

Playing Golf Alleviates Symptoms for Chicago Man with Parkinson's Disease

Topgolf donates \$10,000 to the Parkinson's Foundation to support clinical research, in honor of World Parkinson's Day

DALLAS, April 11, 2017 [/PRNewswire/](#) -- When 61-year-old Gary Smith was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD) in 2008, he immediately began searching for ways to manage his symptoms. When Smith began playing at [Topgolf](#)[®] in Naperville, Ill. multiple times a week, he quickly noticed that his stiffness lessened and his health improved. In honor of Smith and World Parkinson's Day, Topgolf today announced it will donate \$10,000 to the [Parkinson's Foundation](#) to support clinical research.

"We applaud Topgolf for helping raise awareness about the benefits of exercise like golf for people with PD," said Leilani Pearl, vice president of communications at the Parkinson's Foundation. "Studies conducted by the Parkinson's Foundation have found that movement is beneficial and proven to help manage the symptoms of Parkinson's disease, improving flexibility and mobility. We encourage everyone to start exercising early to help manage the disease and improve their quality of life. It's a way that you can take control of the disease."

Affecting an estimated one million Americans and 10 million worldwide, PD is the second most common neurodegenerative disease after Alzheimer's and is the 14th leading cause of death in the United States. It is associated with progressive loss of motor control (e.g., shaking or tremor at rest and lack of facial expression) as well as non-motor symptoms (e.g., depression and anxiety). There is no cure for PD, and 60,000 new cases are diagnosed each year in the United States alone.

"I think golf has lit a fire under Gary and motivated him," said [Dr. Martha McGraw](#), Smith's physician and movement disorders specialist at [Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital](#), a Parkinson's Foundation Center of Excellence. "Golf involves a very precise balance of movement and stability and an intricate combination of large motor skills and fine motor skills. Exercising these skills on a regular basis in a complex activity like golf would certainly benefit brain function."

Smith shared his story with Topgolf while competing in a regional [Topgolf Tour](#) event. He explained

how Topgolf's climate-controlled hitting bays allow him to keep swinging year-round, despite Chicago's harsh winters. Upon learning of Smith's situation, Topgolf gifted him with a complimentary Platinum Membership and custom-designed set of Callaway golf clubs.

"I have been in tears off and on since I was told that Topgolf was giving me a Platinum Membership," Smith said. "I thank God for Topgolf every day. When my neurologist saw me, she immediately noticed the difference and told me that my 'PARscription' was to socialize and exercise. Topgolf is the perfect place for that. I don't know what to say to describe my gratitude except, 'Booyah, intense joy, appreciation and an almost Chicago Cubs-like elation.' I definitely have a new lease on life."

"By sharing Gary's story, we hope to inspire hope, strength and joy among other people living with Parkinson's disease and their families," said Topgolf Entertainment Group Co-Chairman and CEO [Erik Anderson](#). "Golf fosters positive social interaction and is a form of exercise that can be enjoyed year-round at any age. We are proud to support the Parkinson's Foundation to help fund more research on the benefits of exercise for people with PD."

Watch Gary's story at: <https://youtu.be/tC8zVkMmr7E>. To donate to the Parkinson's Foundation, visit Parkinson.org/donate, or join the conversation at #together4pd.

About the Parkinson's Foundation

The Parkinson's Foundation is working toward a world without Parkinson's disease. Formed by the merger of National Parkinson Foundation (NPF) and the Parkinson's Disease Foundation (PDF) in August 2016, the mission of the Parkinson's Foundation is to invest in promising scientific research that will end Parkinson's disease and improve the lives of people with Parkinson's and their families, through improved treatments, support and the best care. For more information, visit www.parkinson.org or www.pdf.org, or call (800) 4PD-INFO (473-4636) or (800) 457-6676.

About Topgolf

Topgolf inspires the connections that bring people together for unforgettable good times. Whether it's a date night, girls' night, family outing, happy hour, work breakfast, lunch hour or any other kind of hour, Topgolf makes socializing a sport – literally. Through the premium experience of Play, Food and Music, Topgolf is inspiring people of all ages and skill levels – even non-golfers – to come together for playful competition. Topgolf also brings interactive experiences to the community that facilitate shared moments and deep relationships through Topgolf U golf lessons, weekly leagues, The Topgolf Tour competition, KidZone parties, social and corporate team-building events, and the World Golf Tour (WGT) app. Each venue features high-tech, climate-controlled hitting bays for year-round comfort, delicious food and beverage, live events, music, hundreds of HDTVs and outstanding hospitality. With 31 venues entertaining 10.5 million Guests annually and the world's largest digital golf audience, Topgolf is creating the best times of your life both in-venue and online. To learn more about Topgolf, follow @Topgolf or visit www.topgolf.com.

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