

# May 2020 Newsletter



## Feeling Isolated Because of COVID-19?

Here are 6 people who let us know they are reaching out and making a difference!

**Irene** was diagnosed with MS ten years ago, at the age of 66. In her words, “When it appeared that I would not be golfing through retirement, I found Tai Chi.” She became a Tai Chi instructor and has been teaching a seated Tai Chi class in her community for the past three years. During the pandemic, she’s been conducting her class on Skype. Currently, the class meets six days a week at 10am. 16 people attend, ranging from 64 to 92 years old. About half the class sits and the other half stands. Once the group can meet physically again, Irene plans to keep the online course going, but at a different time. Anyone interested in attending should [email](#) Irene for more information.



**Sherilyn** is a member of [Multiple Sclerosis: You Are Not Alone](#) (MS. Y.A.N.A.), an organization whose mission is to educate, empower and encourage African Americans and others living with MS. Empowerment groups meet the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30pm, and the organization holds periodic [events](#) to help its members live successfully with MS. Because COVID-19 restrictions banned meeting in person, Sherilyn upgraded her Zoom account so empowerment groups could move to virtual meetings. Those interested in participating in MS. Y.A.N.A activities can [register here](#).



**Nancy** is providing an essential service to others in her community. She works at a local retailer at night cleaning and disinfecting so shoppers can feel safer in the store during the day. According to Nancy, “MS was hard to swallow when I first found out. My older sister had been diagnosed many years earlier and I never imagined I would too... I want others to realize that life isn't over with a diagnosis. My life has actually improved immensely! I try to encourage others not to give up. There is always something you can do to help someone else.”

**Len** is a member of a self-help group, hosted by the National MS Society (the Society), called [Moving on With MS](#). He has been the volunteer e-mail connection for the group for the last six years, sending out meeting reminders, newsworthy MS items, and sharing occasional game-changing events in the life of a member. Approximately 25 to 30 of the group's 85 members consistently attend their monthly meetings. In Len's words, "We love each other; we're very positive. COVID-19 shelter in place threatened our viability when it became clear we could not meet in our regular room in April. All of our members were very enthused about keeping our group running during the pandemic." Len, along with other leaders, **Michelle**, **Denise** and **John** organized telephone coaching sessions with members on the use of Zoom so they can meet virtually and continue to support one another. Anyone interested in joining Moving on With MS can [email Len](#) for contact and access code information.



**Sharon** serves on the [Government Advisory Relations Committee](#) for the Society. As District Activist Leader, she contacts her local legislators about important issues that impact the MS community, such as laws and bills to protect people living with the disease. She also looks for ways to obtain funding for MS research and lets people in her community know about webinars the Society is hosting that can help them live better lives with MS. She has been able to continue these duties during the new coronavirus outbreak and has also lobbied for proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 testing for the staff and residents at the nursing home where she resides.



**Maureen** has hosted an MS moms support group in her home twice a month for the past 3 years. She shares, "The majority of us met many years ago through the [Norton Neuroscience Resource Center's](#) MS Moms Group. The Resource Center stopped hosting this group about 5 years ago, around the same time my MS worsened and I needed the support, guidance and friendship of these special ladies. I decided to take things into my own hands and reach out to them and see if they would be willing to come to my house, since I was unable to drive at the time... We have 7 of us that meet, including myself. Since we are unable to meet in person, I am hosting our meetings via Zoom. This allows us to continue supporting each other... Living with MS is hard, but with the advice, little helpful tips, knowledge, laughter and support we offer one another it's a little easier."



Are you a person living with MS who is helping the MS community during the COVID-19 pandemic? Please tell us how you are [making a difference](#) during this challenging time.