Dear friends,

WPC has an exciting start to 2020 with the launch of our #WPC4YOPD fundraiser and announcement of five new board members. Our first two YOPD fundraisers, Larry Gifford and Heather Kennedy raised enough money to help scholarship nearly six people with young onset PD to attend the 6th World Parkinson Congress. This week UK advocate Matt Eagles is running his fundraising campaign. Learn more about this innovative PwP-designed and PwP-led fundraiser and please consider supporting the program to get more YOPD to Barcelona.

WPC is now looking for your suggestions for program topics and speakers to share with the Program Committee. The WPC 2022 Program Committee is beginning to take shape now, so the timing is right for you to start sharing your ideas on what topics you are eager to see on the program. We'll be collecting your feedback during the the year, but don't wait! The sooner we hear from you the better.

WPC is grateful to our first sponsor for the WPC 2022, USWorldMeds. Not only are they supporting the WPC 2022 website, and the WPC 2022 Ambassadors, they are helping the WPC to host a thought-provoking Leadership Forum in early 2021 with the Executive Directors and CEOs of Parkinson's organizations worldwide. The two day WPC Leadership Forum will bring together the leaders who are helping to change the lives of people with Parkinson's. They will do this by exchanging best practices with in the PD community, but also work to learn from other health spaces so the full PD community can benefit. All WPC Organizational Partners are invited to be part of the WPC Leadership Forum. We look forward to sharing more as the plans unfold.

Calling All Scientists! WPC is excited to announce it is opening applications for our Science Ambassadors program. Read more about this program on our website and be sure to apply by the March 15, 2020 deadline.

Kind regards,

Elizabeth "Eli" Pollard
Executive Director

WPC Blog Highlight
There is a huge and increasing burden of degenerative disorders worldwide.

The Asia-Pacific region is poised to face a large brunt of this, with China alone projected to have the majority of patients with Parkinson’s disease within the next couple of decades.

In addition, disease heterogeneity has been increasingly recognized to be a crucial aspect of the disease. Yet, there has been very little study comparing similarities and differences between East and West, despite the fact that in the period 2013-2017 alone, there were around 7,000 PD-related journal publications from China, Japan and South Korea.

In conjunction with the recent World Parkinson Congress (WPC) in Kyoto, Japan, Lancet Neurology published a very timely and state-of-the-art review on “Parkinson’s disease in the Western Pacific Region” (Lim et al. 2019). (The WPR is the World Health Organization’s terminology for the Asia-Pacific region, minus the Indian subcontinent and a few other countries).
Twenty-six people, all but one who live with Young Onset Parkinson’s Disease (YOPD) aim to ‘pay it forward’ by launching a 52 week Facebook fundraiser to help OTHER people with YOPD to attend the 6th World Parkinson Congress. These 26 participants hope to raise $50,000 to help send up to 50 YOPD to Barcelona, Spain to be part of the extraordinary WPC 2022 experience. If you would prefer to donate through the WPC website your can do so by clicking HERE.

Meet the February 2020 Fundraisers, Matt Eagles and Eli Pollard!

The world is becoming more and more connected. People are sharing their stories and experiences across the globe and across various platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. They are making friends for life. Connecting with these people in real life at conference brings much needed joy and definitely improves our well-being as young people with Parkinson’s. After 44 years with Juvenile Onset-PD I attended my first congress in Japan in June and it literally blew me away meeting people from all over the globe I had only corresponded online with previously.

Travel is becoming easier too with flights to pretty much anywhere on the planet but access to funding to travel is an issue for many people living with YOPD. If we want the full experience at congress we need to invite and enable EVERYONE who wants to attend, CAN indeed attend with no barriers! The parky community is richly diverse and has some wonderful characters lets connect!!

You can donate to my fundraiser by clicking HERE.

Elizabeth “Eli” Pollard has been with the World Parkinson Coalition® from its inception in 2004 and helped steer the organization, alongside world renowned Parkinsonologist and WPC founder, Dr. Stanley Fahn. Together they worked to grow WPC Inc. from it’s sole purpose, of hosting a triennial global Congress on Parkinson’s disease, to it’s more meaningful place in the community today, as a hub for many of the global PD organizations to connect and intersect online, on teleconferences, or in person at the Congresses. As the WPC Executive Director, Eli is honored to be the only non-Parky who is part of the #WPC4YOPD fundraiser. She hopes to make the group proud by raising more than her goal to support YOPD to attend the WPC 2022 in Barcelona.

Learn More About the Fundraiser

Welcome to our new board members!
The World Parkinson Coalition (WPC) announced the appointment of five new members to its board of directors. Drawing on their many years of experience in the Parkinson’s field as movement disorder specialists, researchers, and advocates. Dr. Rajesh Pahwa from the University of Kansas Medical Center, Dr. Ryosuke Takahashi from Kyoto University, Dr. Malu G. Tansey from University of Florida College of Medicine, Dr. Alice Nieuwboer from University of Leuven, and Dr. Linda Olson, Professor Emerita from University of California at San Diego, joined the WPC Board as of January 2020. Board members play a major role in steering the work of the WPC, so we are thrilled to announce our five newest directors.

**Dr. Rajesh Pahwa** has worked for nearly 30 years in the movement disorder field, where he has published more than 250 peer-reviewed articles and led more than 75 clinical studies on Parkinson’s and other movement disorders. He is the director of The University of Kansas Health System’s Parkinson’s Disease and Movement Center, a Parkinson’s Foundation Center of Excellence and, in 2005 he was selected as the inaugural Laverne and Joyce Rider Professor of Neurology at KU School of Medicine in Kansas City, Kansas.

**Dr. Ryosuke Takahashi** was appointed in 2005 as Professor and Chair of Neurology at Kyoto University Hospital and Kyoto University Graduate School of Medicine. Over his nearly 40 years working in the space, he has published more than 300 peer-reviewed articles and held many positions of leadership including as President of the Japanese Society of Neurology and Vice President of the Japanese Society for Neuroscience. His major research interests are the molecular pathogenetic mechanisms underlying Parkinson’s disease and related disorders and development of disease-modifying therapies against neurodegenerative disorders. He’s one of the lead researchers on the promising clinical trial launched in 2018 for iPS cell-based therapy for Parkinson’s disease.

**Dr. Malú Gámez Tansey** from the University of Florida College of Medicine studies the role and regulation of neuroinflammatory and immune system responses in modulating the gene-environment interactions that determine risk for development and progression of neurodegenerative and neuropsychiatric disease.

**Dr. Alice Nieuwboer** is head of the Neuromotor Rehabilitation Research Group at the University of Leuven. She and her team are investigating the mechanisms of gait and balance disturbances in Parkinson’s disease (PD) as well as upper limb motor problems. Her group established the extraordinary link between freezing of gait and freezing in different effectors, a mechanism that they continue to study in their ongoing longitudinal work. Alice’s team aims to answer the question of whether learning can still occur in neurodegenerative disease and if so, how it will imprint in the brain at the neurological systems level.

**Dr. Linda Olson** joined the Board after having attended the last two World Parkinson Congresses as a delegate who came to learn about living with Parkinson’s herself. Dr. Olson, a trained radiologist who worked at University of California San Diego for more than 30 years in the role of professor gave a moving and inspirational key note talk at the 5th World Parkinson Congress about living well with Parkinson’s disease.

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**About the WPC Board of Directors**
A LOOK BACK: WPC 2019 Abstract Highlight

The Australian Parkinson’s Mission: Integrating genomics, biomarkers and patient cell phenotyping into disease modifying clinical trials

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We currently face multiple challenges in identifying disease modifying therapies that slow or stop disease progression in people with Parkinson’s disease. These challenges negatively impact clinical trials and include:

1. Insufficient insight into the molecular pathogenesis of PD
2. Variability in measures used in clinical trials to quantify disease progression
3. Possible misdiagnosis
4. A lack of biomarkers for early and accurate diagnosis and to measure disease progression
5. Parkinson’s disease is a heterogeneous disorder with the significant likelihood of disease subtypes which renders ineffective a one-size-fits-all therapeutic approach
6. The lengthy timeline from drug discovery to patients

The Australian Parkinson’s Mission (APM) will initially see a five-year program supported by the Commonwealth government of Australia that is designed to identify potential treatments and develop precision medicine approaches towards tackling Parkinson’s disease by fully integrating the following approaches:

(a) A series of multi-arm, multi-drug clinical trials in multiple sites across Australia that will involve hundreds of patients in an effort to test repurposed and novel drugs that have been identified by an international panel of experts.
(b) Participants’ genomic information, biomarkers and phenotyping of patients’ cells will aid to advance our understanding of the molecular pathogenesis of PD and potentially stratify patients into disease subtypes. Genomic/biomarker-based subtyping would provide a major step towards personalized medicine for individuals with Parkinson’s by identifying patients that will benefit from a drug and those patients for whom a specific therapeutic strategy would likely be ineffective.
(c) Assess blood biomarkers for their ability to accurately identify patients and detect drug efficacy with greater sensitivity than existing clinical measures. The APM is an Australian-led international collaborative of scientists, clinicians, industry and people living with Parkinson’s whose goal is to identify effective drugs that slow or stop disease progression and fast track them into clinical practice.