



# The Punch Line

## Become a Buddy

Think back to the first time you entered our gym. Likely you have Parkinson's Disease or are a caregiver. And you likely visited us to help evaluate our program to see if it is a fit for you. Can I do what they do? Will I enjoy doing it? Is it worth my time and financial commitment?

Then when you've made the commitment to join us, you wonder about the others you see in the gym. What are they like? What about the journey they are on. Is there anybody here who experiences what I do? Anybody at the same point in their journey? What about my symptoms? Can anybody else relate to what I feel and experience? How will I get to know these folks who all seem to know and enjoy each other already? How will I fit in? Will this really help me?

You *know* how it feels. You've *been* there.

Early on, it was easy for everyone in our family to know everybody else. Early on, we all went out of our way to know every new visitor and member – to know their families – to know when anyone becomes ill and cannot attend on a temporary or even permanent basis.

Now, with two locations, nearly 90 members plus caregivers, ten coaches, volunteers and other friends of the organization, it is increasingly more difficult to make new members and caregivers feel comfortable – to feel like family. To know the newbies like we did before. To make newbies feel at home with our “family” as we did and do.

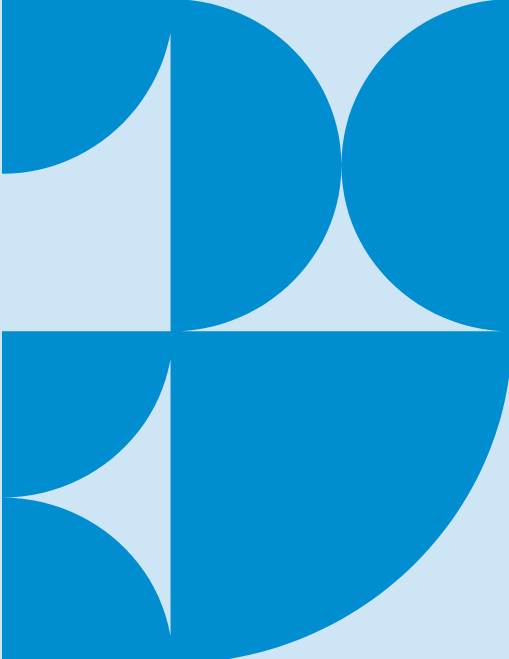
**Volunteer to be a buddy.** If you are a member or caregiver (cornerperson), fill out the form in this newsletter and give it to your coach, who will assign a new member or caregiver to you.

As a buddy, we suggest you contact your buddy on a personal level. Meet with your buddy in person on a regular basis (at least monthly) for coffee, lunch or somewhere away from the gym. If not in person, at least a call.

### **The Punch Line**

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### BUDDY SIGN-UP

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Member? or Caregiver? \_\_\_\_\_

Print this form, fill it out and give to your coach. Or email this information to [info@RockSteadyBoxingMichiana.com](mailto:info@RockSteadyBoxingMichiana.com).

Your coaches will know of your volunteer buddy availability and will make an effort to assign a new person to you. There's not much science behind this matchmaker program. When new people arrive, an introduction will be made. As a buddy, you take it from there. Take the initiative. Make them feel as welcome as you felt (or wish you had).

Once your coach assigns you as someone's buddy, you can help in two ways: You can help the new person feel a personal connection to Rock Steady Boxing of Michiana. You can be an invaluable resource to the new member or caregiver. Sit with them. Phone them. Check in on them.

Further, you can help the *organization* by letting us know when your assigned member or caregiver has an issue, a question, a problem or a celebration. As we grow, it's difficult to remain small. It's difficult for us to know if someone is ill. Or if there is a problem or complaint. So you can help us, as well. We take pride in being more than an organization - **we're a family**.

In short, Buddies make us Better!

## RSB Online Zoom Classes

Know someone who needs RSB but can't find a location near them? Or maybe someone who is temporarily disabled and can't make it to class? We can arrange online Zoom membership with classes 3 days/week.

We do require a brief assessment, medical release and paperwork completed prior to joining. There is a monthly fee for membership. Classes are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:00 am - noon ET.

Contact Don Sheliga or Phil Miller for more information.

## Rock Steady Boxing of Michiana

50770-A State Road 933  
South Bend  
and  
2510 Benham Avenue  
Elkhart  
(574) 286-6731



[RockSteadyBoxingMichiana.com](http://RockSteadyBoxingMichiana.com)

### Coaching...

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering as a coach or coach's assistant, contact Don Sheliga. Or simply ask your coach to pass on your information.

We would like to discuss the opportunity and your interest.

# Member Spotlight



## Carol Waite

Ask this fighter if she believes in the benefits of exercise. You will discover that for her, it's much more than belief. It's an *obsession*.

Canadian-born Carol Waite grew up in the Toronto area, where she graduated from nursing school. She moved to Michigan in 1974, working as an RN until her retirement in 2018.

In early 2013, Carol noticed a twitch in her right hand. And her handwriting had become much smaller. Kristin, the oldest of three daughters, and a physician, alerted Carol that this was very likely Parkinson's disease and recommended that she see a neurologist.

Her diagnosis was confirmed that February, Carol's medical research inclination kicked in: she bought 70 books. She attended seminars. As she tells it, she became *obsessed* with information. She read that exercise could improve her condition and make her feel better. So she participated in the "BIG" program and "Delay the Disease" and exercised at the Niles YMCA. In 2016, she attended the World Parkinson's Congress in Portland, Oregon.

Also in 2016, she saw the Leslie Stahl interview about Parkinson's and Rock Steady Boxing. She promptly found and contacted us and joined in South Bend that August, only 3 months after we opened. Carol was only the second female to join our program.

So - what has Rock Steady done for her? "I believe it has contributed to slowing the progression of my Parkinson's. I started exercising early on, and I've exercised more in the last 11 years than previously in my lifetime. I believe it's important to keep moving. Exercise is my focus; I'm *obsessed*." In Rock Steady Boxing of Michiana, Carol feels that support of her peers is an important part of the program. In addition to RSB, she participates in the Berrien County Parkinson's support group.

Carol and Dennis like to travel. In 2023 they traveled to Europe, where they attended the World PD conference in Barcelona. And this summer, they drove 8,000 miles on their 4-week road trip to eastern Canada.

Hobbies? She loves to feed and watch birds on their property. She fills 40 bird feeders daily and also feeds deer and other assorted wildlife.

**Carol Waite: A pioneer RSB Michiana member. An *obsessed* fighter.**



Carol Waite

## Welcome New Members:

### South Bend

**Teri DeLong  
John Grcich  
David Hoffman**

### Elkhart

**Tom Farrow  
Vivian LaVine  
Dan Purkey  
Dennis Schmucker**