

2013 is here, and that means it's time to look back and see what we've accomplished in the past year...

Looking Back on 2012

Education:

1. We sponsored nine monthly programs encouraging lifestyle changes and wellness and introducing new doctors and therapists to our group and network
2. Mailed information about PPS, clinics and medical providers to hundreds of new survivors of polio contacting us in the United States and around the world.
3. Compiled educational material on the late effects of poliomyelitis for new members, physicians, healthcare providers and students.
4. Fred Shirley, PT, and polio volunteer Steve McMahan have been assisting Carolyn Raville with presenting the twice-a-year presentation of "What Is Post-Polio Syndrome." The special program includes a viewing of the 29-minute video of the same name, then a question and answer session with new survivors. At the end of the program participants leave with a far better understanding of polio/post-polio, what to expect, and how to deal with it. The program is presented twice each year.
5. On February 21st, twenty survivors of polio in our group participated in the University of Florida's Department of Physical Therapy as "guest instructors" in their neuro-rehab course.
6. As our support group president, Carolyn Raville attended several seminars sponsored by our local hospitals in order to bring awareness to the issue of post-polio syndrome.
7. We now have three physicians on our Evaluation Team who have evaluated a number of polio survivors from around the state of Florida: Prathima Reddy, M.D. (Rehabilitation Medicine, Interventional Medical Associates, Gainesville), Amy Clunn, M.D. (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Ocala), and Jose A. Gautier, M.D. (Board Certified, Neurology, Ocala). Fred Shirley, MS, PT, CEAS, is also part of our Evaluation Team and imminently qualified to do muscle evaluations.

Outreach:

1. We have welcomed several new physicians to our group of physicians, therapists and suppliers. We encourage each speaker to prepare beforehand, or jot down during their speech, any questions they may wish to ask the attendees at the end of the program.
2. We continue to encourage the vaccine program for children. Carolyn Raville was named "Polio Ambassador" by the March of Dimes, North Central Florida

Division, and awarded “Division Volunteer of the Year” at the Annual Volunteer Appreciation dinner in Gainesville, Florida. Carolyn also spoke to the members of the Kings Bay Rotary Club of Crystal River During “Polio Awareness Month” (October, 2012) about the polio virus, explaining that the polio threat was still here and still very real.

3. We mailed information to approximately 200 new contacts worldwide, a significant increase over 2011. The increase was due, in part, to some groups folding in the United States and a higher inquiry rate from outside the United States.
4. We continue to encourage contacts outside of our area to join a strong support group in their area. We frequently help them in their search. We also try to encourage support group leaders who contact us to educate themselves further in the “art” of making their support groups work with more positive results and avoid becoming one of those groups that ultimately and unfortunately have to close their doors.
5. To assist physicians throughout Florida, our website has a listing of Florida-based therapists who understand post-polio syndrome; we continue to have excellent feedback on this listing and it is ever-changing. We have also given books on polio/post-polio to several physicians in our area for their review and to help further their education in polio and post-polio syndrome.
6. The list of post-polio support groups on our website (postpoliosupport.com) has been helpful to those who are searching for post-polio support in their area. All groups in Florida are listed, with more from around the USA and the world being added as we learn of them and about them.
7. We continue to strongly encourage survivors of polio to have a complete evaluation by a knowledgeable physician and PT therapist.
8. We continue to update our list of Physicians, Therapists and Suppliers in the north central area of Florida who understand the issues of polio survivors. The list continues to grow and is available at all times on our website at PostPolioSupport.com.
9. We reach out to survivors of polio across the globe, helping those survivors from epidemics of the 1930s, ‘40s, ‘50s and ‘60s as well as those who contracted polio from the Sabin (live) vaccine.
10. We continue to stay in contact with our friends in other post-polio support groups in other countries through our website and email.
11. Our web presence (postpoliosupport.com) continues to be strong and our outreach increases as we continue to reach out and offer help and hope to post-polios in America and around the world.
12. As always, we lent a “listening ear” all 365 days of the year!
13. We mailed or emailed approximately 450+ Polio Post News newsletters around the world every two months. Our newsletter has also been translated into several other languages.

14. Our support Group took part in promoting National Heart Month in February and the March of Dimes' annual pledge walk.
15. We observed our 22nd anniversary in May, with a special program and luncheon with honored guests to celebrate the day.
16. We celebrated the holidays together with a special luncheon where we gathered to make the holiday a happier one for twenty-two children in crisis from the "The Centers" in Marion and Citrus Counties. Our forty-six determined participants assured that each child received a special and unexpected gift this holiday.
17. Realizing there are polio survivors who do not know about or understand PPS, or even that there is help for them, we continue the publicity campaign for public awareness started in 2008. We have had 40 to 55 attendees for each of our programs in 2012, an annual increase, again, from last year's average.
18. We continue in our solid support of the March of Dimes in their campaign and research for healthier babies. We greatly appreciate the help the March of Dimes has given to the survivors of polio over the years and they should know that we will always be at their service whenever they need us.
19. Through the generous support of our members; the March of Dimes, North Central Florida Division; the Collins Center (and Collins Center Coordinator Bill Mansfield, who makes our meeting there possible); our team of physicians, therapists and suppliers; founders Carolyn & Jerry Raville, our volunteers, Sharon Mixson (of AV Connection), Beryl & Joe Gogola, Hila Lane, Korky Kramer, Ed & Nancy Bramlet, Sharon & Ron Daszczynski, Ruth Gensman, Marilyn Berg, Jane Heady, Bonnie Terrant, Esther Pierce and Steve McMahan. Lastly, we could not have done any of this without the speakers... the physicians, the therapists, the pharmacists and the other professionals who have been the ones who shared their knowledge with us. To them our heartfelt thanks.

We are accomplishing our goal of developing awareness of PPS and moving toward wellness for polio survivors. With your continued support we will continue to grow in the year 2013. Your contributions have been a great help in making it possible for us to continue giving hope and understanding of the after effects of polio to the most important people we know, our polio survivors!

We have had a very successful year and we thank each and every one of you. We look forward to the year 2013.