



STRETCHING, DANCING, BOXING

Fighting Back!



Community Report 2018/19

Jillian's Gym — A Dream Come True

I was 49 years old when I was diagnosed with Parkinson's. As with many others who are on a similar journey, hearing those words felt like a huge blow. I was flooded with questions. *I've been a physiotherapist for 25 years. What is going to happen to my career, my family, my life?*

I was a caregiver. I didn't know that much about Parkinson's but knew I could learn. So that's what I did. Then, I started to share my knowledge with others who had been diagnosed and were looking for patient-centred ways to live well despite the disease.

Six of us started exercising at Panorama Recreation Centre. Together we learned that Parkinson's made us smaller in the world, and we needed to get bigger. Our exercises focused on this. One day we thought we were so big that an 8lb medicine ball went over the barrier and landed in the swimming pool!

As we learned, we realized how much fun we were having together. So much laughter and sharing. We had created a built-in support group through Parkinson's specific exercises. Others started to join us.

We grew out of our space and moved to Greenglades in Sidney. We continued to grow and added what is now our brand new custom-built gym and living room in downtown Victoria. We have grown into the community I always dreamed of but never thought we could get to.

This season of growth would not have been possible without our incredible donors and dedicated volunteers. Your support is helping make life better with Parkinson's for so many people in our community.

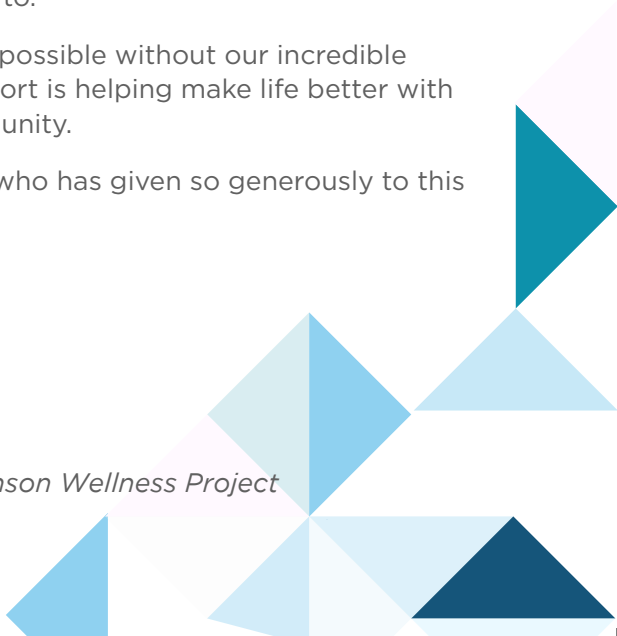
I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has given so generously to this project! Together we did it!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jillian Carson".

Jillian Carson
Founder/Board Chair, *Parkinson Wellness Project*





Built for people living with Parkinson's, our new centre includes Jillian's Gym, a spacious 2,400 sq ft, fully equipped exercise facility with beautiful natural lighting, and a bright, comfortable 600 square foot 'living room' where our community can relax and make connections.

Why is PWP Important?

At its core, PWP provides a place for a community to grow. A place for people living with Parkinson's to exercise, to support others, and to feel the support of our family.

PWP empowers, improves function, and enhances the quality of life for those affected by Parkinson's through fun, safe, and effective multidisciplinary programs. Rigorous, evidence-based exercise is central to our activities.

Nearly 3,000 people on Vancouver Island are currently diagnosed with Parkinson's, and the number continues to grow. Parkinson's is a progressive disorder of the nervous system with no current cure. However, Parkinson's-specific, rigorous exercise has been shown to slow the progression of the disease!

Come out and join us! Let's fight this together.



Donate to PWP Today!

\$100 covers an entire month of classes for one person. You can donate by filling in the reply card included or online at ***support.parkinsonwellnessproject.org***.



Making Life Better - Understanding Parkinson's Lindy's Story

Lindy was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in March of 2018. Although she found comfort and relief in having an official diagnosis and being able to put a name to her symptoms, it was a scary diagnosis to receive none-the-less.

"I felt isolated and depressed in spite of the support of my wonderful family and friends," says Lindy. "I explored any information I could find about PD and became even more depressed."

Despite being encouraged by her GP to find a Parkinson's support group, Lindy

was reluctant to join anything. *"I was scared to see other folks further along in their PD journey and know that that could very well be me down the road,"* says Lindy.

However, her perspective started to shift in early July, when she began the standard Parkinson's drug program. Within just a few weeks, Lindy started to feel much better, both physically and mentally. She heard about PWP and was keen to learn more about this community. Lindy was intrigued and decided to give it a try.

"My first challenge was to get through the door and begin a class, but once I was through that door, I felt right at home," says Lindy. "It was a huge relief to talk to people who understand the nature of this disease."

Today, after taking classes for over 12 months, Lindy says she feels better and more fit than she did before her diagnosis! *"I have also come to realize that socialization is just as important as the exercises we do together,"* says Lindy.

"The camaraderie and comfort I've experienced in the PWP community means so much to me."

With the opening of PWP's new specially-designed centre, Lindy is loving bigger gym space and sitting room for socializing after all the exercising. *"I consider myself very lucky to be a part of the PWP family and so very thankful that I took that first big step!"*



**You can give someone like Lindy community and hope.
Please Give Today!**



Fight Back Against Parkinson's!

Rock Steady Boxing Gets Big Results

Parkinson Wellness Project is a proud affiliate of Rock Steady Boxing, the first boxing program of its kind in North America. And it all started with a friendship.

When Scott Newman, a prosecutor in Indianapolis, Indiana, was diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson's at the age of 40, his friend Vince Perez refused to let him go down without a fight. Vince, an experienced Golden Gloves boxer, designed a program that attacks Parkinson's at its vulnerable neurological points. His intuitive insight is now proven to have merit through an increasing body of medical research.

Realizing that their experience might be replicated for others, the two founded Rock Steady Boxing as a nonprofit. As word of this unique program spread and the demand for the classes increased, Rock Steady Boxing created classes to meet the fitness levels at all stages of Parkinson's—from the newly diagnosed to those who had been living with it for decades.

Classes are taught by Certified Personal Trainers and focus on overall fitness, strength training, reaction time and balance. The non-contact classes include ring work, focus mitts, heavy and speed bags, jump rope, core work, and circuit weight training. There are proven protocols for four different levels of ability, and the training includes caregivers, too. Rock Steady encourages maximum effort, speed, strength, balance and flexibility. So if it sounds like “tough love,” it is, but the program builds camaraderie while building bodies and encouraging participants.

This unique program helps people with Parkinson's fight the disease very efficiently. Boxing works by moving the body in all planes of motion while continually changing the routine throughout the workout. Scott and Vince were, indeed, on to something. Studies suggest that intense exercise programs such as Rock Steady may be “neuro-protective,” meaning that they actually work to delay progression of the symptoms.

Here's just one of countless Rock Steady testimonials, "My total well-being—morale, physical ability, and relationship with others—is better because of Rock Steady."

The rewards are clearly enormous: Rock Steady is a **key component** of our expanding class schedule at PWP.

Moving Better with PWPFIT!



Moving better with PWPFIT! Classes create a welcoming, supportive environment where the focus is on fun, but it's hard work, too! The exercises are based on the research and teaching of Dr. Becky Farley from Tucson, Arizona and enhance functional movement, balance, strength, endurance, and cognition.

Dance for Parkinson's Disease



PWP's Dance for Parkinson's disease curriculum increases mobility and quality of life. The effectiveness of this method is supported by evidence from 38 scientific studies. PWP is lucky to have two instructors, Delilah Smyth and Sepora Jacobson. Both trained with Dance for PD, an affiliate of Mark Morris Dance.

We're so grateful

to those who have contributed to PWP. You are our family: your extraordinary commitment to fighting Parkinson's disease has helped us realize so many of our dreams. We thank you for your generosity and your tenacity. *Together we can make the dreams of so many come true. **Thank you.***

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW



750+
Classes



3,500
Volunteer Hours



80%
More Participants



1 Brand New Gym



PWP
Parkinson Wellness Project

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