

PD GLADIATORS

Newsletter

January 2015

It has been a whirlwind year for PD Gladiators. After working with retired professional boxer Paul Delgado to bring a Boxing Training for PD program to Atlanta last January, we have been on a mission to focus the attention of people with PD and the medical community on the role of exercise in slowing the progression of PD and to make adapted community-based exercise programs available in the Atlanta metro area. Sparked by \$15,000 in grants from the National Parkinson Foundation from funds raised in their inaugural Moving Day Walk Atlanta, a community partnership with the YMCA of Metro Atlanta and additional sponsorships by the American Parkinson Disease Association—Georgia Chapter,

the Georgia Parkinson's Association and Ability Rehab, we launched the PD Gladiators Metro Atlanta Fitness Network over the summer.

By the end of this month, this affiliation of independent fitness instructors, the YMCA of Metro Atlanta, personal trainers and other support personnel will *offer over 40 weekly group exercise classes* for people with Parkinson's and their care partners throughout the metro Atlanta area. These instructors have been trained by experts to adapt many different types of exercises for the specific needs of people with PD. We know of no other metropolitan area with this extensive a network of programs dedicated to people with PD, and if we don't use it, we'll lose it!

This issue of our newsletter will be focused on introducing you to the Network and the people who want to help every Atlantan with PD design an exercise program that is effective, fun and sustainable. We hope you are inspired by our programs, the articles and the neuroscience to adopt the Gladiator spirit and start the New Year off with a resolution to battle through all the reasons not to exercise as vigorously as you can. Keep fighting!

Featured PD Gladiator



Dunwoody resident Bob Negri was diagnosed with PD 17 years ago, at age 50, but is a regular participant in the PD Gladiators Boxing Training program and maintains an active lifestyle. He paces himself when fatigue is a challenge but works out every day, anyway.

Bob attributes his slow progression to “not allowing myself to be a victim, taking charge of the disease by being proactive, getting in a support group, participating in research studies, and always having a positive, can-do attitude no matter how bad a day I'm having!”

Bob's great attitude and work habits make him the perfect role model for anyone newly-diagnosed with PD. Watching him pummel the bags in boxing class is inspirational!

Our Flagship Program: Livramento Delgado Boxing Foundation's Boxing Training for PD Program

The PD GLADIATORS Boxing Training for PD program is presented by Livramento Delgado Boxing Foundation (LDBF), a nonprofit organization, at Delgado Boxing, a gym operated in Sandy Springs by three-time international champion Paul "The Truth" Delgado. The program is a typical non-contact boxing training workout that provides intense exercise along with the intentional mind-body, goal-oriented coordination that may help slow the progression of Parkinson's disease. In each class, participants stretch and warm up, perform calisthenics and receive instruction in boxing training techniques using focus mitts, heavy bags, speed bags, and double-ended bags. It's a chance to get some vigorous exercise in a fun and social environment!



With over 30 people with PD and care partners on the active roster, this is by far our most popular Network class. The participants have become close-knit but are welcoming to all new fighters.

After attending the nationally-recognized Rock Steady Boxing Training Camp in Indianapolis last spring, Paul Delgado returned to Atlanta inspired to modify the program to help his PD Gladiators gear up for the fight of their lives. In May, LDBF expanded from a single one hour class on Saturdays to

three 75-minute classes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays at noon. Boxers

are not required to participate in every session, but attendance has been

growing, and the regulars are seeing real benefits in their symptoms and overall fitness. Goals for 2015 include adding metrics to track participants' progress and adding classes adapted for people with more advanced PD symptoms if there is sufficient interest from the PD community.

The program is presently open to men and women with PD and their care partners. There is no age limitation but participants should consult with their physicians before joining. Our current participants range from their 40s to well into their 70s! The program is not currently suitable for people who require an assistive device to stand or walk, but let Paul know if you want to be added to the list of people interested in a class adapted for people with more advanced PD symptoms.

To register for a free trial or for more information, visit the PD Gladiators website or call LDBF at (404) 856-0093.



Care Partners are encouraged to participate in all Network classes

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PD GLADIATORS METRO ATLANTA FITNESS SAMPLE NETWORK SCHEDULE

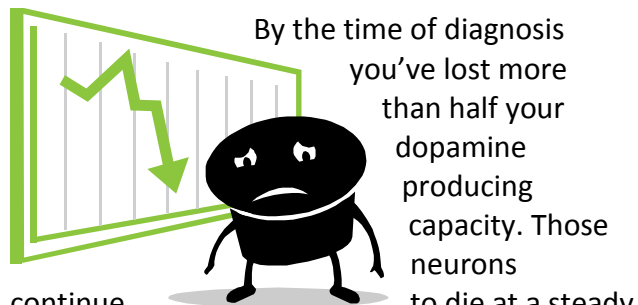
Week of January 26, 2015

	Classes	Instructor	Location	Facility
MON January 26				
11:00 am - 11:45 am	Total Body Fitness for PWPDP	Kimberly Rodriguez	Marietta	Robin's Nest Adult Day Care
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	East Lake	East Lake Family YMCA
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Lawrenceville	Tull-Gwinnett Family YMCA
12:00 pm - 1:15 pm	Boxing Training for PD	LDBF	Sandy Springs	Delgado Boxing
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm	Tailor-Made Yoga for PD	Cathy Hightower	East Cobb	Aloha to Aging
TUE January 27				
10:30 am - 11:15 am	Zumba Gold for PD	Kimberly Rodriguez	Dunwoody	Adult Day of Dunwoody
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Yoga for PD	Dawn Benson	Suwanee	Yoga Dawning Studio
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Decatur	South Dekalb Family YMCA
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Ageless Grace	Sandy Bramlett	Decatur	Decatur Recreation Center
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	East Cobb	McCleskey-East Cobb Family YMCA
1:00 pm - 1:45 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Alpharetta	Isakson-Alpharetta Family YMCA
1:15 pm - 1:45 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Buckhead	Sanders Family YMCA at Buckhead
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Tai Chi for PD (Standing)	Aloha to Aging	East Cobb	Aloha to Aging
2:15 pm - 3:15 pm	Tai Chi for PD (Standing)	Yellow River Center	Morningside	Morningside Presbyterian Church
WED January 28				
10:30am - 11:30am	Ageless Grace	Lori Trachtenberg	Brookhaven	Briarwood Park Community Center
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	East Lake	East Lake Family YMCA
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Tai Chi for PD (Standing)	Yellow River Center	Decatur	The Regency House
12:00 pm - 1:15 pm	Boxing Training for PD	LDBF	Sandy Springs	Delgado Boxing
1:00 pm - 1:45 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Decatur	Decatur Family YMCA
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Newnan	Summit Family YMCA
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	General Fitness for PD	Maureen McCord	Tucker	Northlake Church of Christ
THU January 29				
10:30 am - 11:15 am	Zumba Gold for PD	Kimberly Rodriguez	Dunwoody	Adult Day of Dunwoody
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Ageless Grace - Trial Class	Maureen McCord	Johns Creek	The Cohen Home
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Tai Chi for PD (Standing)	Yellow River Center	Dunwoody	Dunwoody Pines
12:15 pm - 1:15 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Newnan	Summit Family YMCA
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	East Cobb	McCleskey-East Cobb Family YMCA
1:00 pm - 1:45 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Alpharetta	Isakson-Alpharetta Family YMCA
1:15 pm - 2:00 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Norcross	Fowler Family YMCA
1:15 pm - 2:15 pm	Ageless Grace	Sandy Bramlett	Druid Hills	OLLI @ Emory, Executive Park
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Fit Body and Relaxed Mind	Karen Sullivan	Decatur	Sherwood Chiropractic
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Tai Chi for PD (Seated)	Aloha to Aging	East Cobb	Aloha to Aging
FRI January 30				
10:15 am - 11:15 am	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	SE Atlanta	Villages at Carver Family YMCA
11:15 am - 12:15 pm	Tai Chi for PD (Seated)	Yellow River Center	Decatur	The Regency House
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Lawrenceville	Tull-Gwinnett Family YMCA
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	SW Atlanta	Andrew & Walter Young Family YMCA
11:45 am - 12:45 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Cumming	Forsyth County Family YMCA
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Parkinson's Movement Class	YMCA Staff	Dunwoody	Cowart/Ashford-Dunwoody Family YMCA
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Tai Chi for PD	Yellow River Center	Snellville	Centerville Community Center
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Fit Body and Relaxed Mind	Karen Sullivan	Druid Hills	PowerLady Gym
SAT January 31				
12:00 pm - 1:15 pm	Boxing Training for PD	LDBF	Sandy Springs	Delgado Boxing

[To view an up-to-date schedule or learn more details about any of these classes, including how to sign up, please visit our website at www.pdgladiators.org and select "Metro Atlanta Fitness Network" from the navigation bar](http://www.pdgladiators.org)

The Very Real Cost of Denial, Apathy and Complacency: Don't Wait for the (Sinemet) Honeymoon to be Over!

When you're first diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, it's typical to go through the stages of grief. Without counseling, many view the diagnosis as a death sentence, with nothing to do but take medicine to mask the symptoms until the disease progression robs you of your mobility and independence. But the latest scientific research reveals a very real cost to delaying a more proactive approach to your treatment.



continue

Naturally, the best time to start exercising is as soon as possible after diagnosis, before fatigue and mobility issues make it harder (but not impossible!).

The PD Gladiators Metro Atlanta Fitness Network focuses on group exercise adapted for

people with PD because (a) the classes are targeted towards PWP's particular impairments, (b) there's a sense of camaraderie that develops among the group because the participants are fighting a common battle that is not completely understood by others--a support system many find more natural than in a formal support group setting, (c) many PWP's don't feel as uncomfortable if they start exhibiting symptoms than they would in a general population class, and (d) PWP's are more likely to adhere to their exercise programs because they look forward to seeing their new friends in class.

Network group exercise classes are offered by independent fitness instructors and most metro Atlanta YMCA branches. The YMCA also offers an excellent, free exercise adherence program called THE COACH APPROACH (*See the article on the PD Gladiators at the Y program for more on this.*) But if you can design an exercise program on your own (or with the help of a physical therapist and/or a Network certified personal trainer) and have the discipline to stick with it, that's fantastic.

But whatever your exercise preferences, don't delay! Unfortunately, the PD won't disappear and the neurons won't stop dying while you're on your Sinemet honeymoon or just going about the ordinary business of living while you're still relatively unimpaired. The best way to fight back is by creating an effective, fun and sustainable exercise routine and sticking to it.

The Neuroscience: Exercise May Offer Our Best Hope of Neuroprotection

The [Petzinger, Ahlskog and Farley & Hirsch](#) scientific articles on exercise, PD and neuroplasticity featured on our website suggest that actual changes in the brain resulting from exercise may slow progression, produce compensatory mechanisms to restore functions lost to PD impairments or even rejuvenate or regenerate lost neurons. *Exercise gives us hope that PWP's can take back some control from this terrible disease.* Vigorous aerobic exercise produces a brain chemical called brain-derived neurotrophic factors, which may create the ambiance for more finely-tuned, goal-directed activities--those that directly address the mobility, balance and coordination deficits we face--to burn new neural pathways that compensate for those deficits. This suggests the ideal exercise routine for a PWP is consistent with the American College of Sports Medicine's guidelines, *combining* optimal amounts of cardiorespiratory, neuromotor, resistance and flexibility activities.

PD Gladiators at the Y: Our Community Partnership with the YMCA of Metro Atlanta

The YMCA of Metro Atlanta and PD Gladiators want to give people with Parkinson's disease a different outcome by offering specialized programs to help them to live better. Access to effective, fun and sustainable activities and programs will be offered at several local YMCAs.



The new [PD Gladiators at the Y](#) partnership consists of special member rates for PD Gladiators, their families or care partners (*see box below*). At select YMCAs, members will have access to free group exercise classes adapted for people with Parkinson's. By the end of January, 13 branches will be offering 18 weekly Parkinson's Movement Classes (*see the schedule on page 3*) taught by instructors who have completed MDT Education Solution's "Community Exercise for PD" training class. These classes are designed for individuals at all stages of PD wanting to work on

cardiovascular fitness, balance, strength and flexibility. Movements can be done standing or in a chair and at an intensity level self-selected by each participant. Members of any metro Atlanta YMCA branch can attend classes at all branches.

If you have any doubts about joining the YMCA before trying a Parkinson's Movement Class, any branch will offer a free day pass. You can get a pass for the day of the class and just show up at the start time. Of course, you can also try other group exercise programs, water aerobics and the fitness equipment.

The YMCA is also a great idea for people with PD because the Y offers free one-on-one instruction, coaching and monitoring utilizing an exercise support process called THE COACH APPROACH® available to all Y members. They've had proven success with adherence to an exercise program with this process, and we're working with their wellness staff to make them familiar with PD-related issues. They'll also work with physical therapists to implement a discharge plan.

And this partnership is just getting started.

"The Y can help to affect positive change for people with Parkinson's disease and their families," says Kristin McEwen, YMCA of Metro Atlanta group vice president. "This group can come together in local communities to learn, support each other and gain access to additional resources like specialized Y wellness coaches. We are planning additional activities and classes for greater benefit as part of this wellness partnership."

Reduced Monthly Membership Rates at the Y for PD Gladiators

Young Adult: \$30

Adult: \$45

Two Adults: \$65

Senior Adult: \$43

Family: \$71

Senior Family: \$60

To take advantage of these monthly rates, visit the PD Gladiators website at www.pdgladiators.org/pd-gladiators-at-the-y/ and select the **Get Started** button.

Standard joining fees (\$69 individual, \$99 family) will be waived for new members signing up in January—don't delay!

The Network's Heart and Soul: Our Independent Fitness Instructors and Certified Personal Trainers



Dawn Benson operates the Yoga Dawning studio in Suwanee and offers a Yoga for PD class on Tuesdays at 11am.



Maureen McCord is a personal trainer and teaches General Fitness for PD in Tucker at the Northlake Church of Christ on Wednesdays at 2pm. She is offering an Ageless Grace trial at The Cohen Home in Johns Creek on 1/29. Join her if you want this class to be regularly scheduled!



Sandy Bramlett is a certified Ageless Grace® Educator with over 30 years' experience as a fitness instructor. She offers three Ageless Grace classes in the Decatur and Druid Hills areas. Her enthusiasm is catchy!



Penny Parker is a certified personal trainer with experience working with people with PD.



Mary Jo Falvey is a certified personal trainer with experience working with people with PD. She is the founder of Pilates Tutor Studio in Marietta.



Kimberly Rodriguez instructs Zumba™ Gold for PD in Dunwoody on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30am and Total Body Fitness for PD at the Robin's Nest in Marietta on Mondays at 11am. She is also PD Gladiators' Chief Program Development Officer.



Cathy Hightower teaches Tailor-Made Yoga for PD at 2:30pm at Aloha to Aging in Marietta, giving her students the option of working from mat or chair.



Karen Sullivan teaches a Fit Body Relaxed Mind class for PWP's at Sherwood Chiropractic in Decatur on Thursdays at 1:30pm and at PowerLady Gym (women only) on Fridays at 1pm.



Livramento Delgado Boxing Foundation operates the PD Gladiators Boxing Training for PD program, the most intense workout on our schedule. The class meets Mondays,

Wednesdays and Saturdays at noon at Delgado Boxing Gym in Sandy Springs and is led by retired professional boxer Paul Delgado.



Lori Trachtenberg is a Certified Ageless Grace® Educator offering Ageless Grace® classes in Brookhaven and Vinings.



Yellow River Center and **Aloha to Aging** operate Tai Chi for PD workshops for people with PD and their care partners in

Decatur, Dunwoody, East Cobb, Morningside and Snellville. These workshops aim to make Tai Chi an integral part of a person's lifestyle.

All instructors and personal trainers who are members of the PD Gladiators Metro Atlanta Fitness Network have taken a PD-specific training course like "Community Exercise for Parkinson's Disease" offered by MDT Education Solutions or the Rock Steady Boxing training camp.

MDT Education Solutions: Adapting Group Exercise Programs for People with PD

When PD Gladiators learned that it had been awarded \$15,000 in grants from the National Parkinson Foundation in June to subsidize and promote safe, fun and effective group exercise programs for people with PD, one of the first decisions our Board made was to rely on a new company, MDT Education Solutions, LLC, to provide us with a pool of instructors who understood that “safe” and “effective” were priority one. Why did we put our trust in a new venture? Because the founders (and trainers) behind MDT are Drs. Madeleine Hackney, Doherty Riebesell and Tricia Creel, the three most dedicated advocates of exercise as a primary therapy for PD in Atlanta. Dr. Hackney is an Emory researcher known for her Tango and PD studies, and Drs. Riebesell and Creel are physical therapists specializing in the treatment of neurologic disorders, with an emphasis on PD.

The three experts were convinced by the emerging research that people with PD benefit from many different types of exercise but recognized that when they finished physical therapy, it was often difficult for them to continue exercising on their own. Many were still not comfortable exercising in a general population setting, and there were very few PD-specific exercise options in the Atlanta area.

“Many group fitness instructors and personal trainers had very limited knowledge of the specific movement impairments that PD can cause and how exercise can help,” Dr. Hackney notes. “An MDT-trained instructor knows how to adapt exercises for the specific needs of people with PD. That includes helping select the

“We have all seen first-hand the tremendous benefits that exercise can bring. We very much want to share that hope with as many people as we possibly can.”

“An MDT-trained instructor knows how to adapt exercises for the specific needs of people with PD. That includes helping select the appropriate intensity level, keeping everyone safe, and addressing specific movement impairments.”

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MDT Education Solutions held its first training course, “Community Exercise for People with Parkinson's Disease,” in August, and several graduates have joined the PD Gladiators Metro Atlanta Fitness Network as instructors and personal trainers. A second course was held in November at the YMCA of Metro Atlanta’s request to train instructors for the PD Gladiators at the Y program, among others. Overall, MDT has trained almost 60 fitness professionals how to work with people with PD!

“The most impressive thing about the participants in our training classes was how quickly they came to care about the Parkinson's community,” Dr. Creel says. “They understood that this is a very special group of people who will benefit greatly from the services they offer. They left the training inspired and excited.”

But the founders of MDT recognize that while making high quality, accessible exercise options available is an important step, that alone is not enough to sustain the exercise infrastructure they have encouraged. They see the biggest challenge faced by the community as helping people with PD overcome barriers to starting and adhering to an exercise program.

“We have all seen first-hand the tremendous benefits that exercise can bring,” Dr. Riebesell says. “We very much want to share that hope with as many people as we possibly can. Unfortunately, without participation many of these wonderful exercise classes will not continue to be available.”

The Network Is Built—Will You Come?

The PD Gladiators Metro Atlanta Fitness Network was built to help people with PD and their care partners take back control of their disease by creating safe and supportive places to exercise. It was built to create hope.

The emerging neuroscience gives us reason to hope. We dare you to read the exercise studies linked on our website and conclude otherwise.

National and local PD organizations support that hope. Our sponsors are providing fiscal, promotional and educational assistance to encourage people with PD to participate in the



vigorous and varied exercise our network instructors and personal trainers offer.

The YMCA of Metro Atlanta supports that hope. They have

invested in training instructors and Parkinson's Movement Classes in 13 branches, asking only that we educate the PD and medical communities about the need for people with PD to participate in these programs.

The “stars” of our PD community support that hope. Drs. Hackney, Riebesell and Creel took time from their busy research and physical therapy practices to organize MDT Education Solutions and train (and inspire) fitness instructors and personal trainers to create adapted exercise programs for people with PD.

And with the awareness our expanding Network has created, doctors and therapists are focusing on the research and becoming believers, too. Dr. Barry McCasland has been an early supporter of the Boxing Training for PD program, and The Emory Clinic's Dr. Jorge Juncos recently joined our Board.

The Network is built. Everyone believes in it. Will you come?

As an organization run by people with PD and those who care for and treat us, we understand that our disease often makes it hard to exercise in insidious ways. That's why we offer services to address barriers to exercise and make it as easy as possible for you to join us.

Low-cost Classes. We subsidize many of our affiliated instructors' classes and encourage free trials and low prices. The YMCA offers PD Gladiators reduced membership rates and financial assistance to anyone in need. Let us know if you need additional help.

Free Functional Assessments. Ability Rehab is offering PD Gladiators a free functional assessment by their physical therapists to help you decide appropriate exercise for you. Call 678-298-9484 to make an appointment.

Online Reminders. If you use our online reservation system, the software will automatically send email reminders for scheduled classes or any cancellations.

Gladiator Coaching. We offer optional assignment of a “Gladiator Coach”—an experienced person with PD or care partner who can help guide you through our programs, find community PD resources and offer encouragement and tips for living well with PD.

PD Gladiators Facebook Support Group. Our “secret” Facebook group connects Georgia PWPs to share tips about community resources—exercise programs, support groups, clinical trials—but also create a place to address personal concerns or vent. Contact us if you're on Facebook and want to join.



Membership is limited to Georgia PWPs and care partners.

Information shared in the group will not be visible to other Facebook friends.

Education. Website articles about living with PD and crafting a personal exercise routine.

Our Sponsors



Retirement Communities and Businesses Supporting Our Affiliated Instructors

Many of PD Gladiators' affiliated independent fitness instructors rely upon donated exercise space by retirement communities, houses of worship and other metro Atlanta businesses. On behalf of our affiliates and the PD community, we would like to thank them for their generous support and encourage you to consider them for your healthy living needs.

[Adult Day of Dunwoody](#) (Dunwoody)

[Aloha to Aging](#) (East Cobb)

[Centerville Community Center](#) (Snellville)

[Dunwoody Pines Retirement Community](#) (Dunwoody)

[Morningside Presbyterian Church](#) (Midtown)

[Northlake Church of Christ](#) (Tucker)

[The Regency House Retirement Community](#) (Decatur)

[Robin's Nest Adult Day Care](#) (Marietta)

[Sherwood Chiropractic Center](#) (Decatur)