

BPD Calendar

April 6th Punch for Parkinson's Fundraiser in New Britain

April 29th Unity Walk, NY Central Park

May 4th 11am-Support Group Meeting, Wethersfield Police Department

May 5th 10am, Boxing Blow-Out, East Hartford

June 1st Parkinson's Symposium, Wallingford

June 3rd 10am, Boxing Blow-Out, East Hartford

October 5th Parkinson's Gala, Aqua Turf, Plantsville



Beat Parkinson's Disease Today, presented an award to **Carolina McMahon**, owner of Armazem Fusion Fitness of Branford, CT. The award was in appreciation of Armazem's generosity of spirit by helping people with Parkinson's Disease work out together in a large, beautiful, and well equipped gym.

On Thursday, February 14th, Armazem hosted a bonus class taught by one of their knowledgeable and experienced instructors, Tommy Naughton. Tommy has a lifetime of experience with martial arts and boxing. Tommy's goal for the day was to teach the body mechanics of a punch. He demonstrated how the entire body is involved and created drills to help with understanding. The award was presented after this powerful

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[Beat PDers help with CureNow video](#)

On a beautiful almost Spring day, twenty-five Beat PDers took a field trip to the Colt Building in Hartford. The CureNow/PD initiative had asked us to speak for their video. Lunch was served and everyone wore matching t-shirts. We learned that when many quiet voices join together to form a team, they become one loud voice that can make a difference in this world.



April is Parkinson's Awareness Month

Join us in bringing awareness to friends and family. Join us at an event or LIKE us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

Punch for Parkinson's Fundraiser kicks off Parkinson's Awareness Month

Krista Hespeler has a vision. She remembers when she was a UConn student, she was part of a committee that had a "Husky-thon" where teams raise money for a charity and must dance for 24 hours. P4P has morphed into a version of the Husky-thon. The Main Event begins at 1pm with a pro boxer leading us in a mini boxing session and then Dr. DeMarcaida from Hartford Health Care will give everybody a pep talk. Many other speakers, exercises, and surprises are scheduled for the day. Along with educating people about the disease, we are raising money for the program directly. Funds are used for scholarships, new equipment and reducing fees for all participants. To learn more about the event, please go to:

<https://www.crowdrise.com/o/en/campaign/punchforparkinsonsjamboree>



Beat PDRs and CAP Members meet to shoot video to help fundraise for MIT research and the Cure Now:PD initiative.

New Schedule East Hartford Classes

(Begins March 18)

Mondays	8:00am	Silver	Janice
Tuesdays	9:00am 10:15am 6:00pm	Silver/Bronze Yoga PD Silver/Bronze	Michelle Linda Kaylee
Wednesdays	10:00am	All Levels	Janice
Thursdays	10:00am 11:15am 12:30pm	Gold/Silver Bronze Yoga PD	Michelle Michelle Donna
Friday	No Classes		
Saturday	9:00am 10:15am	Gold/Silver Bronze	Kaylee Kaylee

* Classes in Red require pre-registration by emailing inquire@beatpdtoday.com

*Must have 3 or more participants to have class

A Kid's Point of View

by Krista Hespeler

Parkinson's Disease - I never really knew much about it - why would I? Life was full of so much happiness, love, and brightness.

It was my first year of middle school; seventh grade. I remember only bits and pieces of those few months. I remember my parents going to doctors' appointments and not being home as much. I remember both my mom and dad being a little off. I remember that bright, sunny afternoon when I got off the bus.

As any seventh grader would, I was excited for school to be over that day. I was probably wrapped up in what I would be doing that afternoon; friends, phones, sports, homework, dinner. I remember walking off the bus and seeing my mom sitting on the bench waiting for me, as she always did. This time, though, she wasn't sifting through the mail with a grin from ear to ear. She was sitting next to my dad, and I immediately knew something was off; something didn't feel right. I could tell by their faces that what they were about to tell me was something serious.

I never thought that my family's life could have changed so drastically within moments. I remember the conversation starting with, "Mom and Dad have something we want to talk to you about." I remember the words, "Mom is sick, but she is okay" and "We are glad we found out what was wrong - Mom has Parkinson's Disease". I was only thirteen at the time, and just hearing the word "disease" - I was frightened, confused, nervous, and terrified. I had so many questions, yet there were so few answers at the time. I thought, in that moment, nothing but the worst.

At first it was all a secret, which I think is what took the biggest toll on me. It was a secret between my immediate family and some of our other family members. It wasn't something my family wanted to be talked about or shared. I couldn't talk to my best friends or teachers. It felt like there was this weight on my shoulders that I had to carry around everyday. Even amongst our immediate family, it was never really discussed.

Once some time started to pass, the "secret" was becoming more noticeable to family and friends. My mom slowly started telling people what was going on. It wasn't until freshman year of college that it really hit me hard.

Being away from home that year for the first time, even though I was at UConn, was one of the scariest and worst years of my life. I was terrified and only thought the worst could come. I wasn't home to see my mom every day, and I wasn't there to protect her, get her mind off of it, and make her feel better. I cried constantly and couldn't escape the fear. Through the support of close family and friends, I was able to talk through my feelings and think about the situation more positively. After twelve long years, I have worked hard to change my mindset, and it's all because of her.

Being positive, looking on the bright side, shifting perspectives, and never giving up were all mottos I grew up with in my household. We learned to never quit or give up; we always pushed through and believed in ourselves. I am proud of how my family has taken on this challenge full-force and turned it into something positive.

My mom could have let this diagnosis take over her life, her every day, her

daily moves; instead, she chose the complete opposite. She has founded an exercise and support program for all people with Parkinson's in Connecticut. This program has changed the lives of each client, both physically and mentally. She has spread her program across twelve locations and has over two hundred clients. Although it seems like her phone is always ringing off the hook, I still get excited knowing those phone calls are new clients turning to my mom for help. She can't say no. She won't say no. She welcomes every single person and wholeheartedly believes and knows her program will inspire, strengthen, and encourage her clients.

I feel vulnerable sharing my story, but I feel more proud and happy than anything. My mom is an inspiration, a fighter, a hero, and of course, a believer. She positively impacts every single person she encounters without even trying. Her motivation and drive towards finding a cure is what is so contagious.

Please help us find the cure by donating to the cause that not only affects me, but almost 10,000 families across the state and hundreds of thousands of families across the country. Parkinson's disease is not going away until we find the cure...and we will!

Help my mom and all those with this disease by donating at www.crowdrise.com/punchforparkinsons. Thank you for allowing me to share my story with you.

--Krista Hespeler



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