



THE PACING FOR PARKINSON'S STORY



THE EARLY YEARS

By Paul DeLuca, Founding Chair of Pacing for Parkinson's

It all started late in 2008 when the Johns Hopkins Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Center (PDMD Center) approached Paul DeLuca and Laverne Williams with the idea that we should organize a running team to participate in the Baltimore Running Festival. They explained that a few years prior there had been a group known as the "Movers and Shakers," led by Jeff Shinholt, that had quickly built a faithful following and help raised funds for the Center's initiatives.

Paul and Laverne agreed to serve as Co-Chairs for the 2009 team. The first year's committee was a small group: Paul, Laverne, Becky, Quinn

Tyler (PDMD Center), Dave Brown, and the two Sue's. We settled on the name Pacing for Parkinson's with a P4P logo and set a modest goal to raise \$30,000 in the first year. When race day hit, we had 78 runners and had raised nearly \$50,000. Our first corporate sponsor was NuStar Energy, who have supported us generously through all 10 years. Our Top Team of the year was Sydney's Turtles led by Sydney Keys and the entire Keys family. Some of the runners with us in year 1 that became longtime supporters include Steve Anderson, Shellie DeLuca, Grace DeLuca, Pat Kaunitz, Michael Kaunitz, Dr. Grill, Sydney Keys, Will Keys, Eric Keys, Elaine Keys, Arita McCoy, and Erika Swan. Our race day tent experience was nothing like what our runners enjoy today, with a modest supply of Chick-fil-A sandwiches and just water (no Gatorade) being the core of our provisions.

In the coming three years we grew at a modest pace, with runner totals of 113, 122, and 160 in 2010, 2011, and 2012 respectively, and each year raising between \$50,000 and \$60,000. The significant changes in 2010 were the addition of Pat Kaunitz and Stacye Kellerman to the P4P committee and the overwhelming support from Team John and the extended Kellermann family. 2011 saw a fierce team fundraising competition brewing between Team DeLuca, Sydney's Turtles, and Team John. Team John blew the rest away, raising nearly \$10,000! 2011 also marked the addition of Andy Katz to our committee. In 2011 we also added Donna's Café as our race day food partner, and through the generosity of our team member Alan Hirsch they've remained our primary lunch supplier through all the coming years. Throughout these three years we were quickly outgrowing the small 10x10 tent space that the race organizers would allocate to us on race day.



Above: Paul DeLuca and the team on race day in 2010, P4P's second year.



Above: The P4P tent in 2010

We were excited and thankful in 2012 when the charity tents were moved to Ravens stadium and became large hospitality tents. The 2012 race also marked two significant additions to our committee that would impact the growth we would see in the coming years: Bailey Vernon and Tom Kozlowski.

Although our dollars raised began modestly, we came to realize in the early years that P4P's impact went far beyond the funds raised for the JHU PDMD Center. Our little grassroots running team was in fact building a Parkinson's support community unlike anything we had anticipated. The ability of our committee members and runners to meet others battling the disease, celebrate their accomplishments they achieved on race day, and to unite their families through the Parkinson's community event all produced a community feeling that significantly enhances the existing support built through other educational and family support activities.

In 2013 we exploded to 286 runners, solidifying our role as one of the largest charity partners of the Baltimore Running Festival. We hit the \$100,000 mark that year and have maintained the six-figure annual mark since then. We also revamped our logo that year, marking the debut of the core of the current P4P graphics. This set the stage for the next half-decade of P4P dominance at The Baltimore Running Festival...

THE LATER YEARS

As we reflect on the second half of our P4P history, what's strikingly clear is that we hit a run of consistency that began in 2013. For a 5 year span we passed and sustained fundraising over \$100,000 annually and saw our number of runners between 250 and 300 every year.

In 2013, we had an incredibly active committee. We did a complete redesign of our P4P logo - the foundation of which is still present in our current logo. We attempted to hold our own "Team Runs" in Patterson Park and on the NCR Trail in the summer to try to build our runner community. When we received notice from the race organizers that only teams of at least 150 runners would receive a tent, we outdid ourselves by showing up on Race Day with over 300 runners and raised \$100,000 for the first time!

As we started our 2014 campaign, we realized we needed even more help on our committee. Having been nearly crushed by our explosion to 300 runners in 2013, we welcomed new committee members Michael and Laura Powell, Julie and Brandon Bullock, and the Morris sisters - Dodie Szymanski, Cheryl Manser, and Laurie Kimbel. Another

great year of new ideas, one of which was the introduction of "tribute bibs." For the first time, we decided we needed social media presence, and Mike and Laura lead us into uncharted territories. This was also the first year we volunteered as a group at the Brigrance Brigade. To cap the year off, we invited Movers and Shakers founder Jeff Shinholt to join us on race day and discovered that he and Paul DeLuca's wife Shellie are actually cousins! Small world.



Above: P4P helping with water stations at local races

2015 saw another great influx of new help to our committee, including Wendy Long, Don Long, Aliya Reich, Bob and Malissa Cole, and James Morissette. This was the first year we introduced our P4P Post-Race Party, where we annually recognize our top fundraisers, key corporate sponsors, and committee members. On race day we unveiled for the first time P4P koozies, which have been a steady hit ever since. In 2015, we set another new fundraising record by hitting the \$130,000 mark.

2016 was a bittersweet year for me, as I decided after 7 years as Chair or Co-Chair of Pacing for Parkinson's that I would attempt to step aside. The prior year was such a strong one for leadership on the committee and I was fortunate that Don Long agreed to take the P4P Chair role in 2016. Don stepped in flawlessly and facilitated all the lively discussions and ideas that were generated during our committee meetings, a year where we had over 15 active attendees at nearly every meeting.

Don continued his leadership into 2017 and Pacing for Parkinson's continued its streak as one of the largest charity partners at the Baltimore Running Festival. We had a very active year from the committee, with Brandon and Julie Bullock exceeding any prior year's results for getting in-kind donations, holding restaurant fundraisers, and generally spreading good cheer to everyone they encountered. Julie Bullock was featured in Baltimore Sun generating some much deserved recognition of her courageous battle with Parkinson's. The Running Festival announced significant changes to the Celebration Village and race route, and we found a new home in the Charity Tent village on Rash Field. The new location worked out fantastically, and we were able to provide a great race day experience for our 245 runners.

What I hope I've achieved with this history is to share how grateful I am that every year we have a steady flow of new, committed people from our Parkinson's community that step forward to help. I've made so many long-lasting friends through my ten-year journey since we founded Pacing for Parkinson's that I couldn't imagine not having dedicated so much of my spare time to such a great organization.



Above: The P4P Tent 2018

P4P AND THE PANDEMIC

By Aliya Reich, Chair of Pacing for Parkinson's, 2017 - Present

Pacing for Parkinson's continued our relationship with the Baltimore Running Festival through 2018 and 2019, but the Covid-19 pandemic forced us to get creative with our community and our fundraising efforts. In 2020 and 2021, Pacing for Parkinson's evolved into a virtual P4P Week, which featured a week of movement and activities in October that folks could participate in from home. And participate they did!

In 2020, P4P's 12th year, P4P Week had the goal of crossing the state of Maryland east to west as many times as possible. The 2020 team welcomed 107 team members who represented 14 states plus DC and covered 2,383.51 miles as a team, which is equivalent to crossing the state of Maryland 9.5 times. The activities completed by the 2020 P4P team included running, volleyball, walking, mowing the lawn, biking, weight lifting, wheeling, kayaking, pelotoning, strength training, soccer, yoga, horseback riding, hiking, golfing, tennis, paddleboarding, stretching and pickleball. We raised more than \$42,000 for the cause.

In 2021, P4P's 13th year, P4P Week focused on different types of movement and stories from the community and featured a different movement video and a different story each day of the week. The 2021 team consisted of 122 team members from 10 states who covered more 2,056 miles and moved for 26,967 minutes, or nearly 18 days. We raised more than \$54,000 for the cause in 2021. In 2022, we had a great virtual P4P week and a beautiful day in Baltimore on Saturday. 2023 marks 15 years of Pacing for Parkinson's and some exciting changes for P4P!

If there are any memorable moments you'd like to share with us from your experience with P4P through the years, please let us know! You can email us at pacing4parkinsons@gmail.com.

