

Beat PD Today

September 2019

Special Edition



Grand Opening: Parkinson's Center of Connecticut

September 14 marked an exciting milestone for **Connecticut Advocates for Parkinson's** and **Beat Parkinson's Today**: The Grand Opening of the Parkinson's Center of Connecticut. The two non-profits partnered to develop this 3,000 square foot facility dedicated to Parkinson's outreach, exercise, education, and support. Over the past nine months, a committee of volunteers from both organizations, along with the building owners and their crew, worked many hours on designing and creating a "safe haven" for People with Parkinson's (PWP) to gather, share, learn, and be hopeful living with a progressive disease that has no cure.

More than 200 people attended the Grand Opening, which included boxing and cycling demonstrations, yoga, Reiki and chair massages, and door prizes. Attendees included people from all over the state who wanted to learn more about the first and only facility of its kind.



Research, Awareness and Understanding

Part of the Center's mission is to raise awareness in the community, helping people understand that this disease affects many people and needs the attention of the medical world. Not only is Beat PD helping PWP to live better lives today, CAP is working with Massachusetts Institute of Technology on some novel and promising research. Please see www.curenowpd.org for details on this amazing initiative being led by Karl Hespeler and Kelly Kearney.



Themes of the Day: Positive Energy and Gratitude

Chairman of CAP, Karl Hespeler, opened the event and welcomed the guests. Michelle Hespeler and Robin Downey, the Center Co-Chairs, talked about the creation of the center and the challenges along the way. While 200 people listened intently, Michelle asked if everyone felt the energy in the room. As she described the feeling of gratitude she had for everyone there, she was choked up and teary-eyed, which is not unusual for Michelle, who often cries when speaking about PD -- a show of her passion for her work and commitment to the PD community. Robin also shared her gratitude to the volunteers and her commitment to the Center.

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We would like to thank all the volunteers that helped make the day successful: First, the amazing Beat PDers that demonstrated exercises: Larry Orkins, Jennifer Crowder, Karen Beebe, Mary Smealie, Brenda Vanasse, Jon Kimball, Sheila Tobin, Pete Narin, Robin Downey, Bot Sam, Peter Northrop, and Nancy Shapiro. Thank you to the core team who contributed to the planning and implementation of the day: Gale Morianos, Val Wright, Liz Bengtson, Krista Hespeler, Mike Figz and Lianne Hesseltine. Thank you also to Lisa Keithan, Julia Baehr and Gabby Keithan, and to Linda Derick (Massage) and April Baehr (Reiki). We couldn't have done this without you!

More About the Center: Our Location and Mission

Located at 102 Pitkin Street in East Hartford, the Parkinson's Center of Connecticut will help People With Parkinson's (PWP) better manage their disease and take charge of their daily well-being. The Center is an inclusive safe haven, both emotionally and physically, which encourages PWP to share experiences and support one another. It provides educational support specific to PWP families and caregivers, enabling them to better understand current and future needs for their loved ones. The Center will also include a clinical advisory committee to help with outreach to the medical community to educate physicians regarding the services available to their patients.

If you or someone in your life is living with Parkinson's and you'd like to support our efforts, you can donate online at www.parkinsonsct.org or by attending our upcoming Gala for Parkinson's fundraiser on October 5th. See page 3 for event details and a link to [purchase tickets!](#)



PD Center Goes on a Road Show

Hey Southbury! Hey Branford! Hey Brookfield, Mystic, Griswold! Guess what? We are taking the PD Center on the road, and coming to visit you! Here's the plan: someday, very soon, we'll bring you a Beat PD boxing class, followed by yoga, and then have lunch together. All at a facility near you!

We understand that the new Center may be too far for you to visit, so we will come to you. Please look for details this month for a date for the first "PD Road Show" near you. Info will be posted at www.parkinsonsct.org and www.beatpdtoday.com, or call 860-906-1726.

Join Us for a Gala to Benefit Parkinson's!

We're excited to announce our fourth biennial Gala to Benefit Parkinson's. This year's event, on Saturday, October 5th, will raise funds in support of outreach programs and the new Parkinson's Center of Connecticut. The Gala will be held at the Aqua Turf in Southington from 6:30 to 11:00 and includes dinner, live music (with band cover 2 Cover) and a silent auction plus a special guest host, Jim Altman from FOX61! We have some great silent auction items this year including some great trips around the world, sports memorabilia, televisions, winery tours and much more.

With your help we hope to raise at least \$100,000 at this event. We'd love for you to join us! For more information or to purchase tickets, visit <http://www.parkinsonsct.org/gala>. If you can't make it to the event, but would still like to contribute to this important work, we also accept (and encourage!) [donations](#).

Thank you for your interest and support!

