The Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western PA is proud of its legacy of caring for people affected by MG. Our tagline – Strong Together Since 1955 – is more than just a slogan. It’s a wish, a plan…a promise.

If you or your loved ones are among the thousands of patients served by MGA over the years, we call on you now to help us fulfill that promise. We are thankful for your generous, ongoing support. We are grateful too, for our partnership with AHN/Allegheny General Hospital which provides partial financial support for our operations. Due to recent funding cuts, however, we are anticipating a budget deficit of approximately $20,000 this year.

Don’t miss this great evening of good food and good fun! The talent line-up is sure to please. Many people know headliner Gene Collier from his work as a sportswriter for The Post-Gazette, and as a playwright who co-wrote “The Chief” about Steelers owner Art Rooney, and also “The Play” about Rocky Bleier. His writing popularity has led him to a career in comedy, where his deadpan, laidback delivery and hilarious sarcastic wit truly shines. Gene will be joined by feature comic, Baltimore’s funniest Larry XL, and EmCee Joey Welsh, a local regular and co-founder of We Got Next Comedy Group.

The Sokol Club Banquet Hall features plenty of free parking in their huge lot, an affordable cash bar, and the delicious food from Conrad Catering. We will have fantastic silent auctions, basket raffles and more. Reserved seats for dinner & show are $40 and general admission for the show only are $20. Buy tickets online at www.slapsticksproductions.com or call us for mail order at 412-566-1545.

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NEW MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

MGA is in need of some much needed new medical equipment. Our goal is $3,000 and thanks to several generous people we have to date received nearly half of that goal.

Thank You to:
Erika Jones
Kathryn & Fred Guenther
Bob & Roxanne Reuse
Bill & Marilyn Nizinski
Tom & Dolores Quinn

There is still time to add your name to the list! Make your gift payable to MGA, mark any donations as “Med Equip” and Thank you for your generosity!!!

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Beth Knizner
Dennis Felice
On his birthday 12/15 and at Christmas
By Gerri Felice

Paul Fleischhauer
By Jane Fleischhauer
Ralph Getz
By Charlene Getz
Rosemary Greenberg
By Nancy & Robert MacLachlan
Joseph & Edna Hudakcek
By Joan Hudakcek & Mike Dicicco
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The Allegheny MG Support Group, facilitated by Cindy Spring, RN, CCM, now meets at the MGA office, 490 East North Avenue, Suite 410, instead of the Allegheny General Hospital Singer Library. Join us on the 3rd Saturday of every month from 1:00pm to 2:30pm.

**NEWS FLASH!!!** MGA is working on developing a support group especially for those under 40 years of age, to address the unique needs of our younger patients. Watch our Facebook page for more details soon.

The Beaver MG Support Group, facilitated by Mel McRoberts (MGA Board President) has decided to meet on a bi-monthly basis. Join us on the 3rd Saturday of the month, from 1:00pm to 2:30pm at the Beaver Medical Center (March, May, July, September & November).

To attend either support group meeting, please RSVP to Donna at donnak@mgawpa.org or 412-566-1545. Please note: a minimum of three people attending is required to hold each support group, so it’s very important that you RSVP in advance. We encourage everyone, including newly diagnosed and seasoned patients, their family members and friends to attend.

MGA is very grateful to our supporters who have designated our organization to be the beneficiary of their fundraisers on Facebook. Usually, these fundraisers are in honor of someone’s birthday or other special occasion. This is an easy and convenient way to get your friends and family to support a cause that you care about.

Please note: If you hold a Facebook fundraiser benefitting MGA, Facebook does not give us a list of your donors, so we are not able to send a letter of acknowledgement to them. Please check with your donors if they would like to receive an acknowledgement of their donation and mail us their names and addresses. We will be happy to send them a letter of acknowledgement for their generosity.

THE CHALLENGE IS ON! It’s time again for the Highmark Walk @ Stage AE in Pittsburgh. On Saturday, May 11th many Myasthenia Gravis supporters will again put on their walking shoes for MGA. The fun-filled festivities are rain or shine. Donna’s team “It Takes a Pill-age” has already left the gate to top last year’s goal of $1,545. To help MGA you can either start your own team and get pledges from friends and family, or donate to Donna’s team to help her meet her goal. Whichever you choose please participate and show your support of MGA and the services we provide.

Follow this link: http://hcf.convio.net/mgawpa to donate (or send a check to MGA, 490 E. North Ave., Suite 410, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. Be sure to note that your donation is for the Highmark Walk or Donna’s team).

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MGA Association News
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Memorials & Honorariums

Please note. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list of donors. If you see an error or omission, please let us know.

The Myasthenia Gravis Association of Western PA is proud to help us fulfill that promise. We are thankful for your tagline – Strong Together Since 1955 – is more than just a statement of its legacy of caring for people affected by MG. Our planned giving, United Way contributor choice, allocations from United Way of Beaver County and Lawrence County, and general donations are other sources of support. Over the last several years, we have reduced our operational budget significantly, in response to funding cutbacks. We cut personnel costs by going with a part-time medical team (nurse and medical assistant) instead of full-time, reducing benefits and other expenses. Several months ago, we realized we needed to return to a full-time nurse, due to an increased demand for services, but we still squeeze all we can out of every dollar in our budget.

As we plan for the future of MGA, we ask you to continue attending our events, and invite your friends and family along whenever possible. We ask that you keep your promises and your donations coming if you are able. Finally, we ask you to please consider making a lasting gift to MGA in your will. It is one more way to ensure that MGA’s legacy of caring, which you have come to value, will be there for future MG patients and their families. For more information about planned giving, please call the MGA office at 412-566-1545.
The name Myasthenia Gravis (MG) is of Greek origin meaning “Grave Muscle Weakness.” With today’s treatment many people with this diagnosis are able to live fairly normal lives and expect a normal life expectancy. The cause of Myasthenia Gravis remains unclear. It is considered an autoimmune disease which simply means that the body’s immune system is attacking itself. There does seem to be a genetic tendency in families with other autoimmune diseases such as Lupus or Rheumatoid Arthritis to name a couple. That does not mean that Myasthenia Gravis will be passed from generation to generation. It is rare to see more than one member of a family with this disease. There is no cure for Myasthenia Gravis.

How does it work? When an electrical impulse that originates in the brain is sent down to a motor nerve to create movement, a chemical called Acetylcholine (the bridge chemical) works by accessing an acetylcholine receptor on the muscle fiber allowing your muscle to get “excited.” The receptor on the muscle fiber then acts as a bridge so that the electrical impulse can get to the muscle fiber allowing your muscle to get excited. The end of that motor nerve will release a chemical called Acetylcholine. This chemical binds to receptors on the muscle fiber. The binding of Acetylcholine damages the muscle receptors. Some MG patients are considered an autoimmune disease referred to as a “complement activating” disease. This is because the immune system is attacking itself.

Some patients have a neuro-muscular disease which is not due to the immune system attacking it. Treatment options consist mainly of a group of medications. Methion (Pyridostigmine) is the foundation medication for treating Myasthenia Gravis. It works by preventing the breakdown of Acetylcholine (the bridge chemical). Prednisone, a medication often used for other autoimmune diseases, often a brain MRI to rule out other possible causes of your symptoms. An accurate diagnosis is important because there are many potential short and long-term side-effects to the medications for MG. Your doctors do not want you to be exposed to these unnecessarily.

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:
Larry Scott and George Arnold, owners of Modern Mercantile Pgh. We love these gentlemen for all of the time and talent they give to the Purple Party!! XOXO

EXTRA SPECIAL THANKS TO:
JoBeth Barr and her daughter Jamie Jo Stivers for their hard work and generosity in creating and coordinating this fabulous event. What would we do without you? XOXO

BUSINESS DONORS:

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