

PD Walkers to walk IMT Des Moines Marathon

LaDona Molander of Urbandale and Sam Erwin of West Des Moines are currently forming a team (PD Walkers) to walk in the Des Moines Marathon on October 19, 2008. The team will walk to raise funds for the Iowa Chapter of American Parkinson's Disease Association (APDA) to bring more awareness to Parkinson's Disease and fund more research.

LaDona and Sam have both been diagnosed with Young Onset Parkinson's Disease - a chronic, degenerative neurological disorder whose symptoms vary but can progress from mild tremors to complete physical incapacitation. Incidence of Parkinson's increases with age, but an estimated 15 percent of people with PD are diagnosed before the age of 50. LaDona was 28 years old when she was diagnosed with an Essential Tremor and two years later given the diagnosis of PD.

As many as one million Americans suffer from Parkinson's disease, which is more than the combined number of people diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and Lou Gehrig's disease. As is the case with many neurological disorders, the cause of Parkinson's Disease is not known. There is no known cure for PD. Current medications and treatments have improved in their ability to mask symptoms, but for some the side effects of the PD medications can be worse than the PD itself. The opportunity for therapeutic breakthroughs has never been greater, yet research remains severely under funded.

In 2007 LaDona trained to walk a marathon and a half in two days to support the cause for finding a cure for breast cancer. This year LaDona has asked Sam to train with her and be an advocate in the fight against PD. Since PD is a neurological disease, the research to find a cure for PD also benefits research being done for Alzheimer's, ALS, MS and others.

If you want more information on joining the PD Walkers Team or would like to make a contribution to help in the fight against PD, contact LaDona by email at PDWalkers@q.com or call the APDA I&R Center at (515)419-1448. For more information on the marathon visit www.desmoinesmarathon.com. For more information on Parkinson's Disease visit www.apdaiowa.org or www.apdaparkinson.org.