

For Immediate Release

PD Gladiators Merges with the Parkinson's Foundation

Expanding Reach in Greater Atlanta Parkinson's Community

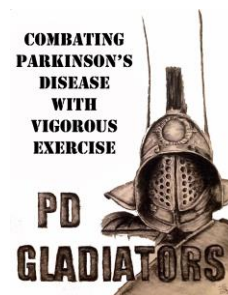
ATLANTA – August 1, 2018—PD Gladiators, Inc., an Atlanta-based nonprofit organization focused on combatting Parkinson's disease (PD) with vigorous exercise, has merged with the Parkinson's Foundation (PF), a non-profit organization whose mission is to make life better for people with PD worldwide through expert care and research.

Founded in 2013, PD Gladiators promotes the role of exercise in slowing the progression of PD using a two-pronged approach. The organization manages a network of 60 weekly community-based exercise programs for people with PD in greater Atlanta and provides education and outreach to the medical community about the emerging body of research indicating that exercise can change the brain and positively impact PD symptoms.

“PD Gladiators’ focus on encouraging a proactive, hopeful approach to managing PD from diagnosis is consistent with our mission to ensure the best possible outcomes for people and families affected by the disease now and in the future,” said John Lehr, president and CEO of the Parkinson's Foundation. “We are proud to welcome PD Gladiators into the Parkinson's Foundation family and expand our presence throughout Georgia.”

PD Gladiators will join the current Parkinson's Foundation efforts in Atlanta and will now be known as Parkinson's Foundation Georgia, part of the Foundation's southeastern region. The combined entity will continue to operate the PD Gladiators Metro Atlanta Fitness Network, as well as the grassroots fundraising program—Moving Day Atlanta, A Walk for Parkinson's. In addition, Parkinson's Foundation Georgia will continue to increase awareness and offer free educational resources to the Parkinson's community.

Parkinson's Foundation Georgia will be led by former PD Gladiators Executive Director Annie Long, who will serve as the Community Development Director and Celeste Tennant, Parkinson's Foundation Community Development Manager with an active advisory council chaired by PD Gladiators founder Larry Kahn. Before joining PD Gladiators, Annie Long helped launch the first Moving Day Walk in Atlanta.



“This is a tremendous step forward for our organization, allowing us to continue providing vital services to the PD community in Atlanta, while ensuring the sustainability and growth of those resources,” Kahn said. “And the Parkinson’s Foundation is a powerhouse that has the network to take what we’ve done in Atlanta and develop best practices for community-based exercise programs nationwide.”

“We will remain focused on encouraging clinicians to *clearly and convincingly* recommend exercise and physical therapy to their patients and on breaking down barriers to exercise faced by people with PD,” Long added. “We want to provide them with the tools—classes, motivation and social support—to enhance their quality of life for many years.”

For more information about Parkinson’s Foundation Georgia, visit Parkinson.org/Georgia.

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About the Parkinson’s Foundation

The Parkinson’s Foundation makes life better for people with Parkinson’s disease by improving care and advancing research toward a cure. In everything we do, we build on the energy, experience and passion of our global Parkinson’s community. For more information, visit www.parkinson.org or call (800) 4PD-INFO (473-4636).

About Parkinson’s Disease

Affecting nearly one million Americans and 10 million worldwide, Parkinson’s disease is the second-most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer’s and is the 14th-leading cause of death in the United States. It is associated with a progressive loss of motor control (e.g., shaking or tremor at rest and lack of facial expression), as well as non-motor symptoms (e.g., depression and anxiety). There is no cure for Parkinson’s and 60,000 new cases are diagnosed each year in the United States alone.

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