



PANC

Parkinson Association of Northern California

UPDATE

Community for the Journey -- November 2025

PANC SUPPORT GROUPS HERE

If you would like to facilitate a group in your area, PANC will help.
Contact [Jen Westoby here](#) if interested.

"Fall has always been my favorite season. The time when everything bursts with its last beauty, as if nature had been saving up all year for the grand finale."
Lauren DeStefano



PANC Education Conference Success!

The Annual PANC Education conference in October was a huge hit! Almost 1,000 attendees were present either in-person or virtually, and it seems a great time was had by all! Watch the 2-minute video highlight reel above.

There were plentiful vendors providing resources galore, helpful volunteers, and expert presentations applicable for all. The audience was pleasantly surprised that Ryan Reynolds, the actor, entrepreneur and PD advocate was on the "More to Parkinson's" panel and joined by the ever-magnificent Jimmy Choi and our own Dr. Suketu Khandhar.

Event attendees shared the following:

- "My favorite part of the day was getting to meet so many people with Parkinson's, hear their stories, and connect the mission back to them"
- "Execution of the day by the event team was seamless! Everything stayed on schedule"
- "Hallucinations and delusions are not uncommon. There's help -- talk to someone"
- "A very well-organized event with friendly and helpful organizers and volunteers"
- "The content, as usual, was top notch. Best lunch ever, loved the comedian and the neuro movement was fabulous -- I've never seen everyone so enthusiastically moving!"
- "The entire day stayed on schedule and is so well organized"
- "The PD journey does not need to be lonely."
- "I appreciate the frankness of the speakers on how much control people with Parkinson's have and to not limit themselves"
- "Laughter and exercise are the best medicines"
- "Everything was great -- especially the surprise speaker Ryan Reynolds!"

- "The check-in process was impressive and efficient!"
- "The socialization at the round tables is very nice"
- "I was a first-time attendee and am new to Parkinson's. The conference exceeded my expectations"
- "All the panels and sessions were great!"
- "As a vendor, I had plentiful time to meet with families looking for support"
- "I really appreciate the help from the parking lot entrance"
- "Get involved in a supportive community. There are so many resources and strength in it"
- "It was an incredible event, and I learned so much from about your organization, from each of the presenters, vendors, and attendees. BRAVO PANC!"

Thank you to those who responded to the post conference survey. We learned what the planning team is doing right and areas where we can improve for the future. **If you didn't attend the event but would like to purchase the video and resources for \$25, [click here](#).**

A giant thanks to the conference sponsors and exhibitors especially **Supernus Pharmaceuticals, Boston Scientific, Medtronic, Amneal, Insightec, Kyowa Kirin, The Park at Laguna Springs, Parkinson's Foundation and UC Davis Health**. Without their participation, we wouldn't be able to host this beneficial community-wide program.

PANC staff and volunteers are already working on next year's program, and we look forward to seeing everyone then if not before. Only 11 months to go!



Why Year-End Giving Matters More Than Ever

As the year draws to a close, many people take time to reflect on what matters most—and for local nonprofit organizations like PANC, this season of reflection is also a season of generosity. Year-end donations play a vital role in ensuring we can continue

serving our community with strength and stability. Let's make sure no one faces Parkinson's alone!

Nearly one-third of all charitable giving in the U.S. happens in November/December and these final weeks determine how boldly we can plan for the year ahead. Year-end gifts help close budget gaps, fund essential programs, and provide the flexibility to respond to emerging needs. They also jump start the new year on solid financial footing, ready to expand impact rather than pull back due to uncertainty.

For donors, this is a meaningful moment to make a difference. Whether giving in honor of a loved one or making a final tax-deductible gift for the year, each contribution—large or small—supports real people and real progress.

Including cash donations, there are many options to support PANC:

- Recommend a grant from your Donor-Advised Fund: A donor-advised fund (DAF) allows you to support a cause you care about while receiving a tax benefit up front.
- Give from your IRA: If you are 70.5 or older, a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) may reduce taxable income while supporting the Parkinson's community.
- Become a monthly donor: Monthly gifts help sustain programs. Select "Monthly" on the donation form to set up a regular gift.
- Donate a car: The proceeds from the sale of your old car, truck, RV, motorcycle or boat can benefit the services of PANC. The process is easy, vehicle pick-up is free, and you may qualify for a tax deduction.

PANC has partnered with the Sacramento Regional Community Foundation (SRCF) who can facilitate gifts of stock, real estate, bequests, donor-advised funds and endowed funds. Kelly Siefkin, the SRCF chief philanthropy officer can be contacted by [email here](#) or by calling 916-921-7723, ext 2701.

As we approach the end of the year, your generosity fuels the mission of the Parkinson Association of Northern California. Thank you in advance for standing with us and helping ensure that our work continues with any financial gift that you can make and passing the information along to others who may want to help too!

Donate to PANC

Why Do PT's and People with Parkinson's Make a Great Team?

*Jennifer A. Liu, PT, DPT,
NCS ABPTS Board Certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist*



Persons with Parkinson's disease (PwP) often find it very beneficial to work with a licensed physical therapist (PT) where they often make drastic improvements with the assistance from these dedicated and highly educated professionals.

PT's who have specialized knowledge and training in neurologic conditions including Parkinson's Disease (PD) are often referred to as neuroPTs.

Because PD is a progressive neurological condition that affects movement, balance, and coordination, PT's serve as a source of education about the disease process and share ways to manage some of the symptoms (including minimizing fall risk). The goal of physical therapy is to improve safety for patients and caregivers, maximize mobility and independence, and provide an optimal home exercise program. As symptoms fluctuate and the disease process changes, it can be beneficial to have an established relationship with a PT who can serve as a trusted guide through the process and enhance your quality of life.

Working with PwP offers PTs a unique blend of clinical challenge and emotional reward. Many PT's, myself included, find deep fulfillment treating individuals with PD because they tend to be dedicated, consistent, and willing to work hard. Another reason therapists are drawn to this population is the opportunity to make a tangible difference: even small improvements in gait, posture, or balance can significantly boost a patient's independence, safety, and confidence. PTs utilize a combination of science, compassion, and creativity to optimize therapy plans for each unique individual. Using researched based principles combined with a patient's personal priorities and a wide array of movement strategies, therapy can help patients maintain the ability to participate in the activities and in a lifestyle that is a priority to them for as long as possible.

The collaborative aspect of care allows for an amazing partnership where PTs and PwPs form individualized goals and treatment plans to improve a person's journey with PD, while also providing an opportunity for PTs to work in a professionally satisfying and motivating environment. This is a win/win relationship. Check with your provider on potential opportunities to meet with physical therapists in your provider network. They look forward to working with you and making you the best you that you can be!



Investigational Recruiting... REGENERATE-PD Clinical Study

Have you been diagnosed with PD or do you know or care for someone with it? Consider participating in AskBio's REGENERATE-PD study with a goal to test whether a new gene therapy (AB-1005) is safe and effective for patients with PD. This therapy aims to introduce working GDNF to the brain, which promotes the survival of brain cells.

Participation may allow scientists and physicians to better understand PD, how to improve treatment, contribute to the medical field, and make a positive impact on the lives of many. [Learn more here.](#)

For participation information, contact AskFirst@askbio.com or scan the QR code.



Task-Specific Training for People with Parkinson's

Task-specific training is an effective therapy approach for people with Parkinson's disease (PD), focusing on practicing meaningful, everyday activities to improve independence and quality of life. Instead of performing general exercises, individuals work on the exact tasks they want or need to do—such as getting

dressed, writing, or preparing a meal. By repeating these functional movements in a structured way, the brain can form new connections that help compensate for the motor control challenges caused by PD.

This approach is grounded in the concept of neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to adapt and learn through repetition and feedback. Therapists design sessions that break down complex activities into manageable steps, allowing the person to practice safely and successfully. For example, someone may practice buttoning a shirt while focusing on large, deliberate motions or rehearse rising from a chair using cueing techniques to improve timing and strength. Over time, these targeted repetitions help retrain the body and mind to move more efficiently and confidently.

Task-specific training is also highly individualized. Therapists tailor exercises to each person's goals, environment, and stage of PD. By making therapy personally relevant, motivation increases, and carryover into daily life improves. Ultimately, task-specific training empowers people with Parkinson's to stay active and independent. By practicing real-world skills in meaningful contexts, it helps transform therapy from routine exercise into life-changing progress.

People with PD can benefit from working with a variety of professionals—each offering

unique expertise to help them learn and reinforce task-specific skills:

- Physical Therapists (PTs): Specialize in movement, balance, and gait training. They can teach task-specific exercises that improve walking, transfers, and posture using evidence-based PD programs like LSVT BIG® or PWR!Moves®.
- Occupational Therapists (OTs): Focus on helping individuals perform daily activities more easily and safely. OTs are experts in task-specific training for self-care, home management, and work-related tasks, and can recommend adaptive equipment or home modifications to promote independence.
- Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs): Help with communication and swallowing issues common in PD. Programs like LSVT LOUD® or SPEAK OUT!® use task-specific speech exercises to improve clarity and vocal strength.
- Exercise or Movement Specialists: Certified Parkinson's fitness trainers or instructors in programs like Rock Steady Boxing, Dance for PD, or Tai Chi can help individuals apply movement strategies learned in therapy to community-based activities.
- Support Groups and Parkinson's centers: Local PD organizations, wellness programs, and community classes often provide education and peer support where people can practice these skills in real-life settings.

Equipment Exchange Products

PANC's Equipment Exchange has the following available:

- **Theracycle (for people with Parkinson's)** - Free
- **Theracycle 300** -- \$1,500
- **Merits Vision Sports Power Wheelchair** -- \$400
- **Over-Bed Trapeze** -- Free
- **Elenker Stand Up Walker** -- \$100
- **Alinker Walking Bike** -- \$900 obo



If you have equipment to share that can help others, the new Durable Medical Equipment Exchange is open and ready to go.

[Click here to post an item](#) and [here to see what's available](#). We want to see this benefit grow to help our Parkinson's community members through the various phases of their disease care.



Celebrating National Family Caregivers Month

November is National Family Caregivers Month, a time to honor the millions of

Americans who provide unpaid care to loved ones with chronic illness, disability, or aging-related needs. Caregiving can be deeply rewarding but also physically, emotionally, and financially demanding. This month offers an opportunity to recognize caregivers' contributions, raise awareness about their challenges, and connect them with support and resources.

Organizations across the country provide helpful resources for caregivers.

- The Caregiver Action Network (CAN) -- Educational webinars, practical guides, and a variety of toolkits to help caregivers navigate daily responsibilities and access support networks (caregiveraction.org).
- The National Council on Aging (NCOA) -- Social media materials, articles, and tips on maintaining caregiver well-being (ncoa.org).
- California Caregiver Resource Centers (CRCs) -- A statewide network of 11 nonprofit centers providing free or low-cost support services (information/referral, respite, counseling, legal/financial consultation) for caregivers of adults with chronic or debilitating conditions (caregivercalifornia.org).
- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Northern California Health Care -- If you're caring for a veteran in Northern California, this resource offers a caregiver support coordinator to help connect with benefits, services and in-home help (va.gov).

National Family Caregivers Month also encourages action: **show appreciation to the caregivers in your life, share resources, or organize recognition events in your community.** Simple gestures, like connecting caregivers with local respite programs, support groups, or online educational tools, can make a meaningful difference. This November, let's honor the dedication, compassion, and resilience of family caregivers while ensuring they have the support they need to thrive.

November Free Webinars

Tuesday, November 18 at 10 am

Travel Planning for Care Partners in Parkinson's with the American Parkinson's Disease Association, Virginia Chapter

Learn ways to help your loved one with PD get through airports and train stations, manage medications across time zones, pace themselves to avoid fatigue, and other tips to make travel safer and enjoyable.

[Info and Register Here](#)

Wednesday, November 19 at 11am

Parkinson's Speech with Power Over Parkinson's

The importance of early and ongoing speech and swallowing therapy and intervention, how SLPs can help improve communication and quality of life, and what resources are available to support patients and their families.

[Info and Register Here](#)

Thursday, November 20 at 9am

Catalyzing Change: Parkinson's Research Progress in 2025 with the Michael J. Fox Foundation

In 2025, researchers built on breakthroughs to deepen their understanding of Parkinson's and find more effective treatments for those living with the disease. Learn more about this year of research and what the future may hold for Parkinson's care and ask questions.

[Info and Register Here](#)

Thursday, November 20 from 11:30am to 1pm

For Veterans -- Navigating Advancing Needs: Planning Ahead with Parkinson's with the Parkinson's Foundation

Explore strategies for proactive care planning, VA services to support evolving needs, and resources to maintain quality of life through each stage of the disease.

[Info and Register Here](#)

Friday, November 21 from 10:30am to 1pm

Parkinson's Disease Symposium with the Parkinson's Foundation Midwest

Experts discussing ways to manage anxiety, stress and depression, research updates, advanced treatments for PD, and urinary and pelvic floor health.

[Info and Register Here](#)

Tuesday, November 25 at 10am

Exploring Respite Options for Parkinson's Care Partners with the American Parkinson Disease Association, Virginia Chapter

Learn how to take short and longer breaks from caregiving while ensuring your loved one with PD is safe and occupied in your absence. The last of a four-part caregiver education series.

[Info and register here](#)

* Contact Jan Whitney [here](#) if you are interested in placing a sponsor article in the *Update*.

www.panctoday.org

Ways to Support

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