

Call on the Fighter

It's 7:15am and Elise shuffles to the kitchen to retrieve her daily meds. Her gait is tenuous and slow. She struggles to gather her belongings and reaches for the door. She stops to steady her hand on the lock. Her sister will be here any minute to provide assistance and transportation. No, she's not on her way to work. She's not going to the doctor. She's headed to the gym. Not just any gym, but one that is just for her and others like her.



You see, Elise has Parkinson's Disease. The simplest of tasks...taking medicine...remaining balanced to walk...and even signing her name are a constant fight due to the muscle control that Parkinson's steals from her. It's a fight she wouldn't be able to take on without regular help and inner courage. This gym at Bridges for Parkinson's is a lifeline to Elise. It's life-changing and provides hope to her and countless others battling this awful, debilitating disease.



Bridges for Parkinson's is the program designed by professional Parkinson's advocate and trainer, Colleen Bridges. Since 2016, Colleen has been tirelessly researching, developing and providing organized classes that focus on keeping people fighting Parkinson's in the game of life. She and her trainers know just what it takes to battle the ongoing effects of Parkinson's and are dedicated to pushing it back on behalf of all the fighters. Colleen says, *"It's really me who is inspired because they bring their hearts to every workout. They inspire me to keep pushing, to keep learning and to go the*

second mile to give them the best because they deserve it." With personalized exercise programs and purposeful boxing movements, fighters are able to gain back much of what Parkinson's tries to take away.

But a program like this takes resources...paid and knowledgeable coaches, gym equipment, facility expenses and more. Due to many factors such as age and lack of insurance, many can't afford even the minimal costs of receiving this important treatment. So, in order to serve more fighters, Colleen and one of her patients, Rich Gootee, an award-winning song writer, singer and Parkinson's patient, have used music in an innovative way to both inspire other patients and provide financial support for the program.

From deep experience and understanding of the struggles of Parkinson's, Rich and a co-writer, Greg Anderson, wrote the song "Call on the Fighter". Rich says, *"I hope that when someone struggling with Parkinson's hears this song that it can inspire them, that it can encourage them and make them understand they're not alone in this fight."* The lyrics run deep into the determination that must be summoned by Parkinson's fighters and their care partners every day. However, it's not just a song of hope and encouragement. It's a movement, a call to inspire other similar programs to be creative in how they meet the needs of their own fighters.

The Bridges for Parkinson's fighters came out swinging in 2022 when asked to film a music video based upon the song. Many pushed through more than their usual 1 hour class to get the video filmed and gave all they could to maybe encourage just one newly diagnosed fighter to join the fight. These are passionate fighters and trainers that are willing to go beyond the pain to provide hope to others.



The video and song will debut at **callonthefighter.com** on September 13, 2022. Visitors to the site will see the music video, hear the genesis of the "Call on the Fighter" campaign, and be encouraged to buy the song and contribute to keep the program available to many more fighters in the region. They are also seeking corporate sponsors who will step up and join the fight.

Elise will tell you that this program has given her back her family, her dignity and her ability. But there are many more like her that need your help.

How will YOU help call on the fighter?

Visit **callonthefighter.com** to contribute today!

