

Porridge for Parkinson's

Why Porridge and Why Now

We want to help find a cure for this nasty progressive disease, and so we are raising funds to go directly to research. Marg was diagnosed in June 1999 when our son, Mac, was 18 months old. (Marg was 43.) The rapidity of its progression has been scary and being proactive feels right.

We admire the huge number of fundraisers that the various Parkinson's organizations hold, but we wanted to do something that worked with Marg's medication "on" times and worked for our family. Noel came up with "Porridge for Parkinson's." It's a variation on a breakfast benefit our friends Carol Denny and David Jiles have held for 14 years for First United Church in Vancouver. It is always such a friendly, simple party, and we thought it would be an ideal fundraiser for our cause. (David originally came up with the idea because he loved the porridge at the Stock Market at Granville Island in Vancouver so much.)

Porridge for Parkinson's is a "we can't just sit around waiting for something to happen with this disease" grassroots event. Parkinson's disease sucks – so let's help get rid of it. Researchers have a better understanding of PD and are close to a cure. The fact that the science is ahead of the money encourages us to get cooking.

Our breakfast turned into a huge deal with close to 200 people, but we firmly believe that whether you serve 10, 30 or 300 guests, you will have contributed to the Parkinson's research facility you support, you will have done something significant towards increasing awareness, and you definitely will have had some fun. And did we mention it is cheap? The costs are remarkably low for the return. Our total cost was about \$200, including cards, envelopes and postage for a huge mailing, masses of superb porridge and dense and delicious Dried Fruit Poached in Port compote. We could have done it for much much less. Our favourite statistic is that the steel cut oats cost \$10.81 to serve 200 people.

The Bottom Line: We raised a lot of money in a morning for the Pacific Parkinson's Research Institute, which funds the Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre (formerly known as the Movement Disorder Clinic at the University of British Columbia). Their work is well known worldwide.

So, if you have Parkinson's Disease or know someone who does, or just feel like putting on a fun, inexpensive and profitable event for this cause, go for it. You're guaranteed to get lots of kudos for these great recipes, it is pretty minimal impact entertaining, and you will have remarkable results both financially and for raising public awareness. Our guests were eager to learn something about this rather bizarre brain disorder and keen to contribute something. It all adds up.