If you know someone living with MS who has a personal goal, dream or project that they would like to achieve and they just need a little bit more support to get started – now is the time to apply for an MS Go for Gold Scholarship.

There are 25 MS Go for Gold scholarships to be awarded valued up to $2,000 each, and recipients have the freedom to choose how to use the grant.

No project, dream, goal, business idea or hobby is too big or too small. People have applied for many different reasons; from needing equipment to help them clean their house so they can spend more time with their family, to funding a course to help kickstart their business idea, to purchasing craft supplies to start painting as a hobby. As Lydia, a past recipient of the MS Go for Gold Scholarship says, “the Go for Gold Scholarship doesn’t have to be for an extravagant dream. It can be for everyday wishes.........my dream was to study Italian.”

We hear a lot from the MS community that they never applied for an MS Go for Gold Scholarship because they thought someone else may need this support more. Don’t let that be the case and encourage the person you care for to apply for an MS Go for Gold Scholarship today. We believe the whole MS community should be supported to apply and achieve their goals.

The application process has been simplified and is an easy-to-follow online application form. You even have the choice to start your application, save it and complete it at a later time.

Apply today at www.ms.org.au/go-for-gold-applications

Our team at MS is producing a series of resources to support you during these challenging times as we face COVID-19. More than ever, we are here so no one faces MS and this crisis alone. www.ms.org.au And don’t forget we are only a phone call away MS connect 1800 042 138.
A story of belonging, caring, and serving
That continues to live on today

I would like to share with you the story of my mother Alice. She was born in Cowes, a small community on Phillip Island.

Alice’s childhood years were the hard times of depression and war. In her small, isolated community everyone had to pull together to get by.

That spirit of belonging, caring, and serving became my mother’s guiding light for her whole life.

In 1946 Alice met Jack Robinson. They married in 1949 and had three children Neil, Barbara and Stuart. They remained together for forty-four years. Dad’s work took the family to Melbourne. Mum became involved in the mother’s club at the local church. She was also active on the parents committees at our schools, as well as being the canteen manager.

Alice did have her challenges in life. Jack developed crippling arthritis and died way too soon in 1993. At about the same time my brother Stuart was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

Mum cared for her loved ones without complaint. She was a quiet achiever, just did what had to be done. Mum was able to look after Stuart at home until she was well into her 70s. She had wonderful support and respite care provided by Multiple Sclerosis Limited (MS). They provided a home away from home, after Mum was not able to continue to look after Stuart. This was in the MS respite accommodation unit in Williamstown, Victoria.

Mum died in 2019. She will always be remembered for her life of service to others. Even though she is gone, her concern for others is still being expressed through her generous gift in her Will to Multiple Sclerosis Limited.

Our family has always been very grateful for the support and kindness of MS and the staff at Williamstown.

Mum’s gift towards the ongoing care for people living with MS will help to ensure that no-one needs to face this crippling disease alone.

Neil Robinson

For more information on how you can express your life values through a gift in your Will to MS, contact Laura Henschke or Michael Knox on 1800 443 867 or visit www.mymslegacy.org.au

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2020 REGISTRATIONS ARE NOW OPEN!

Embark on an epic adventure this August! The MS Readathon inspires kids to read as much as they can, all for an incredible cause. The rules are simple. Read whatever you like, as much as you can, in August. This year’s MS Readathon will be a magical quest, and the adventure kicks off on 1 August and wraps up on 31 August. Children can register with their school (teachers, you can register your class) or individually.

Best of all, by joining our quest, not only will you awaken a love of reading, you will also be helping kids who have a parent with multiple sclerosis.

Register Now at www.msreadathon.org.au
First step to restarting our face to face activities

We are pleased to confirm that following the latest advice from government health authorities, MS has decided to reopen the MS Gym in Lidcombe and resume home visits for NDIS clients in VIC and NSW.

This is only a first step face-to-face and in the next few weeks we will finalise a staged plan to increasingly re-start other face-to-face services and activities across our states, as per the advice from the government health authorities. Our plans will be subject to change due to the evolving nature of the public health issue we are facing because of COVID-19.

We will keep you updated as our plans are finalised and slowly, as a society, we move towards resuming our regular activities across Australia.

Please note that all our other services, including wellbeing and education support, support coordination, MS advisory, employment support services, and peer support will remain available by phone or Telehealth.

We would like to thank you for your understanding during these challenging times. The health and wellbeing of all of our clients and staff have been at the forefront of our decisions.

In the meantime, don’t hesitate to contact us. Our team is here to ensure you stay connected and supported and we are only a phone call away (1800 042 138 or msconnect@ms.org.au).

Two new Support Coordinators join the Launceston team!

Amie Mason began working with MSL in March 2020 as a support coordinator. Amie previously worked within the NDIS space as a care coordinator and support worker for approximately seven years with a community service provider.

She has four children, and a fur baby who is loved by the family who have lived in Launceston most of their lives.

She is thoroughly enjoying working with MSL and is looking forward to finally meeting with all of her clients in Launceston and on the North west coast; once face to face contact is able to be resumed.

Johanna Smith started working for MSL in May of this year.

Johanna has been working in the community sector for over 20 years and her biggest pleasure in life is assisting people to meet their goals. She lives with her corgi, Hudson and her fat cat Evie. Johanna enjoys painting, being creative, playing in the garden and being with friends and family.

When travelling is allowed again, she enjoys visiting her daughter in Queensland. Johanna is really enjoying her role with MSL that she describes as a supportive company with a lot of resources and she loves the way that everyone supports one another and is very personal centered based.
Our MS Peer Support program is a great way for people living with multiple sclerosis, carers, family and friends to connect with and support each other. It’s also a great way to make new friends!

We offer MS Peer Support through a variety of channels, and it’s completely free to participate.

Our current groups are listed below. If you can’t find a group that suits you, please contact MS Connect (Freecall 1800 042 138 or email msconnect@ms.org.au) to register your interest and discuss alternative options.

Where are our face-to-face Peer support groups?*

*Please note due to the implications of COVID-19 Face-to-Face Peer Support Groups are cancelled until further notice, but we encourage you to contact MS Connect on 1800 042 138 between 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday or email msconnect@ms.org.au to join one of our groups online or over the phone.

**MS TELEGROUPS** Telegroups are an effective way of connecting people by phone who have a common need. Telegroups meet by telephone rather than in person.

**Current telegroups:**
- **Under 30s group** First Friday of every month - 12.30pm – 1.30pm
- **Men’s support group** First Thursday of the month – 1.30pm - 2.30pm
  Last Tuesday of the month – 12.00pm – 1.00pm
- **Women’s support group** Fourth Monday of the month – 12.30pm - 1.30pm
- **Women in 40 to 64 group** Third Tuesday of the month – 1.30pm - 2.30pm
- **Over 65’s group** First Tuesday of the month – 10.30am – 11.30am
- **After hours group for working people** Second Wednesday of the month – 7.00pm - 8.00pm
- **Family and friends telegroup** First Tuesday of the month – 7.30pm - 8.30pm
- **General support groups** Second Monday of the month – 7.00pm - 8.00pm
  Second Tuesday of the month – 7.00pm - 8.00pm
- **Mums with MS support group** Second Tuesday of the month – 1.00pm - 2.00pm

**FACEBOOK MS PEER SUPPORT**

Online MS Peer Support is a great way to make connections from the comfort of your own home, or on the go, no matter where you live. Online support leads to better self-care and a stronger sense of wellness. Plus, it’s a great way to make a new group of friends outside of your usual networks!

We have set up a number of private, supportive pages to provide Online MS Peer Support. Our role is purely to set up the page, then it is moderated by trained MS Peer Support volunteers. Our online communities are built on mutual respect and emotional support – they are not designed for medical advice.

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS FOR YOUR CALENDAR**

**Telelinks** are phone-based, short-term Peer Support programs facilitated by the MS Peer Support Coordinators. Six sessions weekly, and each session is 90 minutes long. Guest speakers on topics agreed by the members prompt discussion and learning. They’re really suitable when joining an ongoing group doesn’t suit your needs, or the whole idea is brand new.

- **Carer’s Telelink** Wednesdays 22 July to 26 August 1.00pm - 2.30pm
- **Taking Control of your MS** (for those that have been diagnosed over 3 years and are experiencing changes or navigating a relapse) Thursdays 6 August to 10 September 12.30pm - 2.00pm
‘Family members need support too’- MS Peer Support Telegroup for Family/Friends

Recognising yourself as a carer can be a big step. Family members can see themselves not as care providers, but view what they do as part of their normal role. While being a carer and supporting a person with MS can be very rewarding, as you focus on building your relationship and supporting the person you care most about, it’s also easy to forget your own needs. It is crucial for family members to also focus on their own wellbeing and self-care.

The MS Peer Support Telegroup connects family members to share information and support. David and Harpreet are the Peer Support Volunteers who facilitate this monthly meeting, and both support their wives with MS. David also provides one to one phone support. Peer support involves supporting other partners to identify their own needs for support and to help them to problem solve ways to take care of themselves.

“Self-care is vital for carers. If you are not looking after yourself, you cannot look after others. You have to maintain your own level of energy in order to help other people. The Family members telegroup is a great way to gather information and share support in a nonjudgmental way. It is a sounding board to share ideas and touch base with others who can relate to your situation”

The Family and Friends Wellbeing Telelink commences on the 22 July. This is a 6 week program on Wednesdays from 1.30pm to 3pm. Connecting up to 12 carers over the phone to share valuable information and support. Topics include carers need care too, planning for the unexpected, stronger boundaries stronger carers and accessing services and supports.

Carers/Family Selfcare Podcast will be available in mid-June on the MS website. David and Harpreet share their experience in supporting their wives with MS for over ten years. The MS Connect Social Work Advisor Catherine Smith provides professional insight into the ways carers can maintain their wellbeing and the range of services available for families.

To access any of these programs please call MS Connect on 1800 042 138

Upcoming highlights in the education calendar for July

Looking to keep moving and focused as the cold weather rolls in? How about Tai Chi by Webinar series? 6 weeks, 20 Jul to 24 Aug with Josephine Couper keeping things gentle and leaving you feeling fabulous. Click here to register (there is small contribution cost involved with this series)

We are continually updating the programs on offer with webinars planned on Bladder & Bowel Changes in MS with Fiona Easton, our MS Continence Advisor, and Maintaining Healthy Relationships presented by Helen Diamond. A Smoking with MS webinar is scheduled for Wednesday 29 July, 11.00am - 11.30am.

New Podcasts are being added to our growing Podcast Library which you can access here www.ms.org.au. Two new topics in our Podcast Library are Building Healthy Relationships and Building Your Resilience.

For upcoming programs check out the website: www.ms.org.au