

# A Community of Members that Stand Out

FAIRVIEW MS ACHIEVEMENT CENTER



Name: Fairview MS Achievement Center  
Location: St. Paul, MN  
Attendance: 40 People Daily  
Diagnosis Served: Multiple Sclerosis  
Staff: Therapists, Aids, Chaplain, Volunteers  
Established: 1987  
Website: [www.fairview.org/msac](http://www.fairview.org/msac)

Anyone who has ever walked through the doors of The Fairview Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Achievement Center will agree that it is a successful program comprised of a caring staff and a unique group of members. Leading this program is Cathy Tobias, MS Center Director. She explains how much the MS Center means to her members, "We have forty members registered to come here everyday. They call themselves members of the community. They don't want to be called patients, but members, that is really special!" The two year waiting list to enter this program is an entitlement to its success and great need in the area.



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### PROGRAM HISTORY

The MS Center provides therapeutic, social, supportive, spiritual and educational services to optimize the quality of life for individuals with progressing Multiple Sclerosis. Cathy explains more about the program, "The Fairview MS Achievement Center is in its twenty-third year and we have been at this site in St. Paul for about eighteen years. We offer a very unique program that was the first of its kind in the nation, now there is only about three to five other programs similar to it and they were all modeled after our program."

### THERAPY GYM CHANGES LIVES

All of the therapists at the Achievement Center have experience with MS, advanced training, and education. Cathy talks about how these therapists help members progress, "This room is always very busy! In many ways it is the heart of the program! All the members love coming here, therapy really changes their lives. It is a regular hospital-based outpatient clinic, so we have physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. This is generally restorative therapy. Once they get to a certain level in their standing therapy, walking or stretching program, they no longer need a therapist. At this time the therapist discharges the member and trains our rehab aids to continue that program every week so that members are still able to get that intervention."

### LOTS OF WAYS TO STAND

The Fairview Achievement Center has five EasyStand standing frames in their therapy gym, some Evolv's, and some StrapStand's. When using the Evolv standers, most members are transferred into the stander's seat using a ceiling lift. Some members prefer to use the StrapStand, which has a strap that lifts them directly out of their wheelchair. The therapy gym is indeed a busy place, and often has several of the standers in use at a given time.

### INSIGHT INTO STANDING WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Jackie Harry is a Physical Therapist at the MS Achievement Center. She talks about her job at the MS Center, "I assess whether members are appropriate to use a standing frame. I write letters of medical necessity for standers and help monitor patients and aids using standers during our day program." Jackie continues by talking about the importance of standing, "In my experience, standing really is the best possible way to help reduce a member's spasticity without having to rely exclusively on medication. It also really helps improve circulation, prevent contractures and improve bowel and bladder function, because they work on gravity and when a person becomes increasingly sedentary or wheelchair bound they don't get that normal motion. You wouldn't think it would be a challenge to your heart but they have to pump against gravity, so it is a good way to get some cardiovascular fitness. It just feels good for them to stand!" Many of the members participate in a standing program as part of their rehabilitation program. Two of those patients, Marinela and Nila, share their experiences with standing.

**CHALLENGE:** HELP MEMBERS WITH PROGRESSIVE MS MAINTAIN OR IMPROVE THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE.

**SOLUTION:** CREATE A PROGRAM THAT NOT ONLY OFFERS REHAB THERAPY, BUT CREATIVE ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT IN A SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT.

**CHALLENGE:** GET MEMBERS STANDING, EVEN THOUGH THEY CANNOT TRANSFER INDEPENDENTLY.

**SOLUTION:** USE THE STRAPSTAND TO STAND THE PERSON DIRECTLY FROM THEIR WHEELCHAIR. ALTERNATIVELY, USE A LIFT ASSIST DEVICE TO TRANSFER THE PERSON INTO THE SEAT OF THE EVOLV.

**CHALLENGE:** KEEP MEMBERS AS PHYSICALLY & MENTALLY HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE.

**SOLUTION:** OFFER THERAPY LIKE STANDING TO IMPROVE CIRCULATION, STRENGTHEN BONES, STRETCH MUSCLES, STAY ALERT AND MUCH MORE.



“Standing is good for relieving pressure on our buttocks, for stretching our bodies, for circulation. I find myself being more alert, and I stay awake more.”

### MARINELA'S STORY

Marinela Poptelecan has had Multiple Sclerosis since 1998 and has been coming to the MS Center since 2006. She comes twice a week and stands in the EasyStand StrapStand each time. She explains, “The reason I like to stand is that it helps me with spasticity and with my balance, it also clears my mind. I cannot see coming here without standing, it is the first thing that I do. I like the program and I like to stay with my standing schedule. I usually stand between 30 and 45 minutes a day. It helps me so much!”

### NILA'S STORY

Nila Poole has had Multiple Sclerosis since 1972 and has been a positive presence at the MS Achievement Center for many years. “I like the environment and the state of the art technology that we have here. Standing is good for relieving pressure on our buttocks, for stretching our bodies, for circulation. I find myself being more alert, and I stay awake more,” Nila says. She attends twice a week and usually stands for 20 to 30 minutes, sometimes even on hour! She explains, “I have osteoporosis and standing helps me strengthen my bones. One time I had a foot fracture and it helped strengthen that ankle. It improves my circulation as well as my balance. My body really feels it because I am in my wheelchair a majority of the time. So I don't walk, but I do stand, with the help of the standing frame!”

### MEMBERS GIVE MORE

It is obvious that the Fairview MS Achievement Center is filled with opportunity for both members and staff. For Cathy, working at the MS Center is definitely a rewarding experience, “I enjoy sharing our program with others. Frankly it is just an honor for me to be here and serve these people. I work very hard everyday, but I also have to say that everyday these people give more to me than I am ever able to give to them!”

### STANDING PROGRAM:

MEMBERS STAND 2-3 DAY A WEEK  
30-60 MINUTES

### BENEFITS OF STANDING:

IMPROVED CIRCULATION  
LESS NEED FOR MEDICATION  
REDUCED SPASTICITY  
STRONGER BONES  
CLEAR ALERT MIND  
REDUCED CONTRACTURES  
IMPROVED BOWEL & BLADDER  
CARDIOVASCULAR FITNESS

### CONTACT INFO:

WEB: [WWW.FAIRVIEW.ORG/MSAC](http://WWW.FAIRVIEW.ORG/MSAC)  
EMAIL: [MSAC@FAIRVIEW.ORG](mailto:MSAC@FAIRVIEW.ORG)  
PH: 612.672.2815

