Living Well with Multiple Sclerosis

In the United States, there are 400,000 people living with multiple sclerosis (MS), with nearly one person diagnosed each hour.

Paula Collins, 51, of Manalapan, was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2003.

As the effects of MS took hold, Paula found herself unable to work a full-time job. Initially, she received treatment at a facility closer to where she worked, but through an MS support group, she heard many positive things about Amos Katz, MD, board-certified neurologist and medical director of CentraState’s Linda E. Cardinale MS Center.

“What impressed me the most was that Dr. Katz focused only on MS,” Paula says. “He works very hard to keep patients a step ahead in their treatment plans.”

Paula was first treated at the MS Center in 2008.

“She had severe right-sided weakness and numbness as well as imbalance. Her MRI showed multiple new abnormalities secondary to MS, and she was put on a new, powerful, disease-modifying drug for MS called Tysabri®, which we infuse right in the MS Center,” Dr. Katz explains. “Paula had a wonderful response, with marked improvement in gait and balance. There were also cognitive and behavioral improvements noted by the patient and staff. Her periodic MRIs since then have not changed, and her exam continues to be fairly normal.”

Now, Paula is not only a patient of the MS Center, she is also a volunteer there, and she credits CentraState’s 12-week MS Wellness Program with her current ability to maintain her duties as a weekly volunteer.

“Volunteering makes me feel human again,” Paula says. “I can sympathize with the patients who come in to the MS Center. Working behind the scenes offers me a view of how all staff, from the front office to the back treatment room, care deeply for all of the patients.”

BRIGHT OUTLOOK

Although Paula still deals with lingering MS issues, the treatment she has received from Dr. Katz at the MS Center has greatly improved her quality of life.

“I still sleep a lot, have trouble remembering names, that sort of thing, but I’m so much better than I was,” Paula says.

Dr. Katz is quite optimistic about Paula winning her battle with MS, mainly due to all of the support she receives from family, friends and the medical community.

“Paula’s long-term outlook is very bright,” Dr. Katz says.

As Paula receives treatment and performs her volunteer duties at the MS Center, she can’t help but be inspired by the passion Dr. Katz displays for his work.

“He’s seen what MS does to people and he genuinely wants to see them get better,” Paula says. “I may be unfortunate enough to have MS, but I consider myself quite fortunate to have Dr. Katz on my side.”

For more information about CentraState’s MS Wellness Program, call (732) 294-2505, visit www.centrastate.com/multiple-sclerosis-center or scan the QR code to the left with your smartphone.