



LIVING WELL

Dedicated to impacting and improving the lives of those affected by Parkinson's disease

“MINDING” OUR BUSINESS Exploring Mindfulness in the Journey with Parkinson’s

Summer is in full swing—with barbecues, parades, vacations, and a bit of extra heat (and flying bugs) thrown in. Amid all the excitement, this felt like the perfect time to introduce a new approach to living well with Parkinson’s disease.

You’ve probably heard the word mindfulness before. I recently listened to a podcast hosted by Dr. Rachel Dolhun through the Michael J. Fox Foundation that explored its benefits—especially for people with Parkinson’s. The timing couldn’t have been better, as DAPS will be hosting an in-person educational program on mindfulness later this month.

The podcast featured thoughtful insights from people with Parkinson’s, care partners, and medical professionals. Here are a few key takeaways I’d like to share—and encourage you to explore more at michaeljfox.org:

- Mindfulness is the practice of being present in the moment—fully aware of your physical, mental, and emotional experience without judgment.
- Sree, who has been living with PD for years, shared that mindfulness helped her reduce anxiety by focusing less on the “what-ifs” and “whens” that Parkinson’s often brings.
- Ken, a care partner for his wife with PD, uses his daily walks to practice mindfulness by tuning into the sounds, smells, and scenery around him.
- Dr. Sarah Mulukutla, an integrative neurologist, reminds us that the human brain is constantly active—and that mindfulness helps us notice our thoughts and gently return to the moment with intention.
- Research shows that mindfulness can trigger the parasympathetic response—the body’s natural system for rest, digestion, and repair—leading to measurable physical benefits over time.

Dr. Mulukutla shares even more on the podcast, but I’ll leave you with this paraphrased reminder:

Mindfulness takes practice. Expect some trial and error, and embrace it as a journey—not a destination.

If you’re open to trying something new—whether for symptom management or simply for managing stress—we invite you to join us for one (or both!) of our upcoming mindfulness sessions this month.

Leisha Phipps, MSW
Executive Director



MINDFULNESS IN MEDITATION CLASS

When: Friday, July 11 & Friday, July 18 at 11am

Where: North Dallas Bank & Trust Tower
12900 Preston Rd, Suite 210, Dallas, TX 75230

Led by: Thomas J. Finn
Founder of the Thomas-John Advocacy & Mindfulness In Motion



SPOTLIGHT

Marina McDonald, New Exercise Instructor

Marina McDonald has proudly called the Dallas area home for nearly 30 years. Originally from South Texas, she moved to North Texas to attend the University of North Texas, where she earned a BA in Hotel and Restaurant Management with minors in Psychology and Child Development.



Marina spent two decades building a successful career in the hotel industry. After becoming a mother, she devoted eight years to inspiring school-aged children through classes in Spanish, fitness, dance, and yoga. In 2021, she shifted her focus to adult wellness.

Passionate about helping others—especially adults—feel stronger, move more freely, and live more fully, Marina designs her classes to support a wide range of abilities. She emphasizes balance, mobility, stability, and strength, blending yoga and Pilates into an approach that is both caring and encouraging. She believes stepping outside one’s comfort zone is where true transformation begins.

For Marina, movement is medicine—for the body, mind, and spirit. Her goal is to help every student feel empowered, energized, and supported in their wellness journey.

Marina holds a 500-hour yoga teacher certification from the Dallas Yoga Center, as well as Nutrition and Senior Fitness certifications through ISSA. She is also certified through Dr. Michael Braitsch’s Southpaws Boxing Club.

Outside of teaching, Marina enjoys gardening with her husband, trying new restaurants, and taking long walks with her three sons and three dogs.

COMMUNITY CORNER



Celebrating 100% Participation in Plano!

A huge congratulations to the Plano DAPS Exercise with Erika class! They were the winners of our location contest by achieving 100% participation in the Grow With DAPS campaign! The group has already enjoyed a sweet reward from Tiff’s Treats, and more fun is on the way - DAPS swag will be delivered later this month. **Way to go, Plano DAPS!**

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Managing Motor Fluctuations in Parkinson's: Vyalev and the Promise of Continuous Therapy

By: Dakota Schumacher, M.D.

Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurodegenerative condition that affects the entire body. Its hallmark motor symptoms—slowness, stiffness, resting tremor, and walking difficulty—are primarily due to the loss of dopamine-producing neurons. By the time of diagnosis, individuals with Parkinson's have already lost millions of these neurons, yet millions more remain.

For more than 50 years, the gold standard treatment has been Carbidopa/Levodopa, which supplements dopamine. To the brain, this treatment resembles a steady but diminishing stream of dopamine punctuated by repeated surges with each dose. Over time, as the brain's natural dopamine production continues to decline, patients become increasingly reliant on this pulsatile dosing.

This growing reliance often leads to motor fluctuations—periods when symptoms are well-controlled alternating with times when they return or worsen. High dopamine levels may bring improved mobility, but also carry the risk of dyskinesias (involuntary movements) or even hallucinations. Conversely, low dopamine levels can result in stiffness, tremors, walking difficulties, and painful muscle cramps known as dystonia.

Despite more than a century of research, a disease-modifying treatment for Parkinson's has yet to be discovered. However, many advances have been made in managing symptoms—especially in reducing motor fluctuations and improving day-to-day function. Strategies include extended-release oral levodopa, dopamine agonists, enzyme inhibitors, intestinal levodopa infusions, and deep brain stimulation (DBS).

A New Option: 24-Hour Continuous Subcutaneous Levodopa

I'm excited to share a new therapy now available in the fight against motor fluctuations: 24-hour continuous subcutaneous levodopa infusion. This technique builds on proven principles from diabetes care, where insulin has long been delivered through continuous subcutaneous pumps.

This system uses a small plastic catheter placed under the skin, connected to an infusion pump that delivers a slow, steady dose of levodopa throughout the day and night. The benefits are significant:

- Steady dopamine levels without the peaks and valleys of traditional dosing
- No surgery required—unlike DBS or intestinal infusion therapies
- Bypasses the digestive system, reducing the impact of delayed gastric emptying or interference from protein-rich meals
- Self-administered therapy, allowing patients greater independence

Introducing Vyalev

In Fall 2024, the FDA approved Vyalev, a continuous subcutaneous levodopa therapy that has shown great promise in clinical trials. Vyalev not only helps reduce motor fluctuations but also appears to lower the risk of troublesome dyskinesias for many patients.

With this addition to our growing arsenal of symptomatic treatments, I'm hopeful that more people with Parkinson's will be able to enjoy sustained mobility, improved quality of life, and greater day-to-day confidence in managing their condition.

For more information, visit: vyalev.com/learn

UPCOMING EVENTS

MINDFULNESS IN MEDITATION

Friday, July 11 & Friday, July 18 at 11:00am



Thomas J. Finn

Founder of the Thomas John Advocacy & Mindfulness in Motion

DAPS is offering a free Mindfulness Meditation sessions designed to help you relax, focus, and find balance. Led by Thomas Finn, founder of Thomas-John Advocacy & Mindfulness In Motion, who brings both professional expertise and personal insight from his own Parkinson's journey.

[RSVP for July 11](#)

[RSVP for July 18](#)

ASK THE NUTRITIONIST

Friday, July 11 at 2:00pm



Faye Elahi

Nutritionist

TOPIC: Supplements to Consider for Parkinson's disease

Faye will review a case report and discuss the reasons for recommending essential vitamins, fatty acids, and digestive aids.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

AGING ADULTS FUNCTIONAL & FALL RISK SCREENING

Wednesday, July 16 & Wednesday, July 23 at 3:30pm



Michael Braitsch, PT, DPT

Assistant Clinical Professor

School of Physical Therapy at Texas Women's UNiversity

Join us for free fall risk screenings, offered by Dr. Mike and the University of St. Augustine PT Students.

Each screening includes an assessment of strength, mobility, walking, and balance. Participants will receive a personalized scorecard highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement, along with practical home recommendations to help manage Parkinson's symptoms and maintain functional mobility.

These screenings are open to individuals with Parkinson's and their care partners.

[RSVP for July 16](#)

[RSVP for July 23](#)

-SAVE the DATE-



KEEP LIVING WELL



The Keep Living Well Symposium will be held
on **Saturday, October 4.**

More details coming soon!

EXERCISE & SPEECH CLASSES


New to DAPS? Contact us at daps@daps.org or 972-620-7600

Monday		Wednesday	
9:30am	EXERCISE & VOICE W/ TAMMY SOUTH GARLAND BAPTIST	9:30am	EXERCISE W/ TAMMY LAKEPOINTE AT WHITE ROCK
10:00am	ZOOM EXERCISE W/ ANGIE	10:00am	ZOOM EXERCISE W/ DIANA
10:30am	EXERCISE W/ TAMMY SOUTH GARLAND BAPTIST	11:15am	SPEECH W/ LYNN (HYBRID) GRACE LUTHERAN CARROLLTON
12:30pm	DANCE FOR PD W/ DOMINGO WESTMINISTER PRESBYTERIAN	12:15pm	EXERCISE W/ AMANDA & MARINA (ALTERNATE) GRACE LUTHERAN CARROLLTON
1:00pm	SPEECH W/ ROSY FIRST UMC DUNCANVILLE	2:30pm	NONCONTACT BOXING W/ AMANDA PRESTON HOLLOW UMC
2:00pm	EXERCISE W/ JONATHAN FIRST UMC DUNCANVILLE		
Tuesday		Thursday	
9:15am	ZOOM EXERCISE W/ BARB	9:30am	EXERCISE & VOICE W/ BARB SOUTH GARLAND BAPTIST
10:15am	EXERCISE W/ AMANDA ST. MICHAEL MCKINNEY	9:45am	EXERCISE W/ ERIKA HUNTER'S GLEN PLANO
10:30am	EXERCISE W/ TAMMY PRESTON HOLLOW UMC	10:30am	EXERCISE W/ BARB SOUTH GARLAND BAPTIST
11:30am	SPEECH W/ LYNN (HYBRID) PRESTON HOLLOW UMC	12:30pm	EXERCISE W/ BARB SEMONES YMCA
12:30pm	EXERCISE W/ BARB & AMANDA (ALTERNATE) SEMONES YMCA	2:00pm	EXERCISE W/ JONATHAN FIRST UMC DUNCANVILLE
1:00pm	ZOOM SPEECH W/ PAT		
Friday			
10:00am	ZOOM EXERCISE W/ ANGIE	11:00am	SPEECH W/ TAMI ST. MICHAEL MCKINNEY <i>Class canceled July 4</i>
10:00am	EXERCISE W/ AMANDA ST. MICHAEL MCKINNEY <i>Class canceled July 4</i>		

Zoom Meeting IDs		
	EXERCISE W/ ANGIE Meeting ID: 556-087-4938	SPEECH W/ LYNN Meeting ID: 783-578-3790
	EXERCISE W/ BARB Meeting ID: 556-087-4938	SPEECH W/ PAT Meeting ID: 740-850-5274
	EXERCISE W/ DIANA Meeting ID: 556-087-4938	EXERCISE W/ TAMMY Meeting ID: 556-087-4938
		NUTRITION W/ FAYE Meeting ID: 556-087-4938
		SUPPORT GROUP W/ GAIL Meeting ID: 556-087-4938
		 PASSWORD LOUD

SUPPORT GROUPS

New to DAPS? Contact us at daps@daps.org or 972-620-7600

Monday		Thursday	
10:00am	PARKINSON’S SUPPORT NORTH DALLAS BANK & TRUST TOWER 2nd Monday of the Month	10:30am	CARE PARTNER SUPPORT W/ ZEE SOUTH GARLAND BAPTIST Weekly
10:00am	CARE PARTNER SUPPORT NORTH DALLAS BANK & TRUST TOWER 2nd Monday of the Month	1:00pm	PARKINSON’S SUPPORT W/ ANGELA FIRST UMC DUNCANVILLE 1st Thursday of the Month
1:00pm	CARE PARTNER SUPPORT W/ ANGELA FIRST UMC DUNCANVILLE 1st & 3rd Monday of the Month		
Tuesday		Friday	
10:30am	ZOOM PARKINSON’S SUPPORT W/ GAIL 1st Tuesday of the Month	11:00am	ZOOM CARE PARTNER SUPPORT W/ GAIL 1st Friday of the Month <i>July 4 class moved to July 11</i>

Locations		
CARROLLTON Grace Lutheran 1200 E Hebron Parkway 972.492.4474	DALLAS Semones YMCA 4332 Northaven Road 214.357.8431	DUNCANVILLE First UMC 427 Avenue C 972.298.6121
DALLAS Lakepointe at White Rock 9150 Garland Road 214.324.1425	DALLAS Westminster Presbyterian 8200 Devonshire Drive 214.351.3251	GARLAND South Garland Baptist 1330 E Centerville Road 972.271.5428
DALLAS Preston Hollow UMC 6315 Walnut Hill Lane 214.363.4393	DENTON Denton Senior Center 509 N Bell Ave 940.349.8720	MCKINNEY* St. Michael the Archangel 411 Paula Road 972.542.4667
DALLAS North Dallas Bank & Trust Tower 12900 Preston Rd. Suite 210 972.620.7600	PLANO* Hunters Glen Baptist 4001 Custer Road 972.867.1610	

*Click [here](#) for detailed instructions on where to park/enter.

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(Received before June 23)

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GROW WITH DAPS

2025 Annual

Fundraising Campaign

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(Donations received May 28 - 31)

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*In observance of Independence Day,
our office will be closed on Friday, July 4.*

DISCLAIMER

The contents or opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers or presenters and do not constitute an endorsement or approval by DAPS staff. Please consult your physician for any medical concerns or issues.