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## **January 2023 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.

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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*This past article from our previous Social Worker, Nicole, is worth repeating.*

### **What is your resolution for 2023?**

New Year's Day is a time to gather with friends and family to ring in the beginning of a new year. For centuries, the New Year's celebration happened on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Have you ever stopped and wondered how the New Year's celebration originated? Here is a little history on its origination and how it has changed over the years.

The story of New Year's resolutions goes back to before 46 B.C. Janus, a mythical king in early Rome was placed at the head of the calendar. Janus became the symbol of New Years' resolutions because he had two faces, one to look back on the past events of the year and one to look forward to the upcoming year. Romans looked to Janus for forgiveness from enemies and began the tradition of exchanging gifts on New Year's.

In ancient years, the calendar was tampered with, and the day that New Year's was celebrated was changed from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 25<sup>th</sup> and then to March 25<sup>th</sup>. In 46 B.C. Julius Caesar developed a more accurate calendar to reflect the seasons, and New Year's was celebrated on January 1<sup>st</sup> again.

Resolution means the act, operation, or process of resolving. Every year people make lists of resolutions and seem to forget about them after a week or two pass. Most resolutions are about losing weight and saving money. I believe that it is important to look back at the past year and reflect on how truly blessed we have been and how to make the next year even better.

*My resolution: Find purpose in every day and remember all blessing, past, present and future.*

Another year has just blown by! Now is the time to make a resolution to be healthy in the New Year. For people with MS, being healthy means more than just taking your disease modifying therapy. It is also important to get exercise, participate in disease prevention by getting regular check-ups, take care of your personal relationships, enjoy fulfilling work and leisure activities, and have a satisfying spiritual life. Caregivers should also take care of their own health. It is impossible to take care of someone else if you have not first taken care of yourself.

Here are some things you can do in the coming year to increase your life expectancy and to make you healthier overall.

**Eat well:** Eat a balanced diet of whole grains, vegetables, fruits and proteins. Increase the quantity of vegetables you eat, and decrease the sugar and processed foods.

**Exercise:** Aerobic activity for 30 to 45 minutes every day is a good goal. If you have a disability that prevents this, ask your neurologist refer you to a physical therapist that can help you find ways to build your muscles, improve balance, and move more efficiently.

**Exercise your Brain:** Give your brain a daily workout to preserve memory and sharpness. Try doing puzzles and playing memory games. Read books and newspapers. Be engaged as much as possible in the world around you.

**Socialize:** Getting out, being with other people is what life is all about. Socializing improves your mood and protects your brain from cognitive decline. Seek help from your doctor if you are depressed. You might need an anti-depressant.

**Don't Stress:** A certain amount of stress is good for you, but too much stress can be bad. Learn and practice relaxation techniques every day. Prepare ahead of time for stressful situations by having back-up plans and emergency funds.

**Take care of your MS:** Find a neurologist that you like and can see on a long-term basis. Preferably, find a neurologist that is knowledgeable about MS and the many therapies available. Take your disease modifying therapy as it is prescribed.

**Spirituality:** Develop your beliefs about the meaning of life with organized religion or in other ways. Find a way to look beyond yourself and develop a sense of purpose and hope. Some people find spirituality in religion, others through music, art, or appreciation of nature.

**Mental Health:** The last two years have been very stressful because of the pandemic. Many people lost family members and friends. It is very important to take care of your mental health as well as your physical health.

Some people have a continued fear of infection as offices, schools, and public locations have opened up; and this winter we are experiencing a triple pandemic with Flu, Covid and RSV. Getting out of your home might not be easy. With that in mind, as you try to find a new normal, a first good step is recognizing that the pandemic is a traumatic event we collectively experienced. Then take extra care to address our needs. Finding a therapist to help you through this transition may be helpful.

**Set Goals:** You cannot change the fact that you have MS, but you can do things to improve your life. What can you do this year to improve your life? Set goals to lose weight, develop an exercise plan, join a support group, volunteer, go to church, develop a hobby, spend more alone time, or read more. Find something to look forward to as you get older. Make plans! Having something to look forward to makes you feel good, and it might add an “atmosphere of growth” to your life because the future seems bright.

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### **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. In addition, it is important that we continue to educate ourselves and utilize all current information.

**Can Do MS** is a national nonprofit organization that delivers health & wellness programs on exercise, nutrition, symptom management, and more to help families living with MS thrive.

Each month, a variety of live programs and webinars are offered to help people living with MS and their support partners build connections, learn from healthcare professionals, and address their own unique challenges. Topics include nutrition, exercise, cognition, fatigue, relationships, family planning, employment, and more!

The following are some of the programs offered by Can Do MS free of charge. You can register for these programs at [cando-ms.org](http://cando-ms.org).

**MS Moves** - Virtual exercise program with Mandy

**Webinar Wednesdays** - Practical information on MS topics (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month)

**Jumpstart** – 2-hour virtual sessions online

**Take Charge** – 2-day virtual program for people with MS

**Support Partners** - Online videos for care partners of MSers, available to view any time

**Can Do** – 3-day onsite (in Colorado) lifestyle program offered free of charge to people with MS and their care partner.

**Coaching** – 4-part virtual group sessions

**Your Questions Answered** – One-hour virtual questions and answers with MS Professionals

**Online Library** - Covers many questions related to MS

### **Healthcare Assistance Grant from Multiple Sclerosis Foundation**

The MS Focus Healthcare Assistance Grant assists uninsured individuals with the cost of visiting their MS specialist as well as dental assistance. The grant, which can pay for one visit and one follow-up, is designed to assist those already diagnosed with MS who may need a visit to their treating physician to renew a prescription or handle other important needs.

Applicants give MS Focus staff authorization to negotiate costs directly with the provider, and the fee is paid directly to the doctor. For more information, call 1- 888-MS Focus (1-888-673-6287) or email [support@msfocus.org](mailto:support@msfocus.org).



## Free Smoke Alarms

The Red Cross has a Free Smoke Alarm program!



They will furnish and arrange to come install them for you.

Contact your local Red Cross office for details.  
Evansville 812-471-7200 Owensboro 270-683-2438

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## An Opportunity to Help with your Finances 2023!

Would you be interested in attending a free class on gaining control of your finances? Let us help you learn to stretch your dollars. If so, contact the TSMSA office: 812-423-5943, and let us know if you would be interested in attending a small group class or a one-on-one meeting with **BEN JOERGENS** | FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT DIR, VP, ONB

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## Catholic Charities offers the Neighbor to Neighbor program,

a free faith-based life-skills-education program to help families move toward self-sufficiency. The program teaches goal-setting for finance and health, and other life-skills. Upon successful completion, participants earn assistance with rent, utilities or other appropriate expenses.

Call Catholic Charities at 812-423-5456 today for information or to sign up for the program!

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Judy D. would like to give a Shout Out to the FREE ACExercise group exercise class with UE Doctor of Physical Therapy students. Judy feels it has made a difference for her! Call Emma 812-968-4728 or Rachel 1-618-708-1208 for details. Free transportation offered!

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United Way is another great resource for services. Just dial 211!

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## **AARP Tax Aid Sites to Offer Free Tax Preparation**

**\*Coming Soon\*** AARP's Tax Aid Program provides in person and virtual tax assistance for taxpayers over 50 or who have low-to-moderate income. You don't have to be an AARP member to receive assistance. The program is staffed by trained volunteers who must complete training and pass IRS certification annually. AARP's website will be updated in time for the 2023 tax season. Information on the website will include tax preparation locations, and phone numbers for you to schedule an appointment.