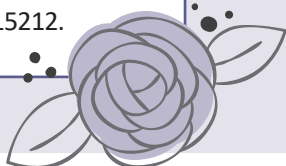


**MESSAGE
FROM THE
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR***In Memorial*
James C. Lynn Jr.

James C. Lynn Jr., husband of the late Carol Lynn, passed away on January 22, 2021. Jim and his family have been wonderful advocates for MGA for many years. Jim's father-in-law, George Sayenga, started MGA when his daughter Carol was a just a teenager. Jim was very involved with many of the fundraising efforts to support MGA.

His affiliation with the Hillman Company here in Pittsburgh was a tremendous help to MGA. The MGA Board and Staff wish to express our deepest condolences to his sons Curt and Scott as well as their family and friends. The family requested donations to MGA in Jim's memory be mailed to MGA of WPA, 490 East North Avenue, Suite 410, Pittsburgh, PA 15212.

***Dear Friend of MGA:***

It is hard to believe that a year has gone by since I first introduced myself to all of you through this newsletter. In some ways, it feels like much more time has passed, but in other ways I still feel as if I just started as the Executive Director of MGA.

I have learned so much over the last year, not only about Myasthenia Gravis and how MGA operates, but also about the importance of human interaction and caring about one another.

I have said many times in many different venues how proud I am of the team at MGA – from our board members, to our physicians, and last but certainly not least our staff – everyone has worked so hard to make sure that mission and vision that was established for our organization over 65 years ago continues to be the driving force of what we do on a daily basis.

Now that we have put 2020 behind us, MGA sees 2021 as a new day and a fresh start for our organization. Although we are still diligently focused on COVID-19 and the safety of all of our patients, we take solace in the good news that vaccines are on the way and hopefully soon we will be able to return to some semblance of our “normal” activities.

As you read this issue of the Keystone of Hope newsletter, you will learn about some of our goals for 2021 – establishing an education committee to better identify and promote educational opportunities for our patients as well as the medical community, increasing our presence on social media and other on-line formats, and continuing MGA traditions like the Highmark Walk and the Butterfly Tribute Tree.

I hope you enjoy this issue of the Keystone of Hope newsletter and I look forward to the opportunities that the coming months will bring for us to connect and collaborate.

Thank you for your continued partnership!

Jim Joyce, Executive Director
MGA of WPA

MGA WELCOMES A NEW ADMINISTRATIVE INTERNSHIP



MGA is excited to welcome a new intern to our organization. Her name is **MADALYN (MADDIE) BYRNES** and she is in the 12th grade at Springdale High School.

Maddie is very involved in numerous activities at her school including playing on the varsity soccer team (she was voted Varsity Captain of the team) and she is also the Senior Class President. Maddie is also the President of her school's "**The Future is Mine**" club and the National Honor Society. Maddie enjoys spending time with her friends through these activities and giving back to the community.

Maddie plans to attend college and major in Marketing and Public Relations. When asked what she hopes to accomplish as an intern with MGA, Maddie responded "*I look forward to helping the organization grow while getting real-life experience for my future career.*"

During her internship, Maddie will be focusing on two projects:

- 1) Creating a social media education/awareness campaign (#Strength4MG) – see more details on Page 7 and
- 2) Planning the MGA Fall Mini-Golf Fundraiser, scheduled for October 16, 2021 (mark your calendars)!

Welcome Maddie – we are so excited for the opportunity to work with you!

MGA IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE A NEW SPRING FUNDRAISER!



A St. Patrick's Day Raffle Ticket based on the Pennsylvania Lottery

For each **\$10 donation to MGA**, you will receive a raffle ticket (only 250 available) with **4 potential winning numbers** based on numbers drawn from the Pennsylvania Pick-3 evening lottery drawing!

There will be three days of prizes...

- **March 15, 2021:** \$100 Dick's Sporting Goods Gift Card
- **March 16, 2021:** \$150 Giant Eagle Gift Card
- **March 17, 2021:** \$1,000 Cash

Please contact the **MGA Office at 412-566-1545** or jjoyce@mgawpa.org with any questions or to purchase your tickets!
Cash, checks and credit cards will be accepted forms of payment.

LESS THAN 50 TICKETS LEFT — GET YOURS TODAY!!!

Thank you for your continued support of MGA!

*Saint
Patrick's
Day*
SPECIAL

COVID-19 UPDATE

Vaccines for COVID-19 will be available in the coming weeks and months. MGA will share guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) when it becomes available.

Because individuals who have myasthenia gravis may be at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, MGA's physicians offer these general guidelines (please keep in mind this is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Be sure to consult with your physician to decide what's appropriate for your specific situation).

- Based on the vaccine research to this point, the recommendation has been that most MG patients should get vaccinated. Generally, we anticipate that the risk associated with the COVID-19 vaccine will be relatively small compared to the risk of contracting the disease itself. However, we still recommend that all patients speak to their Primary Care Physician to discuss their specific situation and what is in their own best interest in terms of the vaccine.
- More than one vaccine is being developed for COVID-19. There is not yet enough information to say which vaccine will be better for MG patients. As of early December 2020, two cases of transverse myelitis have been associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine (with adenovirus vector), so this specific vaccine may not be best for some with autoimmune disease. Again, please consult your Primary Care Physician to determine which vaccine is most appropriate for you.
- If a person is taking immunosuppressant medications (such as prednisone, azathioprine, mycophenolate mofetil, or others), this may reduce the effectiveness of the vaccination but it is still recommended that MG patients should receive the vaccine.
- All vaccinated individuals should continue to follow masking, handwashing and social distancing recommendations to further reduce risk, especially if they are on immunosuppressant medications that may affect their response to the vaccine.

MGA identified two websites where people can go to register to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine: 1) PA State Health Department (www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/pages/vaccine.aspx) and 2) Rite Aid Pharmacy (www.riteaid.com).

As we receive updated information, MGA will continue to keep a database of potential locations to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine, so please continue to check in with the MGA office for updates.

The MGA Board and Staff extend sincere condolences in memory of those MGA friends lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Until further notice Treatment Center appointments will continue virtually through MyCharts, but we look forward to seeing all of you very soon!

CORONA VIRUS PREVENTION



Wash Hands / Use Soap



Wear a Mask



Avoid Crowds



Use Sanitizer



No Handshakes

MGA VIRTUAL HOLIDAY PAINT &



Many thanks to everyone who supported the **MGA Virtual Holiday Paint and Sip Fundraiser on December 10, 2020**. Over 60 people participated in the event and everyone who attended had a wonderful time!

A special thanks to **Ms. Kristy Walter** who led the creation of the snowflake decoration that evening and to **Dr. Michael Kavic** and **Mrs. Patricia Kavic** from Kavic Winery in Carnegie, PA (www.kavicwinery.net) who provided the wine for the wine tasting portion of the program.

Additional thanks to our event sponsors – PA State Representative **Anita Kulik** (www.pahouse.com/kulik) and **Alexion Pharmaceuticals** (www.alexion.com). Representative Kulik also kindly provided anyone who purchased 4 or more holiday bags for the event with a special treat from Applicable in Carnegie, PA (www.apples4you.com)

The MGA Board of Directors and Staff would like to thank everyone who supported this event!

2021 BUTTERFLY TRIBUTE TREE

"The wings of hope carry us soaring high above the driving winds of life." —Ana Jacobs

In 2020, as a part of our Butterflies of Hope program, **MGA established the Butterfly Tribute Tree**. The Butterfly Tribute Tree provided individuals and families with a meaningful way to honor or memorialize a loved one or friend with whom they have shared special memories with over the years.

MGA is pleased to announce that in honor of National Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month in June, MGA will be creating the second annual Butterfly Tribute Tree to be displayed in the MGA office until June 2022. A butterfly shaped ornament will be mailed to past donors and supporters of MGA. They will be invited to decorate the ornament as they wish – potentially including their loved one's name, some special words or something meaningful in the decoration and maybe a small photo. **All returned ornaments will then placed on the Butterfly Tree Mural which was created by MGA Board Member Reita Derrick.**



Our hope is that patients, families and other visitors to the MGA office will be inspired by the tree and what it represents.

If you are interested in reserving a butterfly ornament to decorate for the Butterfly Tribute Tree, please contact Donna Kalisek at 412-566-1545 or donnak@mgawpa.org.



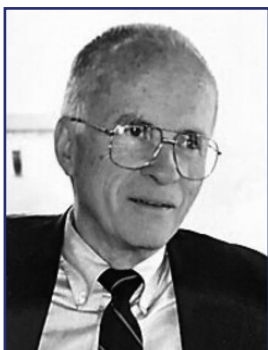
MGA ESTABLISHES EDUCATION COMMITTEE:

MGA is pleased to announce the establishment of an **Education Committee** who will take on the task of planning educational programs for the community as well as health care professionals in order to raise awareness of Myasthenia Gravis as well as what MGA can do to support patients with MG.

The committee is currently made up of individuals who serve on the MGA Board of Directors, but we would welcome additional members to the committee. If you are interested in learning more about serving on this committee, please contact Jim Joyce at 412-566-1545 or at jjoyce@mgawpa.org.

In addition, the Education Committee has created a short on-line survey that they are asking individuals to complete. The survey can be found at (www.surveymonkey.com/r/NYNNFLS). This survey will help us drive educational programming in the future so we hope you will take a moment to complete the information. Thank you!

SIP FUNDRAISER



Dr. Blume

Memorial Service:

For those of you that would like to pay your respects in remembrance of **Dr. Robert P. Blume**, who passed away in April of 2020, there will be a requiem mass at **Most Precious Blood of Jesus Parish, Saturday April 17, 2021 at 10:30 a.m.** The church is located at 3250 California Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15212. *If you are planning to attend the memorial service for Dr. Blume, please RSVP to donnak@mgawpa.org or ejcmt3@gmail.com (Dr. Blume's daughter Emily). Thank you!*

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this memorial was rescheduled so that others may attend. Masks and social distancing guidelines will be followed for this mass.

If you have questions or need directions, please contact the MGA office at 412-566-1545. Memorial donations for Dr. Blume may be made to the Myasthenia Gravis Association of WPA, 490 E North Ave, Suite 410, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. Thank you.

2021 VIRTUAL

HIGHMARK® 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 2021, because of all of the COVID-19 restrictions, the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community will be a virtual event.

The Myasthenia Gravis Association is excited to be participating again this year, and we hope you will join us to make it a success! Please note that a virtual walk is a real walk, but it's on your terms! **Any time before July 15th, you choose how and when you walk** (treadmill, park or trail, or around the neighborhood) – it's your choice!

Registration is now open! Please consider supporting MGA by walking, raising money, and spreading the word!

There are multiple ways to get involved and support MGA! Using the Highmark Walk online portal (walkfora-healthycommunity.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.

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.

In addition to the virtual walk, anyone who registers to participate on the MGA Virtual Walk Team will be sent a scavenger hunt form that they can complete while participating in their virtual walk. **Completed scavenger hunt forms can be returned to the MGA Office for a chance to win fabulous prizes – more details to come!**

We would also like to take a moment to recognize **Donna Kalisek** for all of her efforts supporting MGA through the Highmark Walk over the years. Unfortunately, last year was Donna's final year participating in the Highmark Walk. We appreciate her fundraising efforts in the past and will miss her participation in the future.

Interested in learning more about the Highmark Walk? Contact Jim Joyce with questions, at **412-566-1545** or jjoyce@mgawpa.org.

Thank you to all of our generous donors!

The following donations were received between July 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020.

Alexion	Floyd, Edward L	Miller, Richard H	Sethman, Elizabeth Kim
Allegheny Health Network (AHN)	Folman, Joel & Melissa	Mrosco, John and Phyllis	Shellhammer, Randy
Amazon Smile	Gagliardo, Rich and Donna	Muller, Barbara	Shields, John & Corinne
Anderson, Stacy	Gandjos, William	Murtagh, Margaret	Shinn MD, Sarah
Anonymous	Ging, Don & Georgia	Smith, K Sabina	Simon, Robert
Bacheller, John & Linda	Glass, Michael W	Murtha, J William	Sippos, Robert
Barnes, Gerald	Goebel, Debora	Neal, Donald & Barbara	Smith, Yvonne L
Beehn, Charles and Sally Ann	Golden, Tom	Nelson, Susan L	Somma, JoAnn
Beeson, Raymond	Goldenson, Dennis & Jennifer	Nusser, James	Sopher, Everett & Gertrude
Behe, Greg	Grafton, Doris	Ogden-Wainright, Gloria	Specter, Wallace
Belasco, Cecelia I	Gramc, Daniel	O'Neill, Robert & Patricia	Stewart, Jessica
Benevity/Microsoft Rewards	Greenholt, Tracy & Barbara	Orange, Daniel P	Stigliano, Nancy & Reese
Giving Platform	Guenther, Kathryn & Fred	Orr, Samuel & Eva	Stiglich, Frances
Berhalter, Terrie	Gumberg Fdn, Lawrence & Ina	Park, Robert & Barbara	Suddarth, Dorothy
Bigley, Tom & Joan	Harmon, Barbara J	Patterson, Thomas and Peggy	Swenson, Swen E
Black, John and Rita	Hart, Elizabeth J	Paypal Giving Fund	Tack, Natalie & Ernie
Blayney, Lester	Hartman, Carlton & Bridget	Pearson, Alan & Nancy	Tarr, Audrey
Block, John and Norene	Hendricks, Cheryl	Pelo, June	Totten, Laurie
Blume, Elizabeth	Hernandez, Lisa H	Poole, Jennifer	Treskovich, Patricia
Bock, Kevin and Jeanie	Hershberger, Daniel	Preston, Marion	Tyson, Geraldine
Bohcali, Patricia	Hollenbaugh Jr, David W	Quinn, Dolores	Ulmer-Breeger, Susan L
Bostard, Michael and Jamie	Holman, Rich & Judy	Radigan, C R	Vardaro, Anthony & Kathleen
Bratich, Lauren	Hrutkay, Gregory & Ruth	Randolph, Louise	Volpe, Barbara
Bruder, Mary Alice	Hubbard, Metaxia	Reid, Roy E	Vuono, John & Linda
Buckshaw, John E	Hudachek, Joan & DiCicco, Mike	Repasky, Bonnie	Vuono, Louise
Cahill, Elaine R	Ickert CPA, Donald	Revay, Cynthia	Wallace, Maryann
Carmichael, Dee	Izzo, Katherine	Ritter, Dennis & Dianne	Waltower, Keith
Carr, Jill and David	Jacobson, Laurie	Roberts, Donovan	Wasick, Michael & Paula
Castiglione, Maxine	Johnson, Judith	Roskovich, Elizabeth	Weber, Janet
Christainsen, Mary Anne	Jones, Michael & Janelle Smith	Roskovich, Kevin and Sarah	Weinheimer, Gary
Cohen F.I.B.A., Gail	Jones, Nancy S	Ruscitto, Donna	Werner, Susan
Cohen, Lillian	Joyce, Jim	Rutkauskas, Nicole	Weyandt, John
Collet, Bob and Juanita	Joyce, Michael	Santicola, Marc & Beverly	White, Patrick & Eileen
Connors, Margaret	Kalick, Sheryl	Sayenga, Mattheu & Michelle	Wilkinson, Shirley L
Cooper, Carol	Kalisek, Donna	Schapira, Karl & Bonnie	Willome, David & Donna
Critchlow, Peggy	Karleski, Betty J	Schiffbauer, Judy	Witiak, Gene and Joan
Daly, Diane	Klimchock, Elizabeth	Schott, Ron and Carolyn	Wojtasiak, Gary and Hope
Dancison, Mike & Marge	Klingensmith, David & Barbara	Schrage, Art & Daniel	Wright, Thomas & Cathy
Davis, Deborah	Kohan, Anthony & Tammy	Schrecker, Louis & Judy	Yanofsky, Marvin & Sharon
Dehring, Beverly	Kruszka, Karen	Sebastian, Kristen	Zuccher, Vivian
Denny, William E	Kulik, Joseph		
Derrick, Reita	LaFranchi, William		
Dick, Kathy	Lazzara, Frank		
Dimasi, Fred	Linton, Phyllis		
Docherty, James and Becky	MacLachlan, Robert & Nancy		
Doppelheuer, Mark & Suzanne	Madrishin, Robert		
Double Eagle Foundation	Magoc, Sue Ann		
Dougherty, Bernard	Malanga, Caroline		
Dudas, Gerald	Mandera, Richard		
Duffy, Russell	Marchese, Lynne		
Dysert, Robert J	McCusker, Charles & Peggy		
Facebook/Anonymous	McFadden, Sharon		
Faust, Edward	McIntyre, Mike and Wendy		
Felice, Gerri	McMurray, Rodney		
Filer, Brandon and Amy	McNall, Janet		
Filipponi, Beth	McRoberts, Mel		
Findle, Theresa	Messimer, Kathleen		
	Methven, Jil		

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.

Editor: Jim Joyce, MGA, Executive Director

Editorial Assistant: Donna Kalisek, MGA Administrative Coordinator

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

Designer: PilarDesigns

Printing: Courtesy of Highmark Print Shop

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

Honorariums & Memorials from July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020

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 Clair Grafton**
By Doris Grafton & Family

HONORARIUMS

John Block
By John & Norene Block

Pat Buck
By Barbara Muller

Edward J Buckshaw
By John E Buckshaw

Barbara & Tracy Greenholt
By Lawrence & Ina Gumberg Foundation

Kathryn Guenther
By Diane & Dennis Ritter

Donna Kalisek
By Mike & Marge Dancison
Kevin & Sarah Roskovich
Vivian Zuccher

Annamarie Lazzara
By Frank Lazzara

John McMurray's birthday
By Jil Methven

Felicia Morgan
By Beth Filipponi

Dr. George Small MD
By M/M Gerald Barnes

Melinda Smith
By Mark & Suzanne Doppelheuer

Jessica (Wojtasiak) Stewart
By Anthony & Tammy Kohan

MEMORIALS

Dr. Robert P Blume
By Sharon McFadden
Elizabeth Klimchuck
Margaret Murtagh
K Sabina Smith
Donna Ruscitto

Louis Bonasso
By Shirley L Wilkinson

Joseph & Lillian Buchko
By Charles & Peggy McCusker

Ann Claypoole
By Don & Georgia Ging

Lena Colasurdo
By Barbara Volpe

Mike & Rose Dancison
By Judy & Rich Holman

Dennis R Felice
By Geraldine Felice

Rosemary Greenberg
By Robert & Nancy MacLachlan

John & Virginia Hoffman
By Gregory & Ruth Hrutkay

Joseph M. & Edna R. Hudachek
By Joan Hudachek & Mike DiCicco

Bill Junker
By Elizabeth Hart

Ed & Dolores Kalisek
By Maryann Wallace

Carol E. Lynn
By David & Donna Willome
Thomas & Cathy Wright

Janet "Cookie" Macher
By Caroline Malanga

Patricia Makara
By Donna Kalisek

Diane Mohr
By Donald Ickert CPA

Colleen Montana
By Elaine R Cahill

Carole Murtha
By J William Murtha

Ronald W. Neal
By Donald & Barbara Neal

Ruth Pelo
By June Pelo

Ann Radigan
By C.R. Radigan

Bonnie Repasky
By Donna Kalisek

Carlene Sayenga
By Gene & Joan Witiak

Carol Lynn & George Sayenga
By Louise Randolph

George Sayenga & Family
By Matthew & Michelle Sayenga

Elliot T Shinn MD
By Sarah Shinn MD

Agnes Stiglich
By Frances Stiglich

Lois Wright
By Thomas & Cathy Wright

EXPANDING OUR DIGITAL



In 2021, one of the major goals of MGA is to expand our Digital Footprint – improving and increasing our presence on-line and through social media. MGA is excited to announce three initiatives that will help to accomplish this goal...

- 1 Redesign/Relaunch of the MGA Website** – the MGA Website (www.mgawpa.org) has gotten a makeover! With the help and expertise of **Kirk Peters** from Kirk Peters Website Studio (www.kirkpeters.com), the MGA Website has gotten some much needed upgrades. Please take a moment to check out the new site and continue to visit as we plan to update the site with new information frequently.
- 2 Increased Social Media Presence** – with the help of volunteers **Jessica Stewart** and **Daniel Schrage**, MGA plans to be much more active on our social media accounts in 2021. Jessica and Daniel will be focusing on increasing social media posts to include facts about MG and MGA as well as educational information from members of our clinical team. We are also looking to highlight our patients through a new story telling format called **"MY MG Story."** If you would be interested in telling your MG story, please contact Jim Joyce at **412-566-1545** or jjoyce@mgawpa.org for more information on how to participate.
- 3 #Strength4MG Campaign** – the new MGA Intern **Maddie Byrnes** (see *Maddie's bio on Page 2*) will be creating a new social media campaign that will focus on activities that everyone can participate in to raise awareness and educate the public about MG. The plan is to have this campaign ready to roll out in time for **National Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month in June**, so stay tuned for exciting updates and information on how you can get involved!

Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western Pennsylvania
at Allegheny General Hospital
490 East North Avenue, Suite 410
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Pittsburgh, PA
Permit No. 442

SAVE THE DATE



MARCH 2021

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY SPECIAL
LOTTERY TICKET SALE TO
BENEFIT MGA**

MARCH 15-17, 2021

Details on page 2

VISIT US AT:

www.mgawpa.org

and on our facebook page:

www.facebook.com/mgawpa



MAY 2021

**VIRTUAL HIGHMARK
WALK FOR A HEALTHY
COMMUNITY / SCAVENGER
HUNT**



MAY 2021

Register online at walkfora-healthycommunity.org

Details on page 5



JUNE 2021

**NATIONAL MYASTHENIA
GRAVIS AWARENESS
MONTH**

JUNE 2021

Multiple Activities Planned
including the 2021 Butterfly
Tribute Tree and the
#Strength4MG Campaign

