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## **December 2022 Newsletter**

**Offering support, care, and hope...*right here at home!***

We are continuing to work in the office to make sure the telephone calls, emails, and office needs are being handled. If you are in need of an in person meeting, please call the office and we will be glad to make arrangements to meet with you. It is important to us that we provide up-to-date information on our website and Facebook page for you.

To receive newsletters, send your email address to: [officemanager@tristatems.org](mailto:officemanager@tristatems.org)

**The mission of the Tri-State Multiple Sclerosis Association  
is to enhance the quality of life for individuals living with MS & their families in  
Southern IN, Southern IL & Western KY**

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**Dear TSMSA Friends, Seasons Greetings!**

**The Tri-State Multiple Sclerosis Association  
would like to wish you and your family  
great happiness, wonderful memories, and much joy  
during this holiday season.**

**During this season of giving, we ask that you consider  
a gift to the Tri-State MS Association.**

**While we understand there are many worthy charitable organizations,  
we hope that the Tri-State MS Association is at the top of your list!**

**Your generous gift to our association  
will impact the thousands living with multiple sclerosis in the tri-state.**

**Thank you for your continued support of the TSMSA.**

**We could not do what we do without you!**

**Happy Holidays! Debbie, Linda, Susan, & the TSMSA Board of Directors**



***Make your gift by December 31<sup>st</sup> to receive a 2022 tax deduction!***

## **Take Care of Yourself for Christmas**

**Susan Reynolds RN, MSCN**

It's that time of year again! It's time for the all of the holiday hustle and bustle that makes even healthy people have a hard time coping. As a person with MS, I usually dread the fatigue I know I will always feel when the holidays are over. I have had MS for 32 years, and I handle the holiday much better now that I am older, and I'm better at saying "no".

I always look forward to getting together with family and friends this time of year, but some people with MS can become overwhelmed with all of the holiday expectations. One of the best things you can do for yourself this time of year is: relax your expectations. If your MS is acting up make sure to take care of yourself first. Just say "no" to over-scheduling at Christmas time.

Start your holidays with a "to do" list. If possible, delegate as much of the running as you can. Shop online. Don't wrap presents, put them in the gift bags that are so popular. Keep gift giving simple by buying gift cards or giving cash. Acknowledge your MS and ask for help. People are not necessarily aware of your symptoms and may be too distracted to notice, especially since people with MS have invisible symptoms.

Manage logistics amid the holiday bustle. That adorable dog running in excitement around everyone's feet may trip an unsteady person. If you like to cook, but are unsteady by the stove, struggle with chopping, or have numbness in your hands that makes handling hot dishes dangerous, read the recipes out loud to your helpers instead of cooking, chopping, and doing things that can hurt you. Family members should consider that a new environment — like a relative's house — can be challenging. Remove rugs or clutter for anyone with gait problems.

Heat sensitivity is an ongoing problem for MS patients. For example, remind family and friends that the house should not be too warm. And MS patients should use a cooling vest. Also, remember that baking or cooking over a hot stove will worsen MS symptoms.

The holidays can trigger a range of feelings, and having MS can make a person more likely to experience depression. Many of us with MS have to cancel some activities because we are too exhausted. Not only does that make us feel like we are missing out, but it also makes us feel alone. Many of us are stuck at home, and it is not easy knowing that others are out being merry while we are unable to leave the house. MS also has a tendency to interfere with relationships, causing many of us to have very few or possibly no other people with whom to celebrate. Loneliness can be a way of life for many people with MS. The holidays, which emphasize celebrating with others, really ratchet up our feelings of isolation.

Tell your family how much you love them if you have to miss out. The actual holidays and events can bring along unwanted stress. Ask them if a smaller 'get together' is possible before or after Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, or whatever holiday you celebrate. If not, then discuss other options.

When we live alone with MS it can be depressing, but it does not have to be. There are a lot of us who live alone and can still enjoy the holidays in our own way. Find out who else is alone and set up a Zoom call or FaceTime to celebrate. Remember, you're not alone.

Above all, please remember to continue taking your disease modifying therapy during the holidays. Many MS patients skip a day or two during the holidays because they are too tired to take a shot or take a pill. It is very important to keep up the regime that you always do during the rest of the year. Don't skip doses!

Do whatever it is you do to keep yourself connected spiritually during the holidays. Remember the reason for the season! Be grateful for what you have. Research shows that people who practice gratitude have more energy and optimism. They are less bothered by everyday hassles, are more resilient in the face of stress, have better health, and suffer less depression than the rest of us. The holidays are a great time to aspire to that state of mind.



### *Susan's Highlights*

I would like to highlight resources for individuals living with multiple sclerosis and their families. The Tri-State MS Association is a great local resource, but it is important that we continue to educate ourselves and utilize all current information.

#### **The following is information about MSAA:**

**The Multiple Sclerosis Association of America (MSAA)** is a leading resource for the entire MS community, improving lives through vital services and support.

**MSAA** is a national, nonprofit organization founded in 1970. The organization is dedicated to improving lives through ongoing support and direct services to individuals with MS, their families, and their care partners.

MSAA's free programs and services include the following:

- Helpline and online chat with MSAA's trained specialists
- Safety and mobility equipment products
- Cooling vests and accessories for heat-sensitive individuals
- Educational programs led by top healthcare professionals
- MRI Access Program for qualified individuals who are uninsured, under-insured, or financially unable to pay for an MRI to help diagnose MS or evaluate disease progression
- Award-winning educational videos, webinars, and publications, including MSAA's magazine, *The Motivator*
- "My MSAA Community" peer-to-peer online forum
- "MS Conversations" blog featuring timely discussions relevant to the MS community
- Podcast episodes covering a range of topics

MSAA also offers tools to help manage the ever-changing course of multiple sclerosis. These tools are part of their Shared Management philosophy, involving education, training, and the use of technology to promote healthy outcomes. Shared Management is a concept whereby patients and healthcare providers work together to achieve the best possible health outcomes for the patient. MSAA's Shared-Management tools include a **S.E.A.R.C.H.<sup>TM</sup> program** to assist the MS community with learning about different treatment choices; **My MS Manager<sup>TM</sup>** a mobile phone app to help manage and track disease activity; and a resource database, **My MS Resource Locator®**.

Visit the MSAA website, [www.mysaa.com](http://www.mysaa.com), to learn more about multiple sclerosis, to understand how the organization serves as a leading resource for the MS community, and to find out how you can be a part of their mission of Improving Lives Today!

MSAA publishes a national magazine, *The Motivator*. This full-color publication provides valuable information and support to individuals with multiple sclerosis, their care partners, family members, and medical professionals.

*The Motivator* is distributed twice per year – early spring and early fall. To be added to *The Motivator* mailing list call 1-800-532-7667.

MSAA provides a toll-free Helpline that allows individuals with MS, family members, care partners, and friends to speak directly with one of MSAA's experienced specialists. These trained and compassionate individuals have social services and/or counseling background.

MSAA's Helpline may be reached several ways:

Call **(800) 532-7667, extension 154** or email [MSquestions@mysaa.org](mailto:MSquestions@mysaa.org). Helpline hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM, Eastern Time. To reach a Spanish-speaking Client Services Specialist, call (800) 532-7667, extension 131.

To access MSAA's "What's New in MS Research" articles go to [www.mysaa.org](http://www.mysaa.org) and click on "publications."

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### **TSMSA Equipment Closet**

- ➔ A **power wheelchair** has been donated to the TSMSA. If you need this item, please call the office at 812-423-5943 to make arrangements to pick it up.
- ➔ An **electric hospital bed** has been donated to the TSMSA. If you need this item, please call the office at 812-423-5943 to make arrangements to pick it up.

