

John A. Schafer, MD Multiple Sclerosis Achievement Center



Spring 2024 Newsletter, Volume 10 Issue 1

Direct from the Director

It is absolutely amazing that 10 years have passed since we welcomed our first group of members. The time has flown by (with the exception of COVID which seemed twice as long as it actually was!) and we have experienced many ups and downs, together. When I arrived in Sacramento, I didn't know what to expect, but you were and continue to be so welcoming. We have laughed, cried and grown together and I'm sure we will continue to do so. In addition, we have changed and adapted together. Over the years, we have modified the program curriculum, added and deleted different social outings and seen our membership grow. We've said goodbye to some members and staff while happily greeting others. Ten years provides an opportunity to reflect and look forward. Over the past several years, we have embarked upon the necessary process of transition planning. As a result, I will be stepping aside as Director. I will be staying with John A. Schafer, MD Multiple Sclerosis Achievement Center (MSAC) and plan to be here for several more years. However, as we look to the future, I feel it is time to 'hand over the reins'. I am pleased that Tiffany has chosen to accept the role as the new Director of the MSAC. Tiffany and I have been working over the past several months on transition of duties and I will continue to work with her to assure the transition continues uninterrupted. As I said, my plan is to continue with the MSAC, but slowly transition out of management and concentrate on the programs' exercise components. I also plan to bring greater awareness to the importance of these types of programs for people living with MS. This will include educating healthcare providers and possible funders about the outcomes we and other similar programs have experienced. I'm excited to see the growth and development under Tiffany's leadership and we'll all continue to be in it, together.

I hope you enjoy the trip down 'memory lane' with the pictures in this edition.

Thank you for making the MSAC a special place for us to come every day.

Brian



Be the change you wish to see in the world.
- Mahatma Gandhi

A Time Of Transition

Over the past 9+ years that I have been part of this amazing program, I have often been asked what drew me to the MSAC. That question has always been easy for me to answer...every part of my professional career has been a stepping stone toward the MSAC. My passion has always been in the medical field, and my previous experience in day programs and working with various neurological disease states provided me with the necessary tools for saying 'YES' to the Program Manager position. I am extremely grateful to have been part of the tremendous growth of the MSAC, to be part of your journey through the MSAC, and to share our story with various entities of the MS community. I am truly honored that Brian said 'YES' to me all those years ago, and again now during this time of transition. His leadership, guidance, and support has allowed me to accept this opportunity with confidence and excitement, and I am grateful for his continued dedication to the MSAC. Thank you all for your commitment to the MSAC, your support during this time of transition, and for being part of the John A. Schafer, MD Multiple Sclerosis Achievement Center family! I very much look forward to our future together!

Tiffany

Enjoying time at our 6 year picnic



Splashing around during Aquatics



Rafting down the South Fork



Drea making her Marathon debut



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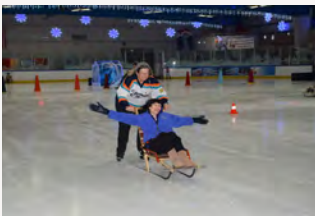
10 Years and Counting-(2014-2024)

On February 20, 2014, the MS Achievement Center opened its doors to people living with MS in the Sacramento region. Ten people were enrolled in the 5 hour (now known as *Empowered to Achieve*) day wellness program. The MSAC quickly grew to twenty participants in June, 2014 and a second program day was added in July. The 2 ½ hour *Achieving Wellness* program was added in 2016 to provide a choice for members who were unable to participate in the *Empowered to Achieve* program. To date, we have served 250 people living with MS through these two programs. The average length of participation amongst our current members is 6 years for *Empowered to Achieve* and 3 years for *Achieving Wellness*. In addition, thousands more people living with MS and their families have participated in adjunct programs both in-person and virtually.

Last year we marked a major milestone with the renaming of the MS Achievement Center to the **John A. Schafer, MD Multiple Sclerosis Achievement Center** in honor of Dr. John Schafer whose vision it was to develop a place where people with MS and their families could gather to learn and participate in healthy lifestyle activities, while socializing with people facing similar challenges.

As we move into our next ten years, we will continue to prioritize our mission of providing wellness services to anyone living with the effects of MS in Northern California. Thank you to all of you who have been involved to date. We look forward to staying connected and adding more to our unique membership.

Zooming around at Skatetown



Spook-tacular Bowling 2018



Teamwork makes the Dreamwork



Angela exploring Glass Fusion



Featured App

Challenge your thinking, problem solving, and processing skills with Wordle!, which allows 6 guesses to uncover the correct word.



Live Mindfully

Celebrating Self & Others

In honor of MSAC celebrating 10 years, we want to express our gratitude to you for being part of the MSAC family. We could not do the work we enjoy doing without you! In that spirit, here is a list of ways to celebrate yourself and others with gratitude, which is a common theme of the MSAC.

- *Give genuine compliments* - celebrate successes and accomplishments with authenticity & specificity.
- *Keep a gratitude journal* - reflect on your own accomplishments with positivity and gratitude.
- *Say thank you* - make a conscious effort to say thank you to the people in your life.
- *Practice mindful gratitude* - take some time each day to think about the things you are grateful for.
- *Help others* - contributing to someone else's well-being often generates a sense of fulfillment and purpose.
- *Celebrate success* - recognize milestones (yours and others) with celebration.
- *Be grateful for your mistakes* - when you appreciate your mistakes, you acknowledge them as opportunities for growth.
- *Practice positive affirmations* - try saying to yourself, "I am grateful for my health, my family, and all the good things in life".
- *Express gratitude to yourself* - take some time each day to appreciate your strengths, talents, progress, and unique qualities.
- *Create a gratitude jar* - collect small notes about things you're grateful for and place them into a "gratitude jar", then read them at the end of the calendar year, on your birthday, or to recognize an anniversary.

Tiffany and Meghan

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MS Awareness Month

Tips for promoting health and wellness with MS

- Keep Moving for Better Fitness and Function- Regular exercise promotes flexibility, can improve balance and can also help with common MS symptoms such as bowel & bladder, fatigue and cognitive issues.
- Keep Your Brain Engaged and Stimulated- Mentally challenging activities, such as crossword puzzles, word games, and taking classes or reading, all help to keep your brain sharp.
- Stay Educated and Aware- Staying up to date with the ever evolving world of MS. There are many national organizations that offer resources and information on MS management, research and overall health.

The MSAC is hosting its 2nd Education Summit which will feature two keynote speakers on the topics of 'MS and Aging'. There will be an opportunity to participate in activities with a music therapist and the Sacramento Ballet, as well as listen to a person with MS share her journey.

Program Offerings

For upcoming events please visit our website at dignityhealth.org/msachievementcenter

Planning For The Future

Congratulations, John A. Schafer, MD Multiple Sclerosis Achievement Center, on your first ten years! As your philanthropic partner, Mercy Foundation is proud to provide support for the MSAC's life-affirming care for its members and their loved ones.

Looking forward to the next ten years, we recently launched an endowment campaign to help assure that the MSAC continues to flourish and provide services for those in our region with multiple sclerosis.

To make a tax-deductible gift to support the MSAC, or to learn more about Mercy Foundation, please visit supportmercyfoundation.org/msac-anniversary or contact Senior Philanthropy Officer, Kathy Lopez, at (916) 851-2011 or kathy.lopez@dignityhealth.org. One hundred percent of your gift will support the MSAC and make a positive impact in our community.

For 70 years, Mercy Foundation has been proud to partner with the community to advance the mission of the Sisters of Mercy to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, educate the underserved, and care for the sick at local Dignity Health hospitals and clinics.



MERCY FOUNDATION

Inspiring philanthropy. Changing lives.

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Todd and Amy Hoddick

***Contributions reflect donations of \$2,000 or greater, received July 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023. A full list of donors is acknowledged through Mercy Foundation.*

If you would like to make a gift to support the John A. Schafer MD Multiple Sclerosis Achievement Center, please visit <https://supportmercyfoundation.org>

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Judith A. Newton, 9/8/1939 - 9/29/2023

Judy was a part of both our Tuesday and Friday programs at the MSAC. She participated regularly over the course of four years. She had an incredible sense of humor and definitely kept us all laughing. She was a valuable part of our week and she will be greatly missed.



Debra Jo Bassett, 1/6/1952 - 1/9/2024

Debbie was part of our Friday program at the MSAC and attended weekly over the course of six years. She was amazingly kind and personable and always made it a point to ask how you and your family are doing. She made Friday's around the MSAC an awesome place to be and will not be forgotten.

