

Parkinson's Warriors

Mike's Story
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Pedaling for Parkinson's at the Ellicott City YMCA

Mike Cesario has had Parkinson's for 14 years, and as it's progressed, he's learned things that most people never have to experience. There are concerns that most of us simply won't have to encounter, and there's the frustration of dealing with a mysterious disease.

It's a longtime tradition for Marylanders to move to Delaware in retirement, and Mike has a place there, but all of his doctors are in Baltimore. As far as he was aware, there wasn't a movement disorder doctor anywhere in Delaware until recently. In two years, Maryland will retest Mike's driving and he could lose

his license. Some days already, he wakes up and doesn't feel up to driving. It sounds simple, but it wears on him because he can't plan, even a day in advance.

Mike has been participating with Pedaling for Parkinson's at the Ellicott City YMCA for the last several months. There has been some research indicating high-intensity training reduces symptoms of PD, so cycling is seen as one way to train. Mike said he recently read that low-intensity training, such as walking, is more important. It's one of the frustrating things about living with a disease that has neither a known cause nor a cure: patients end up as guinea pigs sometimes.

Honestly, he doesn't know if the cycling program is having a positive effect on his symptoms, but he feels like it gives him some control back. And the social aspect of doing something positive with other patients is empowering.

All of you with this disease are facing a tough fight filled with treatments instead of cures, stressful concerns, and a lack of control. But Mike, like the other patients and patients' loved ones we've profiled, is attacking the fight head on. He exercises relentlessly at the Y and at yoga classes. He's working to be able to walk the three-mile round trip from his Rehoboth home to the beach and back. He's been going to the same physical therapist on and off since at least 2006, and recently he's been going twice a week. Mike is convinced that this activity with a therapist who is well-schooled in Parkinson's disease has been a great help to him. He believes it's important to start therapy before a crisis and to stay ahead of problems. Mike finds a daily purpose in his struggle with the disease.

Let's all follow Mike's example and keep fighting the good fight.