

PATIENT AND PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES FROM THE WORLD PARKINSON CONGRESS HELD OCTOBER 1st -4th, 2013, MONTREAL, CANADA

WORLD PARKINSON CONGRESS A Patient's Perspective by Patricia Davies

The World Parkinson Congress (WPC) is a unique event involving the entire Parkinson's community – patients, neurologists, caregivers, family members, scientists, researchers, therapists, and other medical professionals.

I attended the 2010 WPC in Glasgow, Scotland, just over a year after my diagnosis. I was overwhelmed by the amount of information available, and by being surrounded by many people in various stages of the disease, but it was also comforting to be in a safe environment with people from 'my' community, who knew how I felt, when it was so difficult to explain it to others. Mostly, I was inspired by the people with Parkinson's (PwPs) I met, especially those with young onset Parkinson's.

The third WPC in Montreal, Canada, in October, 2013, was even more inspiring. There was a record attendance of over 3,300 people from 70 countries, and the Congress was of special interest to me because I was on the Steering Committee and the Parkinson Advocates Committee. For over 35 years, I organized large international congresses, so I wrote to the WPC to offer my services as a volunteer, and was thrilled to be invited to join the Steering Committee. It was very humbling to observe the knowledge, dedication, commitment and sheer hard work that went into making the WPC successful – from the wonderful staff, to the impressive Committee Chairs and members, who gave their time and talents to create a memorable program, and ensure that the Congress was the best ever!

The first day of WPC comprised three concurrent Pre-Congress Courses, the first one on the Fundamentals of PD, the second on Interdisciplinary Care, and the third on Science and Advocacy. The actual Congress kicked off on the evening of that day with an extremely moving Opening Ceremony, which you can view at <http://www.worldpdcongress.org>

The three days of the main Congress featured daily "hot topics" presentations, plenary sessions, special lectures, parallel sessions, workshops, roundtables, and a wrap-up session, as well as an exhibition, poster presentations, video presentations, a Renewal Room with massage, yoga, dance, etc., film documentaries, and a live musical "The Alan Parkinson's Project". I left the Congress each evening feeling slightly frustrated that I could not attend everything, but enriched and inspired by the sessions I had attended, and the people I had met.

The WPC was a fantastic experience and, as in 2010, my over arching memory is of the people I met and the contacts I made, as well as the knowledge that there are so many people who are battling to find a cure for PD, or developing drugs or other treatments to improve the quality of life for PwPs like me.

I hope to see you at the fourth WPC, which will be in Portland, Oregon from September 20 – 23, 2016. You will learn lots, meet amazing people, be inspired, have fun, and it just might be a life-changing experience!

Pictured from Left: Lisa Ebb, PT, MS, NCS, Medstar Georgetown University Hospital Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department. Patricia Davies, from Washington, D.C. World Parkinson Congress Steering Committee.

