



Upcoming Presentation and Meeting

Companions for Life: Exploring the Life-Changing Roles of Service Dogs, Emotional Support Dogs, and Therapy Dogs

by **Amy Garrity**, an RMCFA Member / Volunteer

April 17, 2010 | 1-3 pm | Heitler Hall | National Jewish Health

Amy will introduce different types of assistance dogs, including how some types can benefit people with CFS and/or FM. The roles of such dogs will be discussed along with the processes for the selection and training of these special dogs. Amy will also introduce Indy, her own service dog, and share the story about they got together.

Additional Discussion: Besides Amy's presentation and associated Q&A, we hope to use some time to discuss the community building ideas below.

Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole. ~Roger Caras

Newsletter Changes

John Bonath, initiator of this latest newsletter series, is no longer able to continue to serve as editor. Many thanks to John for his 2009 service, including his resuming RMCFA's production of periodic newsletters.

Please continue to submit news items to news@rmcfa.org.

We have a volunteer who might do layout, but we need an editor and we need content contributors. Any interested in helping with future newsletters, please let us know at that email address, or at 303-4-CFS-FMS (303-423-7367). Thanks.

Building RMCFA Community, Take 2

Building Connections

Chronic illness causes many of us to feel isolated and alone. Are there ways RMCFA can help alleviate such feelings? Our volunteers and others in Colorado on our contact list (called "members" for this article) often wonder what we can do to build a more vibrant, connected, supportive, and fun community.

We asked for ideas in the last newsletter but had very little response. Please bring your ideas to the April meeting, or email or call us. We need to hear from all who are interested in networking with others.

Will you share your contact data?

A shareable contact list would empower members to connect with each other. We'd like permission to provide your first name, city/approximate location, and primary contact data (phone and/or email address) to others who likewise give such permission. Any RMCFA contact list we share will list guidelines for proper use.

Can our centralized events be improved?

Less than 10% of local members attend any given event at National Jewish Health. Typical lecture events provide useful information but may fail to lift our spirits or leave us feeling more connected with others. Our annual picnic typically draws less people than a lecture event. How can we improve the content or structure of our events to make them more satisfying and enjoyable to attend?

Do you want local area small support groups?

Do you want to attend a small support group of some kind, perhaps more frequently than our quarterly events or closer to your home? Are you a volunteer who can help host or facilitate such a local area support group?

What else might RMCFA do?

We hope you see the value in sharing your contact data and will respond to a related email request (or if you don't use email, please call us to provide data you'll allow us to share).

Besides questions asked above, we seek any other ideas about facilitating personal connections. How else might we help compensate for the social isolation we often experience?

Volunteer helpers are also needed. If considering helping, rest assured: we're a slow paced group that avoids adding extra stress to our volunteer helpers!

Please email link@rmcfa.org or call us with your suggestions, thoughts, contact data sharing permission, interests, and/or offers to be involved:

- Lezlee 303-345-1444 afternoon
- Kitty 303-972-1143 10 am - 8 pm
- Paul 303-586-1935 10 am - 8 pm

Let's help each other "be all we can be"!

– Paul Haines, RMCFA Board Member & Tim Smith, RMCFA President

Rocky Mountain CFIDS/FMS Association
2160 South Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80210-4413

Contact Information:

website: www.rmcf.org
email: link@rmcf.org
info-line: 303-4-CFS-FMS
(303-423-7367)

Thanks to all who donated late last year and early this year. You reversed a 2009 deficit and started this year off well !

If you don't receive email, remember to check the phone line or web site for upcoming meetings.

Metaphorically at least, choose to dance!

I Hope You Dance

Lyrics to Lea Ann Womack's Song

I hope you never lose your sense of wonder,
you get your fill to eat, but always keep that hunger.
May you never take one single breath for granted.
God forbid love ever leave you empty handed.
I hope you still feel small when you stand by the ocean.
Whenever one door closes, I hope one more opens
Promise me you'll give faith a fighting chance –

And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance,
I hope you dance ... I hope you dance.

And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance
I hope you dance ...
I hope you dance ...
I hope you dance ...
I hope you dance ...

And when you get the choice to sit it out or dance, *I hope you dance ... I hope you dance.*

I hope you never fear those mountains in the distance,
never settle for the path of least resistance.
Living might mean taking chances, but they're worth taking.
Lovin' might be a mistake, but it's worth making,
Don't let some hell bent heart leave you bitter.
When you come close to selling out, reconsider.
Give the heavens above more than just a passing glance.

[additional simultaneously-sung lyrics are in () below]
(Time is a real and constant motion
always rolling us along.)

(Tell me who wants to look back on their youth
and wonder where those years have gone.)

Medicare Changes in the 2010 Federal Health Care Law

per www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/health/jan-june10/medicare_03-24.html

- Reduction of Prescription Coverage “Doughnut Hole” (coverage gap):
 - 2010: \$250 rebate for medicare recipients who enter the cov. gap.
 - 2011: 50% discount on brand name drugs in the coverage gap.
 - slowly, by 2020: the coverage gap is to be phased out.
- Medicare Advantage Plan (MAPs) *extras* are likely to be *decreased*:
 - reduction of prior incentives to leave Original Medicare for MAPs (i.e., saving 14% extra government expenses being paid to MAPs will likely reduce extras such as vision and hearing benefits).
- Wellness Benefits to be *increased* in Original/Standard Medicare:
 - annual physicals to be covered (beyond an initial medicare physical).
 - preventative care is to be 100% paid, no longer requiring Medicare beneficiary to pay co-pays or deductibles for such care.
- High Income earners (over \$200K single, \$250K joint) are to pay more Medicare tax, increased to 3.8% [up from 1.45% or 2.9%] plus a new Medicare tax on unearned income (e.g., investments).

XMRV Virus Update

Much “buzz” followed the October 2009 announcements regarding possible involvement of XMRV virus in CFS. Since then the situation has become somewhat murky, with three new studies failing to verify the earlier results.

A *CFIDS Association of America* analysis now says “The implication is that XMRV is likely to explain a subset of CFS rather than all cases defined as CFS.” **

Patients will need to be *patient* as science sorts all this out.

** www.cfids.org/xmr/022510study.asp

For additional XMRV information, see also: www.aboutmecfs.org/Rsrch/XMRVIntro.aspx