



Multiple Sclerosis Quality of Life Project

501 (C) (3) Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation



FEBRUARY 2010 CELEBRATE 10 YEARS

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[To read previous issues, go to www.msqlip.org/learn/newsletter.html](http://www.msqlip.org/learn/newsletter.html)

Celebrate! MSQLP is 10 Years Old

—Donna Krasnow, Board Chair

How can 10 years have passed? It seems like only yesterday I attended MSQLP planning meetings in Gene Harter's Pacific Grove living room. My husband Gary was alive, struggling with his MS; we lived just a few blocks away. But, in reality much has changed in these 10 years. I am alone - Gary died 7 years ago. I moved to a new house, one with fewer memories of those last challenging years together. Gene has remarried and now lives in Hollister. MSQLP has grown so much that we have moved through 4 different office spaces. We started with one client in 2004 and now address the needs of more than 200 persons with MS and more than 100 of their caregivers. Our clients are scattered throughout the Tri-Counties, a 5000-square mile territory. When I look back on these 10 years I feel proud, pensive and speculative.

I am very proud that we have made it through 10 years. Funding is never easy — and has never been harder than the past year and a half. We had to let our social worker go for 5 months last year to save money but, thankfully, our Program Committee stepped in and handled client needs until we were able to re-establish our case management program under the direction of our original social worker, Andrea Dowdall. We continue to provide case management, educational programs, support groups, supportive therapy group sessions, the swim program, a resource library, social activities, a web site and this newsletter. We have done good work and have meet many needs of a greatly under-served community.

But I am also pensive. How might my and my husband's lives differed if MSQLP had been in existence when he was diagnosed in 1983? For me, the most important resource would have been the monthly caregiver support group. I really needed an opportunity to share concerns and challenges with others who understood. Although friends and family were there for me, none really understood what it was like to be a wife, mother, teacher and caregiver of a husband with MS. His needs were so very great it seemed like it was a 30-hour a day job and I was, so often, emotionally exhausted.


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TOTAL OF CLIENTS
WITH MS

- Aug-Dec 2004: 21
- 2005: 59
- 2006: 119
- 2007: 173
- 2008: 201
- 2009: 226

Knowing my husband, I don't think he would have gone to support groups – he didn't like the idea particularly – but he would have been the first in the pool at the weekly swim sessions. Swimming was his thing and he had done it through the PG Adult School until his MS made it no longer possible. He would have loved the pool at the Monterey Sports Center. But the biggest difference to both of us would have been the availability of the case managers. Whenever I "hit the wall" trying to deal with a crisis in our life, I didn't know who to turn to for help. I tried calling different agencies but got little support. Looking back, I realize I didn't even know the right questions to ask and I needed support for things they didn't offer. It is why I have volunteered with MSQLP all these years – I want the path of others to be easier than the one Gary and I followed.

And speculation – what will the next 10 years be like for MSQLP? Will we be able to maintain our program? Whenever I look at our bankbook, I wonder. Can we make it through these next difficult months - or years? I know that every non-profit is suffering but, of course, I focus on us. Will we get enough donations and grants to keep our doors open? Will we have to do the unthinkable again – let our social worker go? Our case management program is the heart of MSQLP and it is what the persons who completed our original needs assessment said they most needed. Please, please, please, whenever you have some extra money, can you send a little our way? As the staff will tell you, no one squeezes every penny out of every dollar donated as well as I do. Your donation will support so very much.

Please join us while we look back at our 10-year journey. I thank everyone who has ever helped MSQLP in any way and those, specifically, who helped us with the articles in this issue. We look at how we began, what we are doing and speculate about the next 10 years. 

A (Very Personal) History of MSQLP

—*Mimi Wessling*

A few years ago, I was hired to build a web site for MSQLP. I got the job through a discussion with my dental hygienist, Amy Lamb Heckel. We were talking about the difficulties of patient-physician communication, and the strains that chronic illness puts on a family. She mentioned her mother's illness—multiple sclerosis. That struck a chord with me because I've known persons with multiple sclerosis since I was 9 years old, and it seems that I've met persons with MS at every turn of my life—persons young and old, male and female .

After attending to the business of building the web site, I became increasingly more involved with the group, and more and more impressed with the quality

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TOTAL OF CAREGIVER
CLIENTS

- Aug-Dec 2004: 1
- 2005: 21
- 2006: 47
- 2007: 75
- 2008: 92
- 2009: 107

of interactions among the Board members, and the positive impact that MSQLP has on the quality of life of persons with MS—apropos the name! My historical training made me curious about the process that had built this very effective organization, but not until now did I have the opportunity to put the story in place. The process turned out to be more like assembling a 1000-piece puzzle than doing the archival research I'm used to doing!

My "research" began with interviews of the psychologist Doctor Lotte Marcus and her husband Alan, and the neurologist Doctor Jerry Lehrer. These three names were familiar to me as the founders of the organization, and the interviews were an opportunity for me to hear their stories as my primary historical sources. What you'll read now is a melding of stories, one which could never quite capture the richness of the story as it was told to me.

Like most histories, this one has deep roots on the past: the impulse for service to the multiple sclerosis community in our three counties started long ago and far away in the personal histories of the founders. Of the three, Doctor Lehrer (known to us as Jerry) had direct experience with MS in his years of doing research on the immunology of MS in 1961-62 at Mount Sinai Hospital. Before his medical career, he had never known anyone with MS, but since then has devoted his life to finding the best way to ameliorate the discomforts, both physical and psychological, of persons with MS. He developed the program for MS treatment at Mount Sinai, and devoted most of his practice in ensuing years to treating persons with MS. Since moving to Monterey in 1994, he has continued to treat persons with MS.

The Marcuses come from the tradition of community activism. They were part of the movement started by Cesar Chavez to better the lives of Mexican migrant workers, and created a very successful program for teaching English to those workers in the Salinas area. Lotte and Alan recognized that teaching involved more than just the language—it required bringing the workers and the farm bosses to a mutual understanding of the separate worlds they lived in, the separate challenges they faced. This experience and Lotte's training in psychology evolved into the motivation that eventually led to the founding of MSQLP.

Lotte came to see the same disconnect between disparate needs of persons with intractable chronic illness when she worked with young physicians at hospitals in the Salinas area, one she had also seen when teaching in the family practice residency in Santa Rosa. Chronic illness separated patient from healer: the healer was taught to medicate, and became frustrated when the medicine didn't cure; the patient became, in Lotte's words, medical orphans. In the same

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way that she and Alan worked with both the migrant workers and their bosses, she worked with the physicians to bring them to see the patient's world, not just their own. Again, it was a situation where "teaching to both sides" was necessary, and her training as a psychologist empowered her to do just that.

Moving from Lotte's broader experience to her personal encounters, she told me about some persons with MS who had touched her deeply. Some were clients in her private practice, some were persons she just happened to meet. The list is long, and I'll recall just a few: A young person with MS who struggled to keep fit by swimming, an accomplished marine biologist, a female physician...

Lotte and Alan concluded that something had to be done to address the needs of persons in our semi-rural area, where there was no centralized facility dedicated to MS. They started to attend meetings of the MS National and also interacted with a charitable organization funded by a local family. Neither of these options seemed to fulfill what the Marcuses had observed to be the real needs of patients. In these meetings, whatever their frustrations with the institutional milieu, they met Dr. Jerry Lehrer, and that fortuitous confluence of skills and sensitivities produced the seed that grew into MSQLP.

This was the first tier of MSQLP. The next step was to find community support. According to Gene Harter, who has been until just recently a member of the MSQLP Board, "Lotte had a meeting at the Monterey Library to gather interest and to get some folks 'signed up' for a grassroots MS-related project. What I remember best at the start of MSQLP was the struggle to decide what to pursue. Was it trying to arrange housing for several clients? Was it providing services that were not available in Monterey? Fortunately, someone said 'maybe we should do a survey of folks with MS in the tri-county area and find out *what they need!*'"

With funding that came from private sources—the sons, spouses, friends of persons with MS—the original three hired Joy Smith, who helped them put together a structured interview that would document in detail the needs of the persons with MS in our semi-rural area. The core group then organized as a 501 (3)(c) nonprofit, and sought grants to fund a locally based organization.

Once the format of the Needs Assessment was in place, to quote Gene again, "...there was a strong feeling that what was needed was not housing, but services and the coordination of those services. It was decided that a social worker should be hired to identify what specifically was needed." Then, yet another fortuitous connection was made. Andrea Dowdall, who had spent her professional life in the service of others as a social worker, had moved to California with her husband to "retire." But stay retired she did not!

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In 2004, Andrea was volunteering at the local Hospice, and her supervisor had heard about a group that was interested in finding a social worker, and thought that Andrea would be a good fit for them. Andrea describes herself as “intrigued” by the supervisor’s description of the group as “a grassroots program that wasn’t really developed, they had a kind of mission, they knew what direction they wanted to go—sticking with people with MS for the long term, helping them with long-term planning and education, as well as doing research.” Andrea had encountered 2 persons with MS in her personal life, and also in her professional life; she had also worked with MS patients in a rehab facility. Andrea took up the challenge of organizing the Case Management program; she found that, perhaps more than education, one obvious need of the clients was assistance navigating the different systems they had to interact with .

What I will call the “second-tier” of founders of MSQLP as we know it now began to coalesce. They debated if the new nonprofit should be called the Multiple Sclerosis Quality of Life Program. Donna Krasnow (you read about her in the opening piece of the newsletter) told me that the consensus was that the name should reflect an ongoing and growing effort to make life better in ways that were identified in the Needs Assessment: the Multiple Sclerosis Quality of Life Project.

This second tier of MSQLP was beginning to fill out with local professionals; in addition to Dr. Lehrer, the neurologist Alejandro Centurion MD and physiatrist Michael Berlly MD wanted to support something local with their expertise. These physicians spread the word to contacts at UCSF. Support groups began to coalesce around the topics that the Needs Assessment revealed as the priorities of clients. Ron Grubman, a physicist and attorney whose father had died of MS, the physical therapist Lynn Herbert who has had persons with MS as clients, Marie Swank, Ron Gaasch, Paul Englund, MaryLou Schaeffer RN, all at different times became active Board members. Kim King was hired to run the office and do development, and somehow managed to keep all the separate areas of our activities working in harmony.

And this is where I came in, at that Board meeting in January 2007, and since then I have had the honor of working with this extraordinarily talented, devoted group of people and others who have since joined them. I’m not sure I’ve managed to assemble the thousand-piece puzzle for you, as the group is, as the name implies, a work in progress. A quote from Rabindranath Tagore best describes the MSQLP atmosphere: “He who wants to do good knocks at the gate; he who loves finds the door open.” 🌟

TOTAL NUMBER OF
HOUSE VISITS

- Aug-Dec 2004: 57
- 2005: 286
- 2006: 446
- 2007: 715
- 2008: 993

MSQLP TIMELINE

2000 Lotte Marcus and Gerry Lehrer meet to discuss how persons with MS can better have their needs addressed. More meetings follow that include community members concerned about the unmet needs of the local MS community.

2001-2002 Acquire funds to create and complete needs assessment of 80 local persons with MS and 25 of their caregivers. Joy Smith, R.N. supervises the completion of these assessments.

2003 MSQLP analyzes needs assessment and establishes program that addresses identified needs.

2004 MSQLP opens its doors in Carmel on August 1; Andrea Dowdall is the part time Social Worker/Case Manager.

- 21 Clients with MS
- 1 Caregiver clients
- 57 House Visits
- 480 Phone calls with or for clients

2005 January 1 Kim King joins the staff as part time Outreach Assistant/Office Manager; Andrea becomes full time Social Worker/Case Manager.

- 59 Total Clients with MS
- 21 Total Caregiver clients
- 286 Total House Visits
- 5,246 Total Phone calls with or for clients

2006 MSQLP office moves to Monterey; in May, Lotte retires as Board Chair and Donna Krasnow takes over as both Volunteer Executive Director and Board Chair.

- 119 Total Clients with MS
- 47 Total Caregiver clients
- 446 Total House Visits
- 11,414 Total Phone calls with or for clients

2007 Narit Gessler is hired as part time Outreach Assistant; Andrea retires at the end of the year but stays on to help through the transition.

- 173 Total Clients with MS
- 75 Total Caregiver clients
- 715 Total House Visits
- 15,823 Total Phone calls with or for clients

PHONE CALLS WITH
OR FOR CLIENTS

- Aug-Dec 2004: 480
- 2005: 5,246
- 2006: 11,414
- 2007: 15,823
- 2008: 19,493
- 2009: 22,373

2008 Lisa Yocum is the Social Worker/Case Manager; at the end of the year she moves, with her family, to Germany.

- 201 Total Clients with MS
- 92 Total Caregiver clients
- 993 Total House Visits
- 19,493 Total Phone calls with or for clients

2009 Dockie Lewis is the Social Worker/Case Manager from January through May; Amy Wright becomes Executive Director in September; Narit moves to Israel for 6 months at the end of September; Andrea Dowdall volunteers to return as part time Case Management Supervisor between October 2009 and March 2010; Kim leaves at the end of year for a new job in Monterey. We address staff changes and the impact of the declining economy on grants and donations. We survive a most traumatic year!

- 226 Total Clients with MS
- 107 Total Caregiver client
- 1,112 Total House Visits
- 22,373 Total Phone calls with or for clients

2010 By mid-March we should have a new Case Management Supervisor in place. By June, we will hire a new Outreach Assistant. We continue to look for ways to meet client needs while resources are stretched. 🌟

MSQLP-the Next Ten Years

—Amy Lamb and Donna Krasnow

Even as we celebrate our first 10 years, it is appropriate to think about the next 10 years. What should MSQLP look like in 2020? How should we best use our limited resources? This is especially important given the restraints of current economic conditions. What services should we keep? Are there any we should eliminate? What additional services should we sponsor? Are there ways to better serve the local MS community? These and other questions have been topics of discussions with clients at support group meetings and in individual interviews as well.

1. Continued access to information about MS Several clients stated that education events sponsored by MSQLP are among the most important way they learn about their disease. They greatly appreciate opportunities to hear from experts in a range of fields that relate to MS and to have the opportunity to have their own questions addressed. They wish we would sponsor even more events that we currently do.

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We agree. Unfortunately, we do not have the funds to pay for speakers and their transportation, hotels and meals. Thankfully, several pharmaceutical companies have been willing to sponsor presentations and pay these costs. That is why many of these presentations have also included information about specific drugs. At this point, two educational events are planned for 2010. We will offer as many events as we can find sponsors who will cover the costs.

2. More opportunities for socializing Social isolation is a great concern for many of our clients; they see MSQLP as an opportunity to lessen their isolation. Several clients suggested that MSQLP create more social events. They did not necessarily need MSQLP staff attendance at these events, but wanted MSQLP assistance to organize them. One suggestion was a “movie afternoon.” Clients would meet at a local theater, attend a movie, and have coffee afterwards to discuss what they had seen and to decide which movie they would see the following week. It would be relatively inexpensive, especially if people attend the matinee. MSQLP would be needed to get the event started but it should quickly become self-sustaining. Other ideas were to have MSQLP advertise upcoming social opportunities like free admission days at the Aquarium for local residents. Again, MSQLP would not have to attend events but would help organize them.

We think this is a great idea and would like to start movie afternoons in the Santa Cruz, Salinas, and Monterey areas as soon as possible. Once a movie and time are decided, we can add it to the website and send out email alerts to clients in the appropriate theater areas. However, we need a contact person for each site who would be responsible to let the office know the next movie title, date and time of viewing so that it could be sent out to clients. If you are interested, please call the office. Until we have a contact person in an area, we can't do it.

3. Share contact information about other MSers with members of social groups—including support groups Clients who expressed this idea wanted to be able to call other members of a support group outside of the meeting time. They also said they would volunteer to make the reminder phone calls before each support group meeting.

Great idea, and we thought we had already shared this information. There are confidentiality issues that must be addressed, however, before re-releasing contact information. We must have a client's approval before his or her information is released. Once we know who wishes to share information, we can pass out contact lists at each support group meeting. We very much like the idea of support group members volunteering to make the support group reminder calls – it would allow

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us to use that time in other ways. We will try this with the March support group meetings.

4. Continuation of the assistance and support services offered to caregivers Clients expressed how extremely important this is and that it is very hard to come by elsewhere.

We are aware of this need and agree that it is important to keep this service in our program. We will continue to address caregiver-related issues in our newsletters and provide support services to individual caregivers. We recognize that effective caregiving has a positive impact on quality of life. In addition, we believe that good caregivers deserve good support. We have been pleased with the response to our newest support group for caregivers. It meets in a different room at Oldemeyer Center in Seaside but at the same time as the support group for persons with MS. Participants have told us how much the opportunity to discuss their own challenges has meant to them. It is open to all caregivers.

5. Increase awareness of MSQLP in the local MS community Several clients have mentioned that they discovered MSQLP only by happy accident. One idea is to place a brochure outlining our services in the offices of local neurologists.

Hmmm, we already do that—but we know that our brochure is out of date. We are in the process of developing a new brochure that better describes our services, and hope it will soon be in offices in the Tri-County area. We give our brochures to neurologists, physical therapists, primary care physicians, and those agencies that work with our clients. We also count on all of you to share awareness of our organization with anyone you should meet who has MS or has a friend or relative with MS. In case you are interested, we have learned over the years that people find about us from other persons with MS (like all of you), from their doctors, from our website, and from our newsletter, and from people in the community who know about us.

6. More services for young persons with MS Although MS is often perceived as a disease that affects persons in their middle years, this is not always the case. Our client who discussed this issue asked for more activities for younger persons with MS—a support group and other social opportunities.

We agree. We have started work on developing a new support group for young persons with MS that we hope will be able to meet at CSUMB. We believe a college environment is a great place to meet; so many things are going on at that campus. We hope these young people will choose to meet for social opportunities outside of the support group, and we will facilitate this in any way that we can. continued page 10

7. More activities for persons with MS ...like organized yoga classes designed specifically for those with MS or field trips (transportation provided) to events like the Monterey Farmer's Market. Clients who mentioned these topics want more opportunities to socialize.

Very interesting ideas and please call the office with any other ideas you may have. When the economy returns to something approaching normal (whatever that is!) so that donations increase and grant opportunities open up, these are types of activities we would like to sponsor. We are in the process of submitting a grant for 3 monthly workshops. It is still in the planning phase but if the grant comes through, we will offer monthly sessions in music therapy, art, and quilting. We have spoken with many clients who have expressed degrees of grief over loss of ability to do former art or sewing projects. We believe that with adaptations and help, participation in activities like these can resume. We will let you know if the funding comes through. 🚀

Where Are They Now?

Lotte Marcus co-founder of MSQLP. Lotte stepped down as Board Chair, Creator-of-the-Program, Grant-Writer, Newsletter Editor, Overall-Person-in-Charge in May of 2006. She is now continuing her work as a psychologist (her office is in Monterey), sees clients, mentors elders, writes, researches topics of interest to her and enjoys her grandchildren and beautiful yard when she has some free time. She remains a force to be reckoned with. May we all age with the wisdom and determination that is Lotte.

Gerard Lehrer co-founder of MSQLP – The elder statesman! Jerry is still practicing in the Monterey area, and his clients are exclusively persons with MS. He keeps up with research in the field, advises our Board.

Donna Krasnow Board Chair and volunteer Executive Director from 2006 to the present. Donna happily passed over her Executive Director responsibilities to Amy Wright when Amy was hired by MSQLP in September of 2009. She retains her position of Board Chair and enjoys working on the newsletter, grant writing and stepping in when needed at the office. She also enjoys time with her new grandson who is now 6 months old. She believes he (Wesley Thomas Kelly) is absolutely perfect except that he lives out of state with his parents in Portland, Oregon. She visits a lot.

Andrea Dowdall Case Manager/Social Worker from August 2004–February 2008, and Social Worker Supervisor from October 2009–March 2010. Andrea was our


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original social worker and volunteered to come back for just a few months when we re-established our case management program in October of 2009 (we had been without a social worker from May through September. Thank you, Program Committee members who oversaw our program during that gap). When she leaves in March she will return to a position on our Board of Directors. Given her years of experience and her knowledge of MS we are grateful that she is willing to continue to share her time with us. When she is not with us, she may be involved in her quilting/sewing or spending time with her granddaughter.

Dockie Lewis Case Manager/Social Worker from January –May, 2009 - At the end of last summer Dockie Lewis helped her son move up to British Columbia where he began his freshman year at college (in Vancouver). She was able to then drive further north to visit with her family in Alaska.

Lisa Yocum Case Manager/Social Worker from January –December 2008 - Lisa has relocated with her family to Germany. She is enjoying the opportunity to travel while living in Europe. So far she has visited Austria, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland and quite a bit of Germany. At the moment Lisa is a substitute teacher. Having a flexible schedule and being home with her daughter is a great joy. Lisa misses her MSQLP friends and sends well wishes your way!

Kim King Outreach Assistant, Office Manager, Development –from 2005 through 2009. Kim had the longest span of time with MSQLP. She had many jobs over the years. She began as a part time Office Manager and Outreach Assistant. By the time she left at the end of 2009 she had become our Development person in charge of fundraising and grants while still running the office and stepping in with outreach assistance when needed—a true woman of many skills and abilities. Kim now works full time at a different job on Garden Road in Monterey. Most days find her rushing around town, from her children’s school to the grocery store and so on. She lives with two teenagers(!), her wonderful husband, and her dear old cat. She is happy that she has joined our Board of Directors so that she “can work at a different level with so many dedicated wonderful people.” Kim will be the Chair of our annual Walk-n-Roll in September and will help with grant writing. So, thankfully, we didn’t really lose her.

Narit Gessler Outreach Assistant from 2007–2009. She and her partner have been in Israel for 4 months. They’ve seen all of Israel, and also visited Vienna, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Slovakia, and Turkey! Narit loved seeing the ancient ruins in Israel, and found Jerusalem truly awe-inspiring. Narit misses everyone at MSQLP and all the wonderful clients, and wishes us well. 

Our New Executive Director, Amy Wright

Hello, my name is Amy Wright and I am thrilled to be MSQLP's new Executive Director and to be a part of the MS community here in Central California. I've recently moved to Pacific Grove from Humboldt County and absolutely love the area, the people, and of course, everyone involved with this organization!

I have a Bachelor of Arts degree from California State East Bay in Human Development/ Gerontology. I have close to 15 years of experience working with persons with disabilities and their families; seniors; and non-profit organizations. I've worked in all facets of the field: as activity coordinator in an assisted living home; case manager; caregiver; events coordinator; program development and personnel management. As Executive Director with MSQLP, I get to do a little bit of everything, and I thrive on the variety and challenge of each and every day.

I have been married for close to 13 years (yikes!) and have an amazing 5 year-old daughter. I am a certified yoga instructor, I love to cook, read, and on the weekends you can find my family at the beach, on a bike ride or being tourists exploring our new area! I look forward to meeting and getting to know all you, and so appreciate the opportunity to work with such a fabulous group of people. Thank you! 🏡



AMY WRIGHT and LOTTE MARCUS at the 2009 WALK-N-ROLL

Development

Since our last newsletter, we have received donations from the following individuals and foundations. Thanks to everyone for your generous and ongoing support:

Dr. Alejandro Centurion

Winifred Chandler

Community Foundation of the
Monterey Peninsula

Community Hospital of the Monterey
Peninsula

Richard and Lynda Cornell

John Daugherty

EMD Serono

Ruth Forsberg

Jon Gundersgaard

Harden Foundation

Faye Hanger

Bernice Hearn

Lynn Herbert

Robert and Linda Holub

Barbara F. Hornady

Mike Johnson

The Kaplan Family Foundation

Burton and Judith Kleinberg

Lynne Krasnow

Dr. Gerard Lehrer

Sonja Loftus

Janice Maroot

Multiple Sclerosis Foundation

Kent Newbold

Leona Palmer

Marlene and William Ramsay

Monterey Peninsula Quilters Guild

Tracy Tucker

WalMart

David and June Weber

Lorna Wheatly

Stay tuned for upcoming events...

...starting with MSQLP's participation in the Santa Cruz Human Race on Saturday, May 8, 2010! We are looking for volunteer walkers, sponsors and Team Leaders to rally up funds and excitement that day. As many of our clients live in Santa Cruz, this is also a fabulous opportunity for us to reach out and become better known in the SC community. The walk includes breakfast, lunch, entertainment, and lots of fun! Check out the website for the Human Race at <http://www.scvolunteercenter.com/events.html>.

Please be our friend!

MSQLP is can now be found on Facebook by searching "Multiple Sclerosis Qlp". A great way to stay in touch with MSQLP and the MS community.

Volunteers needed:

As always, we are looking for volunteers for upcoming event coordination, as friendly callers, or to help out around the office. Please call Amy at the MSQLP office (831.333.9091) for more information and to learn how you can get involved.

Terri's Tinsel Town Talk - If I Picked the Oscars

—Terri Nash

(One of our clients, Terri Nash, is an avid moviegoer. She, along with her service dog, Mabel, sees about 8 movies a month).

It's that time of year – the Oscars! For this issue I am selecting the people I think should win – but only in categories that interest me.

Best Picture - Avatar I would not normally go see this movie; I'm not a big sci fi fan, but I believe it is the best picture of the year. James Cameron's insight and imagination are phenomenal—it surpasses anything I have ever seen. But go see it in 3D on the big screen if you can. It costs a bit more but is worth every penny. If you go to the first movie in the morning, it's cheaper.

Best Director - James Cameron for Avatar What a movie!

Best Actor – Jeff Bridges in Crazy Heart Jeff was so good in this movie that it left me speechless—and that doesn't often happen. He is completely believable as a country-western singer—both his speaking accent and his voice. Colin Ferrell is also terrific. When you listen to Colin speak and sing it is hard to believe he is Irish! This is the first time that I can recall coming home and wanting to get the sound track.

Best Actress – Sandra Bullock – in The Blind Side She nailed the part. She is completely believable and her transformation into the mother who adopts 17-year old Michael Oher is perfect. Excellent job.

Best Supporting Actor – Stanley Tucci as Julia Child's husband in Julie and Julia. It was fun to see Meryl and Stanley together again but in totally different parts, He was so cynical in The Devil Wears Prada and so supportive of Julia in this role.

Best Supporting Actress – Mo'Nique in Precious She was extremely believable, especially surprising when you realize her background is not acting. She perfectly portrayed an abusive mother, so good that you felt deeply sorry for her daughter.

Special Effects – no discussion here, Avatar. Just stunning effects. Where does he get these ideas? He turned animals from the sea into forest-dwelling critters. Who thought you would ever see jellyfish-like animals living on land? You see ocean-like bioluminescence in the forest. The actual avatars themselves were amazing. We have seen creatures with human images before, but nothing like this. Go see this movie.

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Terry's Favorites of 2009

Here are my favorite movies from 2009 (If they aren't still in the theaters, rent 'em).

- Amelia
- Avitar
- The Blind Side
- Brothers – if you don't like war movies, skip this one
- Crazy Heart
- Food, Inc
- Hurt Locker - if you don't like war movies, skip this one
- Inglourious Basterds - Quentin Tarantino's World War II satire
- Invictus
- Is Anybody There
- Julie and Julia
- My Sister's Keeper
- Precious
- The Proposal
- Public Enemies
- Sherlock Holmes
- Up (An animated film – great for kids)
- Up in the Air
- Where the Wild Things Are – Fanciful and great for kids
- And, as always, Babe – my all-time favorite movie.



What Our Clients Say About MSQLP

Kent Newbold: My wife and I didn't know anything about MS when I was diagnosed. Andrea got us information to read and helped us learn about the disease. She met us in Salinas to discuss it. She is so gifted in her ability to discuss difficult topics and she made us feel comfortable.

Claudia Herrington: Andrea came to my house to talk with me about my MS. I didn't know anything about the disease, I was completely in the dark. She shared important information with me.

Helen Chow: Andrea knew I was going on a vacation and needed help walking. She got a used scooter for me from another client. She delivered it with the message, "Have Fun." Because of the scooter my father was willing to walk with me to the edge of the Grand Canyon. He knew I was safe on a scooter. Without her help, the vacation wouldn't have been possible.

Ruth Forsberg: I was at a tipping point with my MS but was unwilling to admit it. Lotte Marcus kept telling me that I needed to plan ahead. At the time I resented it but she made me realize that I had to get help. It changed my life. She forced me to look at my disease and I am grateful to her for keeping at me.

Melissa Bassi: Andrea is the shining light, the star. She has the knowledge, the drive and the love for others so that she does her job well.

Norm Hagen: There are two things I appreciate about MSQLP: 1) I have thoroughly enjoyed the excellent speakers at their educational events. I have learned so much about my disease and 2) My wife and I have never experienced such support as has been offered at the support group meetings. I have gone to the meeting for persons with MS; my wife has gone to the support group for

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caregivers. If she had had such support 25 years ago (when I was first diagnosed) her life would have been easier; it would have been easier to handle.

Rheta Burton: The name or the organization is correct. It has given me back Quality of Life. They were the first in the area to help me. What I am grateful for is that they are always there. If Andrea does not know the answer immediately, she always gets back to me. I like all the educational events and the support groups. Everyone has been so helpful. I also appreciate our diversity - we are an interesting group.

Tom Crain: I was one of the persons who was involved in the original needs assessment in 2001 and have been a co-facilitator of one of the support groups in Santa Cruz. Sometimes I am frustrated when so little money donated to national organizations comes back to our area but that is not the case with MSQLP. They are a marvelous local organization that helps the local community. I have loved working with Andrea. She has been very helpful in getting me the mobility aids that I have needed – wheelchair and she even had an Easy Pivot patient lift waiting for me when I came home from the hospital. I am really appreciative that they are always available. I am proud that we have such an organization in our area.

Norma Delgadillo: I enjoy the companionship I experience at our support group meetings, educational t groups. Everyone has been so helpful. I also groups. Everyone has been so helpful. appreciate our diversity - we are an interesting group.

Jessica Azevedo: MSQLP is great! I have received help with MediCal issues and I like what I have learned at meetings. We can bounce ideas off of each other.

Esteban Flores: MSQLP is very good. They were the first to help be get a walker. Andrea came to my house and helped me get my prescribed medicines. She has helped me a lot.

Sylvia Smith: It is great to have a support team. I really like the water aerobics class. Any exercise is good and this program has really helped me. I know not everyone likes the cool water in the pool but it is great for me. I really enjoy the Walk-n-Roll.



This picture sums it all up!

Anagram

—*Victoria Scaccia*

Challenges met head on

Extending helping hands

Lots of hard work

Ever changing

Bringing hope

Respect given to all

A vision come true

Teamwork

Endeavoring to carry on!

It is fun to walk around the lake and now that I have a walker it is easier. I really appreciate how Andrea has helped me whenever I have needed it.

Diane Taylor: Oh my goodness, MSQLP has helped me in so many ways. Andrea is absolutely wonderful. I really went through a hard time financially and she took me through all the steps I needed to follow to apply for services for which I was eligible. I appreciate that she calls me to see how I am doing. Recently I have participated in the supportive therapy group at the MSQLP office. It is good for me to be able to hear from others with my illness and how we all deal with it. 🌈

We thank all the many people who have contributed time to MSQLP

Board Member, Advisors, and Interns from CSUMB. At least one hundred more have volunteered their time in countless ways, and more than a thousand have donated money. We could not do what we do without each and every one of you.

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...And all the more-than-1,000 volunteers and individual donors

Although we have listed your names in previous newsletters we want to identify 21 ways you have helped MSQLP:

- 1 You help run our educational events and fundraisers.
- 2 You assist persons with MS at our weekly swim program.
- 3 You walk with us and collect donations at our annual Walk-n-Roll.
- 4 You donate money year round – we appreciate each and every one of you.
- 5 You go into clients' homes to help make basic repairs and spruce up gardens.
- 6 You make friendly phone calls and visits to clients who feel isolated.
- 7 You lead our support group meetings in Santa Cruz, Seaside and Salinas.
- 8 You help our clients by making deliveries of supplies.
- 9 You help in our office – data entry, stuffing envelopes, cleaning out our files.
- 10 You present at our educational events and share information with our clients.
- 11 You let us interview you for newsletter articles or you write articles yourselves.
- 12 You donate items to our numerous fundraisers.
- 13 You donate furniture and supplies to our office and to clients
- 14 You donate equipment to clients.
- 15 You donate resources to our library.
- 16 You share your skills and abilities with our clients.
- 17 You represent us at meetings and make presentation about MSQLP.
- 18 You help us with artwork for our events and fundraisers.
- 19 You sit on committees and share the committee work.
- 20 You conduct research for us and help us analyze our needs.
- 21 You share your time with our clients at our supportive therapy sessions at the office. 🚀