It seems odd to be writing about boosting your immune system when battling an autoimmune disease such as Scleroderma. But in truth, for many people with an autoimmune disease a simple cold or flu can be life threatening. So how do you boost your immune system to help stay healthy while taking immunosuppressant medications?

Taking simple precautions is the best way to start. Take time to apply common sense to everyday actions such as hand washing and avoiding people who are sick. Layering in extra warm clothes to keep your core body warm and wearing a face mask if you need to go out in public helps to reduce the risk of virus exposure and catching a respiratory infection. Eating a healthy diet and taking natural immune boosters may help. Vitamins A, C and D, and minerals such as magnesium and zinc will help keep your immune system strong.

Well researched immune supporting herbal teas are both beneficial and tasty and can be serve hot or cold anytime of year. For centuries herbal teas have been used to enhance immunity and boost brain power and energy. Echinacea, mint and dandelion teas help to support respiratory function.

Discuss with your doctor if a flu and or pneumonia shot is right for you. Being well informed about your choices to help build your immune system will keep you healthy and happy through the winter months.
Spokane’s Stepping Out to Cure Scleroderma Walk/Run

by Patty Varty

The Spokane support group has had a busy year. We hit the ground running in January and by June 4th we had really gotten the word out on our walk and scleroderma awareness. Sylvia Miller got our mayor and city council to proclaim June “National Scleroderma Month”, Lisa once again made sure the smokestacks in downtown Spokane were lit up in teal, and we had fundraisers at 5 Guys Burgers and The Steamplant.

On a sad note, we lost a great advocate and friend, Kathy Rollins in February. Her husband Scott, son David, sister Pam and brother in law, Dan, all lost a great woman to this devastating disease. Even in grief, they made her proud by working tirelessly on our walk. In fact, they allowed us to honor her by naming the walk for her. God Bless her.

The walk was a great success. We raised close to 15,000 dollars and had over 200 people join us. We had a BBQ, great music thanks to Kenny, a silent auction and Paul and his lovely assistant Ellie ran our live auction. We had lots of laughs and fun watching that while raising hundreds of dollars. We’d like to thank Marcia, president of the board of directors, for coming over and supporting us.

We finished the summer with our Extravaganza. Friends and family of the support group shared food, beverages and laughs at Paul and Lisa’s. We plan to make this an annual event. All in all we had a tremendous year. KREM 2 News was at our walk, hundreds of new people became aware of our cause, and people newly diagnosed received received information and help.

The Spokane support group will start at 6pm now on the 3rd Monday of the month at Deaconess Education Building W. 910 5th, room 266.

Do you suffer from Raynaud’s?
Help is on the way with Soletics Gloves; these are not your mother’s mittens!

The Soletics Raynaud’s Gloves utilize small sensors strategically located in the glove to register temperature changes. These sensors then inform the glove how much heat is needed and where, all before the hand can register a temperature change. Once heat is applied and the sensors detect the optimum temperature has been reached, the glove will stop heating—conserving energy. This efficiency allows the gloves to be thin and flexible. The powerband is also completely removable from the glove body, allowing for many different combinations and uses. The glove portion is hand washable. It’s as simple as slip on and go. Soletics has generously agreed to donate a pair of gloves. These will be making the rounds of our support groups so that everyone may try them. To learn more visit www.teamsoletics.com

2016 Scleroderma Auction at the Rainier Golf and Country Club

Our roaring 20s theme was a hit. Seeing everyone in their flapper and Dapper Dan clothing was so much fun. People really got into the spirit of things.

Our auction chairwoman, Arica Sykes-Dawley helped us to reach new heights, raising almost $31,000. Under Arica’s guidance, our attendance and revenues both increased and she is brimming with ideas on how to make next year’s auction even bigger, better, more fun, more successful and smoother running.

Save the Date!
The 2017 Scleroderma Auction will be on May 13th at the Rainier Golf and Country Club

A Fun Night for a Worthy Cause
Each year the Scleroderma Washington Evergreen Chapter gives out one conference scholarship that includes, airfare for two, entrance to the conference and hotel accommodations. The scholarship offers an opportunity for one person affected by scleroderma and their caregiver to attend the conference and participate in educational topics, try new products, reconnect with friends old and new and enjoy community support. This year Lauri Pruett and her boyfriend David Lamson won the Washington Evergreen Chapter scholarship!

Scleroderma Stories
Lauri Pruett interviewed by Shelley Van Pelt

Lauri shared some of the highlights from this year’s conference. She enjoyed everything from educational topics to meeting the researchers and seeing the poster presentations.

Lauri said, “You got to talk directly with the researchers.” Seeing the latest research has given her a positive and hopeful outlook for the future. “Four years ago (research) wasn’t so positive. But now there is more hope for those with scleroderma.” Although she comes from a medical background, the conference gave Lauri a broader base of knowledge for medications and pathophysiology. She also spent time learning about wound care; this is timely information that she use to better care for a finger ulcer.

Lauri did some valuable networking while there.

“Meeting and getting to know others doing so well with scleroderma can be so powerful. People come from all over the world to this conference.” she explained. Lauri’s boyfriend, David, also found the conference enjoyable and worthwhile. He was really inspired by those affected with scleroderma.

Lauri enthused, “This group didn’t complain about their problems and everyone was so positive.” Lauri encourages anyone with scleroderma to attend the conference with a positive outlook of meeting others with scleroderma.

She advised, “Don’t have expectations and go with an open mind and learn something new.”

Scleroderma patients, please submit your stories for future newsletters or request to be interviewed. Contact Andrea at smithap@comcast.net

Look for us online: www.scleroderma.org/washington and facebook.com/sfwaevergreen

Summer 2016
A Message from our Executive Director

Jeremy Harrison-Smith

The Scleroderma Foundation’s 18th Annual National Patient Education Conference was a must do for both newly diagnosed and chronically affected people with Scleroderma. The conference continues to grow in attendance each year. I had the opportunity to attend this year’s event as part of our chapter’s leadership team along with our board president and support group coordinator.

We attended chapter leadership day on the Friday before the conference where we received valuable updates from national staff, attended a workshop on board development, and had the opportunity to meet and connect with other staff and board members from chapters around the country.

Over the next two days I attended a number of interesting presentations highlighted by a talk on stem cell transplants by Dr. Richard Burt.

Our chapter’s own Chanel White was part of a youth panel discussion. It was very inspiring to hear their stories of struggle and success as they continue fighting this disease. The other patients in attendance received excellent feedback on their own struggles, Chanel offered lots of suggestions for them on a range of topics.

Overall, my experience was enriched by having the chance to meet many scleroderma patients and hear their stories, including some who came from other countries. The people I met and the connections among patients that I saw opened my eyes to how important and valuable this event is and the work that the Scleroderma Foundation does.