

INSPIRE

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 1

BOSTON
MEDICAL
CENTER

EXCEPTIONAL CARE. WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

Helping Jane Regain Her Rhythm

Diagnosed with Parkinson's at age 60, BMC helps Jane step into her new life as a dance instructor



Jane credits her BMC physicians for encouraging her to pursue her passion for dance despite her Parkinson's disease diagnosis.

Dance instructor Jane McDonald stands in front of a wall of windows arching her arms above her head to demonstrate a pose. Her dancers imitate her with varying degrees of success. Some stand, some sit and others use walkers and wheelchairs. They all have Parkinson's disease, also known as PD, a neurodegenerative disorder that has robbed them of the fluid muscle movements that most people take for granted.

For Jane, who also has PD, teaching this class is the culmination of a five-year journey to find a foothold back in her former life as a dancer. An indomitable spirit who wears tinsel in her gray-haired bob, Jane knew she needed an equally powerful ally to help her combat the disease when she was first diagnosed at age 60.

“I wanted to go somewhere that had a specific focus on PD. I've heard some doctors will say ‘try this medication, and we'll see you in a year.’ That was not for me. I wanted hands-on care.”
— Jane McDonald

Jane found that ally at Boston Medical Center with clinical neurologist Anna DePold Hohler, MD. One of only nine Advanced Centers for Research in the country, as recognized by the American Parkinson's Disease Association (APDA), BMC offers advanced treatments and access to clinical trials offered nowhere else in the region.

“When I met Dr. Hohler, we just clicked. I have great respect for what she knows, her warmth and caring, always positive energy and attitude,” explained Jane, who travels from her

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SOLOMONT CENTER SETS NEW STANDARD IN BOSTON



BMC's new simulation center provides state-of-the-art medical training to strengthen coordination of care among specialties.

The mannequin, representing an 89-year-old woman, is lying on a stretcher in the preoperative area prior to surgical repair of a hip fracture. The anesthesia resident and preoperative nurse are conducting their final checks when the mannequin states, “I can't breathe.” The nurse had started the patient's antibiotic medication prior to entering the operating room. The patient's heart rate increases from 60 to 150 and her blood pressure drops to 50. When the resident listens to her

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HELPING JANE REGAIN HER RHYTHM

home in Orleans to BMC's satellite office in South Weymouth for her outpatient visits.

PD is caused when dopamine-producing cells die inexplicably in the brain hindering the body's ability to control movement. Currently there is no known cure. At BMC's Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center, the goal is to provide patients with the best quality of life by slowing the disease's progression through a combination of medications and physical, occupational and speech therapies. BMC neurologists monitor the progress of their patients closely through frequent outpatient visits. In addition, specialized programs offer treatments for complications of the autonomic nervous system and deep brain stimulation to treat a variety of disabling PD symptoms.

Jane was lucky to be diagnosed relatively early in the progression of her disease. Under the guidance of Dr. Hohler, she started a combination

of medications that minimized her symptoms, allowing her to return to her normal day-to-day activities. But for Jane, what mattered most was continuing to dance, one of her greatest passions before Parkinson's took away the quick movements of her feet. Dr. Hohler was eager to support Jane's desire.

"Exercise is essential to the management of Parkinson's disease. Recent studies indicate that exercise can have neuroprotective benefits. Optimization of medications and exercise regimens can result in a longer and better quality of life for Parkinson's disease patients," explained Dr. Hohler.

When Jane learned of a dance curriculum for PD patients developed by the prestigious Mark Morris Dance Group in Brooklyn, New York, she traveled to Brooklyn to attend a Dance for PD[®] instructors' workshop. The experience was life changing. "I spent much of the course crying tears of joy because I knew this is exactly what I wanted to do," she remembered.

Jane knew that the Parkinson's community on Cape Cod could

greatly benefit from such a program and she also knew Dr. Hohler and BMC staff would do whatever they could to help support her in making her dream a reality. Working closely with Cathi Thomas, MS, RN, program director of BMC's Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders Center, Jane applied for and was granted an APDA scholarship to build on her expertise as a dance teacher and bring a Dance for PD[®] program to Cape Cod.

Today, her Dance for PD[®] classes are held weekly at Council on Aging locations in Eastham and Orleans. They are filled by both dancers and caregivers, who are eager to dance, socialize and support each other through their illness.

"Every class I witness what could be considered miracles. The music never fails to inspire people to forget their PD and dance," said Jane. "Having PD has opened doors to some amazing experiences I would have never had otherwise. I feel incredibly lucky to have found Dr. Hohler and Boston Medical Center to help support me." ■

GRATEFUL PATIENT GIVES BACK



Parkinson's disease patient Ernest Selig and his wife, Rae, recently recently donated \$50,000 to BMC's Department of Neurology in honor of the wonderful care he received from the hospital's medical staff since his diagnosis.

The Selig's gift will help fund patient and family support services for neurology patients as well as fund ongoing education in the Parkinson's disease community.

The Seligs recently met with medical staff in BMC's new Shapiro Ambulatory Care Center. From left to right: Rae Selig, Marie Saint-Hilaire, MD, FRCPC, Ernest Selig, Anna D. Hohler, MD and Raymond James, RN. ■