

# pain connection

helping people with chronic pain and their families

Publication of Pain Connection – Chronic Pain Outreach Center, Inc.

WINTER/SPRING 2008

## Learn to Live Mindfully: Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction for Chronic Pain

Learn to relieve anxiety, stress, pain and chronic illness through awareness and relaxation in classes modeled on Jon Kabat-Zinn's work at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Instruction by board member, Mary French RN, MSW, LCSW-C and Amy Brush, MS, RYT.

This is an 8 week program that meets weekly for 2 hours modeled on the program founded by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D. at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Each session incorporates an experiential and cognitive component, so practice, teaching and discussion occur in each session. Throughout the 8 weeks, we engage in various practices, including the body scan, sitting meditation, walking, and yoga. An extremely gentle Hatha yoga is practiced, which consists of postures done mindfully and with awareness of the breath. People work with and modify according to any physical limitations, exploring limits but not pushing beyond them. This course provides a wonderful opportunity for practitioners to learn tools that they can utilize with clients as well as improve their own well being.

Some of the themes in class will be: How what we "take in" affects our health and well-being and Perception and Creative Responding - How you see things or don't see them will determine how you will respond to them.

The training will be held at: Maryland Nonprofit, 8720 Georgia Avenue, Suite 303, Silver Spring, Maryland. Phone: 301-565-0505 (directions only). Classes will meet on Friday afternoons from May 2 to June 20, 2008, 4:00 to 6:00 PM plus a half day session on Saturday June 7th, 2008 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM (this is optional for those not needing CEU'S).

The program cost for Pain Connection Members is \$340; for non-members: \$385, which includes: 9 class sessions, meditation CD's and Stress Reduction Program Manual from Center for Mindfulness.

This program is approved by the National Association of Social Workers (provider #886473645) for 20 continuing education contact hours. You can pay on-line or send a check payable to Pain Connection. A non-refundable deposit of \$25 is required with registration. Full payment is required one week prior to course start date.

*Sign up quickly as class size is limited.*

## Outgoing Board Member

Eileen Zagone has decided to take time off to devote to her family and work. Eileen is a massage therapist at A Calmness Within in Silver Spring. Eileen has been our artistic board member. She helped coordinate our art show and provided many hours of board leadership. We will miss her.

## New Board Member

Lee Blank, is a certified massage therapist and owner of Massage Associates, specializing in pain and stress relief. Lee also works as a volunteer at several local hospice organizations, currently with a program for Breast Cancer Survivors funded by Susan G Komen For The Cure with the Potomac Massage Training Institute. Lee has spoken at several Pain Connection Speakers Series and volunteered before becoming a board member. Prior to beginning her massage therapy career, Lee owned a computer services company for fourteen years.

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## MISSION STATEMENT

There are seventy six 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® is a 501(c)(3) not for profit human health service agency that provides monthly support groups, training, supervision, information and referrals, community outreach and education, website and newsletter. Pain Connection plans to establish an outreach center which will provide counseling, support groups and seminars, 24 hour hotline, library with Internet access, training program, case management, advocacy, and transportation for people suffering from chronic pain. These services will improve the quality of life, offer a chance for rehabilitation, decrease the sense of isolation this population experiences and enable the chronic pain sufferer to take control of his/her condition and treatment and maintain independence.



**PAIN CONNECTION®**  
**CHRONIC PAIN OUTREACH**  
**CENTER, INC.**

12251 St. James Road Potomac, MD 20854

**For Information call:**

Tel. 301-309-2444

Fax. 301-309-2336

Check our website: [www.pain-connection.org](http://www.pain-connection.org)

**Executive Director and Founder**

Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C, DCSW

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Neil Goldstein, Treasurer

Mary French, Secretary

Malcolm Herman, Director

Lee Blank, Director

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## Battling Chronic Pain

*Written by Chris Emery, October 14, 2007, Baltimore Sun, Copyright 2007.* The doctors of Johns Hopkins hospital have successfully implanted a spinal cord stimulator under the skin of a patient's back to override pain signals traveling from her brain to her body due to a fall that had left her with debilitating pain in 2001. The stimulators cost approximately \$30,000 to \$40,000 and are a last resort for severe chronic pain sufferers. Over 40,000 devices were implanted in 2007 in spite of the debate over their effectiveness, longevity of the device as well as risks associated with the surgery itself including complications from the surgery. The device works by stimulating the larger nerves of the spinal cord to prevent the pain impulse from the smaller fibers. The patient is in control of the level of stimulation through wireless electrodes which mask or cover the pain. The stimulator makes it possible for the patients to function when many were unable to function due to the severity of pain. The device must be replaced once the battery dies, which will be around seven years from placement.

*Summary written by Edith Banning*

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## From a Curiosity to a Cure

*Written by Stephanie Desmon, Baltimore Sun, October 7, 2007.* High tech and low tech meet in the Shock Trauma Unit at the University of Maryland's Center for Integrative Medicine to help alleviate the severe pain from all types of trauma. In spite of skeptics, the University has started a study on the effectiveness of acupuncture and other alternative medicines such as guided meditation to assist in the pain management of the patients and reduce the reliance on drugs and their side effects. Among the alternative treatments is Reiki, which is less studied, but according to Dr. LixingLao, the University's Director of Chinese Medicine Research has been received with a positive response from patients. The technique of passing hands over the person's body to pass their healing energy to the patient with little or no touch. Reiki (derived from Japanese word 'rei', meaning universal and 'ki' meaning life energy) was developed in the early 20th century by a Japanese physician and monk, Mikao Usui. The technique was introduced in the United States in the 1930's under much criticism. But patients who are experiencing excessive pain are open to nearly anything and with their help the technique has shown positive results to many beyond the "holistic" type thinker. Police officers, firefighters and even surgeons, who typically oppose alternative medicines, have seen enough to start requesting Reiki as part of their own pain treatment. The medical professionals at Shock Trauma have treated the physical body for years and are now seeing the benefits of incorporating the mind and spirit aspects of the human in pain treatment.

*Summary written by Edith Banning*

## CHRONIC PAIN SUPPORT GROUPS CALENDAR

### **Montgomery County Support Group Dates - 1st Thursday**

Location: Davis Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda, Maryland  
Time: 1:30 - 3 PM

### **Prince George's County Support Group Dates - 2nd Wednesday**

Location: Rexford Place, 9885 Greenbelt Road, Lanham, MD  
Time: 1:30 - 3 PM

### **Anne Arundel County Support Group Dates- 2nd Thursday**

Location: West County Library, 1325 Annapolis Rd.  
Odenton, MD 21113 Meeting room B  
Time: 1- 2:30 PM Call: 410-533-2999(Linda Girdner)

### **Howard County Support Group Dates- 3rd Monday**

Location: 8840 Stanford Blvd., Suite 4300 Columbia, MD  
Time: 1- 2:30 PM Call: 301-873-3959(Mary French)

### **Baltimore County Support Group Dates-4th Tuesday**

Location: Pikesville Library, 1301 Reistertown Road, Pikesville, MD  
Time: 3-4:30PM Call: 410-465-5499(Rosalie Kosloff)

**For Your Comfort Bring Your Pillows, Mats, Ice or Hot Packs!**

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## **Moroccan Cactus Brings Pain Relief**

Exciting hope for the future presented to the public at NIH on October 30, 2007 as part of NIH's Medicine for the Public Series. Michael J. Iadoarola, Ph.D., Chief Neuronal Gene Expression Section Pain and Neurosensory Mechanisms Branch of NIH dental and Craniofacial Research, talked about new treatment methods under development including a new pain relieving drug called Resiniferatoxin or RTX.

Resiniferatoxin has already been used successfully in animal trials with Phase I clinical trials soon to begin. This drug will be utilized for clients with advanced cancer and intractable pain. RTX is a nonaddictive, nonopioid that works by selectively killing neurons that are responsible for cancer pain while leaving other cells intact.

Amazingly this drug is a naturally occurring substance that was found in a species of a Moroccan cactus-like plant. RTX is similar to the better known drug capsaicin which is the active ingredient in hot peppers. RTX, however, is much more powerful, killing pain neurons which do not grow back.

As many pain sufferers know, opioids have dose limiting side effects and do not always provide relief of pain for those with advanced cancer or other chronic pain conditions. Finding a new treatment which provides pain relief with few complications, that is fairly easy to administer and at a low cost would provide thousands with an increased quality of life. Hopefully, RTX will have successful clinical trials with humans. Although RTX must pass rigorous testing, there is hope for all of us as new treatments gain interest within the research community.

*Review - Mary French RN, MSW, LCSW-C*

## 2008 SPEAKERS SERIES

January 28, 2008 Lisa Marie Price, L.Ac., Dipl.Ac.,  
"Treating Pain with Acupuncture"

February 25 Kim Thompson, Yoga Instructor, "Gentle  
Yoga and Chronic Pain"

March 17 Lee Blank, Massage Therapist, "Massage and  
Chronic Pain"

April 28 Mary French, RN, LCSW-C, "Lowering Your  
Pain Level with Mindfulness Meditation"

May 19 Mike Sitar, PhD, "Taking Control of Chronic  
Pain with Biofeedback"

June 23 Malcolm Herman, Attorney, "The Legal  
System, Personal Injury Cases and Pain"

September 22 Elizabeth C. Carr, Psy.D., Clinical  
Psychologist, "Shielding Your Marriage from  
the Strain of Living with Chronic Pain/ Illness"

October 27 Jan Dommerholt, PT, Pain Specialist,  
"What Makes Pain Chronic?"

November 24 Paula Mintzies, PhD, LCSW, "Learning  
to Nurture Yourself with the Relaxation  
Response and Qi Gong"

Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center,  
1000 Forest Glen Rd. Silver Spring, MD

TIME: 1.00 - 2:30 p.m

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## **Designated Founders For Contributions of \$100 and Over:**

Dr. Michael April	Mary Peterson
Wendy Norcross	David Greene
Malcolm Herman	Mary French
Neil Goldstein	Ed Moot
Micki Rosen	Geoff Manifold
Ellen Weiss & Jon Greenberg	

## ***YOU CAN NOW DONATE ONLINE !***

With Your Credit Card Go To Our Donation Page.  
Press Either The "Network For Good" Logo Which  
Is A Secure Service Or Donate Directly To Pain  
Connection On The Membership Page.

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**Our United Way National Capitol Area Campaign  
Designation Number Is # 8695. Our Combined  
Federal Campaign Number Is #62705. Please  
Designate Our Name & Number On Your Donor  
Card At Work Or When Making A Donation!  
Tell Your Family, Friends And Neighbors.**

# Members' Forum

*Pain Connection welcomes articles, poems, and drawings from members and families to provide an insight into their lives*

## CHRONIC PAIN AND SUICIDAL THOUGHTS

By Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C, DCSW

**MANY PEOPLE WITH CHRONIC PAIN THINK OF SUICIDE AND OR DEATH. IT IS THE PAIN THAT THEY WANT STOPPED, NOT DEATH. THEY JUST WANT THEIR OLD LIFE BACK.**

**THE LOSSES IN LIFE (WHICH INCLUDES EMOTIONAL PAIN) DUE TO THE PHYSICAL PAIN, CREATE DEPRESSION, ALONG WITH THE OVERWHELMING FEELING THAT THERE IS NO WAY OUT, WHICH LEADS TO DESPAIR.**

**THESE THOUGHTS, WHILE NORMAL FOR CHRONIC PAIN PEOPLE, BECOME DANGEROUS WHEN LEFT UNTREATED.**

**CHRONIC PAIN PEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO TELL OTHERS THESE THOUGHTS, FOR FEAR THEY WILL BE LABELED "CRAZY", SO THEY KEEP THESE THOUGHTS INSIDE AND SINCE THEY ARE ALREADY ISOLATED (DUE TO THE PAIN), THESE THOUGHTS BECOME STRONGER AND BEGIN TO MAKE SENSE TO THEM.**

**TALKING ABOUT THESE THOUGHTS WITH A FAMILY MEMBER, FRIEND, CLERGY, A SUPPORT GROUP, DOCTOR OR MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL IS ESSENTIAL FOR HEALING.**

**IF TALKING DOES NOT RELIEVE THESE THOUGHTS, THEN THERAPY AND MEDICATIONS MAYBE NEEDED TO HELP YOU COPE WITH THE CHANGES IN YOUR LIFE.**

**THERE ARE ALWAYS OPTIONS (WE JUST DON'T SEE OR KNOW THEM AT THE TIME) AND HOPE IN HEALING.**

**ACCEPTANCE OF OUR PHYSICAL CHANGES WILL CHANGE OUR EMOTIONAL FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS.**

**DON'T STAY ALONE IN YOUR PAIN!**

**\*\* SEEK HELP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BY CONTACTING A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL OR BY CALLING THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE AT 1-800-273-TALK**

### Hotline Numbers 1-800-SUICIDE

Montgomery County Hotline	301-738-2255	Howard County	410-531-6677
Mental Health Association	301-738-7176	Anne Arundel/Calvert/ Charles/St Mary's	1-800-422-0009
Montgomery County Crisis Center	240-777-4000	Baltimore	410-752-2272
Prince George's County	1- 800-422-0009	Glen Burnie	410-931-2214
	301-864-7161	Salisbury	410-749-4357
Prince George's Suicide Prevention	301-864-7130	Frederick	301-662-2255
DC Mental Health Access	1- 888-793-4357	North Virginia, Arlington	703-527-4077
Cancer	1- 800-433-0464	Deaf Hotline	1-800-799-4TTY (4889)