Cindy Copenhaver is a certified personal trainer and group fitness instructor in Chicago. She also is a certified aquatic instructor and a licensed massage therapist. She has been instructing fitness classes for nearly 40 years. Cindy became certified with the Arthritis Foundation 15 years ago so she could instruct the research-based land and aquatic classes. She also wanted to understand more about arthritis as her mom had a terrible case of osteoporosis. Cindy studied a lot about essential oils and has tried them several times for pain relief and anti-inflammatory benefits. She currently instructs one aquatic and two land-based classes weekly.

Donna Dernier is 72 years of age and resides in California. She has been facing the challenges of osteoarthritis for many years. She retired early from her job at the Social Security Administration. She had to make changes in what vehicle she drove and how she dressed, and has to avoid too many stairs. At age 59, she sought out a group of women in their 80s because, with their assortment of canes and walkers, they moved at the same rate as her. She has tried a variety of things to alleviate the pain, including acupuncture, massage, physical therapy, surgeries and various medications.

Kathy Geller is a certified group fitness instructor and personal trainer. During her career of 25 years, she was certified as an Arthritis Foundation exercise instructor. After a few years of conducting a successful program at a local YMCA, she was approached by the Arthritis Foundation to become a trainer for the land program. Little did she know at the time that she would not only teach exercise for countless people with arthritis, but would also face her own osteoarthritis journey. When she could no longer manage her fitness career because of multiple shoulder, hand and wrist surgeries, she managed Arthritis Foundation exercise programs in New Jersey, including approximately 250 trainers and aquatic, exercise and tai chi Instructors at over 130 sites. In addition, she delivered educational presentations to the community on arthritis-related topics. After seven years, she was unable to continue this position due to her increasing challenges with osteoarthritis. She returned to volunteer status, serving on the leadership board, acting as chair in 2014-2015, chairing the volunteer engagement committee and serving as a Platinum Ambassador for the Foundation’s advocacy program.

Bruce Hanson is a retired Evangelical Lutheran Church in America parish pastor. Rev. Hanson has osteoarthritis and presently does some part-time preaching for a small rural church and takes care of his wife full-time. His wife has suffered from several diseases, including osteoarthritis. Rev. Hanson has been extensively involved as a patient advocate with the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute as a patient engagement committee member and grant reviewer, as well as a board member of the Critical Care Subcommittee of the American Board of Internal Medicine, a technical expert for the health services advisory group on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Quality and Efficiency Measures Group, a member of the patient advisory panel for the Pharmacy Quality Alliance, and a former member of National Patient Advocacy Foundation.
Kay Harvey is a U.S. Army veteran. After 10 years, she ended her time in service and received an honorable discharge. She has completed her master’s degree in health education and is currently pursuing her doctorate in health education. Kay began her advocacy work in 2010 while living and working in Syracuse with patients suffering from arthritis. Kay noticed her own struggles with pain as a result of osteoarthritis, but wasn’t actively diagnosed until after her time in service. Although she “felt” something wasn’t right physically, she was unable to actively describe her pain while on active duty as a noncommissioned officer. Kay is currently working to educate several faith-based and veteran community organizations concerning the burden of arthritis, cost and access to care. She lives with her husband, who is currently serving on active duty at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

Fletcher Johnson, 58, is a software engineer in the San Francisco area. He has osteoarthritis in his knees. He currently enjoys cycling in his home state of California, but has had to give up many other activities due to his osteoarthritis. He would like to stay on top of current research, but finds the local paper to be one of the few places to learn about changes that isn’t written in medical jargon. His overwhelming goal is to know about (and possibly participate in) the various regenerative technologies that may prevent him from having to replace his knees with metal.

Janet Maynard is a board-certified internist and rheumatologist who joined the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Rheumatology Products, as a medical officer in 2011. She became a clinical team leader in 2013. Janet received her medical degree from Vanderbilt University and completed a residency in internal medicine at Duke Hospital. Subsequently, she completed a fellowship in rheumatology at Johns Hopkins Hospital. During her fellowship, she completed a master’s of health science at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the graduate training program in clinical investigation. Following her fellowship, she was a faculty member at Johns Hopkins.

Ed McGrath is 69 years old and now resides in Florida. His career was in international banking, investment management and trust businesses. He retired in 2007. What was subsequently diagnosed as Heberden’s nodes started to appear on his fingers in his early 30s. In his early 60s, osteoarthritis was diagnosed during an examination of his knee before surgery. Once the knee was cleaned up, he could walk much better, got rid of the cane he was using and began exercising. However, many of the activities he enjoys, like scouting, boating, flying and gardening, are now much more difficult because of his osteoarthritis.

Amanda Niskar is the national scientific director of the Arthritis Foundation. Amanda has more than 25 years of clinical and scientific experience in the health industry. She is the architect of the Arthritis Foundation Scientific Strategy 2015-2020. Amanda represents the Arthritis Foundation on the steering committee for the Clinical Trials Transformation Initiative and is distinguished faculty for the 2017 Osteoarthritis Research Society International World Congress Inaugural Course on Osteoarthritis Clinical Trials. She received her doctorate of public health from the University of North Carolina, her master of public health from Emory University and her bachelor of science in nursing from the University of Michigan.
Ann M. Palmer is the president and chief executive officer of the Arthritis Foundation. With more than 30 years of experience within the voluntary health space, Ann has revolutionized the organization’s approach, structure and focus to deliver the greatest impact in the lives of those with arthritis. Ann is a member of the board of directors of the National Health Council, which consists of voluntary health agencies committed to helping people with chronic diseases and disabilities and their caregivers. Ann is passionate about her work as the Foundation’s leader: “I am truly inspired by the dedication of our volunteers and the courage and perseverance of people with arthritis and their families.”

Suzette Peng is a board-certified internist and rheumatologist. She received her medical degree from the Morsani College of Medicine at the University of South Florida. She then completed her internal medicine residency and rheumatology fellowship at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. She was a staff rheumatologist at Walter Reed and then Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, where she continues to see patients with a range of rheumatologic conditions. She joined the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 2012 as a clinical reviewer in the Office of New Drug, Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Rheumatology Products.

Mary Suzanne Schrandt is the director of patient engagement for the Arthritis Foundation. She has advocated on behalf of children and adults with arthritis since her own rheumatologic diagnosis in 1990, and serves numerous roles in patient and clinician education initiatives aimed at increasing early diagnosis and appropriate, patient-centered management of arthritis. She received her law degree from the University of Kansas School of Law and is a member of the American Health Lawyers Association, the Kansas Bar Association, and Professional Responsibility in Medicine & Research.

David Shuey is chair emeritus of the Arthritis Foundation’s national board of directors, and has served in numerous posts and positions as a volunteer for the Arthritis Foundation, both locally and nationally. David has osteoarthritis. During his tenure as chair, he biked coast-to-coast to honor his mother, who suffered with osteoarthritis, and raised money and awareness for the Arthritis Foundation. David is an experienced executive in the insurance industry. His clients range from early-stage research and development companies to large pharmaceutical firms. He has expertise in therapeutics, medical devices, generics, nutraceuticals, consumer products, contract research organizations, laboratories and contract manufacturing.

Angela Tucci is a second year college student and certified group fitness instructor. During her high school soccer career, she hoped to play collegiately until she had to turn down the opportunity due to two anterior cruciate ligament surgeries and several meniscus tears occurring within the timespan of a year, both on her right leg. She now majors in exercise science and hopes to continue her education in preventative care for injury and osteoarthritis. As a 19-year-old who lives a very active lifestyle, both in her career and in her personal life, she anticipates being diagnosed with osteoarthritis at a very young age. She is nervous this disease will put a stop to her dreams.
Janet Woodcock is the director of the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The CDER is responsible for evaluating prescription and over-the-counter drugs before they can be sold and oversees their testing in clinical trials. The CDER provides health care professionals and patients with the information they need to use medicines wisely. The CDER ensures that brand-name and generic drugs work correctly and that their health benefits outweigh their known risks. She received her medical degree from Northwestern University Medical School, and her undergraduate degree from Bucknell University.

Janet Steams Wyatt has been a volunteer with the Arthritis Foundation for the past 14 years following diagnosis with osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. During this time, she served in multiple leadership roles, including terms on the national board of directors and chair of the advocacy-public health policy committee. Jan has spent more than 40 years in nursing, health education and policy as a nurse practitioner, educator and executive. Her clinical experiences include service in both the U.S. Navy and Army Nurse Corps Reserves, and work as a nurse practitioner in primary care and community health care settings. As a nurse educator, she served in graduate faculty positions at the University of Maryland and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. She served for more than 13 years as the chief executive officer of the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board and Institute of Pediatric Nursing. Jan was appointed to the National Advisory Council of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and also led grant review teams for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. She is a passionate advocate for advocacy and access for all individuals with arthritis.

Sarah Yim is a board-certified rheumatologist who has been with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) since 2005, serving as a medical officer, clinical team leader and associate director for rheumatology in the Division of Pulmonary, Allergy and Rheumatology Products. She served as the FDA co-sponsorship coordinator for the Arthritis Foundation-FDA Accelerating OA Clinical Trials Workshop in February 2016. She is currently the director of the Division of Clinical Review in the Office of Generic Drugs, FDA.

A Special Thank You

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