



# PANC

Parkinson Association of Northern California

UPDATE

*Building Community for the Journey -- December 2024*

## PANC SUPPORT GROUPS HERE

*"Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love." –  
Hamilton Wright Mabie*

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### About the Safire Poem

Rev. Safire Rose is a mindfulness and spiritual life coach and facilitator. She wrote this poem to honor how some of our difficult issues, fears and thoughts may be in place for years, decades even, and it can be hard to believe they will ever shift.

She writes about the power of "just letting go" of the negative thoughts, feelings, and opinions we carry with us every day. She notes how this allows us to let go some of the internal battles we fight and to better appreciate the positive things we have in everyday life.

#### *She Let Go*

*by Safire Rose*

She let go.  
She let go. Without a thought or a word, she let go.  
She let go of the fear.  
She let go of the judgments.  
She let go of the confluence of opinions swarming around her head.  
She let go of the committee of indecision within her.  
She let go of all the 'right' reasons.  
Wholly and completely, without hesitation or worry, she just let go.  
She didn't ask anyone for advice.  
She didn't read a book on how to let go.  
She didn't search the scriptures.  
She just let go.  
She let go of all of the memories that held her back.  
She let go of all of the anxiety that kept her from moving forward.  
She let go of the planning and all of the calculations about how to do it just right.  
She didn't promise to let go.  
She didn't journal about it.  
She didn't write the projected date in her Day-Timer.  
She made no public announcement and put no ad in the paper.  
She didn't check the weather report or read her daily horoscope.  
She just let go.

She didn't analyze whether she should let go.  
She didn't call her friends to discuss the matter.  
She didn't do a five-step Spiritual Mind Treatment.  
She didn't call the prayer line.  
She didn't utter one word.  
She just let go.  
No one was around when it happened.  
There was no applause or congratulations.  
No one thanked her or praised her.  
No one noticed a thing.  
Like a leaf falling from a tree, she just let go.  
There was no effort.  
There was no struggle.  
It wasn't good and it wasn't bad.  
It was what it was, and it is just that.  
In the space of letting go, she let it all be.  
A small smile came over her face.  
A light breeze blew through her.  
And the sun and the moon shone forevermore...

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## Enjoy the Holidays with PD

Living with Parkinson's disease (PD) may change your holidays, but you can still have enjoyable and meaningful celebrations. Although PD can make some holiday traditions different or challenging, it doesn't mean you can't enjoy connecting with friends and family during this festive season. By communicating your limitations, being flexible, and adjusting your expectations, you can ensure that the

holidays are still enjoyable and memorable for yourself and your loved ones.

Many PD experts have contributed to the following list of recommendations to help you experience an enjoyable holiday season:

**Communicate Your Needs** -- Let your loved ones know that connecting with them over the holidays is as important as ever to you, but PD makes it hard to plan as usual due to symptoms like difficulty walking and posture changes. Added stress can worsen symptoms, so you need to put your health first or risk worsening your condition.

**Be Flexible** -- Instead of saying "no," say "yes" to something else. If a family tradition no longer works for you, it may be time to suggest an update. If you can't travel as usual, consider offering to host and ask others to bring potluck dishes and help clean up so you don't wind up overdoing it.

If you usually host the gathering but can't do it this year, encourage someone else to host instead. They may be delighted to welcome everyone to their home for a change. If you always bring a beloved dish, pass the treasured recipe on to a loved one like you would a family heirloom, or shine the limelight on another chef in the family and invite them to bring their favorite dish.

**Plan Alternate Ways to Celebrate** -- If it's just not possible to get together in one place this year, consider using a video chat service such as Skype, Zoom, or FaceTime to have a special holiday call on a smartphone or laptop. During a video chat, you can:

- Open gifts together
- Show decorations around your houses
- Read a holiday story or poem to the children

- Sing favorite holiday songs together

**Keep Up with Regular Exercise Schedule** -- Use virtual resources to maintain your regular exercise while traveling or meet with your rehabilitation team to obtain a virtual exercise program for your travel.

**Plan Ahead** -- Allow extra time for transitions, your morning routine, eating, etc. to allow for you to feel comfortable and not rushed throughout your holiday events. If traveling, make sure you bring your hospitalization preparation kit in case of emergencies and keep extra medications on you as well.

**Stay Well Rested and Fed** -- Maintain a regular sleep schedule and take scheduled rest breaks throughout the day. Maintain a healthy PD nutrition plan when possible.

Here are some mindful tips from **Johns Hopkins Medicine** for adjusting holiday expectations:

- Accept that your holidays won't be perfect and will be different from celebrations in years past.
- Focus on what really counts. Find things to be grateful for and look for new ways to connect with loved ones.
- As you reflect on the last year, be kind to yourself and let go of any negativity. As you look forward to next year, make smaller, gradual resolutions rather than huge goals that may be difficult to achieve.

**PANC wishes you a wonderful holiday season.** We hope that our resources provide tools to help you enjoy yourself and time with loved ones. And if all else fails, let it go!

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## What's Your Parkinson's Story?

As part of our 2025 initiative to reach more people in Northern California who are impacted by Parkinson's but don't know about PANC, we would love for you to share your stories of strength and hope with others.



Your stories and testimonials about how you were helped by PANC, our support groups, conference, respite grants, etc., are incredibly impactful to others who may be hesitant to participate. You can submit stories with your name or anonymously. Many of these will be shared in our newsletters, on social media, and any place we can reach people with Parkinson's. [E-mail stories by clicking here](#) or sending to the PANC office at [panc@panctoday.org](mailto:panc@panctoday.org).

Long stories, poems, or simply a few words are all great! Everything helps. Feel free to text a video testimonial recorded on your cell phone to 916-390-7366.

Your story matters! Thank you in advance for your help that will assist many people and their families living with Parkinson's who need to hear from you.

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## Singing, Speech, and Swallow Therapies for PD

*Enjoy the video above of the North State Therapy Choir's recent season finale performance!*

PD is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder resulting from the loss of dopaminergic neurons within the basal ganglia in the brain. This loss of neurons leads to altered neural control of movement, contributing to the classic motor symptoms. However, there are other symptoms of PD that are affected by altered control of movement such as impairments in voice, respiratory control, and swallowing.

In particular, laryngeal muscle control is involved in voice production, respiratory control, and swallowing. To produce a vocal sound, the laryngeal muscles are involved in keeping the vocal folds in the midline so that vibration can occur, and a sound with volume is produced. Laryngeal muscles also play a role in respiratory control. These muscles provide active vocal fold opening to enhance airflow during inspiration and partial closing to reduce airflow during expiration. Finally, for swallow, the laryngeal muscles elevate the larynx to protect the airway and allow food or liquid to pass through the pharynx. PD can alter control of these muscle groups and may lead to complications for persons with PD.

Singing and other therapeutic speech and swallow therapies are known to be successful and fun treatments that help voice, respiratory, and swallow impairments. Singing shares many elements in common with voice production and targets the musculature involved in respiratory control and swallow. Both voice and singing use the larynx as the primary sound source with the respiratory system serving as the pressure generator for vocal fold initiation and vibration. Moreover, singing and speech and swallow therapies can enhance well-being and help with self-management of PD symptoms and eliminate social isolation.

Search for speech pathologists or click on the following resources to learn about these Parkinson's-specific organizations that are available throughout Northern California and online.

- [North State Therapy Choir](#)
- [Parkinson's Voice Project](#)
- [LSVT-Loud](#)



**OCTOBER 18, 2025**  
**Save the date for the next**  
**Annual PANC**  
**Educational Conference**

## PasstoPass -- Life Changing Hiking Adventures!



PasstoPass, is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote exercise and healthy living for people with Parkinson's disease (PD). Since 2016, PasstoPass has held multi-night backpacking trips that create awareness of PD, build confidence, cultivate community, nourish wellbeing, and minimize symptoms through exercise.

Their multi-night backpacking trips on the Pacific Crest Trail are assisted by volunteer support hikers and llamas, allowing PD hikers to carry only a small daypack. PasstoPass is funded by donations so there is no fee to participate. PD hikers take control of their disease by setting goals to exercise vigorously that help to improve and slow down the progression of their PD symptoms. A sharing of common trials and experiences on and off the trail also builds new friendships and confidence in living a life with PD to its fullest. They have 14 trips planned for 2025!

For more details and information, visit [www.passtopass.org](http://www.passtopass.org)

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## December Free PD Education & Webinars

*Wednesday, December 18 at Noon*

**Proactive Brain Health: REM Sleep Behavior Disorder, An Early Sign of PD?** with PMD Alliance

REM sleep behavior disorder (RBD) is when you physically act out your dreams unknowingly while asleep. A movement disorders specialist will talk about why RBD could indicate risk of future neurodegenerative disease.

[Info and register here](#)

*Thursday, December 19 at 9am*

**Being a Care Partner in Parkinson's: Not Another 'Self-Care' Discussion** with the Michael J Fox Foundation

Practical tips for care partners, including how to reduce the risk of burnout using small, accessible strategies and forging the kind of community that can support those who care for loved ones with PD.

[Info and register here](#)

*Friday, December 20 at Noon*

**Christmas Movie Hero's Journey** with Dr. Robert Cochrane

Attendees review clips from 12 classic Christmas movies through the lens of the Hero's Journey, and share what can make PD community members laugh, cry, and relate to others through the stories.

[Info and register here](#)

Thank you to Stanford Parkinson's Community Outreach for providing information in this section.

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\* Contact Jan Whitney [here](#) if you are interested in placing a sponsor article in the *Update*.

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