



PLUS
Neuro Wellbeing

ACT Newsletter
July 2024

Our Values - Empowerment, Community, Expertise, Creativity and Spirited

The 2024 MS Go for Gold Scholarships applications open this month!



The MS Mega Challenge has supported over 900 Go for Gold Scholarship recipients in fulfilling a dream and this year we want to help you achieve your dreams! The scholarships provide one-off grants to follow a personal dream.

If you're living with multiple sclerosis, the scholarships can provide the helping hand you need to follow your passion.

Categories include:

- Personal expression: arts, crafts, music - includes materials or participation costs
- Education: academic or lifestyle courses and directly associated costs
- Living your best life: wellbeing activities such as yoga, alternative therapies, travel, or sports equipment/ participation fees

No project, dream, goal or hobby is too big or too small.

Applications open on 11 of July 2024.

[Find out more](#)



**HELPING KIDS,
ONE STORY AT
A TIME**



Reading transports you to whole new worlds. Every page holds the promise of a wonderful adventure. And in August, reading is extra special. It's when you can join the MS Readathon. For the whole month, every time you read and log your books, you'll help raise money for families impacted by multiple sclerosis.

Are you ready to unleash your imagination for an incredible cause?

[Sign up today](#)



2024 MS Mega Swim Canberra



Get ready to ignite your competitive spirit at the. Join us on **3 – 4 August** for an exhilarating weekend of swimming, fun and camaraderie at the Australian Institute of Sport, all in support of a great cause.

Whether you're a seasoned athlete or a weekend warrior, there's something for everyone in this ultimate test of endurance. Each moment promises to push your limits and create unforgettable memories.

So, gather your friends, pull on your bathers and get ready to make a difference as we come together to raise funds and awareness for multiple sclerosis research and support. Get ready to conquer the challenge and leave a lasting impact!

If you're feeling especially competitive and feel like doing it all over AGAIN then please join us on the weekend of 31 August - 1 September at Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre for the 2024 MS Mega Swim Sydney.

[Click here for more information](#)



Congratulations to our 2024 Art Show winners!!

Congratulations to the winners of our 2024 MS Plus Virtual Art Show! This year 58 people submitted 88 pieces of artwork, all exploring this year's World MS Day theme: 'It Takes a Village'.

Congratulations goes to:

The Barry Allen Art Award, winner: Robert Barnes 'Long View from a Long Hill'

Paintings/Illustrations, winner: Peter Spies: 'Inter Connectivity'
Special mention: John Ellison 'Bridge'

Sculptural/Craft Artwork, winner: Rikki Butinar 'Village Offering' **Special mention:** Jade Warner 'My School in the Depths'

Digital Artwork and Photography, winner: Deanna Renee 'Healing Isn't Linear'

Special mention: Annie Probert 'It Takes a Village'

Carers Award, winner: Summer Archilles 'Reaching for Help'

[View the full Virtual Art Show Gallery](#)

Improve your wellbeing

with tailored strategies and symptoms management



Plus Exercise
Physiology



Plus Physiotherapy



Plus Diet and
Nutrition



Plus Continence

[Book your telehealth appointment today](#)

[Click here to improve your quality of life](#)

what's on

Exploring the latest programs and updates from client engagement and wellbeing



JULY 2024

Upcoming MS Plus webinars

Managing uncertainty and anxiety

29 July 2024, 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm AEDT

Living with a diagnosis of MS also means living with a degree of uncertainty and unpredictability. This often manifests as wondering when symptoms might appear, when they might subside, and what the next day or even year will entail. Coping with the uncertainty and anxiety that MS can bring is vital for people managing the condition. In this webinar, psychologist Seona Ilalio will discuss how people living with a chronic condition can maintain their mental wellbeing and provide practical strategies for managing the inevitable uncertainty. Seona offers a unique perspective as someone living with a chronic condition.

[Register Now!](#)

Podcast spotlight

Talking men's health, diagnosis and the journey of living with MS with David and Andrew

In this episode of the MS podcast series, in recognition of Men's Health Week, David and Andrew share their personal experiences of being diagnosed with MS and its impact on their lives and mental health. David and Andrew have a deeply personal conversation about their initial symptoms, the diagnostic process, and the mental and emotional challenges they faced. The discussion also covers the societal pressures that men still face regarding toughness and emotional openness, as well as the importance of support systems, both professional and personal. They highlight the crucial role of communication with healthcare providers and the benefits of mental health support. David and Andrew both share their coping strategies and offer advice for other men living with MS, stressing the importance of self-care, listening to your body and seeing the GP, as well as reaching out for support.

[Listen here!](#)

Catch up on recent MS Boost podcasts



Men's Health Matters: Tackling Erectile Dysfunction with Nurse Practitioner Luke Mitchell

In this episode of The MS Boost, we interview Luke, a nurse practitioner specialising in sexual health to discuss erectile dysfunction (ED), its prevalence in the population, misconceptions and links with mental health. Luke provides insight and practical advice for managing ED discussing holistic treatment options, the importance of trusting your health care practitioner and broader health and relationship implications. [Listen here!](#)

The MS Boost will be in addition to our current series, so make sure you're following [**MS Podcasts**](#) on your preferred player like [**Apple Podcasts**](#) or [**Spotify**](#) to be the first to know when new episodes are released

You can find previously recorded webinars and podcasts on the [Resource Hub](#).

If you need further information or would like to speak to our MS Nurse, please contact the Plus Connect team.



Information for people supporting someone with MS

The **Plus Navigate: Friends & Family** program is for people who support someone with MS.

Over two 75-minute sessions, an MS expert will guide discussions, provide information, links to resources and answer any questions.

We'll cover a range of topics including:

- * understanding MS
- * navigating the health system
- * where to access help and support
- * how to take care of yourself

[To learn more or register](#)










Young Carers: Navigating Responsibilities and Wellbeing

Young carers play a significant role in our society, often shouldering responsibilities beyond their years. Each young carer has unique circumstances and responsibilities. Clinical Psychologist, Nicola Palfrey from headspace National talks about the world of young carers, their challenges, and the importance of looking after themselves to manage their daily life.

[Watch here](#)

Carers, Family & Friends Toolkit

This online resource provides a range of information and practical tips specifically designed for people who are supporting someone with MS. Topics include:

	Understanding MS for Carers		Looking after yourself		Finances, legal & work
	Understanding emotions		Talking about MS		Young Carers
	Parents of teens with MS		Navigating support systems		Preparing for emergencies

[Explore the toolkit here](#)



Meet Samantha

Are you feeling overwhelmed by the complexities of managing your NDIS plan while also navigating life with MS or other neurological conditions? We understand the challenges you face, which is why we're excited to introduce our new NDIS Plan Manager, Samantha, who is dedicated to helping you achieve your goals with ease and confidence. [Read more >](#)

Volunteer Visitors

Do you know an older person in aged care or who has a home care package who could use some company? MS Plus is a proud provider of the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme, where we match older people in need of company with volunteer visitors. If you know of someone who may benefit from the program, please contact our ACT program coordinator at ACCVSAdmin@msplus.org.au

A travel agent's journey to support the MS community

For over 30 years, travel agent Lois Marshall has helped people explore new horizons. But her particular journey extends beyond travel — it's about making a difference for people with multiple sclerosis (MS).

Lois realised long ago that people with MS often didn't go on holidays. As their disease progresses, their world shrinks. It's harder to leave the house, let alone travel. Seeing the struggle of friends and clients with MS, Lois felt moved by their courage. This is another reason she began making annual donations to MS Plus 43 years ago.

"I knew people with MS and saw how it affected them and their families," she explains. "Right now, it's a disease with no cure and no light at the end of the tunnel."

In 1981, Lois got a letter about a new MS Plus initiative: *The Key to MS Treatment and Research*. The organisation was close to her then-home in Artarmon, on Sydney's north shore. The local appeal and urgent need piqued her interest.

"MS was a cause that needed my support, so I signed up," she recalls.

For her kindness, Lois received a little gold key from MS Plus — which she has kept for over 40 years in her jewellery box. She also received a certificate of appreciation signed by the late Betty Cuthbert, the champion track runner and beloved MS advocate. But Lois thinks certain diseases are better known and funded these days.

"Currently, there's a lot of generosity for well-publicised causes like breast and prostate cancer. They're certainly worthy. But in contrast, MS often gets overlooked and put in the "too-hard basket". Yet MS needs as much, if not more, financial support for research and treatment," she says.

"People don't understand that MS affects not only the patient but also their loved ones. I'm for the underdog and will always consider causes that aren't so popular. That's why I support MS," says Lois.

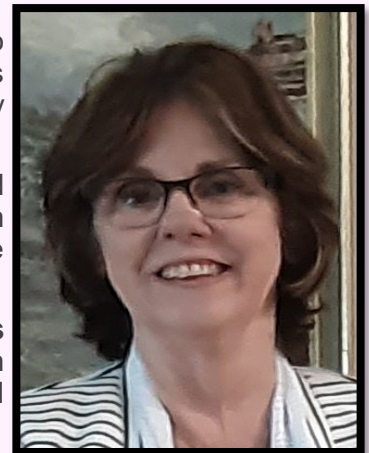
Ten years ago, Lois extended her generosity by including a gift in her Will to MS Plus. She says the process was straightforward. She wrote instructions and discussed her intention with her solicitor. Lois remains 'cautiously optimistic' that her gift could make a difference.

"While treatments are important, research should be the priority. I don't mind if research happens in Australia or overseas. Scientists everywhere can learn from each other and share ideas. By working together, they can accelerate the discovery of a cure," she says.

The key in Lois's jewellery box remains her reminder that "research is always the key to a cure." Lois hopes more people will learn about MS in the future. She believes education might lead to increased funding and support.

"MS sufferers and their families need and deserve hope," she concludes.

Currently, 33,335 people in Australia have MS. Like Lois, you can be a beacon of hope for them. Since 1956, MS Plus has supported thousands of clients and their loved ones. Gifts in Wills can fund research, treatments, peer support programs and well-being centres. Find out more from Laura or Rebecca at MS Plus. Call **1800 443 867**, visit www.mymslegacy.org.au or email futureplanning@msplus.org.au



Did you know? Our free Plus **Employment Support Service** boasts a remarkable 91% success rate in securing jobs within 3 months. Even better, 85% of clients are still thriving in their roles 2 years later!

Wherever you are, we can provide support via telehealth. Your job success matters,

**Secured employment
within 3 months**



**Maintain employment
over 2 years**



Get in touch today

Exercise Classes at Gloria McKerrow House

Be Better Balanced

A combination of chair and circuit-based exercises designed for individuals who can still walk but have challenges with balance, stamina, and overall mobility. Classes are comprehensive and well-paced, ensuring they are enjoyable for everyone.

When: Tuesdays 9.30am — 10.30am
Thursdays 10.00am – 11.00am (online available)

Wheels in Motion

A class designed for people in wheelchairs or who are having difficulty walking. In this class the focus is on upper body mobility as well as making use of a motorised exercise bike for those it suits. This is a small group and where possible individual work is done on each person to mobilise leg movement.

When: Thursdays 11.00am – 12.00pm **Cost:** \$10.00 per class or 10 classes for \$90.00

Please call 1800 042 138 to register



Online Mindfulness Meditation

...for people with Multiple Sclerosis and other neurological conditions.

Join us every Friday afternoon, from 3:30pm - 4:30pm and experience the relaxing benefits of meditation.

Email Helen Woodbridge (woodbridgehelen@hotmail.com) and she'll send you a Zoom link for the session every Friday. Carers and family also welcome!

Peer Support

We have two Peer Support Groups available in the ACT, and new members are welcome at any time.

People with MS (PwMS) Taking Control Group

Our group meets twice a month and seeks to connect people living with MS in the Canberra region, for friendship and information sharing, with a focus on living well with MS.

Meets: 1. 12.30 to 2.00pm - 2nd Friday, 12 July 2024 **Venue:** Zoom only

2. 12.30 to 2.00pm - Last Friday, 26 July 2024 **Venue:** Gloria McKerrow House, Deakin

Contact Vanessa Fanning/Mary Webb at pwmstcg@gmail.com to be added to our email list, and/or join our Facebook group 'Canberra Region MSers'. In line with privacy principles, you can unsubscribe at any time.

ACT Weekend MS Peer Support Group

Meets: 10am, 3rd Saturday of each month **Venue:** ACT Café, Canberra

Contact Plus Connect on 1800 042 138

Tabletop Games

This year the group will be operating every second month — No prior knowledge required!

When: Saturday 10 August 2024,

Where: Gloria McKerrow House, 117 Denison St, Deakin ACT

Time: 1:30—4:00pm, come and go at your leisure

Please register your interest at pwmstabletop@gmail.com for updates.

* Family, friends and carers are also welcome *

