

**MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*****Dear Friend of MGA:***

First let me take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Jim Joyce and I am the new Executive Director of the Myasthenia Gravis Association of WPA. I am honored to lead such a wonderful team of healthcare professionals and excited about the opportunity to work for such an important cause. We would also like to wish former Executive Director Maree Gallagher the best of luck as she moves onto an exciting new phase in her life and to thank her for her many years of leadership and dedication to the MG Association of WPA.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Keystone of Hope newsletter. As you read the information contained in the newsletter, you will see that we have been working very hard to support the mission and vision that has defined this health care organization for the last 65 years.

With your ongoing support, plus the hard work of our staff and board, we are committed to continuing to provide the very important programs and services that help the patients and families in our community. In the coming months, you will be hearing about several new initiatives that we will be implementing. Our hope is that you will see value in these programs and you will support them as you have supported other MGA programs in the past.

As we transition from winter into spring, we look forward to the opportunities 2020 will bring for us to connect and collaborate.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Jim Joyce, Executive Director  
MGA of WPA

**6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MGA  
COMEDY  
for a CAUSE**

***"We don't laugh because we're happy,  
we are happy because we laugh."***

*– William James*

Don't miss this fun evening with great food and great entertainment! The talent line up at this year's show is sure to tickle your funny bone. We're returning to the spacious SOKOL CLUB BANQUET HALL on the

South Side, with three hilarious comedians to entertain you – headliner **TOM ANZALONE**, International Musical Comedian Superstar; feature comic **DAVID KAYE**, as seen on Comedy Central; and our Emcee **SUZANNE LAWRENCE** from the Arcade Comedy Theater.

We've got a delicious dinner buffet, a wonderful dessert table, an affordably-priced cash bar, and of course our fabulous basket raffle, live and silent auctions and more. Plus the Sokol Club Banquet Hall features plenty of free parking in their huge lot!

Reserved seat tickets for dinner and show are \$40, and general admission tickets for the show only are \$20. Buy tickets on-line at [www.slapstickproductions.com](http://www.slapstickproductions.com) or call the MGA Office at **412-566-1545**.



**M  
G  
A**  
*Myasthenia Gravis*  
Association of Western Pennsylvania  
AT ALLEGHENY GENERAL HOSPITAL  
A Treatment & Advocacy Center

**SIXTH ANNUAL COMEDY FOR A CAUSE**

**Proceeds Benefit Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western Pennsylvania (MGA)**

**Funny Feature**



**DAVID KAYE**  
Comedy Central

**Hilarious Headliner**



**TOM ANZALONE**  
International Musical Comedy Superstar

**Humorous Host**



**SUZANNE LAWRENCE**  
Arcade Comedy Theater

**Plus Silent & Live Auctions Basket Raffle & much more!**

**Saturday - May 2**  
**SOKOL Club Banquet Hall**  
2912 East Carson Street - Pittsburgh, PA 15203

**\$40<sup>00</sup> Includes Dinner & Show • \$20<sup>00</sup> Show Only • Cash Bar**  
**Doors 6:30 • Dinner: 7:00 • Show 8:00 • Guests 21 & Over**  
**Tickets On Sale at MGA Office or Call: 412-566-1545**  
**Purchase Tickets Online at [www.slapstickproductions.com](http://www.slapstickproductions.com)**

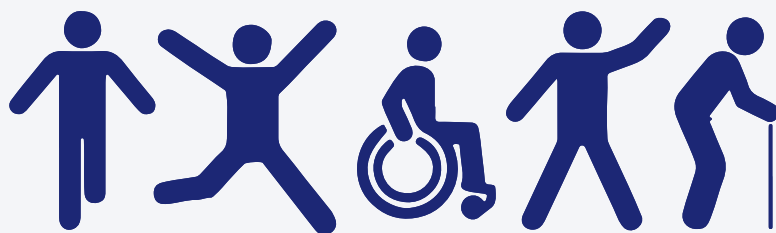


You are invited to attend a **support group every third Saturday of the month from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm**. Join us with your questions and concerns, or just to share your experiences to support others. We meet in the MGA Treatment Center location in the Allegheny Professional Building, 490 E North Ave., Suite 410, Pittsburgh PA.

Contact MGA at [donnak@mgawpa.org](mailto:donnak@mgawpa.org) to be added to our email list or call **412-566-1545**. RSVP's are requested.

We encourage everyone, including newly diagnosed and seasoned patients, their family members and friends to attend.

# 2020



## WALK FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

The Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community is an annual fundraising event to help participating organizations raise money and public awareness for their missions. In 2019, the Pittsburgh Highmark Walk raised over \$400,000 for over 90 participating organizations. The Myasthenia Gravis Association is excited to be participating again this year, and we hope you will join us to make it a success!

This year the walk will take place on **Saturday, May 9th at 9 a.m. at Heinz Field (a new venue)**. There are multiple ways to get involved and support MGA! Using the Highmark Walk online portal ([www.walkforahealthycommunity.org](http://www.walkforahealthycommunity.org)) you can select *Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western Pennsylvania* as your

nonprofit of choice and then register to walk as an individual or as part of a team. On the same site you can also donate directly to an individual or team to help them meet their fundraising goals.

Registration is now open! Please consider supporting MGA by walking, raising money, and spreading the word! Access the MGA page at <http://hcf.convio.net/mgawpa>, and then select one of the 4 options listed below:

1. Register as an individual
2. Form a team
3. Join an existing team
4. Donate

You can also send a check to MGA, 490 East North Avenue, Suite 410, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. Be sure to note that your donation is for the Highmark Walk.

MGA already has two teams registered – Donna Kalisek's team "It Takes a Pill-age" will be walking to support MGA again this year and a new team "MGA Pooch Parade" has been created in honor of our four-footed friends (and their two-footed companions) who supported MGA for many years at our Pooch Parade fundraiser. You are welcome to join either of these teams or create your own team to support MGA.

Contact Donna Kalisek with questions, at (412) 566-1545 or [donnak@mgawpa.org](mailto:donnak@mgawpa.org).

### NEW TREATMENT Center Schedule for Dr. George Small

**DR. GEORGE SMALL** now sees MG patients in the MGA Treatment Center on the **FIRST, THIRD and FOURTH TUESDAY morning of every month**. **DR. SANDEEP RANA** still sees MG patients in the MGA Treatment Center on the **SECOND TUESDAY of every month**.



## 50/50 RAFFLE

Proceeds will **BENEFIT MGA** as part of the **Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community**

Tickets available until **MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2020**

Tickets:    **1 ticket @ \$1.00**  
              **6 tickets @ \$5.00**  
              **15 tickets @ \$10.00**



Call **Donna at 412-566-1545**  
for details or to purchase tickets.

# April is National Car Care Month



Each year, the Car Care Council designates April as National Car Care Month in order to raise awareness about the importance of regular car care. Failure to perform regularly scheduled preventative car maintenance can cause breakdowns and make your vehicle unsafe.

The Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western Pennsylvania is proud to partner with Midas to offer free and discounted oil changes to friends and supporters of MGA.



For each \$20 donation to MGA, you will receive a coupon card good for 1) a free oil change (or \$20 off any service) and 2) a \$12.99 oil change (or \$15 off any service). Oil changes include up to 6 quarts of Conventional 5w20-30 motor oil, an in-stock filter, a tire rotation and a visual brake inspection.

The coupon cards are good at over 100 participating Midas shops located throughout Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Michigan, Kentucky and Georgia. Visit [www.midaspromos.com](http://www.midaspromos.com) for a complete list of participating locations.

Remember, you will receive a coupon card for every \$20 donation you make to MGA, so make multiple \$20 donations and cover your oil changes for the rest of 2020.

For more information, call the MGA Office at 412-566-1545. To purchase the Midas Coupon Cards, make checks payable to MGA and mail to MGA of WPA, 490 East North Avenue, Suite 410, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. Please include "Midas Card" in the memo line of your check.

## Changing Seasons with MYASTHENIA GRAVIS

By Cindy Spring, RN, CCM, MGA Patient Support Coordinator

It's hard to believe that Spring and Summer are fast approaching! On my daily walks with my dog, Schroeder, I have begun to notice buds on trees, crocuses pushing their hope of spring up through the soil of winter, and the sounds of birds singing in the morning and evening hours. Even the air smells and feels different. All of these signs bring the hope of rebirth and healing. We look forward to seeing the sun again – THE WHAT!?!

What does this mean for Myasthenia Gravis Patients? If you take Imuran or Cellcept, you need to purchase a fashionable gardening or beach hat and slather on the sunscreen every time you go outdoors to decrease your risk of skin cancer.

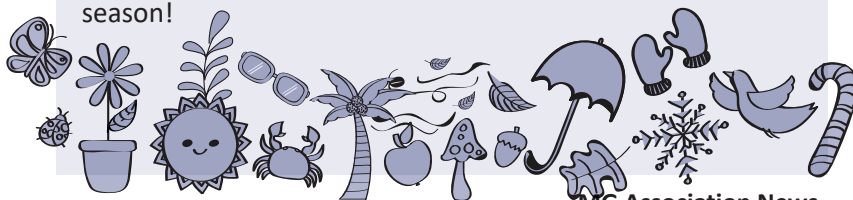
If part of your treatment includes IVIG or Plasmapheresis, please plan your outings strategically after treatments so that you can be at your best for those backyard barbecues.

Always, always carry a supply of Mestinon (Pyridostigmine) with you in case you get caught up in the day or need an extra dose to keep up with those beach parties. Be sure to take all of your medications on time and take an extra supply if you travel.

If traveling out of the country, be sure to get the appropriate vaccinations for that part of the globe, check with the MG Clinic if you are unsure if the vaccinations are safe for you. CDC.gov will tell you where it is safe to travel and which vaccinations you need. In addition, look into availability of healthcare in the area where you intend to travel, take a travel buddy with you who is educated to your diagnosis, medications and needs. Take your medical records with you and carry these and a supply of meds on your person at all times.

If your relaxation includes any kind of activity or even just relaxing on a blanket at the beach, always let someone know where you are going and when you plan to be back. Be sure to take frequent breaks from the sun/heat/activity, drink plenty of fluids and set a limit for yourself. Remember hot and humid weather is generally not a friend to Myasthenia Gravis and 12 hours of driving to your favorite location today may leave you with double vision and ptosis in both eyes tomorrow!

As your parents always said—have fun!!!—but everything in moderation! Have a wonderful, safe, and healthy vacation season!



MG Association News





# 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL Purple Party was a GREAT success!

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# *Thank you to all of our generous donors*

*The following donations were received between July 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019.*

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## **KEYSTONE** *of Hope*

Keystone of Hope is published twice a year by the Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western PA, and direct mailed to patients, donors and friends. It is also available at [www.mgawpa.org](http://www.mgawpa.org).

**Editor:** Jim Joyce, MGA, Executive Director

**Editorial Assistant:** Donna Kalisek, MGA Administrative Coordinator

**Contributor:** Cindy Spring, RN, CCM, MGA Patient Support Coordinator

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MGA, 490 East North Avenue, Suite 410, Pittsburgh, PA 15212  
(412) 566-1545 • [www.mgawpa.org](http://www.mgawpa.org)

# Honorariums & Memorials from July 1, 2019 to December 30, 2019

Please note: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list of donors. If you see an error or omission, please let us know.

**PERPETUAL GIFT** in memory of  
**Ronald Claire Grafton**  
 By Doris Grafton & Family

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**Daniel Schrage**

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**Josephine Tabisz**

By Donna Kalisek

**Ken Tyson**

By Geraldine Tyson

**Rosemarie White**

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## FUNDRAISING ON facebook

MGA is very grateful to our supporters who have designated our organization to be the beneficiary of their fundraisers on Facebook. Usually, these fundraisers are in honor of someone's birthday or other special occasion. This is an easy and convenient way to get your family and friends to support a cause that you care about. **If you would like some additional help in setting up a Facebook fundraiser for MGA, please call the MGA office at 412-566-1545 and we will be happy to assist you!**

*Please note: if you hold a Facebook fundraiser benefitting MGA, Facebook does not give us a list of your donors, so we are not able to send a letter of acknowledgement to them. Please check with your donors if they would like to receive an acknowledgement of their donation and mail us their names and addresses. We will be happy to send them a letter of acknowledgement for their generosity.*



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Please continue to go to <https://Smile.Amazon.com> and in the drop down box make sure you choose "Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western PA". Then each time you make a purchase Amazon with donate to MGA of WPA.

It's easy—and it will help support MGA all year long. Remember to invite your family, friends and co-workers to do the same!

Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western Pennsylvania  
at Allegheny General Hospital  
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Pittsburgh, PA 15212

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STAND UP

MAY 2020

6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MGA  
**COMEDY**  
for a **CAUSE**

**MAY 2, 2020**

Sokol Club Banquet Hall,  
South Side

*Details on pages 1 & 2*



MAY 2020

HIGHMARK.   
WALK FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

**WALK WITH US!**

**MAY 9, 2020**

Register On-Line

Support MGA in person or in spirit

Heinz Field, North Shore

*Details on page 3*

[www.walkforahealthycommunity.org](http://www.walkforahealthycommunity.org)



JUNE 2020

**NATIONAL MG  
AWARENESS MONTH**

Look for details and program  
information on our website:

[www.mgawpa.org](http://www.mgawpa.org)



Or on our Facebook page:

[www.facebook.com/mgawpa](https://www.facebook.com/mgawpa)

