

YMCA PLANS TULIP DROP TO SUPPORT THOSE BATTLING PARKINSON'S DISEASE

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ROSCOE - In light of April being Parkinson's disease awareness month, everyone's invited to a tulip drop at the Roscoe branch of the Stateline Family YMCA. The tulip drop will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Monday by the Main Street Bridge near the Firehouse Pub, 10670 Main St.

Fifty red tulips will be provided and Peddling for Parkinson's class member Ed Skwarlo will be speaking, according to YMCA instructors Cortnee Dusing and Cathy Garrey.

The Roscoe YMCA is a big supporter of those with Parkinson's disease. It offers free cycling classes for people with Parkinson's disease. The class meets three times a week - Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. - noon - at the Stateline Family YMCA Roscoe branch, 9901 Main St.

Mike Kasper, who has Parkinson's disease, attends the class with his wife, Mary. He also attends Rock Steady Boxing classes in Rockford.

"It's a great class and I love it. I've been peddling since the class began, four to five years ago," said Dan Akermund who also attends boxing classes.

Jay Eaton, 77, said he got diagnosed with the disease two years ago a bit late in life. Peddling for a year, he said the class has been a big factor in slowing his disease progression. He also walks and does household chores to stay active.

Instructor Garrey said the key is for people to get their cycling rotations up to 90 per minute and to exercise for 40 minutes. Data is tracked on the bikes. When their cycling rotations are high enough, Garrey said it triggers something in the brain which improves mobility.

The class is not only a great way to help mobility, she said, but is a great support group. Members share the latest information on Parkinson's research with each other.

Those at the YMCA are also planning a tulip bulb fundraiser this fall, which could drum up funds for Parkinson's organizations. It will also help people remember those with the disease when their bright flowers emerge in the spring.

Parkinson disease affects about one in 100 Americans over age 60. The average age of onset is 60-years-old.

Parkinson's disease is a degenerative movement disorder which can cause deterioration of motor skills, balance, speech and sensory function. Although it develops slowly, symptoms may include tremors or shaking, loss of balance or stiffness. It can pose an array of disheartening challenges such as not being able to button your shirt or not being able to get up from a fall. While a diagnosis can be scary and a challenge, the good news is there is increasing hope for treatment of the disease using vigorous exercise such as fast cycling or



Hillary Gavan/Beloit Daily News Mike Kasper peddles in a Peddling for Parkinson's class at the Roscoe branch of the Stateline Family YMCA. Behind him, from left, are Dan Akermund and Jay Eaton. The free class helps people with the disease slow symptoms. The class is looking forward to a tulip drop event on Monday to raise awareness of Parkinson's.

boxing.



Studies in the 1980s and 1990s showed rigorous exercise emphasizing gross motor movement, balance, core strength and rhythm can improve mobility and the activities of daily living. More recent studies, most notably at Cleveland Clinic, focus on the concept of intense "forced" exercise, and have begun to suggest that certain kinds of exercise may be neuroprotective, actually slowing disease progression, according to <https://www.rocksteadyboxing.org>.