



Photo credit: Emily Griffiths

FALL 2021

Parkinson Wellness Projects

Welcome Back!

To anyone who has not heard from us for a while and everyone who has been taking part in our Zoom classes online, we look forward to seeing you again.

We are delighted to announce that select classes at Parkinson Wellness Projects (PWP) will resume on **Tuesday, September 7th**.

To ensure your health and safety against COVID-19, every precaution is being taken. All of our instructors, staff and volunteers are fully vaccinated. The equipment will be sanitized between every class, and all high-touch surfaces are sanitized regularly throughout the day.

We are also taking steps to ensure that all of our in-person participants are fully vaccinated, and providing alternatives for those who aren't. The PWP Living Room is closed for the time being until we are able to safely gather socially.

This past year was a time of change for everyone. PWP and HeadWay – Victoria Epilepsy and Parkinson's Centre amalgamated, transforming our centre into a one-stop resource shop serving Greater Victoria and beyond, and uniting our Parkinson's communities. As a single entity, we now offer a stronger voice for you, devoting more time and resources to our programs. Whichever side of PWP you have joined from, we hope that you will all find what you need under our roof.

In November, as part of these changes, PWP hired Bailey Martin as our new Program and Education Manager. We are pleased to announce that after organizing our programming through the amalgamation and overseeing our re-opening process, Bailey has been appointed Executive Director of Parkinson Wellness Projects. As Executive Director, Bailey will manage the day-to-day operations, reporting as always to our tireless Board of Directors.


Because of your support, PWP has weathered the challenges of the past year, and we were able to continue to provide programming when it was most needed. You've helped our community continue to thrive and grow, and we look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together in the years to come. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for being here for us, so that we can be here for you. 

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PWP
Parkinson Wellness Projects



Executive Director, Bailey Martin

Fall Welcome from Bailey Martin

I am fortunate to be part of an amazing team, all of whom are instrumental in the success of PWP.

Despite the fact that the main interaction I've had with most of you is through my laptop screen (thank you for being patient as I navigated the Zoom world), I have felt extremely welcomed and learned so much. I hope by sharing some of my knowledge through the virtual seminars, you have learned a thing or two as well.

While the pandemic has been challenging for all of us, I feel grateful that we were able to continue with our exercise classes and extend our reach beyond Victoria, beyond Vancouver Island, even beyond

Canada. At the end of the day, regardless of your postal code or zip code, we are a community, bringing together people with Parkinson's and providing you with the tools and resources to help live your best life is what I will continue to strive to do.

I look forward to what the next ten months have in store and I want to thank you for bringing me along on this journey with you. 🌀



Ten months?! Somehow ten months have passed since I joined Parkinson Wellness Projects, and what an adventure it has been. I am honoured and thrilled to be the newly appointed Executive Director, and I am excited to help develop an already outstanding organization.

Zooming Along

The pandemic disrupted everyone's lives, but with your help, we were able to adapt to serve you. We set up Zoom exercise, dance, and music classes. The HeadWay staff transitioned counselling to video chats and helped support groups set up virtual sessions. We continue to add PWP newcomers via Zoom, completing an average of eight virtual new assessments per month. The total

numbers are now hovering around 300 participants, with over 110 participants attending our classes each week.

As PWP returns to in-person classes, we want to assure you that our Zoom instruction remains a priority. Many of you shared how much you enjoyed being able to attend classes even when getting to the centre was difficult. Because of this, Zoom fitness classes

will remain available even after we return to in-person classes. We may not be able to provide every class, but we will provide as many as possible.

We'll keep you updated about classes available over Zoom as we continue our transition into the fall. Thank you to everyone who has helped us to keep our classes running throughout the pandemic with your generous donations, and to everyone who logged in and worked out! 🌀

Our smiling PWP instructors



Photo credits: Emily Griffiths

We're Growing With You!




The previous year has also been a time of new collaborations and outreach to our broader community. Early this year, PWP started negotiations to share space with Naomi Casiro of Neurofit BC, the province's leading physiotherapist specializing in people with Parkinson's disease. We have now signed agreements and are ready to start working together! This partnership with Neurofit BC will allow PWP to expand our range of classes and it will transform our space into something unique to in all of Canada.

Naomi Casiro is a kinesiologist and physiotherapist focused on neuro rehab to help people with Parkinson's. She founded NeuroFit BC to better serve the Parkinson's population and as a platform on which to educate other health professionals. Naomi now spends her time teaching classes, treating clients and offering courses to health professionals about the incredible impact of exercise and neuroplasticity on those living with Parkinson's. Naomi is also an adjunct

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professor at the University of British Columbia where she teaches up-and-coming physiotherapists the ins and outs of treating Parkinson's disease through exercise and physiotherapy.

This expansion would not have been possible without the generous support of Rotary Victoria-Harbourside, whose help allowed us to forge ahead and develop our new space, and provide a wider range of services and offer specialized programs. We look forward to showing you all of these new programs through the coming year.


If you have questions for Naomi, she can be reached at [604-345-9318](tel:604-345-9318), or by email at Info@neurofitbc.com. 

Fundamentals of Functional Movement



Naomi Casiro, Fundamentals of Functional Movement instructor

One of the new programs that we're excited to be offering as part of our new expansion is Fundamentals of Functional Movement, which Naomi Casiro will be personally teaching to PWP participants.

Fundamentals of Functional Movement is a program designed by Naomi Casiro for people with Parkinson's. This exclusive exercise-based treatment program uses gait training, stability and mobility flows, global movements and falls training to improve function and help participants move better than they ever thought they could. These classes teach movements that can then be practiced at home, and we look forward to bringing them to our community. 




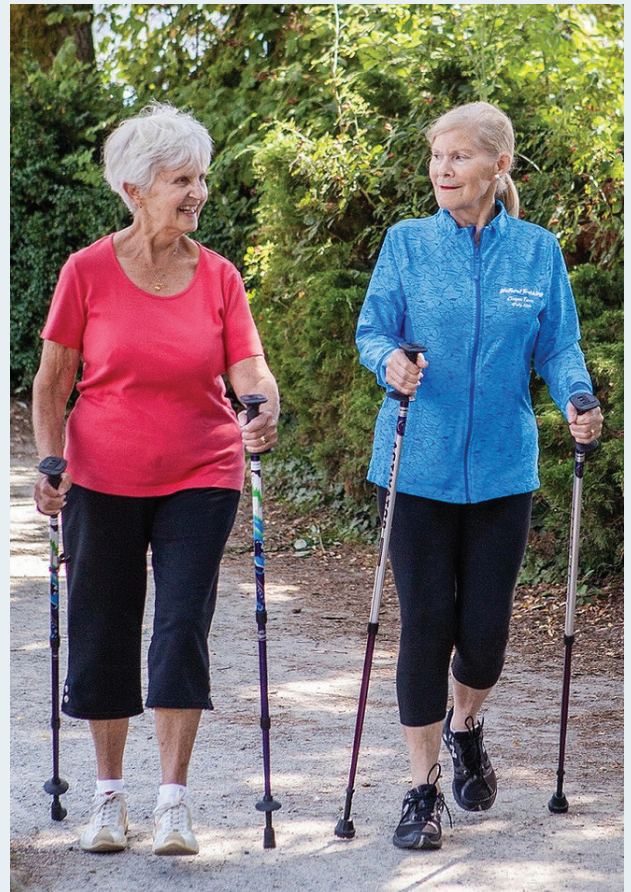
Welcoming the Tulip Circle

One of the newest initiatives at Parkinson Wellness Projects is our inaugural Tulip Circle. The Tulip Circle celebrates individuals who have decided to make a long-term commitment to

Parkinson's treatment, which will help PWP keep its services free for everyone who needs them. Members of the Tulip Circle have pledged to support PWP in their wills, providing an investment that will keep our organization active for generations to come.

The inaugural members of the Tulip Circle include Dave Douglas, Sukhi Rai, Andy Robinson, Terry Gorsuch, and Bill Peterson. If you have decided to leave a legacy to PWP, we would love to know about it so that we can induct you into the Tulip Circle as well! You can remain anonymous, or join our other Tulip Circle members for special get-togethers.

If you're interested in becoming a Circle member, drop us a line and we will be happy to let you know how to take part. 




Alf Todd is Riding High for Parkinson's



with his young sons, and later with his daughter. After being diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2007, Alf's daughter, Cindy, helped him to organize the very first Ride for Parkinson's in 2011, joined by seventeen other riders who helped raise nearly \$20,000 for Parkinson's research and support. Alf has been running rides with his family, friends and fellow cyclists ever since, and has raised over \$100,000 for Parkinson's services in the Greater Victoria area.

This year, Alf and his fellow riders covered over 50km during a three-hour ride to Sidney and back! This year's ride was sponsored by Paladin Labs, a pharmaceutical company focused on acquiring or licensing emerging pharmaceuticals for the Canadian market. Paladin were touched by Alf's dedication and drive, and were

excited to be the title sponsors of the event.

Parkinson Wellness Projects is grateful to have supporters like Alf, who are willing to work hard to make events like these a reality. If you're interested in putting together your own fundraising event, let us know! We can give you information on how to make events like the Ride for Parkinson's a reality. 

Alf has been running rides with his family, friends & fellow cyclists ever since, & has raised over \$100,000 for Parkinson's services in the Greater Victoria area.

Counselling



Photo credits: Emily Griffiths

PWP counsellor, Dr. Linda Franchi

Well-being isn't just about keeping your body fit. Studies have shown that mental health is a critical aspect of managing Parkinson's disease. Depression and emotional changes are a major symptom for many people with PD. Because of this, providing mental and emotional counselling is a key service that PWP

Linda strongly believes that life is best when we feel connected to ourselves, each other and our communities.

Depression and emotional changes are a major symptom for many people with PD. Counselling is a key service that PWP is proud to offer.


is proud to offer. This summer we were honoured to be joined by Dr. Linda Franchi, our new counsellor.

After three decades serving the deaf and hard of hearing communities in a variety of leadership and counselling capacities in Vancouver, Linda relocated to Victoria in 2020. She holds a PhD from Simon Fraser University, examining accessible communication, family and community relationships and end of life care. She is a certified Death Doula and Advance Care Planner.

Inspired by the human spirit's ability to transcend enormous challenges and achieve monumental success when quality, accessible services are created and delivered in communities of caring, Linda strongly believes that life is best when we feel connected

to ourselves, each other and our communities. She strives to assist her clients in creating and sustaining those connections.

You don't need a special diagnosis to get counselling – anyone who has Parkinson's, or who is a caregiver or immediate family member of someone with Parkinson's, is eligible. Like all of our services, counselling is funded by generous support from donors and is completely free of charge to participants. PWP provides counselling both one-on-one and for family or group sessions.

If you would like to know more about counselling, or schedule an appointment, please call us at the office at 250-360-6800, and we will be happy to assist you. 



Supporter Story: Terry Gorsuch

Meet PWP participant, volunteer, and founding member Terry Gorsuch!

After Terry was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2010, he learned that exercise was important for slowing the progression of the condition. In 2012, he signed up at Panorama Recreation Centre for the only program in the Victoria area designed for Parkinson's patients.


At that time, physiotherapist Jillian Carson was seeking volunteers

to help her organize exercise classes designed for Parkinson's. Along with Jillian, Diana Satok, and Sandra and Gil Tourigny, Terry and a small number of other people formed Parkingo, the forerunner of Parkinson Wellness Projects. Exercise classes provided essential physical movement, socialization and mutual support.

Terry and his spouse also attended monthly support meetings organized by HeadWay – Victoria Epilepsy and Parkinson's Society. These meetings provided educational seminars, shared experiences and resources for people with Parkinson's and their caregivers. The Sydney Sharing Group was formed under the HeadWay umbrella and Terry acted as co-facilitator when the regular host was unavailable. During amalgamation discussions, Terry felt that the services should remain local and joined HeadWay members in campaigning for a local amalgamation with PWP, even volunteering to serve as a HeadWay board member. He worked along with the other board members to successfully amalgamate HeadWay and PWP, under the name Parkinson Wellness Projects.

When COVID-19 closed the PWP gym, Terry started a once a week Zoom meeting called Chat and Laughter. It has helped maintain connection and socialization for PWP attendees.

One of Terry's favourite quotes is "The only good thing about Parkinson's is that I have met so many interesting and wonderful people."

Terry believes having access to these services has helped slow the progression of his PD. He is grateful to all those who have dedicated their time and effort to make this happen. 

"The only good thing about Parkinson's is that I have met so many interesting and wonderful people."


– Terry Gorsuch

An Appeal to You

Here at Parkinson Wellness Projects, we are proud of what we've accomplished. In just a few short years, we have become a facility unique to Canada, bringing together, under one roof, physical, emotional, and social support for people with Parkinson's. We now serve over 300 registered participants, including over 120 people in our fitness classes each week, four peer-led support groups, and both one-on-one and group counselling.

It is critical to us that everyone who can use this support is able to receive it, regardless of age, race, creed, gender, or financial ability, which is why we are so adamant that services must be offered free of charge.

Right now, PWP does not get any government funding; all of our operations are funded through a mixture of donations from our community and from private foundations and corporations.

If you haven't already done so, please consider making a donation today. To everyone who has supported us through your donations of money and items, your time as volunteers, and helping us to raise awareness of PWP and Parkinson's, thank you. Your trust and efforts have allowed PWP to help hundreds of people with Parkinson's across the region, and to grow and thrive during a difficult time. 



Free of charge to participants is not the same as free of charge to us:

- **Fitness classes for one participant for one month cost over \$100.**
- **A typical series of counselling sessions for a single person costs \$250.**
- **Licensing fees and training cost up to \$1,000 a year per program.**

Photo credit: Emily Griffiths



Thank You to All Our Monthly Donors

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If you'd like to learn more about Parkinson Wellness Projects, or if you'd just like to say hello, we would love to hear from you. We can be reached at:

Tel: 250-360-6800

Email: info@parkinsonwellness.ca

www.parkinsonwellness.ca