

Opening to advocacy



**Cyndi Zagieboylo,
President & CEO**

A note from the President & CEO

Earlier this month, we recognized MS Awareness Week nationally, launching a campaign that will grow engagement through awareness all year long. We promote awareness because we know that when we connect more people with resources, with each other and with the MS movement, it can change their world. It can uncover solutions that lead to fulfilled dreams. And each of us can help.

In "[Connecting for change](#)," you'll read about three individuals, including 14-year-old Taylor Prather, who are working to make the world better for people who live with MS. All of them shared their own experiences of living with MS, making valuable connections with others that led to important change.

Taylor says that a willingness to be vulnerable and talk about her disease was important in

getting attention from her state representative. Once Taylor helped him see the impact that MS has on her, as an individual, the congressman became committed to working with the Society to increase funding for MS research.

Bill Luria was reluctant to get involved when he was first diagnosed with MS, but he found that volunteering opened up networks of relationships with legislators and other civic-minded people. As a result, he's been able to improve accessible transportation services throughout his state. And Ralph Montefusco worked for change locally, showing restaurant and shop owners how improving accessibility could benefit customers and businesses alike. Both men have made it easier for people with MS to be less isolated and more engaged in life.

As Bill notes, connecting with business owners and legislators is easier than you might think. To learn your legislators' opinions on various topics, sign up for our [MS Activist Network](#), and then let them know how you feel. If you're not able to visit your legislators in person, call or write them. And remember, you can always speak with your vote.

There are other ways to connect for change, as well. You can participate in events like Walk MS. In "[A step forward](#)", Kristin Sanchez, Carin Snell and Rebecca Kuchar talk about how the connections they've made at Walk MS have propelled the MS movement—and their lives—forward.

You can include a connection image on your email signature—go to [MSconnection.org](#) to learn how—and share your activities with your social media networks. Even something as simple as wearing an MS pin or T-shirt lets people know what matters to you. Let people know what your goals are, what obstacles stand in your way and how they can help.

Strengthening your connections with others helps them understand your experience and your vision of a better world, and can inspire them to work toward it with you. And the more people who share a vision, the more likely it will be achieved. When it comes to creating a world free of MS, every connection counts. I'm interested in the connections you've made and what happened next. Email me at cyndi@nmss.org. I would be honored to learn about and connect with you.

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National MS Society

Sign up for the [MS Activist Network](#) and get involved!.