

# pain connection

helping people with chronic pain and their families

## In This Issue

Will 2015 be the Year of Action?	1
Pain Connection's 15th Anniversary!	1
Upcoming Meetings	2
Update on the Activities of the NCCPPP	2
Pain Connection Honored By Nonprofit Village	3
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Collaboration	3
Insurance Reimbursement	4
"FREE" Acupuncture Pain Clinic	4
Pain Connection at Health Fairs	4
A Day of Wellness in the Chronic Pain Community	4
"Cake" is More Than a Movie...	5
Celebrating Travel Milestones: Part Two	6
10 Ways to Tame the Beast	7
Membership	8
Open Hand: My Favorite Mudra	8
Irene I. Lukoff—Volunteer Grant Writer	9
New Volunteers Always Welcome	10
Volunteer Thank You's!!!	10
Ways to Support Pain Connection	10
Intern   Volunteer Needed for September	12

## Will 2015 be the Year of Action?

by Malcolm P. Herman

A year ago in this newsletter we asked whether 2014 would be the year of the coalition in the pain community. With hindsight, we can now say that 2014 was just the beginning and that in 2015 the numerous national organizations representing people with pain are actively collaborating in a number of important areas. Now we can look ahead again and ask whether 2015 will be the year of action.

A significant catalyst for action has been the long awaited release of the National Pain Strategy by the Department of Health and Human Services on 2 April 2015. The *National Pain Strategy* is the first-ever, comprehensive, population-level strategic plan to advance pain research, education, care and prevention and was developed in response to the imminent need to transform how pain is perceived, assessed and treated in

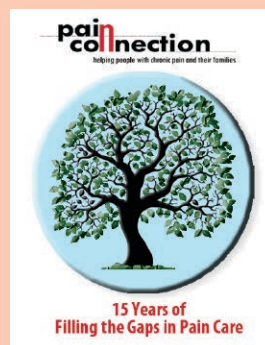
America. The process began after the seminal 2011 Institute of Medicine report *Relieving Pain in America* determined that over 100 million American adults live with life-altering chronic pain at an annual economic cost burden of \$600 billion. This equals a national epidemic with costs far exceeding that of any other disease, condition or disorder in the United States.

Pain Connection was one of the founding members of the Consumer Pain Advocacy Task Force (CPATF), a coalition of seventeen national consumer organizations and advocacy groups which was created specifically to promote, support and monitor the implementation of the National Pain Strategy. Pain Connection is proud to be an active member of this coalition, which holds regular meetings and brings together many of the leading advocates in the pain community. CPATF has developed a detailed plan of action and is calling for the Department of

## Pain Connection's 15th Anniversary of Filling the Gaps in Pain Care!

Pain Connection celebrated 15 Years of Filling the Gaps in Pain Care on November 9 at the "Winery at Olney" in Maryland, where over 50 celebrants toasted Pain Connection for serving people with chronic pain and their families. Over \$2000 was raised to help support outreach. Attendees had the opportunity to taste different wines and enjoy a variety of snacks and desserts. There was also a silent auction of donated items.

**Mark your calendars for the 2nd Pain Connection Fundraiser at the Winery at Olney on 4 October 2015.**



Health and Human Services to take two essential steps in order that the strategy will be implemented. CPATF is requesting that the Department should proactively develop a federal oversight body and start the budgeting process now so that it can swiftly commence implementation of the plan as soon as it is approved and the final version is released. The National Pain Strategy

will revolutionize the treatment of chronic pain in this country; but, as with all national policies, it is dependent on adequate funding and proper implementation. The pain community must ensure that this happens, so that next year we can look back and say that 2015 truly was the year of action.

members feel they can serve the chronic pain community more efficiently and effectively while enhancing their own skills and embracing use of a multidisciplinary approaches to provide more comprehensive care.

The NCCPPP provides its members opportunities for education and discussion groups with leading experts, and offers training and networking opportunities that can result in new collaborations, partnerships and referrals to and from other colleagues. The NCCPPP held its first general meeting 20 February, where Dr. Michael E. April, a pain specialist practicing in Rockville MD, facilitated a discussion on chronic pain and sleep. Members and other colleagues remained after the discussion to network and discuss the benefits of belonging to the Coalition.

The summer and fall schedule for upcoming general meetings is exciting and has already generated a tremendous amount of interest:

- 19 June—features addiction psychiatrist, Dr. George Kolodner, Medical Director of the Kolmac Clinic, who will lead a discussion on

## Upcoming Meetings

### “PAIN CONNECTION LIVE” CONFERENCE CALLS

1st Thursdays, 1:30–2:30 p.m. EST  
2nd Thursdays, 7:00–8:00 p.m. EST  
Registration is required for each call.  
For more information, email [info@painconnection.org](mailto:info@painconnection.org) or call 301-231-0008.

### DMV SUPPORT GROUP

2nd Monday, 1:00 - 2:30 PM  
Pain Connection Office  
Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C, DCSW,  
Group Leader (301)231-0008

### PAIN WARRIORS HAGERSTOWN

For more information, please contact the Pain Connection office at 301-231-0008.

### VIRGINIA SUPPORT GROUP

2nd Wednesdays, 1:30–3:00 p.m.  
Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine  
6829 Elm Street, Suite 300  
McLean, VA 22101

### SPEAKERS SERIES

June 22—Adrienne Hausman, Aromatherapist, “Using Aromatherapy to help ease pain, stress, and depression”  
1:15–2:15 p.m.  
Holiday Park Senior Center  
3950 Ferrara Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20906  
240-777-4999 (directions only)  
Inclement Weather Policy: The Holiday Park Senior Center follows the weather policy of Montgomery County Public Schools. Call them at 240-777-4999 for further information.

## Update on the Activities of the NCCPPP

by Sharon E. Barrett, DrPH, MS

*A founding member of NCCPPP and current President of Pain Connection*

The National Coalition of Chronic Pain Providers & Professionals (NCCPPP) is off to a very solid beginning. The NCCPPP is a network of health providers, professionals and organizations working on behalf of individuals with chronic pain, their families and their caregivers. Established in 2014 by seven independent practitioners and organizations, membership continues to grow. It is evident that providers, professionals and organizations are responding to their need to come together. As a coalition,



Dr. Michael April presents “Treating Sleep and Chronic Pain” at the first general meeting of NCCPPP.



Treating People with Chronic Pain and Addictions.

- 18 September—Bridget Hughes M.Ac., L.Ac. NBCCH, licensed acupuncturist and Qigong instructor with a Master's degree from the Maryland University of Integrative Health (formerly Tai Sophia Institute), will discuss A Heart-Mind-Body Approach to Pain. Ms. Hughes is the author of the widely read and appreciated book, *Unlocking the Heart of Healing*.
- 18 December—highlights Dr. Luke Tian, Luke Acupuncture and Herbology Center, who will discuss the use of herbs, acupuncture and other complementary medicine modalities to treat chronic pain.

The general sessions are designed for providers, practitioners and professionals. There is a fee of \$15 for each session for nonmembers. Members of the Coalition participate at no cost.

We encourage you to become a member to enjoy these meetings and other benefits. Membership can be as low as \$25.00.

Also NCCPPP encourages you to have your patients or clients sign up for the May 15 Wellness Day and Community Resources event that will take place at Hope Connections For Cancer Support, Beaumont House at FASEB, 9650 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD.

Free workshops will be offered for people with chronic pain that include:

- Self Massage
- Ergonomics and Body Posturing
- Acupuncture
- Guided Imagery
- Nutrition

Pre-registration is required since space is very limited. Please have your patients and clients register at the NCCPPP website, <http://www.nccppp.org/>



*Pictured with Gwenn are Jeffrey Slavin, Board President of the Nonprofit Village and Montgomery County Executive's First Lady Catherine Leggett, Esq. who is honorary chairperson.*

Please continue to check the website [www.painconnection.org](http://www.painconnection.org) for other upcoming activities and information that will benefit you as a provider, practitioner and professional working with individuals with chronic pain.

### **Pain Connection Honored By Nonprofit Village**

In recognition of numerous achievements, the Nonprofit Village awarded Pain Connection the "2015 Small Nonprofit Making a Difference" at an awards breakfast held on May 1st at the Pooks Hill Marriott in Rockville. Pain Connection was recognized for the many services they provide to people with chronic pain and their families. Gwenn Herman, founder and Executive Director of Pain Connection, accepted the award on behalf of the organization. A fine article about Gwenn and Pain Connection can be found in the latest issue of the "Potomac Almanac." <http://connectionarchives.com/PDF/2015/041515/Potomac.pdf>

### **Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Collaboration**

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine contacted Pain Connection to collaborate in developing their pain medicine course curriculum for first year medical students. Incorporated into this class is the 'patient's perspective'. Pain Connection will give a presentation on the Six Psychosocial Stages of Chronic Pain and support group members will meet with students in small groups. The small group discussions will focus on how pain affects one's daily life, pain management treatments tried and experiences with the health care system. It also will touch upon providers that do not believe when patients have pain and need pain medication, non-medical approaches to pain management tried, psychological state and adaptation to living with chronic pain. The course was held on May 14, 2015.

## Insurance Reimbursement

In 2014, Pain Connection was approved as eligible for reimbursement for specific Maryland Medicare and Medicaid programs. Acceptance from these insurance programs will help with sustainability.

## “FREE” Acupuncture Pain Clinic

Lisa Marie Price, L.Ac., Dipl.Ac., recently announced a new FREE Acupuncture Pain Clinic on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at Healthpointe Acupuncture & Wellness in Rockville, MD. More details can be found on the clinic website at <http://free-acupuncture-pain-clinic.eventbrite.com>, and an appointment is required. Appointment scheduling for each Free Clinic Day will be opened up approximately one week ahead of time.

This free acupuncture pain clinic is ideal for those who are un-insured or under-insured and also for those who just want to try acupuncture or get additional free treatments each month. Patients are encouraged to bring family and friends to either try a treatment or just to see what acupuncture is like.

This will be a “community-style” clinic with two or more people in each room so there will be no privacy. Acupuncture points on the arms and legs will be used so patients need to wear loose clothing that can be rolled up to the elbows and knees. This is not a comprehensive acupuncture treatment but rather will address one or two areas of pain. People without pain are welcome to try a sample treatment, but we will only spend about five minutes with each person and will not be able to evaluate and treat complex conditions.

There will be treatment tables to lie on and chairs to sit on during the first-



*Board Secretary, Alison Bennett, represented Pain Connection at a community resources and health fair at Cabin John Mall in Potomac, MD on April 26.*

come, first-choice treatment. This clinic is inappropriate for children, women that are pregnant, patients who faint easily, or for those who are unable to sit for half an hour or more.

Treatment at Wednesday pain clinics is always 100% free. However, if you feel moved to give, there is always a donation box to collect funds for a local charity. For the month of June 2015, all proceeds will go to the Pain Connection. Our next free pain clinic is on 24 June.

In 2014, we attended several of these health fairs. Among them were the Martin Luther King Volunteer Fair, the Veterans Resource & Volunteer Fair, the Sjogren's Syndrome Foundation Health Fair, Elder Abuse Health Fairs, and the Combined Federal Campaign kick-offs.

We encourage you to attend these health fairs in 2015 and stop by our table and say hello. If you're a Federal employee, don't forget our CFC number is 62705.

## Pain Connection at Health Fairs

Pain Connection does its best to disseminate information about chronic pain—and the ways in which people with chronic pain, and their families, can improve the quality of their lives.

One way is participating in health fairs throughout the Washington metropolitan area. By doing so, we make ourselves available to answer questions, provide literature, and refer those interested to other sources of assistance.

## A Day of Wellness in the Chronic Pain Community

*By Sharon E. Barrett, DrPH, MS*

On 15 May, the National Coalition of Chronic Pain Providers and Professionals (NCCPPP) hosted its inaugural community event at Hope Connections for Cancer Support in Bethesda, MD. Individuals with chronic pain and their families signed up to participate in an afternoon of wellness activities and educational sessions. Members of the Coalition, who were practitioners provided free sessions, including

acupuncture, gentle movement, nutrition counseling, guided imagery, and ergonomic and body posturing. In between sessions participants visited the resource rooms to peruse and pick-up pain literature, pamphlets, and other resources.

Response from the community was tremendous. They were grateful to have this opportunity to participate in activities they found beneficial to management of their chronic pain as well as to explore other forms of services that they had not yet tried. The Coalition thanks Paula Rothenberg,

President and CEO of Hope Connections for Cancer Support and one of the founding members of the Coalition for allowing the NCCPPP use its facility to host the event. The facility provided a beautiful and comfortable environment for each workshop session.

*(continued on page 7)*

## **Cake is More Than a Movie...It's About Millions of Lives Affected By Chronic Pain**

*by Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C, DCSW*

The Pain Community had been hearing about this movie that was supposed to focus on chronic pain. I was hesitant and yet excited to see "Cake" starring Jennifer Anniston who plays a character named Claire who was injured in a car accident. So as soon as it reached the movie theater, I went with my husband.

My fear was that it would stereotype people with chronic pain as just being drug seekers and addicts which would set the whole pain community back. My excitement was for chronic pain to finally be recognized by the public as a serious disease. The only other movie I ever remembered seeing about chronic pain was the movie *Frida*, which starred Salma Hayek. Frida Kahlo was a famous surrealist Mexican painter. She suffered from chronic pain due to a bus accident, but the movie did not make chronic pain the main subject.

It is interesting that *Cake* was generally panned and given mediocre movie ratings by the critics even before it appeared in the movie theaters. Is it because pain is just not sexy? Jennifer Anniston portrayed the physical and emotional aspects of pain very well. It raised many tucked away memories and feelings in me. I felt Claire's pain. I felt my own pain. I saw the pain and movements of thousands of people I have met who suffer from chronic pain in her actions and movements.

Yes, Claire did eat her meds like candy and drink like a fish. But that is because her pain was not treated properly. None of her providers seemed to understand the depths of her pain. Claire did not have a treatment plan that incorporated every aspect of her life. Claire was recovering from surgery which seemed to be six months following her car accident.

Besides chronic pain, Claire had complicated grief. This was due to the death of her young son in the car accident, post-traumatic stress disorder from her accident, her husband left her, she could not work as a lawyer, she could not do simple things around the house or even drive, and the suicide of Lucy, an acquaintance from a support group. Claire was very interested in Lucy's death because she wanted to end her own physical and emotional suffering. She saw no other way of relief. The medications only took the edge off of her pain and her life was just pure agonizing pain. Many people do become suicidal when they are not treated as a whole person.

I felt the movie missed an important opportunity in educating the viewers. The viewers saw the misery in Claire's actions and the way she moved her body but that left them to determine whether she was just a whiner, a drug addict, or simply should have stiffened her upper lip and move on with her life. It promoted stereotypes by not educating what chronic pain is. In my mind, viewers today have to be spoon fed to understand what they are seeing. The support group could have been an excellent tool if the other members spoke about how pain changed their lives, feelings of isolation, depression, expressing the anger for the losses and the feelings of not being believed because chronic pain is an "invisible disease". The group leader could have framed chronic pain as a disease that needs to be treated within a biopsychosocial framework stressing the importance of a good solid treatment plan that includes not only medications but also mental health treatment, the importance of good nutrition, the need for vitamins and supplements to build up the autoimmune system, acupuncture, massage therapy, Chinese herbs, meditation, guided imagery, Chi Gong, biofeedback, Neurofeedback, Reiki, and many more types of treatments.

Hopefully, this will not be the last major movie produced on chronic pain but a step toward the next one that will encompass all the aspects above.



## Celebrating Travel Milestones: Part Two—Cruising with Pain

*by Anne M. Smith*

May 2014 marked my return to cruising after a five year hiatus from one of my favorite ways to see the world. My last full cruise was to Alaska in May 2009, before my partial hysterectomy in July 2009 when my life changed drastically and chronic pain not only found me but took up permanent residence within me. To make a very long medical story short, my hysterectomy was long overdue and as a result of the delay in the surgery, by the time my uterus was removed, it was more than twice its normal size, boggy, and not in one piece. I developed a host of related conditions including Interstitial Cystitis, IBS, Fibromyalgia and my joint and spine pain was excruciating. I had severe migraines and chronic systemic inflammation. My blood work was all abnormal and so were many tests I underwent. This is my short list.

Traveling was so far from my mind and thoughts. My life became consumed with understanding, coping, managing and living with pain in my new body. Thank God I found the Pain Connection and Gwenn Hermann who has been an integral part of my healing and understanding!

In my last article, I discussed my first land trip since my left knee replacement. In this article, I will discuss how I prepared for my first cruise since 2009. I had many fears, apprehensions and concerns, mainly be surrounded by so many people. My fear of falling, being bumped or shoved accidentally was present and accounted for. With thousands of people in a contained space and the possible germs I'd come in contact with (with a compromised immune system), I was very nervous. I didn't want my trip to be ruined by becoming ill.

To prepare, I went to see a naturopathic doctor who was familiar with natural supplements for traveling. Not only was I going to be on a large ship with lots of people, I'd also be visiting three island destinations I had never been to before so I didn't have an idea of the food or indigenous allergens. Oh, I forgot to mention I had just recently had painful allergy testing done and was found to be allergic to histamine, fur, mold, dust and cockroaches, all items out of my control in a tropical climate. I started my weekly allergy shots two weeks before I left on the cruise as a precaution. Additionally, I was given so many useful tips to help stop germs from even latching on in the first place. For example, the naturopathic doctor suggested before my flights to put Neosporin under my nose and on the outside of my ears to catch any germs before they enter my system. Both my husband and I did this. I was also given several antioxidants to boost my immune system before and during my cruise. I also began a Vitamin C regiment. Again, I had my pre- and pro-biotics, digestive enzymes and of course my Dramamine and sea wrist bands for motion sickness. Lidoderm patches in place.

I did all this before I even got on the cruise ship! We flew in one day early to avoid any travel stress and to recuperate from traveling. I utilized the pre-boarding on the flight so I could get the second row from the front close to the restroom. We overnighted in a handicapped accessible hotel room that had grab bars in the tub. We also rented a larger SUV that I could easily get in and out of and would be a comfortable ride for the one hour trip to the cruise port.

Months in advance, I pre-selected a cabin that was mid-ship and close to an elevator. I had a balcony cabin so that I could get fresh air any time I needed in case I started feeling motion sick. I took hand sanitizer with me and used it religiously onboard since Norovirus is the one communal sickness that can spread quickly onboard a ship without proper hygiene. It is also available at the entrances to all restaurants on board. I took the required supplements before and after my meals and I didn't have any stomach problems.

While on board, we planned our activities in one area of the ship at specific times or around the ship's entertainment to lessen how much walking I had to do. I was also very mindful of slippery areas near the pool and used my husband's arm for support to avoid slipping. I witnessed two people fall on board; I was determined NOT to be one of them.

The biggest thing I learned was to rest when my body was tired. The Caribbean sun is hot and exhausting. I hydrated well and rested often. I was very happy my experience re-entering the world of cruising went pretty smoothly and I was able to celebrate another travel milestone of cruising with pain. Stay tuned for my next article – Touring with Pain.



*Lisa Marie Price, Acupuncturist, discusses the benefits of acupuncture with a participant.*

*(continued from page 5)*

The event was very positive. Participants were engaged and eager to experience and learn. There was laughter, sharing of stories and honest discussions. Our practitioners and other members who volunteered felt as if they provided a real service to individuals with chronic pain. Individuals who stopped by Hope Connections for other activities found themselves drawn to the event and took advantage of one or two sessions and pick up resources. One practitioner from Virginia, who belongs to a network in Virginia, discussed joining the Coalition and also encouraging members of his network to join the Coalition. Other feedback we received included:

*"Wonderful program"*

*"Great overall, relaxed and great learning opportunity"*

*"Exchange amongst participants as this is a very knowledgeable group of attendees"*

*"So happy I tried acupuncture again"*

The next NCCPPP general session for practitioners and professionals engaged in work on behalf of individuals with chronic pain will take place on 19 June from 12:00 pm (noon) to 1:30 pm at the

Pain Connection Office, 12320 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD. Please log on to the NCCPPP website at [www.nccppp.org](http://www.nccppp.org) for more information. This session will feature networking and a presentation and discussion by addiction psychiatrist Dr. George Kolodner. We also encourage you to learn who the NCCPPP is and consider joining your colleagues in our efforts to meet the needs of individuals with chronic pain and their families.

## 10 Ways to Tame the Beast

*by Mary Beth—2nd prize winner for our "Write Something to Share" contest*

We are pain warriors. Each day we wrestle with the beast called chronic pain. Here are some of the tools I use to tame it—perhaps they will be helpful to you as well.

### 1. Pain Support Group

If you can find a local group, why not give it a try? It can really help you feel understood, to surround yourself with those who know what it's like to juggle the demands that pain throws at you.

### 2. Meditate daily

This habit helps manage the stress and anxiety that often accompany chronic illness. Having time to quiet your mind can restore your inner peace.

### 3. Stretching/Physical therapy

Quite frankly, "just do it."

### 4. Journaling/Counselor

Having a way to express yourself as you work through challenges is very beneficial. Whether it be a therapist,

writing in a notebook, or both, you can work through the emotional struggles of living with pain.

### 5. Self-care

Treat yourself with loving-kindness. Your quality of life will improve when you pay attention to your own needs.

### 6. Pacing

Planning your week really helps. For example, when you schedule a big outing, plan to rest the day before and the day after your event.

### 7. Supportive friends

It's a true gift to have a friend you can call when you need to vent. Bonus empathy points if the friend has a chronic illness.

### 8. Gratitude

When life is the most challenging, practicing gratitude can provide a broader perspective. One way to do this: write down 5 things you are grateful for each day. Extra credit: Make 3 of the items something you admire about yourself that you observed that day.

### 9. Volunteer

If you have an opportunity, it really lifts your spirit to help someone else out. You may even find something that you love to do.

### 10. Music/art

Any form of art can speak to your soul. Whether you're creating or passively enjoying it, art can be uplifting.

Finally—

*Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.*

—Arthur Ashe

*Thanks to Mary Beth for her coping suggestions. Mary Beth writes that she has a chronic pain disorder, Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS/RSD), for 12 years. She lives in Maryland with her two teenagers and supportive husband. Mary Beth is a Pain Connection member.*

## Membership

**We Need You!** Chronic pain is still a new and developing field in medicine and mental health.

**We Need You!** There still is not enough awareness by the public to try and solve this debilitating problem.

**We Need You!** Chronic pain is not pressing on the minds of government, foundations and private donors.

**We Need You!** In order to support and further develop out programs.

**Take a Stand!** Help solve this pressing problem, become a member and grow with us!

### Join Pain Connection Today!!!

- Your payment of a \$40.00 annual membership fee may be made in the following ways:
- Credit card on-line through our secure server.
- Check mailed to Pain Connection with completed application form.
- Fax your completed application and credit card information to 301-231-6668.
- Through Network For Good and Razoo which are secure services. Please also send in an application form for our records.

Your membership benefits include:

- DISCOUNTS of up to 25% with local wellness providers
- DISCOUNTS on our trainings, groups, symposiums and DVDs
- Monthly notices of support group meetings and the Professional Speaker Series by mail, email and/or phone call
- Chronic Pain resources
- Pain Connection's newsletter
- Contact information for your local support leader (on request)
- Health care practitioner referral list for your geographic area (on request)

## Open Hand: My Favorite Mudra

*By Kim Thompson*

Mudras are positions or gestures of the hands. In yoga and various meditation traditions, mudras are used to settle the mind and calm the emotions. You may have seen statues of the Buddha or Asian deities with hands in very deliberate shapes. To the best of my knowledge, what I am going to share with you here is not a classical, traditional mudra. (If you know it and know a traditional name for it, please tell us in a comment.) I think of it as "Open Hand."

Try this: Don't move your hands. Pause for a moment to observe them.

Are your fingers curled or straight? Are the palms of your hands closed or open? Where are your thumbs in relation to your fingers?

Also take a moment to check in with other parts of you: What are tension levels like in your jaw, neck and shoulders? in your arms? What is the tempo and depth of your breathing? (This one is really hard for me—as soon as I pay attention to my breathing, I change it. Try not to. Go for a sense of how you have been breathing for the last few minutes.)

Now try this: Get something flat: a clipboard, a book, a firm pillow. If you don't have anything handy that you can set on your lap, then sit in front of a table. Place one or both hands palm down on the flat surface so that the fingers and thumbs are easily straight. Allow the heel of your hand to rest on the surface and position yourself so that your wrists are comfortably straight. Just sit like this for several breaths and notice what happens.

Check in with the level of muscular tension in your forearms. Check in with your jaw, neck and shoulders. Check



in with the tempo and depth of your breath. Any changes?

This simple opening of the hand has been profound for me. If I sit with my hands resting on a flat surface, I feel my shoulders and forearms soften. My breathing becomes easier and more complete. I feel more restful all over. The amount of change has surprised me. Typically, my hands at rest are softly curled. They are not clenched and I don't experience them as being especially tense. Yet deliberately opening them has been significant.

If you don't notice anything, that's fine. This particular activity might not be very meaningful for you. It is also possible that you are not in the habit of paying attention or experimenting in this way. In this case, changes might happen more slowly and take more time to percolate into your awareness. There's no hurry. Sometimes I rest my hands on something flat when I am watching television, when someone else is driving, when I am listening to another person speak. There are plenty of opportunities to play.

In standing, the action is a little different, but the principle is the same: opening the hands without adding



tension. Stand up and allow your arms to hang comfortably at your sides. Are your fingers curled? If you are really clenching into fists, we've got some work ahead of us.

Try this: Imagine tying puppet strings to the tip of each finger and each thumb. Take your time. I'll wait. Now, imagine attaching a weight to each puppet string. Allow these weighted puppet strings to gently and effortlessly pull down on your fingertips. I can't see you so I'll have to guess. My guess is that one of two things is happening. Most likely, you are deliberately straightening and extending your fingers through the use of muscular tension. If this is true, you will feel contraction in the muscles of your hands and forearms. You will also think this is a dumb idea. It is. This is not what we're after.

We want the other possibility—in which the muscles in your hands relax as though in response to the gentle pulling action of weights tied to your fingertips. In this scenario, you won't feel your muscles working. However, you may have to keep re-engaging your imagination on this mission to keep up the sensation. That's fine.

Stand still for several breaths. Notice what happens to the tempo and depth of your breathing. Notice what happens to the tension level in your arms, shoulders and neck. Notice your spine, hips, legs and feet. Do you feel more centered or grounded?

Go for a walk and notice the difference in your experience when you walk with your fingers curled and when you walk with open hands. How do your arms swing? Where do your eyes tend to look? What's going on with your mind and emotions?

My students have reported feeling more grounded, more stable, and more fluid when they walk with open hands. They have also reported that walking with

open hands calms their minds; reducing any tendency to ruminate.

You can experiment: try wearing wrist weights while standing and/or walking with open hands. What is your balance like when you stand on one foot with fingers curled? Any increase in steadiness when your hands are open and your fingertips are pulled by imaginary weights? Try playing along the diagonal—if you tend to wobble while standing on your right foot, then stand on your right foot while really extending through the open fingers of your left hand.

I love little things like this. Our hands are busy so much of the time. Try using a clipboard, book or lap desk to support your open hands the next time you watch TV or a movie. Try standing with open hands the next time you wait in line at a store. You might even take a break from the rush and deliberately choose a longer, slower line.

You can repeat this now and then throughout the day. Don't be concerned with changing or correcting yourself, just become acquainted with what you do. Of all the myriad possibilities, what shapes do your hands take most often?

Standing with open hands can be especially nice to do in a beautiful nature spot—a beach, a forest, a mountain view. However, the world is always around us and it is always a benefit to be present. You can stand in front of a window, in front of a beautiful painting. You can stand in open presence in a mall or at an airport and witness the passersby.

Gently check in with your hands throughout your daily activities. Do your hands tend to be clenched? curled? open? Since I have begun to play this way, I have noticed that my hand gestures are becoming more open. Perhaps my autopilot has taken note of the positive effects of open hand and is

looking for more opportunities to tap into these benefits.

What about you?

What shapes do your hands habitually take at rest?

If you play with Open Hand, are there any observations you'd like to share?

*Credit Where It's Due: This exploration was inspired by the Reflexes: Prisons or Portals training led by Jaimen McMillan and Jane Swain. Jaimen used the image of puppet strings pulling on the fingers. I expanded the idea to rest the hand on flat surfaces out of a desire to move out of the Palmar Grasp.*

## **Pain Connection Welcomes Irene I. Lukoff—Volunteer Grant Writer**



Irene has more than 30 years of fundraising and management experience in health care, higher education, and arts and culture—spanning five capital campaigns ranging from \$4 million to over \$4 billion. Most notably, this includes 26 years at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) with stints at its School of Arts and Sciences, the Wharton School, and Penn Medicine.

Most recently, Irene served as Vice President and Campaign Director for MedStar Washington Hospital Center Foundation. There, she provided

leadership in building the philanthropy infrastructure for the cardiovascular service line across a ten-hospital system. By recruiting, training, and working with physician and surgeon philanthropy champions, she expanded the grateful patient prospect base in the quiet phase of the \$30 million capital campaign for MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute.

Among her major accomplishments, is the successful management of financial and advancement operations for the Chemical Heritage Foundation—from its days as a fledgling, interdisciplinary Center at Penn—to what has become the premier resource for the study of the chemical and life sciences and related industries. Irene was a key member of the Team that engineered the Foundation's transformation and move to self-sufficiency, including: raising the \$6 million to match the Othmer Challenge through the Unique Partnership Campaign; the purchase and renovation of a new building at Independence National Historical Park; and securing the \$100 million bequest from the estate of Donald F. Othmer.

Irene holds a BA from Brown University, an MA in museum studies from George Washington University, and an MS in higher education from the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education. Her academic interests focused on the proliferation and evolution of Organized Research Units (ORUs) in response to the rapidly expanding research agenda and federally dominated research economy during the post World War II era.

## **New Volunteers Always Welcome**

New volunteers are welcome and are needed at Pain Connection. We are sure that there are many interested and talented out there who would be willing to help the organization. Areas of interest are working with the media, writing grants, fundraising activities, manning a table at health fairs to name a few. If interested in serving the organization, please contact Gwenn Herman at [gwenn@painconnection.org](mailto:gwenn@painconnection.org).

### ***Board Members wanted!***

Become a member of Pain Connection's Board which would involve helping to make decisions about policy, mission and programs. These are great opportunities to build your portfolio while helping people with chronic pain. Previous experience required.

### ***Public Relations and Marketing***

Help to develop public relations plan, convey story of our programs, develop PSA's, marketing strategy to raise awareness of the organization in the community, social media and help with annual report.

### ***Computing and Technology***

Help keep our computers up to date so we can serve our community.

### ***Fundraiser/Grantwriter***

Solicit major donations, researching donor bases and opportunities and write grants to help with sustainability.

## **Volunteer Thank You's!!!**

Alison Bennett, Paula Mintzies, Mieke Brown, Teresa Shaffer, Nikki Richman, Kim Thompson, Sherry Hutchinson, Lee Blank, Dr. Linda Kuserk, PT, Linda Berg Cross, PhD, Rachel Noble Benner, Cordelia Goldstein, Neil Goldstein,

Sharon Barrett, Malcolm Herman, Elsie Ferguson, Frances Stanford, and Irene Lukoff.

## **Ways to Support Pain Connection**

### ***Rockville Rewards***

100% of the card purchase price goes back to Pain Connection! Cards are on sale now for \$15 online and through our local non-profit partners. With cards valid for discounts around town from September 1, 2014 until August 31, 2015 cardholders still have plenty of time to enjoy discounts. When you use your Rockville Rewards card for a massage at Massage you will save \$15 on your first 75-minute session! There are also over a 100 businesses offering discounts, so you'll save the purchase price many times over while supporting your favorite local non-profit, Pain Connection. View more details at <http://www.rockvillerewards.com/>. Buy your card at <http://www.pain-connection.org/updates/rockvillerewards.html>.



### ***Direct donations***

A donation to Pain Connection makes a wonderful gift for you to send to your friends and family. It's tax deductible for you, and your friends and members of your family will know that the gift comes straight from the heart. Send your gift donation and donations for your friends and family to Pain Connection at 12320 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852.

## Combined Federal Campaign Designation

Our Combined Federal Campaign designation is #62705. Please designate us on your donor card at work or when making a donation! Also, tell your co-workers, family, friends and neighbors.



## Donate your car to Pain Connection

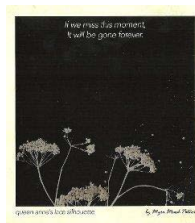
Pain Connection has made arrangements with a company called CARS (Charitable Auto Resources) to enable us to accept donations of vehicles in an efficient and cost effective manner. If you have a vehicle (car, truck, RV, boat, motorcycle, or other vehicle) you no longer want or need, please consider donating it to Pain Connection. To learn more, call CARS at 877-537-5277.



## Give a gift!

### Nature Print Cards

Original Nature Print Cards created by local artist Myra Mensh Patner are now on sale. Patner donated these brilliantly colored cards to Pain Connection as a fundraiser to support its free programs.



One can buy them all year round as gifts or use them yourself. One might even want to frame them—people often do. Printed directly from ferns, Queen Anne's Lace, hickory and oak leaves and more, the intensely colored cards are sure to be a balm for anyone you care about.

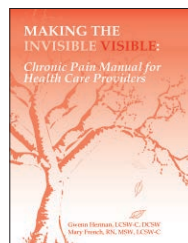
For single cards: \$3.00 plus \$0.46 shipping per card and 6% MD sales tax (if applicable). For a special package of 4

cards: \$10 plus \$1.50 shipping and 6% MD sales tax (if applicable).

We will send the cards directly to you as soon as we receive your order. To see all eight different notecards, go to [www.pain-connection.org/updates/cards.html](http://www.pain-connection.org/updates/cards.html).

## Making the Invisible Visible: A Chronic Pain Manual for Health Care Providers

Pain Connection's *Making the Invisible Visible: A Chronic Pain Manual for Health Care Providers* is a comprehensive and unique publication that contains up-to-date information on chronic pain, exercises and handouts for developing coping skills and strategies, and insights and experiences of chronic pain sufferers and their families.



Written by Gwenn Herman and Mary French, who each have more than 25 years of experience as health providers and also live with chronic pain, the 262-page manual examines a wide range of topics including:

- Myths and misconceptions about chronic pain clients
- Psychosocial effects of chronic pain
- Pain Connection's Support Group Model
- Complementary and alternative treatments

*Ms. Herman's and Ms. French's firsthand exposure to the difficulties of getting healthcare providers to properly recognize, diagnose and treat chronic pain makes this an excellent resource for both professionals and patients.*

Dr. Gary Kaplan, Founder and Medical Director of The Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine

The book is \$25.00, plus \$5.00 shipping and handling fees plus tax. To order,

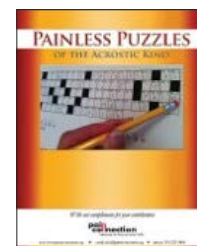
go to [www.painconnection.org](http://www.painconnection.org) or call 301-231-0008.

**Pain Awareness Month Symposium, From Research to Clinical Practice**  
Pain Connection's *Pain Awareness Month Symposium, From Research to Clinical Practice* DVDs are still available. If you missed the symposium you can see presentations by Dr. Gary Kaplan, Osteopath, Pain Specialist, Kaplan Clinic, "Treating Depression and Chronic Pain" and Dr. Alan Pocinki, Internist, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFIDS) Specialist, "Developing an Individualized Treatment Plan for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome".

Cost for both DVDs: \$30 non-member \$25 member. For one DVD: \$20 nonmember \$15 member.

## Painless Puzzles, Volume 2

For donations of \$25 or more, donors will receive a free gift of the second volume of *Painless Puzzles of The Acrostic Kind*, created by Pain Connection Board member Neil Goldstein. The book contains 52 acrostic puzzles originally published by the Tribune Media syndicate and edited by the Quote-Acrostic guru Charles Preston. Donation forms are available from our website [www.painconnection.org](http://www.painconnection.org). Donate now and receive the book as our thanks!





## Intern | Volunteer Needed for September—Job Description

There are over 100 million adult Americans (not including children or the military) suffering from pain and who are not receiving adequate treatment. Pain Connection-Chronic Pain Outreach Center, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not for profit human service agency working since 1999 to empower people with chronic pain and improve their quality of life, decrease their sense of isolation and to take a more active role in their treatment. Pain Connection does this by providing information, psychosocial support, coping skills and training to people with chronic pain, their families and health care providers. Services include support groups, speakers' series, specialized classes, workshops and conferences for healthcare professionals.

Pain Connection needs your help to assist the Executive Director with the administration of the day-to-day operations of the office functions and duties.

### Main job tasks and responsibilities

- Data entry, research and statistics
- Phone calls
- Photocopying, scanning and faxing
- Drafting, editing documents, including articles for the monthly newsletter
- Assisting in webinars, conferences
- Website updates
- Scheduling
- Help with fund raising and special events
- Develop media coverage-radio, TV, newspaper ads

### What you can learn

- Interaction with clients
- Marketing of programs
- Proposal writing and research
- Writing for newsletter/website, and advertising

### Education and experience

- Knowledge of software like MS Office
- Proficient in use of email and internet
- Accurate keyboard skills
- Excellent writing skills
- Fluency in Spanish a plus

### Details

- 10-20 hours per week

If you are interested in applying, please send a resume to: [info@painconnection.org](mailto:info@painconnection.org) or Pain Connection, 12320 Parklawn Drive, Suite 210, Rockville, MD 20852.

There are 100 million Americans suffering from chronic pain who are not receiving the treatment they need. Many fall between the cracks in their own private health insurance, workman's compensation, and disability benefits. Others are helpless because of a lack of insurance.

Pain Connection's mission is to help people with chronic pain improve their quality of life, decrease their sense of isolation and take a more active role in their treatment. We do this by providing information, psychosocial support, skills-building and training to people with chronic pain, their families and health care providers.

Pain Connection is a 501(c)(3) human health service agency and was incorporated in 1999.

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**PAIN CONNECTION®**  
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[www.painconnection.org](http://www.painconnection.org)

**Executive Director and Founder**  
Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C, DCSW

**Board of Directors**  
President: Sharon Barrett, DrPH, MS  
Vice President: Kim Thompson, BA  
Secretary: Alison Bennett, M.Ed.  
Treasurer: Frances Stanford, CPA  
Director: Malcolm Herman, MA, Esq  
Director: Neil Goldstein, MA  
Director: Elsie Ferguson, PhD  
Director: Michael Sitar, PhD

**Honorary Board Members**  
Mary French, RN, LCSW-C  
Gary Kaplan, MD  
Senator Jamie R. Raskin