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msconnection

Mid-Florida Chapter

Until the world is free of multiple sclerosis, there's the National MS Society . . . This is why there is hope.

Honoring Those Who Make Our Mission Possible

Mid Florida Chapter's Annual Meeting bestows honors, welcomes new board

On Friday, Nov. 3, the Mid Florida Chapter held its Annual Meeting, installing the 2007 Board of Trustees and recognizing some of the extraordinary individuals and organizations whose efforts help the MS Society move toward its goal of a world free of MS.

Keynote speaker John Richert, MD, shared information about advances in MS research. Dr. Richert serves as the National MS Society's Executive Vice President, Research and Clinical Programs. Following reports from Chapter President Tami Caesar and incoming Chair Chuck Owston, the treasurer's report was presented (see chart on page 19 for details).



The highlight of the Mid Chapter annual meeting was an awards ceremony recognizing those who go the extra mile on behalf of our organization. Pictured (from left) are Chapter President Tami Caesar, Nayda Cueves, Jeffrey Hamilton, Vicki DiMaria and Chapter staffers Melissa Mulcahy and Pat Chuck.

The 2006 Award Ceremony honored the following for their contributions to the Chapter:

Community Partner Award

Dr. Phillips, Inc., Jewish Family Services, Central Florida YMCA - *For their partnership and support of the MS Journey Club*

Activist of the Year - Vicki DiMaria

Volunteer of the Year - Jeffrey Hamilton

Spirit of Philanthropy Award - SeaWorld Orlando

Achievement Award - Nayda Cueves

Corporate Star Award - Bright House Networks

Mission Award - Sally & Abbott Buegeleisen

Class of 2006 Volunteer Hall of Fame Inductees - Sally Buegeleisen, Peter B. Dunne, MD, Catherine Kerns & Valerie Sewell

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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Join Us in Our BRITE New Challenge

This issue of MS Connection comes on the heels of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's 2006 National Conference, held in early November in Orlando. In addition to very exciting ideas and announcements, the conference announced a new manifesto for our organization. We are challenged to be "BRITE" -- bold, relevant, inclusive, transparent and engaging. In doing so, the Mid Florida Chapter will mirror the National Society's commitment to be:



- **Bold** by setting aggressive goals to reach greater heights in the fight against MS. Our first bold move was to *double* our local programs and services budget for 2007!
- **Relevant** by determining how we can best help people with MS and those around them and to ensure that the programs and services we offer are relevant to their needs. In early 2007 please respond to the Mid Florida Chapter comprehensive Needs Assessment. Your answers will help us prioritize and implement the programs and services that you want and need.
- **Inclusive** by involving more people – with or without MS – and reaching beyond our primary demographic (women of Northern European descent) to better serve minorities with MS, and minorities within our own organization. We are activists and we welcome everyone who wants to do something about MS – Now!
- **Transparent** by operating as a non-profit organization that fully and freely discloses our funding sources and expenditures. Our Chapter is audited by an independent firm every year. Please call our office if you would like detailed financial information.
- **Engaging** by continuing to strive to be an organization that excites, attracts and builds long-lasting relationships with people, whether they're young research scientists excited about finding a cure for MS, children of people with MS who "grow up" in the organization and want to play a role throughout their lives, or members of the community who are aware of our vital organization and the role it plays in the lives of so many.

Just as I hope you'll take this **BRITE** challenge with us, all at the Mid Florida Chapter hope your holiday season is bright, bountiful and blessed.

Warmest Regards,
Tami Caesar, *President Mid Florida Chapter*

The National Conference Proves We're Gaining Momentum



Gaining Momentum: A World Free of MS, NMSS' 2006 National Conference, was held at the Renaissance Orlando Resort at SeaWorld where over 1,000 staff members and volunteers gathered Nov. 1-4. Keynote speakers throughout the event included Joyce Nelson, president and CEO of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Shawn Reifsteck, president of Hands On Network, leadership and management consultant Marcus Buckingham, singer/songwriter and motivational speaker Ken Medema, Clear Channel president Randall Mays, Fox News' Neil Cavuto, NMSS national chairman Weyman Johnson, and Dr. Peter Calabresi.

A full schedule of more than 50 affinity sessions, workshops, and town hall meetings offered attendees insight into a variety of relevant topics, from health care and insurance issues to fundraising and volunteer recruitment.

The annual conference was also the setting for the unveiling of an exciting new branding campaign. Weiden+Kennedy, one of the world's leading advertising agencies (their clients include Nike, Coca-Cola and Starbucks), spent a year developing a campaign that truly reflects our organization, the people we serve, and the importance of getting involved in the race to find a cure for MS.

The campaign, which will publicly launch during MS Awareness Week in March 2007, includes a thought-provoking video that beautifully illustrates the BRITE Manifesto. We look forward to sharing the campaign with you in the next issue of MS Connections, and to providing opportunities for you to view the video in the near future.

PremiereTrade™ Event Wows Attendees

The PremiereTrade™ Plaza Grand Opening event was a huge success. The Mid Florida Chapter was the beneficiary of the proceeds from this Oct. 21 event, which took place downtown at the new Kuhn Properties building. Over 750 guests came to mix, mingle and enjoy the entertainment, which included dance bands, a mini-film festival, performance artists and a laser light show. Thanks to all who worked so hard to make this event a resounding success!



A Tax-Saving Opportunity to Give – Before Time Runs Out

If you do not itemize, are age 70 or older, no longer have deductible interest expenses from mortgages, and have an IRA from which you need to make a distribution, the Pension Protection Act of 2006 offers you a tax-saving opportunity.

You can make a gift to the NMSS Mid Florida Chapter using funds transferred from your individual retirement account (IRA) without paying taxes on your distribution. The gift lowers your adjusted gross income while satisfying a pledge, benefiting a special fund, or increasing our endowment.

This opportunity is available to you for the rest of 2006 and throughout 2007. It ends as of Dec. 31, 2007. For additional information, please contact Ed Davis at 800-818-8854 or ed.davis@flc.nmss.org.

A Family – and a Neighborhood – with a Mission

The Paul Davis family of Satellite Beach lives on a close-knit street with 16 homes. When the Christmas season approaches, each family decorates its



house brightly with lights. The street has become a “must see” for thousands of people, with more than 24,000 cars traveling the street last December.

The Davis family helped start this neighborhood tradition 24 years ago, three years after Mr. Davis was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. For many years, a collection box was set up to accommodate the many sightseers who wished to say “thanks” by making a donation. Until 2005, those collections were donated to a cancer-related organization.

When residents met to discuss the 2006 decorations, they surprised Mr. Davis by informing him that, in his honor, all collections would be donated to the Mid Florida Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Mr. Davis was humbled and very proud.

Paul Davis is exuberant when he talks about how he has coped with MS. While he and his wife raised a family, he has remained active. The same can be said of his wife and daughter who will be among the thousands participating in the Walt Disney World Marathon early in January. Each raised at least \$1,000 in pledges to qualify, and these funds will benefit the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

The Mid Florida Chapter salutes Paul Davis, his family and their neighbors on the 25th anniversary of their holiday gift to the community and thanks them for the generous contribution they will make this holiday season to fight MS.



The MS Walk Hits its Stride Once Again

2007 will bring one annual walk to Mid Florida

Once again, the **MS Walk** has gone the distance in raising funds for the Mid Florida Chapter. Hundreds of people realized the importance of getting involved this past October and participated in the **MS Walk**, raising more than \$145,000 for research and local programs and services.



Historically, the Mid Florida Chapter has staged two **MS Walks** each year, one in the spring and one in the fall. In 2007, the Chapter starts a new tradition by rolling both events into one annual walk each March. The **2007 MS Walk** is scheduled for March 24 in Brevard, Orange, Pinellas and Sarasota counties. The day when we finally find the cure for multiple sclerosis is getting closer. *This is why we walk.*

Register now by calling 1-800-Fight-MS or visit our website at nationalmssociety.org/flc.



One Walker's Story

Laural was always on the go. Whether it was mountain biking, hiking or scuba diving, Laural was a tough lady to keep up with. So while on a trip to Australia with Jonathan, her husband of 11 months, Laural suddenly found it difficult to keep up on their excursions. For several days the pins and needles in her feet were so bad that Laural was tripping and losing her footing. Unaccustomed to seeing his wife at the back of the pack, Jonathan became concerned. They rationalized and convinced themselves it was simply a case of jet lag. A chance encounter with a wallaby changed all that.

While hiking Down Under, Laural bent over to feed a wallaby and fell. Panic set in as she realized she couldn't get up. On the day they were supposed to dive the Great Barrier Reef, Laural and Jonathan spent the day at a hospital in Australia. That's how their MS journey began.

Back in Bradenton, Laural stays active by making a difference in her local community as a vocal advocate for those living with MS. She has participated in the **Sarasota MS Walk** for five years as the team captain of Laural's Gang, MS ambassador and committee member. Laural believes it's important to be hopeful and optimistic, while still being honest and realistic. People with MS can lead full and rich lives; they just have to do some things differently.

Join Laural this March 24 for the **2007 MS Walk** and *do something* in the fight against MS.

Grip Your Handlebars and Get Ready to Ride



Whether you or someone you know is a recreational cyclist, a weekend warrior, or hardcore roadie, the **2007 Bright House Networks MS Bike Tour** is the place to be.

Scheduled for the weekend of April 21 and 22, 2007, this is no ordinary bike ride. It's an annual challenge and a commitment to improve the lives of those living with multiple sclerosis. In Central Florida alone, over 10,000 individuals are coping with the devastating effects of MS. In fact, every hour one more person will be diagnosed with MS.

This year, we intend to we give the Mid Florida MS community over ONE MILLION reasons to continue to hope and fight for a cure. Last year we raised over \$925,000 in the fight against MS and this year, our goal is to raise over a million dollars!

Join us for the **2007 Bright House Networks MS Bike Tour** as we bike through some of Central Florida's best cycling areas, from Cypress Gardens to SeaWorld and back. Whether you ride, volunteer or raise funds, you'll spend the weekend making friends and memories, *all while making a difference!* Register at www.nationalmssociety.org/flc or call 1-800-FIGHT-MS.

Shannon's Story

by Shannon Gately

Every year, hundreds of people train for and ride in the **MS Bike Tour**. This

year, my boss Mike was one of those people. Mike is an avid cyclist. It is one of his joys in life. About 10 years ago, he started riding in the **MS Bike Tour**. It allowed him to do something he loved while

raising money for a good cause, but he did not know anyone with the disease.

I am not sure that he has studied MS in depth. Some things he has picked up just from exposure. I don't think the particulars matter to him. He just knows this disease can be brutal. It can take someone in the prime of their life and drag them down. He found a way to do what he loves and make it count for something positive.

I was hired at the company in 2003. Eventually I saw the certificates for his work with MS on his wall and expressed surprise at the number of times he had ridden. The fact that this man rides his heart out over one weekend a year, for people he has never met, touched me deeply.

We talked more about it in the months that followed and my interest grew. He was out riding his bike during lunch breaks, after hours and on weekends to train for the ride. He was enthusiastic about his work and that helped foster my interest in finding a way to help alongside him.

Due to the strength of his passion, I went out on both days to volunteer. I helped set up the finish area and then took my place at both finish lines to welcome Mike. He smiled and waved and looked happy that someone was there to greet him personally. On the second day, the riders got their medals

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MS Awareness Week 2007: Join the movement

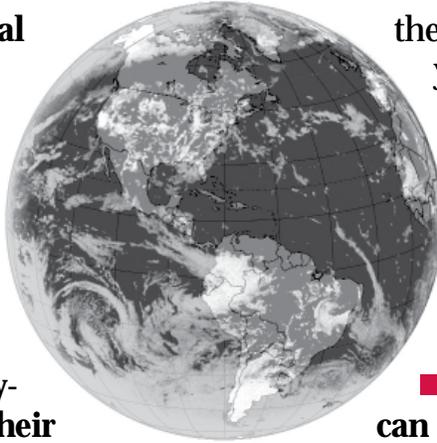
Last year, our inaugural MS Awareness Week focused on what it means to live with MS. We issued the challenge to “Come face to face with multiple sclerosis.” We launched a new Web site, faceofms.org, which offers an opportunity for anyone impacted by MS to tell their story and to read and hear the stories of others. It’s still going strong.

This year, we’re building on our good start. Mark your calendars: MS Awareness Week is March 5–11, 2007.

2007 is a pivotal year. Our strategic response to the problem of MS—developed by all levels of the Society during 2006—calls for us to be **bold, relevant, inclusive, transparent, and engaging**. Soon you will see an entirely new look—a new logo, new colors, a new central Web site, and most importantly, a whole new way of talking about MS and the work we can do together.

We need the wider world to understand what it means to live with MS. MS robs people of the ability to move easily, whether from one place to another or from one thought to another, or to move ahead with their lives as they expected to do. While the Society works to end MS, we also work to help people move ahead again. The new rallying cry says this in a simple and powerful way: *MS stops people from moving. We exist to make sure it doesn’t.*

We are going to ask everyone to “Join



the movement!” We are asking you to:

- Tell 10 people you know that MS Awareness Week is March 5–11. Ask them to tell 10 people they know.
- Call us to find out if you can volunteer at one of our awareness events in March.
- Visit faceofms.org. If you haven’t added your story, do it now!
- Make a donation, online or by mail.
- Sponsor a walker or cyclist in an MS Bike Ride or the MS Walk.
- Sign yourself up for the MS Walk or an MS Bike Ride, and start training. We have accessible routes so everyone can take part.
- Put an MS Awareness Week html button on your e-mail signature. (Buttons will be on the national Web site before March.)
- Contact government officials about an issue important to people with MS—or call us to find out what MS activists are doing in this chapter.
- Network! Explore our affiliated self-help groups, committees, educational programs. Visit nationalmssociety.org to learn more.

MANAGING SYMPTOMS WITH MS LEARN ONLINE

Get facts about options for managing MS symptoms from the privacy of your home computer with **MS Learn Online**. This series of more than 50 webcasts features experts who delve into such topics as treatment, life planning, alternative medicine, and much more.



Managing Your Symptoms is a four-part program tackling the touchy subjects of bladder dysfunction, pain, vision problems, and sexual dysfunction. Nancy Holland, RN, EdD, and vice president of Clinical Programs at the Society, shares more than 30 years of MS experience and

GET HELP FOR COLLEGE

The National MS Society is accepting applications for its **2007 College Scholarship Program**. To be eligible, a candidate must be a high school senior who has MS or who has a parent with MS, or be a high school or GED graduate of any age who has MS and has never attended college.

Apply by **January 15, 2007**. For information and to download an application, go to nationalmssociety.org/scholarship. Or call us at **1-800-FIGHT-MS** to have an application sent by mail.

knowledge about physiology, diagnosis, treatments, compensatory strategies, and the social and emotional factors that can make these symptoms so difficult to live with.

Each program runs from 11 to 15 minutes. To view them, go to nationalmssociety.org/mslearnonline. The programs can also be downloaded as podcasts. If your computer can't access the webcast, program transcripts are available that can be read online or printed. To be notified of future programs, send your e-mail address to MSLearnOnline@nmss.org. You'll get advance information about the presenters and a direct link to the program. For more information, call us at **1-800-FIGHT-MS**.

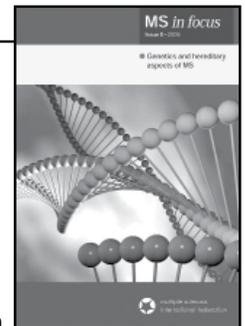
MS IN FOCUS SPOTLIGHTS GENETICS

The Multiple Sclerosis International Foundation announced that the eighth issue of **MS in Focus**

magazine, a special issue on genetics and heredity published in August 2006, has been their most popular.

"In the first two months, downloads for this issue exceeded any we've published since we started in 2003," Lucy Hurst, the MSIF's information and communications manager, told **MSConnection**.

Every issue of **MS in Focus** can be downloaded at www.msif.org/en/publications/ms_in_focus. You can also order free paper copies of your favorite issues. Recent topics covered include rehabilitation, intimacy and sexuality, and healthy living with MS.



YOUNG AND LIVING WITH MS— SOME REAL TALK AND REAL ANSWERS

There is a growing number of younger people with MS. To hear what's on their minds, the Society and MS LifeLines sponsored a forum focused on wellness—**Real Talk. Real Answers. Living with MS in your 20s and 30s**—for questions, open discussion, and getting some honest answers. The event was broadcast live on the Web on November 16th from Washington, DC.



living with ms in your 20s and 30s



A nationwide dialogue Five young adults at various mileposts of life and career joined a panel of MS experts including a top psychologist, a professional career coach, and an exercise and wellness specialist. Dr. Donnica Moore, nationally renowned health advocate, moderated.

Questions flew in from the audience and from virtual participants across the country: “Can we start a family?” “I’m worried about telling someone I’m dating.” Panelists tackled these and more in a spirited exchange.

The summit was a first but more opportunities are in the works for people in this age group to meet, network and speak out. To see the webcast, go to www.RealTalkRealAnswers.com. A print transcript is also available.

THE MS MOVEMENT NEEDS ACTIVISTS! NEW VIDEO SHOWS WHAT IT TAKES

If getting involved with public policy issues seems out of your league, a new video from the Society shows that pitching in to make changes that benefit people with MS is easier than you think.



Obama

From Advocate to Activist features MS activists from across the country who talk about their experiences, their successes and how getting involved to help themselves and others has enriched and changed their lives. Their stories reflect how one person can make a difference and that even small efforts can make big waves when many people participate.



Smith

Senators Barack Obama (D-IL) and Gordon Smith (R-OR) and Representative David Price (D-NC) explain how important MS activists are in helping to educate legislators like themselves on important issues.



Price

Take a stand Join the MS Action Network on our Web site at [nationalmssociety.org/Action Network](http://nationalmssociety.org/ActionNetwork). You'll receive an Action Alert via e-mail when important legislation needs a quick response. It's easy to call or e-mail your representatives in Congress, sign a petition, or visit your district offices. If you don't have e-mail, call us to get involved: **1-800-FIGHT-MS**. To see the video, go to nationalmssociety.org/advocacy, or call us.

"BENEFIT" STUDY ADDS TO DATA SUGGESTING EARLY TREATMENT MAY DELAY MS

Studies suggest that early treatment with one of the MS disease-modifying drugs can help to "put the brakes" on MS. In many people, early use of Betaseron, Avonex, Copaxone, or Rebif decreases the frequency and severity of attacks, reduces the number of new lesions in the brain or spinal cord, and possibly reduces future disability.

A new report on the BENEFIT study, published in the October 2006 issue of *Neurology*, has shown that Betaseron may delay the onset of MS in people with a high risk for the disease. The BENEFIT study followed 468 people who had experienced a single, MS-like attack, such as inflammation of the optic nerve or numbness on one side of their body. Many who experience such attacks—called CIS, or "clinically isolated syndrome"—will later be diagnosed with MS. They are considered at high risk for the disease.

The BENEFIT study participants received either a standard dose of Betaseron or an inactive placebo for up to 24 months or until MS was diagnosed. Those taking Betaseron had a 50% reduction in risk for developing definite MS, and those who were later diagnosed with the disease were diagnosed an average of one year later than those taking placebo.

Based on these results, Betaseron's sponsor, Schering AG, filed an application with the FDA for use of Betaseron in people with CIS in the U.S. The FDA approved the application in October.



CLUES TO LIMITING NERVE DAMAGE

MS attacks nerves and myelin, the insulation that covers nerves. Finding treatments to protect nerve tissue is crucial, as damage to nerves is what causes permanent disability in MS.

In a new study, partly funded by research grants from the National MS Society and the National Institutes of Health, researchers at Children's Hospital Boston found that treatment with nicotinamide, a form of vitamin B3, prevented further breakdown of damaged nerve fibers. The study was done in mice with an MS-like disease called EAE.

The researchers had shown previously that an enzyme called NAD decreases when nerves break down in mice. Injections of NAD or nicotinamide—which can be turned into NAD—prevented injury to nerves.

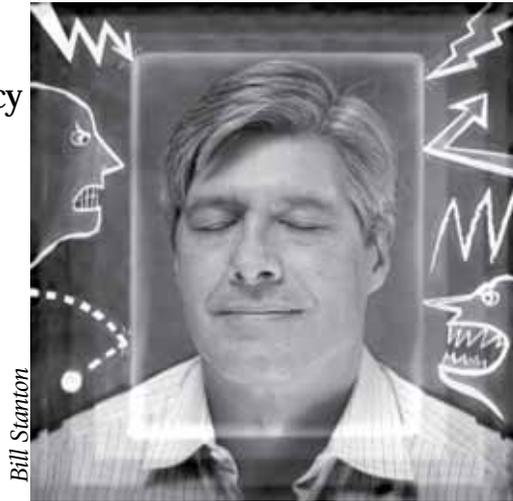
In the current study, the team injected nicotinamide into mice with EAE. Treatment succeeded in reducing inflammation and myelin destruction, and also protected nerves from breakdown, including those that had already lost their myelin sheaths. Mice given the highest doses of nicotinamide had the fewest neurological symptoms.

This hopeful clue requires more research. According to a press release from Children's Hospital, the nicotinamide doses used in these mice would translate into very high doses for humans. High intake of B vitamins can produce severe side effects in people. Progress will depend on the outcomes of safety studies.

Let Go—and Manage Your Life

by Nancy Law

Letting go of anger. We have a tendency as human beings to hold on to things. We hold on to disagreements we have had with people; we relive injuries and insults. We can carry those bad feelings with us a long time, and this causes stress long after the stressful situation is over.



Bill Stanton

Anger and MS can sometimes go hand in hand. Some of the signs that anger may be stressing you:

- Feeling irritable much of the time
- Finding little things bothersome
- Yelling or raising of your voice frequently
- Feeling sarcastic
- Saying things you later regret.

Anger is usually a secondary emotion. It comes in the wake of other more painful feelings—hurt, fear, or powerlessness. Anger actually protects us from those painful feelings, but until they are addressed, we generally continue to be angry. Ask yourself:

- Is something scaring or hurting me?
- If so, who or what?
- Do I feel helpless or powerless?

Confronting and talking to people who have hurt you can sometimes resolve the issue. Sometimes, it's just best to move on. Dealing with things that make you feel fearful or powerless generally requires action. For example, checking into insur-

ance options or talking with your employer about workplace accommodations. These actions may sound worse than the fear, but taking action will help you feel more in control of your life.

Eight steps to less stress

One of the most important things to do in managing stress is to

take care of yourself.

1. **Find the right medical team** and work with them on managing symptoms.
2. **Eat right.** Good nutrition is a no-brainer. Stick to sensible portions and avoid fad diets.
3. **Exercise.** Even though you may not be able to do the things that you used to do, you can adapt your exercise regimen to fit with your MS.
4. **Maintain healthy behaviors.** Women should get regular pap smears and mammograms. Men should have their PSA tested regularly. Periodic physical exams are a must for everyone.
5. **Avoid negative coping strategies.** Try to quit smoking. Drink in moderation. Seek help with this if you need it.
6. **Healthy relationships.** Many people find support within their own families. Others find a support network in their religious group. The Society has affiliat-

Let Go—and Manage Your Life (continued)

ed self-help groups. Some people meet with others in Internet chat, bulletin board, and e-mail listserv groups. Find a system that works for you.

7. **Avoid “toxic” people who bring you down.** You know who they are.
8. **Take time to laugh.** Laughter is actually known to be physically healthy. Find those comedy DVDs, videos, or get out to a movie. Read jokes on the Internet. Talk to friends. Share a laugh.

Nancy Law is the vice president of the National MS Society Client Programs Department. “Let Go—and Manage Your Life” was adapted from her MS Learn Online series “C.A.L.M. Down and Manage Your Stress,” which is archived at nationalmssociety.org/MSLearnOnline. The C.A.L.M. model was developed by Barbara Braham in her book **Managing Stress at Work**. If you do not have Internet access, call us and request the transcripts.

Información en Español

There are between 25 and 35 million Spanish speakers living in the U.S. Some of them have MS; many more know someone with the disease. “As part of our effort to provide people with up-to-date, unbiased information, we’re offering many of our resources in Spanish,” Maria Adelita Reyes-Velarde, MD, MPH, told **MSConnection**. Dr. Reyes-Velarde coordinates the Society’s national Hispanic outreach program.

Last August, the program developed **Lista de Recursos de Información para Personas con MS o sus Familiares**, a list of Society brochures and webcasts in Spanish. It also includes URLs for a number of MS-related organizations for Spanish-language speakers. For a copy, call us at **1-800-FIGHT-MS**.

Most of the Society’s Spanish-language brochures can be read or downloaded from our Spanish-language home page: nationalmssociety.org/espanol. The page also includes links to other Spanish-language MS organizations, online com-

munities, and information about Spanish-language books on MS published by Demos Medical Publishers.

Other Spanish-language resources

Lista de Asociaciones Nacionales de EM (National Associations list provided by MSIF)
www.msif.org/es/global_ms_network/index.html

La Federación Internacional de EM (Multiple Sclerosis International Federation Spanish Information)
www.msif.org/es

Federación Española para de Lucha la contra EM (Spanish Federation against MS)
www.esclerosismultiple.com

La Alianza Nacional para la Salud Hispana (National Alliance for Hispanic Health—general health info)
www.hispanichealth.org

Getting connected—online

“I was diagnosed last August,” Carla Gladstone told **MSConnection**, “and one of the first things I wanted was to talk with others who have the disease. But the thought of attending a support group was overwhelming.”

Gladstone* is not alone—some people new to MS are uncomfortable with the idea of telling their story to a roomful of strangers. Others like the idea of support groups, but live in out-of-the-way areas or find it difficult to commit to frequent meetings. Many people with MS and the people who care for them have made a home away from home by logging on to **MSWorld.org**.

A decade online

Kathleen Wilson, MA, MFA, was diagnosed with MS in 1988, and in 1995 was forced to retire from a fast-paced advertising job. The next year she launched **MSWorld** with a single chat room. Now staffed by 30 volunteers who also live with the disease, **MSWorld** has evolved into a comprehensive online support network for anyone affected by MS. The site offers scheduled chats, e-mail groups, message boards, and an award-winning online magazine, and it receives half a million visits every month. The National MS Society has long been a partner with **MSWorld**—the Society honored Wilson with a National Achievement Award at its 2006 National Conference.

“Our motto at **MSWorld** is ‘Wellness is a State of Mind,’” Wilson said. “When you are well within your mind, your life has its greatest potential.”

(*Not her real name.)

Make a move

From **nationalmssociety.org/chat.asp**, click on “Go to the official chat site.”

Or simply type **www.MSWorld**

.org into your browser. From there, click on one of the following menu topics:

Message Boards—Post a question, reply, or find replies to questions others have posted.

Chats—Talk with others in real time or read transcripts of earlier, highlighted chats.

E-mail Groups—Register for one of two discussion groups: E-Pals, for people diagnosed with MS; or CARE-Pals, for people who care for someone with the disease.

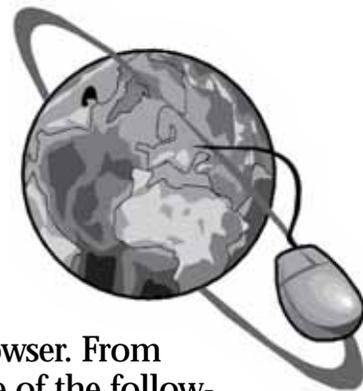
Resources—Read the latest news on clinical trials, alternative treatments, and more.

LivingMS—**MSWorld**’s online magazine features artwork, essays, poetry, recipes, and much more.

Wherever you are, whatever your situation there are others in the same boat.

Online groups can be a rich source of advice from others experienced with MS, but remember even with its close ties to the Society, not all advice on **MSWorld** is appropriate for your particular situation.

Any medical information you pick up should be discussed with your professional health-care provider and the National MS Society.



**NEW! KNOWLEDGE IS POWER—
THE DVD**

Hearing the words “you have MS” is overwhelming. What’s next?

Knowledge is Power (KIP) provides well-organized information about MS right away. Developed by MS professionals with input from people with MS, eight booklets cover diagnosis, treatment, self-care, relationships, employment, working with doctors, and parenting. They are sent by mail or by e-mail in easy-to-digest weekly installments.

Now there’s more to **KIP**—a 120-minute DVD narrated by Meredith Vieira,

the co-host of the *Today* show. Her husband, journalist and TV producer Richard Cohen, has MS.

The DVD features 12 people with MS—of different ages, backgrounds, and ethnicities—and several medical experts, one of whom has MS. Their stories illustrate how real people use knowledge to manage their lives with MS.

If you have previously received KIP but would like the DVD, call us at **1-800-FIGHT-MS**. To sign up for the full KIP program, which now includes the DVD, go to nationalmssociety.org/knowledge or call us.

WAYS TO GIVE**NEW TAX-SAVINGS
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR DONORS
AGED 70½**

On August 17, 2006,

President Bush signed into law new tax incentives for charitable gifts from donors who are 70½ or older. **The Pension Protection Act of 2006** encourages financial support of qualified charitable organizations such as the National MS Society.

Previously, if you had taken a distribution from your IRA or Roth IRA to make a gift to the Society, you would have been required to pay income tax on the distribution; then you would have been entitled to a charitable deduction for the gift amount. Under the new law, you can make a lifetime gift to the Society using these funds without undesirable tax effects.

You can benefit from this new law if:

- You are age 70½ or older
- The gift is \$100,000 or less each year
- You make the gift on or before December 31, 2006, for the 2006 tax year; or you make the gift on or before

December 31, 2007, for the 2007 tax year

- You transfer funds directly from an IRA, Rollover IRA or a Roth IRA to the National MS Society

An Example

Pat, aged 80, has \$450,000 in an IRA and has pledged to give the Society \$100,000 this year as a charitable gift. If Pat transfers \$100,000 from her IRA directly to the Society, she will avoid paying any income tax on that amount. She cannot, however, claim a charitable deduction.

The legislation allows a maximum \$100,000 gift in both the 2006 and the 2007 tax years. So Pat could make a gift of \$100,000 each year. And Pat’s spouse, aged 85, can give up to \$200,000 over the same period out of his IRA.

For More Information

It is wise to consult tax professionals if you are contemplating a gift under the new law. The Society’s Special Gift Office is pleased to provide you educational information. Call us at 1-800-923-7727.

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for finishing the tour. I was allowed to hand Mike his medal, which meant the world to me.

You see, on the back of his jersey was his number placard. At the bottom of his placard was written, "Riding for Shannon." Yes, I have multiple sclerosis. And because he didn't know anyone with the disease until he met me, he rode for me.

When I was first diagnosed a decade ago, I considered it a death sentence. I thought it was enough to have the disease and feel sorry for myself. But Mike's determination and heart has inspired me. Since my case of MS is on the mild side, I have decided to ride for my peers who cannot. He is now counseling me and helping me train. In April 2007 we will ride in the tour - together.

Here's a Great Vehicle for Driving MS Away **AUTOS-4-MS** accepts tax- deductible donations

The end of the year is a popular time for new car shopping. If you're in the market for a new car, this is also a great time to pick up a tax deduction. Instead of trading in your car, or if you have a spare vehicle you no longer need, consider donating it to the National MS Society's **AUTOS-4-MS** program.

Through this program, individuals and organizations can donate their unwanted cars, trucks, trailers and motorcycles to help those with multiple sclerosis. (We also accept recreational vehicles upon inspection.) We in turn

sell them to used vehicle auctions.

Unlike other vehicle donation programs, **AUTOS-4-MS** does not use a third-party, for-profit company to process donations. That means 100 percent of the proceeds from the sale of your vehicle goes directly to our mission of ending the devastating effects of MS.

We even make the process a simple one. All you need to do is call our toll free number or fill out the online donation form on the program's website, then fax a clear copy of the front and back of your title. (While we'd love to accept any donated vehicle, regardless of its condition, we're not always able to do so.) Once you start the donation process, a towing company contacts you within a couple of days, picks up the vehicle at no cost to you (although you're welcome to donate the towing charge), and we issue a tax receipt as soon as we receive the sale transaction paperwork.

To learn more, call **AUTOS-4-MS** toll free at 1-877-672-8864, ext. 1197, or log onto www.autos4ms.org.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is proud to be a source of information about multiple sclerosis. Our comments are based on professional advice, published experience and expert opinion, but do not represent therapeutic recommendation or prescription. For specific information and advice, consult your personal physician.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society does not endorse products, services or manufacturers. Such names appear here because they are considered valuable information. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society assumes no liability for the use or content of any product or service mentioned.

Our Expanded Financial Assistance Program Ups Annual Limits

The Mid Florida Chapter's Quality of Life Grant Program is in place to help those who are living with MS and have limited financial means. We're very excited to announce that the program has been expanded considerably. In fact, instead of an annual cap of \$350, the program now follows a three-tier system that allows up to \$1,500 in annual assistance.

In order to qualify for the program, you must complete and sign a grant application with the following:

- A prescription indicating a MS diagnosis from your neurologist or primary care physician.
- For medical equipment and exercise programs, physician approval is also required.
- A copy of a quote or invoice for the service or product to be provided with the requested funds.

Upon return of the above information, your request will be reviewed. Funding will be considered only for the following:

Level 1 - \$350 maximum per request

- Exercise/Tai-chi/Yoga/Aquatic programs
- Gym/YMCA memberships
- Small durable medical equipment
- Glasses/vision-related equipment
- Air conditioners
- Cooling vests & other cooling equipment
- Other assistive technology

Level 2 - \$750 maximum per request

- Respite care services
- Short-term counseling services
- Short-term in-home or companion care services
- Hippotherapy programs
- Transportation to medical appointments, Mid Florida Chapter programs and self-help group meetings
- Massage therapy when prescribed by a physician

Level 3 - \$1,500 maximum per year

- Vehicle modifications
- Home modifications
- Specialized equipment

Alternative avenues of payment must be explored before utilizing Chapter funds. These may include health insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, VA benefits, Vocational Rehabilitation and other community resources. Funds will be paid directly to the approved vendor or service provider only.

Financial assistance is provided based on eligibility guidelines established by the Mid Florida Chapter Clinical Advisory Committee and approved by the Chapter Board of Trustees. To qualify for financial assistance, family income cannot exceed 200 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines (see below).

If you have questions regarding your eligibility or if you would like a grant application, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 1-800-FIGHT-MS.

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2006 Mid Florida Eligibility Guidelines Standard @ 200% of Poverty

Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States and D.C.
1	\$19,600
2	\$26,400
3	\$33,200
4	\$40,000
5	\$46,800
6	\$53,600
7	\$60,400
8	\$67,200
For each additional person, add	\$6,800

2007 North American Education Program Topics Announced

Each year, the National MS Society collaborates with the MS Society of Canada to present the North American Education Program. Through this program, we share the latest information about MS research and disease management. In the past, annual program topics have alternated between research and symptom management. In 2007, through the generosity of program sponsors Berlex, Inc., Teva Neuroscience and Acorda Therapeutics, both topic areas will be covered.

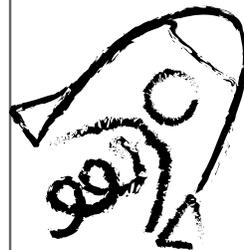
The Clues to Epidemiology will be offered as a videotaped conference. It will feature recognized experts discussing the role epidemiology is playing in scientists' efforts to identify

the risk factors for the disease, develop more effective treatments and find a cure.

The Mid Florida Chapter will offer this conference in January and February in select locations throughout our 23-county territory. You'll receive details and an invitation to this conference in the mail.

Getting There: Staying Mobile with Multiple Sclerosis will be offered to self-help group programs. This videotaped conference will be made available to self-help group leaders in January. Ask your local self-help group leader for details.

For further information, contact Melissa Mulcahy at 1-800-FIGHT-MS. or melissa.mulcahy@flc.nmss.org.



A Bicultural MS Journey Club to Blast Off In Osceola County

Just as our Society's new manifesto calls for us all to be more inclusive, the Mid Florida Chapter is expanding our popular MS Journey Club by offering a bilingual, bicultural program to Osceola County families affected by multiple sclerosis. The six-week journey is expected to begin in mid-February 2007 and will be available to 10 families. A commitment to attend all six sessions, one per week, is requested. Call Melissa Mulcahy at 407-478-8880 to learn more.





Wish List Opportunities

The Mid Florida Chapter always has a Wish List of services and items our clients need. Here are just a few ways you can help fulfill someone's wish.

- \$35 to deliver medical assistance to someone at home for whom travel has become difficult
- \$750 in financial assistance to cover such needs as respite care or short-term counseling
- \$3,000 to purchase an electric wheelchair

To fulfill a wish, contact Ed Davis by phone 800-818-8854, or e-mail ed.davis@flc.nmss.org.

MS AWARENESS WEEK

March 5-11, 2007

The next issue of MS Connections will include details on how you can make this special week a **BRITE** experience.

Mark your calendars and get ready to **JOIN THE MOVEMENT!**

One Person Really Can Make A Difference

When she approaches you, the fact that she's in a wheelchair is overshadowed by her exuberance and her smile. Beth Cohen is on the move, and she may be knocking on your door at any moment!

The people in West Pasco County know Beth well. She has approached many of them over the past three years in search of items or monetary donations for the annual MS Silent Auction she conducts each August. It's the largest event in the area benefiting the Mid Florida Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

In addition to the silent auction there are door prizes, music, food, raffles, games and loads of fun. And it all takes place at the West Pasco Moose Lodge, which is a co-sponsor. Proceeds have grown each year with a total in excess of \$3,600 being donated in 2006.

Congratulations to Beth Cohen, and special thanks to the many businesses and individuals whose generosity has fueled her commitment in support of the Society's mission.

Third Party Events are conducted by non-affiliated groups or individuals with limited involvement by NMSS staff. Once an event meets specific criteria and is proven to benefit NMSS legitimately and genuinely, it is approved by the Society.

For information about conducting a Third Party Event please contact Ed Davis at (813) 889-8303 or ed.davis@flc.nmss.org.

Continued from Page 1

Making a Difference Award - Carol Rodriguez

Leadership Award - Mark Mohler

Bike Tour Top Individual Fundraiser
Mike Esmonde, Sr.

Bike Tour Top Team - Lockheed Martin

MS Walk Top Individual Fundraiser & Top Fundraising Team - Edgar Montanez & Team "Eggies"

The Annual Meeting was just one portion of four fun, informative, event-packed days spent at the Renaissance Orlando Resort SeaWorld during the 2006 National MS Society Conference.

2007 Mid Florida Chapter Board of Trustees

As of Dec. 12, 2006

Officers

Chuck Owston, Chair
Sue Tatum, Vice Chair
Mike Morgan, Treasurer
Russell Buhite, Secretary

Emeritus Trustees

Sally Buegeleisen
Peter B. Dunne, MD

Members At Large

Robert Lacey
Mac Lewis
Tom Mirek
Mark Mohler
Susan Montanez
Jennifer Mooney
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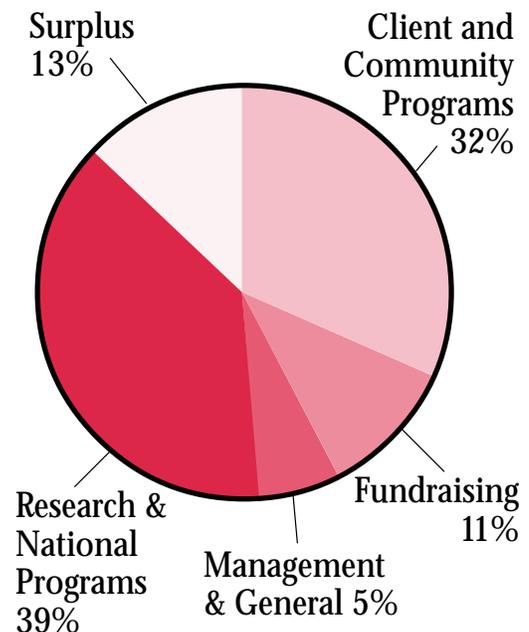
**National Multiple Sclerosis Society Mid Florida Chapter
Financial Statement Recap Subject to Audit**

Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2006

<u>Income Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Special Events	\$1,305,994	50.3%
Memberships, Contributions & Legacies	\$1,219,039	47.0%
Workplace Giving Campaigns	\$ 32,960	1.3%
Program Fees	\$ 3,411	0.1%
Investment Income	\$ 33,747	1.3%
Total Income:	\$2,595,151	

<u>Expense Category</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Client & Community Programs	\$ 821,954	31.7%
Fundraising	\$ 290,978	11.2%
Management & General	\$ 137,318	5.3%
Research & National Programs	\$1,000,113	38.5%
Surplus	\$ 344,788	13.3%
Total Expenses & Surplus:	\$2,595,151	

FY 2006 Expense as a Percent of Total Income



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Wishing you the happiest holidays and a new year so
BRITE, you'll be ready to **JOIN THE MOVEMENT!**

Until there is a cure, there's the National MS Society ...
this is why there is hope.

Serving . . .

Brevard • Charlotte • Citrus • DeSoto • Flagler • Hardee • Hernando • Highlands
Hillsborough • Indian River • Lake • Manatee • Marion • Orange • Osceola • Pasco
Pinellas • Polk • Sarasota • Seminole • St. Lucie • Sumter • Volusia



NATIONAL
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
SOCIETY

Mid-Florida Chapter

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