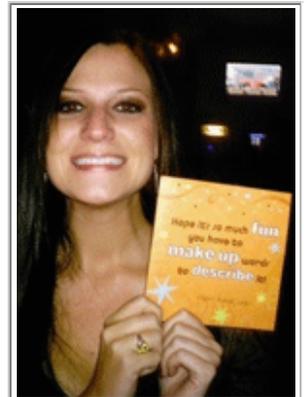
New VISTA Volunteer Plans to Expand, Strengthen Illinois Volunteer Base



Kalina Jakymec

Kalina Jakymec joined the Greater Illinois Chapter in late November as our new AmeriCorps VISTA intern. Kalina replaces Sarah Gross, who completed her one-year assignment with the chapter. Learn more about VISTA through the great introduction Kalina has posted for us [here](#).

[read more ►](#)



Sarah Gross

VISTA Intern Helped Launch Chapter's Social Network

During Sarah's year as a VISTA volunteer, she accomplished her primary goal: to identify volunteer opportunity gaps in Illinois. She then presented a formal report of suggestions on where and how the chapter can engage volunteers to fill in those gaps. Sarah, who plans to stay involved with the chapter as an occasional volunteer, also left another great legacy. Her efforts helped the chapter launch its social networking presence via Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Her work also involved increasing our



Cindy Bean
Interim President

the Greater Illinois Chapter, thank you, and happy holidays!

As you take time over the next few weeks to count your blessings, enjoy your loved ones and perhaps open a gift or two, please also take a moment to appreciate the work you help us do and the difference you make in the lives of the people living with MS every day -- gifts you have provided through the year! On behalf of

volunteer resources by recruiting volunteers for chapter events, and she even managed to prepare a procedures manual so that the next VISTA volunteer coordinator could pick up where she left off without having to reinvent the wheel. Thanks, Sarah! You can [read more about VISTA here](#).

Interested in volunteering? [Please click here](#) to learn more about volunteer opportunities with the Greater Illinois Chapter.



Multiple Solutions' Cocktailin' for the Cause Draws More than 400 to Hard Rock Chicago

[Cocktailin' for the Cause](#), a semi-formal benefit hosted by Multiple Solutions, the junior board and auxiliary group of the Greater Illinois Chapter, was held Saturday Nov. 14, 2009. More than 400 attendees participated, enjoying an evening filled with dancing, cocktails, silent auction and raffle prizes. The 6th annual event was held in the Fender Ballroom of the Hard Rock Hotel on Michigan Avenue in Chicago.

[read more](#) ►

Cocktailin' for the Cause is one of Multiple Solutions' signature events, which in 2010 will also include the [Half-Court Classic](#) (planned for March 27, 2010) and [MS Slugfest](#) (held in August). The group's members also host an annual MS Pub Crawl, which is actually quickly approaching -- the [13th Annual MS Pub Crawl](#) is January 2, 2010. [Click here to learn more and to register>>](#) and learn more about Multiple Solutions at [multiple-solutions.org](#).

If You or Someone You Know Has MS: Early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can make a difference for people with multiple sclerosis. Learn about your options by talking to your health care professional and contacting the National MS Society at nationalMSSociety.org or 1.800.344.4867.



About the Greater Illinois Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society
We mobilize people and resources to drive research for a cure and to address the challenges of everyone affected by MS. We envision a world free of MS and move towards that end by driving change through advocacy, facilitating professional education, collaborating with others and by providing helpful programs and services. Join the Movement at [MSIllinois.org](#). ||||| [Participate](#) | [Advocate](#) | [Volunteer](#) | [Educate](#)

Questions, suggestions or stories to share? Please write to the editor: john.henao@ild.nmss.org.

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