

Taking a lap for Parkinson's Disease

Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center at Barrow Neurological Institute receives \$12k contribution

Drive Toward a Cure raises funds and awareness for Parkinson's Disease research and patient care. Inspired by the camaraderie found within the automotive culture, the organization's mission benefits equally from both enthusiast communities and industry professionals. Drive Toward a Cure events harness enthusiasm for cars and driving and turn that power into support for ongoing work to improve the lives of those living with Parkinson's, as well as the research that will hopefully one day lead to a cure. Since 2016, Drive Toward a Cure has raised more than a half million dollars to support both research and patient care.

When premier lifestyle automotive event Taste of Motorsports enlisted Drive Toward a Cure as its key beneficiary for the 2021 season, the only caveat from the charity foundation was that all funds raised stayed local, supporting regional Centers of Excellence for Parkinson's Disease. Having completed the first of three events together this spring in Arizona, including two separate fundraising endeavors, Drive Toward a Cure provided a matching donation that secured a \$12,000 gift to the Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center at Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix to support patient care.

Fundraising events included a spirited Saturday morning drive and a VIP charity/auction preview evening at the Otto Car Club in Scottsdale. The highlight of the weekend was a Sunday Taste of Motorsports finale at the Bondurant High Performance Driving School. Attendees had the opportunity within a festival atmosphere to test drive high-performance vehicles on track, view an enormous display of exotic cars including the newly launched Shelby Speedster, and to enjoy a full array of gourmet food all day long.

Drive Toward a Cure board member Derek Torry, who happens to be afflicted with early onset Parkinson's, was on hand for the entire Arizona weekend, having driven in from Southern California. He noted that the commonality of attendees, whether drivers or car enthusiasts, were very much in sync with Drive Toward a Cure's mantra of blending cars and camaraderie. "Since 2016 we've set out with one mission: combine the minds and hearts of individuals within the car community with a stronger awareness for Parkinson's disease—and find ways to channel their enthusiasm to raise funds." Drive Toward a Cure has successfully moved that mission to raise more than \$500,000 since its inception five years ago.

Last year, the Muhammad Ali Parkinson Center at Barrow Neurological Institute made nearly 25,000 connections with individuals with Parkinson's disease and their care partners through in-person clinic visits, tele-health visits and outreach efforts.

Drive Toward a Cure is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that supports beneficiaries including The Michael J. Fox Foundation, the Parkinson's Foundation and numerous Centers of Excellence for Parkinsons. For donations, sponsorship and event registration please visit www.drivetowardacure.org. ■

(Top right) Drive Toward a Cure board member Derek Torry (left) and Tom Floyd (right), head of Taste of Motorsports, kick off the charity drive.

(Center and bottom right) Automotive artist Dwight Knowlton of Carpe Gear/Carpe Viam donated a 1-of-1 framed sketch of legendary Porsche-ophile Vasek Polak and his famous #88 Porsche 550 Spyder, during the VIP preview evening, held at the Otto Car Club in Scottsdale.

