



April 11, 2018

PROUDLY SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH
ALL NEUROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

MSWA supporting people living with Parkinson's

For two years Kent Piercy developed an increasing stiffness and slowness in both arms and a reduced swing in his right arm. Naturally concerned about these changes, Kent saw a neurologist early last year, and at the age of 74 was diagnosed with tremor-dominant idiopathic Parkinson's.

Parkinson's is a long-term degenerative disorder of the central nervous system. While the symptoms generally come on slowly, they include shaking, rigidity, slowness of movement and difficulty walking. There are approximately 70,000 people living with Parkinson's in Australia and 4,000 in Western Australia.

Kent is just one of the many Western Australians who will now benefit from MSWA's support for people living with neurological conditions. Some of the money raised from last year's Step Up for MSWA has helped purchase a motorised therapy bike called the MOTomed Viva 2 Parkinson, for the Parkinson's Clinic at Osborne Park Hospital (OPH). The bike provides supported leg movement, similar to normal cycling, but incorporates a new therapy method called forced exercise, with users cycling at up to 90 revolutions per minute.

Since January, Kent has been taking part in the weekly group exercise circuit with the Parkinson's physiotherapy group at OPH.

"Forced exercise is a mode of exercise where the person taking part maintains an exercise rate greater than their preferred voluntary rate. Research has shown that it can lead to improvements in motor control and cortical activation in people with Parkinson's. We are extremely grateful for the donation of equipment made by MSWA," said Tanya Pember, Senior Physiotherapist at OPH's Parkinson's Clinic.

Recent studies have shown that people using motorised bikes have significant improvements in the speed of their movement and a reduction in their rigidity and tremors. The Parkinson's physiotherapists at OPH plan to use the bike to help improve the health of their clients in the Parkinson's Clinic.

"The current evidence is that exercising with increased cadence and speed goes a long way to maintain function, and could possibly be neuroprotective in the long-term," said Dr Barry Vieira, Clinical Head of Services at OPH.

MSWA Client Rosario Longhares was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2013 when she was 58. Her symptoms included anxiety and stiffness in her feet. Rosario now accesses occupational therapy, speech therapy and domestic support from MSWA through her NDIS plan.

"The services and OT support I'm receiving from MSWA are increasingly helpful. The cleaning services have been fantastic for keeping my home tidy, as it is something I struggle with now, and my speech therapist has been invaluable in helping with my speaking and eating difficulties," said Rosario.

"Last year's Step Up for MSWA saw 1,027 people raise almost \$250,000, breaking records in both numbers and fundraising. The money they raised has allowed us to continue to support people like Kent and Rosario who are living with a neurological condition," said MSWA CEO, Marcus Stafford AM.



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“Over the past five years we’ve also been able to invest more than \$8.55 million in research into finding the cause, better treatments and a cure for MS and other neurological conditions. This year we’re spending a record \$2.6 million on research, more than twice the amount contributed by all the other State organisations combined.

“Because MSWA is now offering our services to people with a range of neurological conditions, people taking part in our events can now nominate where they would like their fundraising money to be spent. It could be Parkinson’s, stroke, motor neurone disease, Huntington’s disease or acquired brain injury or of course MS, to name a few, the choice is theirs.”

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