



National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society  
Greater Illinois  
Chapter

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### NATIONAL MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SOCIETY, GREATER IL CHAPTER NAMES 12 OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR



**CHICAGO, October 22, 2012** – All told in fiscal year 2012, nearly 1,800 individuals volunteered their time with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Greater Illinois Chapter by staffing major fundraising events including Walk MS and Bike MS, facilitating support groups and peer support programs, lending their professional talents to special projects and office work, chairing their own fundraisers, lobbying elected officials, and providing leadership as members of the Chapter's Board of Trustees. On Saturday, October 20, the Greater Illinois honored the dedication and hard work of its volunteers, naming 12 Outstanding Volunteers of the Year at the 17th Annual Fannie & Charles Penikoff Research Symposium at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont.

“Our volunteers play an enormous role in the day-to-day operations of the Society, whether it's out at an event, in the office, fundraising in the community, or offering supportive services to their peers,” said Greater Illinois Chapter President John Blazek. “Their dedication and commitment to our movement is essential in helping us to provide vital research, programs and services that assist the 20,000 individuals throughout the state living with MS.”

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## VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR, Add One

The 2012 Outstanding Volunteer of the Year recipients included:

- **State Rep. Patricia Bellock (47th district)**, of Hinsdale, has served in the state legislature since 1999, and has championed healthcare, developmental disabilities, and mental health issues since first being elected. The Chapter Illinois Chapter's first meeting with Rep. Bellock was five years ago and she has been a friend to the Chapter ever since. This past year, she supported the bill for Safe Handling of Patients in Nursing Homes as well as a bill supporting Gas Station Accessibility for People with Disabilities. She was honored with the **Legislator of the Year Award**.
- **Ron Bernstein**, of Highland Park, is a long-time member of the Greater Illinois Chapter's Board of Trustees, where he currently serves as treasurer and chair of the Audit Committee. Ron and his family participate in numerous fundraising activities on behalf of the National MS Society throughout the year, including the annual Cohn-Weil Golf outing at Northmoor Country Club. He was honored with the **Chairman's Award**, which is the Chapter's highest honor, recognizing distinguished service and outstanding support.
- **Tracy Butler**, of Chicago, is a meteorologist with ABC7 Chicago, and has been involved with the National MS Society through one of the Chapter's premier events the Women on the Move Luncheon where she was served as emcee for three years. She was honored with the **Public Education Award**.
- **Dr. Joy Derwenskus**, of Chicago, is a physician at Northwestern Medical Center for Comprehensive MS Care. She has been with Northwestern for seven years and 100 percent of her clinical practice is in MS. She was honored with the **June Golin Service Award** which acknowledges outstanding achievement in the development and delivery of services of people living with MS.
- **Gene Keck**, of Aurora, is a volunteer co-facilitator of one of the Chapter's newest programs, *Meeting the Challenges of MS*, a five-session problem solving workshop for family and friends who are caring for a loved one living with MS. He was awarded the **Support Group Facilitator of the Year Award**.
- **Sylvia Kemp**, of Frankfort, personally raised \$23,000 for Walk MS in 2012, while her team of 46 members topped the \$36,000 mark. She held four fundraisers on her own to spread awareness and raise funds and has been unbelievably inspiring to boost people's spirit. She was honored with the **Excellence in Fundraising, Walk MS Award**.
- **Patricia Kroll**, of Chicago, has been a Peer Support Volunteer with the Chapter since 2012, where she offers an empathic and action-oriented approach to her callers. She also coordinated the Research Symposium's health expo. She was awarded the **Peer Support Volunteer of the Year**.
- **State Sen. Terry Link (30<sup>th</sup> district)**, of Waukegan, has served in the state legislature since 1997. He has been a champion for the environment, economic development, tax fairness, health care, and human services. Sen. Link's connection to MS is his wife, Susan McCall Link, who lives with multiple sclerosis. Every year, he meets with Chapter activists during MS Action Day in Springfield where he discusses relevant legislation and reviews requests for his support. He received the **Legislator of the Year Award**.

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## VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR, Add Two

- **Terry Mazurkiewicz**, of McHenry, has gone above and beyond in his first year volunteering with the Greater Illinois Chapter. His positive attitude since being diagnosed with MS two years ago has allowed him to excel with the MS Society in all aspects, raising over \$11,500 during the Walk MS 2012 campaign. He received the ***Rookie Fundraiser of the Year Award***.
- **Gary Shlifka**, of Park Ridge, is an office volunteer with the Greater Illinois Chapter in the IT Department. Always reliable, he has been a great asset to the Chapter through his involvement with data migration as well as other technical/IT projects. He received the ***Volunteer of the Year Award***.
- **Vicky Tate**, of Downers Grove, and her Bike MS team, the Pedal Heads raised over \$55,000 this year. With 130 riders, the Pedal Heads are the largest team in the 31-year history of the Greater Illinois Chapter's Bike MS: Tour de Farms. She was honored with the ***Excellence in Fundraising, Bike MS Award***.
- **Adam Wozny**, of Norridge, currently a freshman at Northwestern University in Evanston, rode his bike 500 miles across Illinois over 13 days this spring in honor of his mother who lives with MS. For the ride, he founded his own charity, Miles for MS, which raised \$4,500. He was awarded the ***Community Event Volunteer of the Year Award***.

Attended by nearly 500 individuals from across the state, Research Symposium covered the latest news and trends in MS research. In addition to the volunteer awards, this premiere, all-day event including a keynote presentation by Dr. Stephen Hauser, MD, of the University of California at San Francisco and winner of the National MS Society/American Academy of Neurology 2008 John Dystel Prize for MS Research, a health expo, and four educational breakout sessions.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society depends on the commitment of volunteers at every level of the organization and is always looking for new volunteers. For more information about volunteer opportunities with the Greater Illinois Chapter, contact Jocelyn Cheng at 312-423-1139 or visit [MSIllinois.org](http://MSIllinois.org).

Every hour in the United States, someone is diagnosed with MS, an unpredictable, often disabling, autoimmune disease of the central nervous system. MS interrupts the flow of information between the brain and the body and stops people from moving. The disease affects more than 20,000 people in Illinois, 400,000 in the U.S. and 2.5 million worldwide.

**The Greater Illinois Chapter (GIC)** mobilizes people and resources to drive research for a cure and to address the challenges of everyone affected by MS. Envisioning a world free of MS, the Chapter moves toward that end by driving change through advocacy, facilitating education, collaborating with others and by providing helpful programs and services. Visit [MSIllinois.org](http://MSIllinois.org) for the latest GIC news and information.

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*Editor's Note: A photo of the Outstanding Volunteers of the Year has been included.*

From left to right, bottom row: Dr. Joy Derwenskus, Adam Wozny, Vicky Tate, Sylvia Kemp, Ron Bernstein. Top: Terry Mazurkiewicz, Patricia Kroll, Gene Keck, Gary Shlifka, Rep. Patricia Bellock, Sen. Terry Link and Sean C. Gallagher (Chairman, Board of Trustees). Not pictured: Tracy Butler.