



THE FREEMASONS'
GRAND CHARITY

CASE STUDY

Parkinson's UK

£250,000 for Parkinson's UK

The 2011 Annual National Grant has been awarded to Parkinson's UK. Each of the 48 Metropolitan and Provincial Grand Lodges have been given £5,000 to donate to a local Parkinson's UK branch, and the money will be spent on helping to improve the lives of people affected by Parkinson's. The aim of this grant is to support local branches, allowing them to decide how they spend their money. The branch allocation is being decided by Parkinson's UK.



Teresa Forgiione, Major Gifts Manager at Parkinson's UK, said:

"We are delighted that The Freemasons' Grand Charity are joining us and supporting our work with this generous donation. Our local groups run a wide range of activities and support for people affected by Parkinson's, including Pilates classes, education days or day trips for members. The money may also go towards part funding a new Parkinson's nurse or a new minibus."

For further information about Parkinson's UK please visit: www.parkinsons.org.uk

Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurological condition which affects 120,000 people in the UK. People with Parkinson's don't have enough of a chemical called dopamine, because some nerve cells in their brain have died. Without dopamine people can find that their movements become slower so it takes longer to do things. The loss of nerve cells in the brain causes the symptoms of Parkinson's to appear. There's currently no cure for Parkinson's and we don't yet know why people get the condition.

The main symptoms of Parkinson's are tremor, rigidity and slowness of movement. As well as affecting movement, people with Parkinson's can find that other issues, such as tiredness, pain, depression and constipation, can have an impact on their day-to-day lives. The symptoms someone has and how quickly the condition develops will differ from one person to the next. The symptoms can be controlled using a combination of drugs, therapies and occasionally surgery.

The Freemasons' Grand Charity has funded Parkinson's UK since 1981 and in 2010, finished funding £177,056 for a three-year study into a gene involved in Parkinson's called PINK1. The research was carried out by Professor Nick Wood at University College London. The research team aimed to find out more about how mutations in the PINK1 gene might be linked to the death of specific nerve cells within the brain. The PINK1 gene gives rise to a protein that usually keeps nerve cells healthy, but the protein needs to be changed from its original form before it can work.

Through their research, Professor Wood's group have discovered new factors that work with PINK1 to alter it to allow it to work correctly. Mutations in the PINK1 gene prevent that interaction, and this eventually leads to nerve cell death. But scientists still need to understand more about how this happens and how they can prevent the death of nerve cells occurring. However, the team's discovery is a significant step towards understanding how the nerve cells die in Parkinson's and to finding out whether and how the cells can be rescued.



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