



The PD Walkers team was formed in 2008 with the hopes of raising awareness, increasing education, empowering people with PD on the benefits of exercise, and providing support to patients and family members who live with Parkinson's disease. In order to raise awareness and funds, the team participates in the IMT Des Marathons and does online fundraising to support their team's effort.

The idea to form a team came after Founder, LaDona Molander, saw her cousin Leigh run Grandma's marathon in 2005 and raise over \$1500 for Team Parkinson in her honor. LaDona then trained and fundraised with 3 friends and walked a marathon and a half in the 2007 Avon Breast Cancer walk in Long Beach, California. Then there was an article in the APDA newsletter featuring Team Town. The Town family had joined together to run in the Des Moines Marathon in honor of their father, Rick, who had been diagnosed with PD 18 years ago. She decided since she could walk, fundraise and raise awareness for a cause, she would try to bring more awareness to Parkinson's disease (PD) since she had been diagnosed with Young Onset PD at the age of 32.

The PD Walkers team became a reality, thanks in great part to Chris Burch, the Des Moines Marathon Director and Sam Erwin, previous Coordinator of the I&R Center. PD Walkers has turned out to be very successful in its goals. The 2008 PD Walkers team had 58 members and fundraised over \$6000 and the 2009 team had 53 team members and raised \$9000. The 2010 team recruited 78 members and was able to raise almost \$14,000. These funds were donated to the local IA Chapter of the APDA which supports the Iowa Information and Referral Center. The I&R Center provides support to the entire state of Iowa and parts of bordering states. It has been a support to many families and individuals who are affected by the diagnosis of PD and a resource for over 30 support groups.

LaDona's future goal is to create funding to develop exercise programs across the State of Iowa. Exercise is being promoted as the next drug for PD patients, no matter what age or stage. She believes exercise and a positive attitude have helped manage her symptoms and slow the progression of PD.

With the help of LaDona's friends, family and supporters, she is looking forward to the possibility of expanding the team to participate in other Midwest marathons, half marathons, 10Ks, 5ks, triathlons, local runs, bike races, etc. If you are interested in supporting the PD Walkers at any venue, please email LaDona at pdwalkers@q.com.