

A Place of Hope and Care

Parkinson Place, a program of the Parkinson Research Foundation, offers education, free services and support for people diagnosed with Parkinson's and their care partners.

"I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease about two years ago," recalls Nomi Schneider. When Nomi and her husband, Barry, learned that she had Parkinson's, they began seeking out all the information they could find about the disease.



**PARKINSON
RESEARCH
FOUNDATION**



PHOTO COURTESY OF PARKINSON RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Nomi and Barry Schneider are so glad they found Parkinson Place, where they can be themselves and learn more about the disease.

The couple knew that although knowledge about the disease was important, they would also need emotional support to cope with this new challenge in their lives. Thankfully, Barry and Nomi found Parkinson Place, a program of the Parkinson Research Foundation.

"We found Parkinson Place quite by accident through a conversation at our daughter's restaurant between a prospective instructor and Marilyn Tait. We were encouraged to attend an exercise class with Kathi Sims for people with Parkinson's," Nomi says. "While there, we learned there's also dancing, Tai Chi, singing, and all kinds of exercises."

Barry adds, "We also learned that there are special event days and lectures as well as help for caregivers."

After trying that first exercise class, Nomi was hooked. Barry and Nomi soon became regulars at Parkinson Place. In fact, sometimes they stay all day to participate in programs that enable Nomi to be active while also being social with other Parkinson patients.

"Parkinson Place is the most important thing in our lives," says Barry.

A place to be yourself

Parkinson's disease is a chronic neurodegenerative disorder that is presently incurable and affects nearly 1.5 million people in the United States. Parkinson Place was designed around the unique

physical, mental, emotional, and social needs of people with Parkinson's and their care partners.

Larry Hoffheimer, Chairman of the Parkinson Research Foundation, which supports Parkinson Place said "It's the first of its kind, offering over 80 free educational and participation programs each month for Florida residents and snowbirds." Parkinson Place, open weekdays, offers evidence-based programs proven to enhance physical function and emotional well-being.

"Parkinson Place houses everything necessary to keep your body, mind and spirit up and moving when Parkinson's tries to slow you down," says Marilyn Tait, Parkinson Research Foundation executive director and director of Parkinson Place. Marilyn celebrates 45 years in health care, 16 of which she has dedicated exclusively to Parkinson's disease. Marilyn is a noted educator and advocate for Parkinson's disease patients on a local and national level.

For improved physical function, Parkinson Place offers five different exercise programs available each week that include Gentle Yoga (simple poses and meditation), Fun Fitness (interactive group exercise), Tai Chi (meditative exercise), Let's Dance (music and expressive movement), and Ageless Grace (21 energetic chair exercises for better function and cognition). All programs can be performed

standing or sitting in a chair, based on ability, so everyone can participate.

For the mind, there are ongoing education and empowerment programs. Parkinson Place offers monthly "Ask-The-Doctor Lunch and Learn" sessions with Juan Sanchez-Ramos, MD, PhD, a fellowship-trained movement disorders specialist. During this program, questions submitted in advance are answered regarding up-and-coming treatment options and research.

"Parkinson Power," a weekly "Lunch and Learn" with Marilyn, offers ongoing direction, motivation, support and everything you need to know to live well with Parkinson's.

Nomi says that these "Lunch and Learn" sessions help her better understand what is normal for Parkinson's disease and teaches her what questions she should be asking of her neurologist.

Parkinson Place houses a University of South Florida Parkinson Clinic directed by Juan Sanchez-Ramos MD, PhD. Dr. Sanchez-Ramos is a leader in the field and the medical director for the Parkinson Research Foundation. He is a professor of neurology at the University of South Florida, Tampa, where he holds the Helen Ellis Endowed Chair for Parkinson's Disease Research. Dr. Sanchez-Ramos is available by appointment at the clinic every Wednesday. In addition, Patrick J. Madden, MD, board-certified neurologist, sees patients on site by appointment every Monday and Thursday.

For improved speech and swallowing, Parkinson Place offers weekly Voice Aerobics classes as well as the Singing In The Park Chorus. For psychosocial support, Caregiving Made Easy offers ongoing motivation and coping skills for care partners providing long-term care for a loved one with Parkinson's. Morning Café provides the opportunity for members to get together for coffee and socialization on a daily basis.

Parkinson Place is proud to provide the on-site services of Request Physical Therapy as well as the benefits of the

"LSVT BIG" program, provided by certified physical therapists.

Living with Parkinson's

"Parkinson Place has the best of everything for those living with Parkinson's disease," affirms Marilyn. "It's like a home away from home where those demonstrating obvious symptoms such as uncontrollable tremors, loss of facial expression, muffled speech, involuntary movements and stooped-over, shuffled gait can feel normal. It's a safe haven. Parkinson Place also provides the opportunity for care partners to come together and relax while feeling a sense of camaraderie with others sharing their experience."

Barry observes, "At Parkinson Place, you learn how to live with Parkinson's disease and how to make the best of life with it. It's the place that Nomi can go and feel completely comfortable. There's never anyone with any kind of criticism or questioning."

Nomi says that because there is no judgment, it's a place where pure friendships can develop. Parkinson Place has given Barry and Nomi a second family to reach out to and learn with together.

"Parkinson Place is a happy, positive place where you can come for a pick-me-up and the encouragement and empowerment you need to face each day with Parkinson's disease. It is a place of hope." Marilyn's favorite motivational quote is, "You have Parkinson's; Parkinson's does not have you!"

Since its opening in September 2012, with more than 8,000 visits so far in 2013, Parkinson Place continues to grow. Membership is free for Parkinson patients and their care partners.

"If you have Parkinson's, Parkinson Place in Sarasota is the place to be," concludes Barry. "They're helping with everything related to the disease. The staff have hearts of gold and they treat every one in a magnificent fashion."

Nomi emphasizes, "There's no other place like this one. It's amazing." **FHCN**

A Place of Hope

Stop by for a tour and learn about all the free resources available to you and your loved one. Parkinson Place is located at **5969 Cattleridge Blvd., Suite 100**, Sarasota, one block north of the Bee Ridge Road and Cattlemen Road intersection.

For detailed information about up-and-coming programs, visit **ParkinsonPlace.org** or call **(941) 893-4188**.

To learn more about how you can help the Parkinson Research Foundation help others, visit **ParkinsonResearchFoundation.org** or call **(941) 870-4438**.