



Meet Francisco and Shaness

By Shaness Grenald

My father, Francisco, is one of the most influential people in my life. He was diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson's disease, a diagnosis that stunned him. Unable to initially cope with the news, Francisco recalls walking home from the doctor's office, unsure of what to make of the diagnosis.

But life seemed to go on as usual. Francisco woke up early each morning to run his construction company, and occasionally came home at the end of the day with treats for my siblings and I. Weekends were spent watching movies, working on home projects and sharing meals. Francisco has now been living with Parkinson's disease for 20 years, and has faced some challenges along the way. Always a brave face, despite moments of pain. In spite of this, my father has always demonstrated strength and has shown me what it is to be courageous. I remember how proud I was when I learned that my father was one the first patients to demonstrate the positive benefit of boxing in Parkinson's disease in a study conducted at NYIT. Studies have shown that exercises like boxing has the ability to improve the clinical outcomes of Parkinson's disease patients. NYIT's Rock Steady Boxing program not only offers Francisco a community, but equips him with new tools to manage his Parkinson's disease symptoms.

Francisco continues to enjoy home projects, boxing and swimming. I first learned about P4P one day when I casually walked into a pizzeria one afternoon and a fundraiser was going on. I knew I wanted to become a member for my father. I am grateful to be a part of such a wonderful community where I can get the support I need while being an advocate for other Parkinson's disease patients!