Dear WPC friends,

So many things are happening with the WPC 2019 planning and beyond, it's a good day to share the excitement. The WPC Blog is hosting exciting posts by leaders in the field, posing questions and highlighting successes. Yesterday's post by Dr. Soania Mathur puts engaging in clinical trials front and center, and is an interesting follow-up to the post by Dr. Michael Schwarzschild in January that explored the idea of looking at genetic determinants to design trials to disrupt Parkinson's before it even starts. This isn't a new idea, and it certainly has challenges, but the question now is, are we at the right point in time to invest in research around genetics now that we can pinpoint specific genes that are the suspected triggers or culprits for Parkinson's. Learn more about the challenges and the idea around preventing PD before it even starts, in Schwarzschild's blog. Read the full post and leave a comment, let us know what you think about this direction of research, is it time?

We announced in late 2017 that the WPC was presented with the Incredible Impacts Award, but we wanted to share with you this newly released video about the award itself and why the WPC was selected. Being the inaugural winners of this award, in a field with thousands of conferences, is a huge honor for the WPC. We
are a relatively young organization, and have hosted only four Congresses in our time, which must mean that these Congresses have made a huge impact in order for us to be selected. You'll notice in the video that it's our Board member, and community advocate, Pat Davies who is accepting the award for the WPC. We believe that people with Parkinson's should be at the center of everything we do, that includes accepting awards for us and speaking to the global community about why the WPC works. Scroll down for the video.

**Buddies Program Coordinators** have been selected! We are thrilled to announce the names of our Buddies Coordinators for the WPC 2019, Deanne Krywy (Canada), June Ritar (Australia), Robert Davis (Canada), and Tamara & Conder Seaholtz (USA). They hail from three countries and each brings a wealth of experience to the role. As in the past, WPC Buddies will be matched with each other prior to the WPC to connect, talk, share plans and support each other along the journey to Kyoto. We'll also have opportunities for Buddies to meet up in Kyoto before the Congress begins. Registration to attend the WPC is required in order to become a Buddy, and will begin as soon as registration opens on September 10, 2018.

Get ready! Just 210 days until the WPC 2019 registration opens.

Warm regards,

Elizabeth "Eli" Pollard
Executive Director

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**WPC Blog Highlight**
Planning for Prevention. It is Time.

by Michael Schwarzschild, MD, PhD

The following is an excerpt from his blog post. The link to the full blog post is below.

Preparing to prevent Parkinson’s might seem premature. After all, even when scientists wistfully describe the ‘holy grail’ of PD therapeutics, we typically aspire to halting or perhaps reversing the inexorable clinical decline. Of course simply slowing progression of disability would represent an epic achievement. If we have yet to demonstrate that any treatment can dent progression in people already diagnosed with PD, is it wise to start designing trials to disrupt PD development in healthy people? I believe the answer is now yes. For two good reasons:

1. Our ability to identify who is at higher risk of getting PD has rapidly expanded. This growing capability will soon allow us to define populations of healthy individuals who are sufficiently ‘at-risk’ to justify joining clinical trials of candidate protective therapies, at least those that are reasonably safe. The opportunity
results from an accelerating understanding of PD risk factors – both genetic determinants and prodromal features of the disease.

Read the Rest . . .

Subscribe to the WPC Blog

World Parkinson Coalition Receives the Incredible Impacts Award

Watch the Video

Sponsor The 5th World Parkinson Congress!

As a subscriber to the WPC eNews, you already know that the World Parkinson Congress is the only high level scientific congress that brings the global Parkinson community together under one roof. The triennial congresses provide the only opportunity for the whole Parkinson community to learn together about the latest developments in the field and to network with each other over four powerful days. Why wait to sponsor the upcoming WPC 2019? There are exciting exclusive sponsorship items, meaning once they are gone, that's it!
Sponsor: WPC 2019 Welcome Reception
Help us kick-off WPC 2019 by sponsoring the Welcome Reception. The reception starts immediately after the opening ceremony on the evening of Tuesday, June 4th at the Convention Center. This popular event gives sponsors prime recognition as supporters of the WPC community. We are expecting to bring more than 2,000 people together that evening.

Learn more on page 25 of the WPC Prospectus

Sponsor: Health Professional Networking Sessions
We provide a rare opportunity for the spectrum of Parkinson's health professionals to network with each other to share and learn best practices. We host specific gatherings for physical therapists, nurses, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists and social workers. Supporting these gatherings gets your company in front of the leaders in these fields. The number of health care professionals who attend these sessions is always growing, WPC 2016 saw more than 400 attend these sessions!

Learn more on page 25 of the WPC Prospectus

Abstract Highlight from WPC 2016
Innovative Approaches to Improve Walking and Reduce Freezing of Gait in PD

by Fay Horak, PhD, PT

Although walking problems and freezing of gait are the most common reasons for falls and reduced quality of life in people with Parkinson’s disease (PD), current antiparkinson medications and deep brain stimulation (DBS) have limited effects. In fact, although levodopa and DBS often improves gait speed, balance does not improve and falls may increase with treatment. Unlike other neurological diseases, gait in people with PD often does not improve with a cane or walker. Currently, many laboratories are exploring innovative approaches to improve walking and reduce freezing of gait based on new: 1) medications, 2) technologies, or 3) exercise programs.

Medication: Recent studies suggest that balance does not improve with levodopa because it may depend more on the neurotransmitter, acetylcholine and recent studies with Rivostigmine and Donepezil that increase the amount of acetylcholine in the brain can improve gait and reduce falls.
Technologies: Augmenting sensory inputs during gait with biofeedback shows promise in reducing freezing of gait. Traditionally, external cues have been shown to overcome freezing (ie; a line on the ground) but new technology can link sensory cues to real-time measurement of walking. For example, studies are showing that vibrotactile or visual or auditory feedback about how a person is actually walking could improve gait and reduce freezing. However, most of these studies are limited to short term changes in a laboratory environment and need to be translated and tested in real life conditions.

Exercise: There is good evidence that exercise can improve gait speed and stride length but less evidence that exercise can improve freezing. Since freezing is associated with specific types of cognitive deficits, we developed and are testing a new type of agility training with cognitive challenges. Preliminary results show significantly reduced freezing of gait after a 6-week (18 session) agility group exercise program. In addition, this improvement is associated with improved functional connectivity between locomotor and cognitive areas of the brain.
In July we will start accepting original abstracts for the 5th World Parkinson Congress in Kyoto, Japan. Scientific and Living with Parkinson's abstracts will be considered for acceptance. **Scientific** abstracts will cover a range of topics from basic science, clinical science, and comprehensive care, while **Living with Parkinson's** abstracts are open to those involved in education or advocacy related to Parkinson's.

The top twelve scientific abstracts will be selected for Hot Topics, and the authors will be invited to orally present their work in front of up to 1,000 people, including leaders in the field. One outstanding abstract submitter whose work is deemed innovative and visionary will receive the Stanley Fahn Young Investigator Award which will be part of the group of Hot Topics presenters and will receive an award to cover costs for attending the WPC.

The inaugural winner of the Stanley Fahn Young Investigator Award announced during the WPC 2016, was Morten Gersal Stokholm, MD, PhD candidate at Aarhus University, for his abstract "Neuroinflammation in prediagnostic Parkinson's disease: A multitracer PET study of idiopathic REM sleep behavior disorder patients." [Watch his and the eleven other Hot Topic presentations for free registering here.](#)

**Abstract submission opens on July 9, 2018 and close on November 23, 2018.**

[Click here to learn more.](#)
Meet the WPC 2019 Buddies Program Coordinators

**Deanna Krywy (Canada):** Deanna initially participated in the Buddies Program at WPC 2013 and served as a Coordinator for the Buddies Program for WPC 2016. Deanna was diagnosed with Parkinson's at 50 years of age, which turned life upside down, but created great opportunities.

**June Ritar (Australia):** June took part in the Buddies Program at WPC 2016. June was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 2007. She has
been involved in the Mid-Western Parkinson's Support Group since its inception in 2010 holding several leadership roles and organizing fundraisers.

**Robert Davis (Canada):** Robert took part in the Buddies Program at WPC 2016. Robert was diagnosed with Parkinson’s in 2008 and has served as the City of Toronto’s Supervisor of Public Consultation for a range of city divisions including water, and transit planning.

**Tamara & Conder Seaholtz (USA):** Tamara & Conder live in Washington state and participated in the Buddies program for the first time at WPC 2016. Conder was diagnosed with Parkinson's not long before WPC 2016. Tamara speaks English, Spanish, German and American Sign Language. Conder speaks English and German.