



Advocates for Young Onset Parkinson's Disease Launch Innovative Facebook Fundraiser to Support the 6th World Parkinson Congress

Twenty-six people, all but one who live with young Onset Parkinson's Disease (YOPD) have launched a series of year-long Facebook fundraisers to help others living with YOPD attend the 6th World Parkinson Congress. The participants, representing 11 countries, will host their fundraiser for two weeks, with each running back to back to cover all 52 weeks in 2020. The group aims to raise at least \$50,000 for travel grants to support more people with YOPD to attend the Congress.

Parkinson's disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder after Alzheimer's, impacting an estimated one million Americans and 10 million people worldwide. Parkinson's which is typically associated with people 60 years and older, but 10% of people diagnosed with Parkinson's get the diagnosis before the age of 50. Trying to navigate a career, raise a family, and manage a Parkinson's diagnosis can be overwhelming. This is why a group of international YOPD advocates have joined the [#WPC4YOPD Facebook Fundraiser](#) to help others with YOPD attend the World Parkinson Congress to learn about research, meet others facing similar struggles, and combat feelings of loneliness and isolation that often accompany the disease.

"I am constantly frustrated by people telling me 'you don't look sick' or 'you're too young to have Parkinson's'," reports Heather Kennedy, WPC Advocate. At the WPC, I never have to explain myself or feel embarrassed by my symptoms because I am surrounded by people who understand what I am going through. That sense of being a part of a larger community changed my perspective on living well with Parkinson's. I want to share that experience with others who have not had the chance to attend a WPC yet. I want others with YOPD to be inspired to live better lives the way the WPC inspired me."

One hundred percent of every dollar raised will go towards providing travel grants to people with YOPD. The goal is to raise over \$50,000, which will help support up to 50 individuals from across the globe to attend the [6th World Parkinson Congress](#) (WPC 2022), which will be held in Barcelona Spain from June 7 to 10, 2022. More than 4,000 neurologists, basic scientists, neuroscientists, clinicians, rehabilitation experts, people with Parkinson's, care partners, and family members will participate in this unique congress. The program includes four days of high-level talks on the latest scientific discoveries, medical practices, personal stories from people with the disease, and caregiver programs related to Parkinson's disease. The Congress' distinct format enables discussions on the leading scientific studies and allows for dialogue

between participants about real issues facing people living with Parkinson's, helping to shape future Parkinson's research, treatment and care.

"The WPC 2022 is the premiere meeting for international discourse on research, treatment and management of Parkinson's," states Elizabeth Pollard, Executive Director of the World Parkinson Coalition. "By providing a totally immersive Parkinson's forum for researchers, health care providers and people with Parkinson's, WPC 2022 enables a range and depth of conversations unlike any other Parkinson's meeting. This fundraiser is an incredible initiative that was designed and led by people living with PD. It shows how valuable and impactful the WPC experience is for delegates, so impactful that they want others with YOPD to experience the WPC themselves. It's the ultimate 'pay it forward' campaign and I am honored to be part of this innovative fundraiser and generous community."

About the World Parkinson Coalition® and WPC 2022

The World Parkinson Coalition Inc. provides an international forum for learning about the latest scientific discoveries, medical practices, caregiver initiatives and advocacy work related to Parkinson's disease. The triennial World Parkinson Congresses provide a space for the global Parkinson's community of researchers, clinicians, health care professionals, people with Parkinson's and their care partners to meet in person, network, and discuss advances in Parkinson's research, improve understanding and promote advocacy worldwide, while influencing future research and care options. The WPC 2022 will attract more than 4,500 delegates. Learn more at: <http://www.wpc2022.org/>

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