



# CONTACT

Published by the Multiple Sclerosis Association of King County  
Your Local MS Service Center Since 1956

Winter 2001

## “Gertrude” Keeps On Chuggin’ for MSA’s Benefit

by Tom Barr,

MSA Development Director

Between 1960 and 1981, thousands of local children knew Bob Newman as Gertrude, the wacky sidekick of KIRO-TV’s J.P. Patches. He was also the voice of some 12 to 15 characters on the show. Among them were Esmarelda the doll, the Irish policeman Officer Paddy Wagon, Boris S. Wort, the second-meanest man in the world, and Gorst the friendly monster who lived in the basement.

“It wasn’t that I was so great,” said Newman. “It was that we had a budget of \$7.50 and nobody else would work that cheap.”

Maybe that’s why he kept his ‘day job’ at KIRO as a floor manager, and became a make-up man. “It’s something you learn by watching others work. Then you buy \$2-\$3,000 worth of make-up and you end up getting to apply it from time to time,” Newman said.

Hang out with Newman and you will frequently be treated to such a string of one-liners, self-deprecating humor, and off-hand comments.

Few may have known that while he was establishing his identity Newman was also waging a continuing battle with MS.

“I was diagnosed in 1965 and I’ve had MS for 25-30 years. I’m a chronic progressive, and I’ve got a bunch of other dumb stuff.”

After 26 years he had to leave KIRO because “my MS had gotten to the point where I just couldn’t run around the studio like a floor director has to. I went on a long-term disability, which means I went to my house and laid down a lot for 10 years.”

Although he retired in 1996, Newman still maintains an active lifestyle and works as much as he wants. Recently, he served three years on the M.S. Association of King County Board of Directors



*Although he’s lived with multiple sclerosis for 25-30 years, Bob Newman has never let it ruin his enthusiasm for life.*

**See GERTRUDE on page 2**

## Volunteers: The Bedrock of the MSA!

by Glenn Reed, Editor

Four years ago Patty Heflin, who was diagnosed with MS in 1983, was filling out her Social Security papers and having a difficult time with this paperwork that is definitely not user-friendly.

“It’s a time-consuming process when you have MS, especially because you’re easily fatigued and it requires other types of documentation such as letters from doctors,” notes Heflin. “A peer support person

from the MSA really helped me get through the process.”

Heflin, like so many others with MS or with family members who have the disease, decided that she wanted to give something back to the MSA. She decided to become one of the hundreds of individuals who presently volunteer for the organization.

“Volunteers are invaluable to a non-profit organization such as the M.S. Association,” emphasizes MSA

Executive Director, Merrill Ringold. “We benefit, in particular, from a volunteer base of individuals who are highly motivated and dedicated to our goals. This is partly due to the fact that so many of them are familiar with the challenges presented by the disease and truly want to be of assistance to others facing those challenges.”

MSA volunteers can offer their services in a wide variety of capacities,

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**GERTRUDE** continued from page 1

and is still a member of the Development Committee. For several years on Thursdays he's driven his Corvette up to Queen Anne Pool for MSA's water therapy class.

Newman is also helping raise money to provide MSA services and find a cure for MS. This year, he is serving as the MSA's spokesman, seeking contributions through the annual direct mail appeal.

"It's a very demanding illness, but I've got it so much better than so many people. I can still make it around pretty good. I use a cane, but that's fine. I've never been frightened about it.

"I'm at the point where I've been living with MS for 30 years,

and I want to find a cure for this thing. I want to go down and get a shot and it's over. But even if that happens, there will still be a need for MSA's services.

Although J.P. Patches and Gertrude haven't had their own TV show since 1981 their fame lives on in videos, CD ROMs, and T-shirts. They still play an active slate of Christmas and business parties, fairs and other events.

"We've always got 49 things going. That's what's made this thing so great. Don't feel sorry for me. I haven't got time for that. I've got things going on this afternoon, tomorrow, the next day. I've got places to go, and things to do.

"Our show lasts about 45 minutes and we do everything from

Simon Sez to Hula Hoops and talk to the audience. Now we're doing birthday parties. Someone will call us and say 'Fred is 50 and I want to give him this. . .' So we're the secret guest. We do a lot of great stuff, we do a lot of weird things, but hey, it's all legal."

Newman also does make-up at KCTS on a regular basis, and on-call for commercials and movies.

"When I was home with MS, I went over to Channel 9 and did a makeup seminar for the producers. I worked one show for six years and then more shows. I've been over there for 13 years now."

Newman was born in Seattle and lived on Mercer Island, when according to him, it was still grazing land for livestock. He grew

See **GERTRUDE** on page 6

## M.S.A. Programs

### Hydrotherapy Classes

Bellevue - Odle Pool ..... Tuesdays, 1:00- 2:00 p.m.  
Burien - Evergreen Pool ..... Fridays, 12:00-1:00 p.m.  
Kent - Kent Pool ..... Mondays, 1:00- 2:00 p.m.  
Seattle - Helene Madison Pool ..... Thursdays, 11:00-12:00 noon  
Seattle - Queen Anne Pool ..... Thursdays, 3:00-4:00 p.m.  
Shoreline - Fircrest Pool..... Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

### Yoga Classes

Bellevue – Highland Community Center .... Fridays, 12:30-1:30 p.m.  
Seattle – The Yoga Tree ..... Wednesdays, 10:30-11:45 a.m.  
Seattle Evening – The Yoga Tree ..... Fridays, 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

### Newly Diagnosed Support Groups

South King County, Renton–Group Health Office.  
First Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m. . Call Mary Huff 253-850-3692  
Seattle, Fremont - MSA Office  
First Tuesday of the month, 7:00 p.m.. Call Allen Wittenberg 206-633-2606

### Nutritional Discussion Group

Seattle – Greenwood Library...Third Monday of the month, 7:00-9:00 p.m.  
Call Pepper Miller 206-297-1071

Other MSA programs include Peer Support, Short-Term Counseling, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy. **Prior registration is required for all classes.** If you would like further information on any

## CONTACT

CONTACT is a publication of the **Multiple Sclerosis Association of King County**, for people with MS and their families. It provides news and information on MS and agency services. The opinions expressed in CONTACT do not necessarily reflect those of the MS Association of King County.

MSA is located at:  
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# MSA News Notes

## *New Board Member*

Diane Peters joined the MSA Board of Directors this fall, though she's been a volunteer for over a year along with her daughters Tori and Christina. The family became involved as a result of Tori's diagnosis with multiple sclerosis in early 1998.

"The MSA was such a help to us and I don't know how we would have made it through otherwise," she notes. "I had to find a way to give something back."



*Diane Peters*

Diane grew up in California, went to Palo Alto High School and attended several colleges in that area, has pursued volunteer work in a church food program and is presently taking courses at Bellevue Community College. She and her family moved to Issaquah from the Bay Area three years ago. She will be serving on the M.S. House Committee and hopes to continue her involvement with fund development.

"Personally, I'd like to see the MSA become stronger financially and I'd like to help educate people more about the disease," she adds.

## ***Board Opportunities!***

If you are interested in serving on the MSA Board, please call Merrill Ringold at 206-633-2606.

## MSA Salutes Volunteers!

About 20 MSA volunteers, board and staff members gathered on November 2<sup>nd</sup> to celebrate another successful year for the volunteer program. Guests represented the spectrum of over 200 MSA volunteers. They included people like Randi Ryan and Rita and Dic Selin, who have helped the MSA for many years, but also new volunteers like Andy Kallio, who was just completing his first month with the agency.

Executive Director Merrill Ringold noted the wide range of skills that volunteers bring to their work, as well as the varied jobs that volunteers do for the MSA "You are all immensely valuable to us," Ringold told attendees.

Volunteer trainings for 2001 will be presented Saturday mornings on 1/27 (Effective Listening Skills), 3/24 (Boundaries and Limit Setting), and 6/2 (topic pending). All volunteers and interested people are welcome to attend.

For more information on the M.S.A. volunteer program, contact Gregg Robinson at 206-633-2606.

## Educational Workshops for 2001

The M.S. Association has set dates for a number of educational workshops for 2001. They include the following:

A session on **Social Security Disability Insurance/ Supplemental Security Income/ Employer Disability plans *or* SSDI/SSI/ Employer Disability Plans** will be held on Tuesday, February 13 from 7-9 p.m. at the Good Neighbor Center in Renton. Speakers will include Rebecca Pursley, a former school teacher who has M.S., and Ken Gormly, an attorney who specializes in the topics.

Specific subject matter will include an explanation of the eligibility criteria, procedures and process, helpful tips and strategies in filling out the application and an explanation of how employer disability plans work and how to appeal a denial. The MSA hopes to present this workshop on a quarterly basis in different regions of King County.

The annual **Living Well Series**, held in collaboration with the National M.S. Society, will be on April 4, 11 and 18 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at locations to be announced. Speakers/topics will include:

**April 4<sup>th</sup>**— Mariko Kita, neurologist and Director of the M.S. Center, Virginia Mason will speak on "What's New in MS?"

**April 11<sup>th</sup>**— Lorin Jacobs of Extendicare Health Services will speak about home-based support service, community-based support services, and housing options.

**April 18<sup>th</sup>**—speakers TBA. Topics will include estate/life planning and insurance.

**Living with M.S. for Care Partners and People with M.S.** will be held on Saturday, May 19 at a specific time and location to be announced. Speakers will include John Babbo (Ph.D in Health Psychology and Family Systems) who will speak to the care partners only and Vali Hawkins Mitchell, (Ph.D and Certified Mental Health Counselor) who will speak to MS'ers only on "Living with a Chronic Illness." Dr. David Tempest, Psychiatrist at Swedish Medical Center, Providence Campus will speak to both groups on "M.S From A Rehabilitative Perspective."

The Association will also organize the **Complementary and Integrative Wellness Options Series** sometime in June. Watch for more information on this and other workshops in the mail and future issues of *Contact*.

# Keeping Our Doors Open

## Swordsmen Raises Money for MSA; Whacks Way Into Guinness Book

Twenty years ago a chance encounter with a person struggling to cross a street became a defining moment for Russell McCartney.

“That person had advanced MS. The light had already changed, and he looked at me and it was very clear that he was saying ‘just be patient,’” says McCartney. “I still, to this day, feel the power of that moment. It said great things about people who have MS. They must really have a tremendous amount of fortitude to deal with that.”

McCartney became chief instructor of Japanese swordsmanship at Ishi Yama Ryu Dojo in Seattle and President of the College of Battodo Sword Instruction. When he was challenged to try for the Guinness Book World Record in a form of Japanese swordsmanship called Battojutse, he wrote to local businesses seeking sponsorship with the understanding that part of the money would be donated to local



*Russell McCartney (right), President, College of Battodo Sword Instruction and chief instructor at the Ishi Yama Ryu Dojo school of Japanese Swordsmanship describes one of the swords he uses to MSA Executive Director Merrill Ringold.*

human service organizations.

The rules and format of the Battojutse competition are very precise. Swordsmen are limited to one sword that can not be re-sharpened. There are eight basic cuts and nine essentials for a successful target cut. The cuts are two diagonals from upper to lower, two diagonals from lower to upper, both on the right and left hand side, and then two horizontal cuts.

McCartney earned his Guinness

record spot at the Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival held in the ballroom at the Seattle Center House. He did so by making 1184 consecutive cuts in 20 targets without a miss in one hour and 25 minutes. McCartney moved from target to target cutting them at angles of 35-41 degrees from vertical.

Our congratulations to McCartney and thanks, as his precision and record resulted in a \$600.00 donation to the MSA!

## Raffle Kick-Off Scheduled for February!

MSA's annual raffle is scheduled to kick off in mid-February, and ticket sales will continue into mid-May. Ticket buyers and sellers have an opportunity to win a variety of prize packages that will include travel, local sightseeing, Seattle sports memorabilia, outdoor recreation, lodging, and dining. Other prizes are expected to include tickets to theater productions, children's attractions, and overnight accommodations at regional attractions. Ticket prices will be \$2.00 each and \$20.00 for a book of ten.

This year we are hoping to increase the availability of tickets through sales at local shopping malls and supermarkets. The success of expanding ticket

sales, and thus increasing the amount raised, depends on the numbers of volunteers that will be available to sell at these sites. Last year, MSA had over a dozen shopping malls and supermarkets where tickets could have been sold on multiple days and weekends but did not have volunteers available to sell at these sites. Most of these locations are expected to be available again this year. You can help by volunteering your time and asking friends and associates to join you in selling.

In addition to helping raise money for the M.S. Association of King County you will increase the possibility of winning prizes for yourself. The

top three overall ticket sellers, as well as the top monthly ticket sellers, will receive prizes. Regardless of the number of tickets you buy or sell, every dollar you raise is truly needed and appreciated and 100% of the money you raise stays right here to help local people with MS and their families.

John McKinley, top ticket seller for the last two years, is recruiting volunteers to work on this year's raffle. You can help him and yourself by calling MSA at 206-633-2606.

As in the past, ticket holders will not need to be present to win. Raffle tickets can be obtained by contacting MSA of King County, 753 N. 35<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 208, Seattle, Washington 98103,

# Honor Roll

Annual Giving and Other Donations Received From September 1, 2000 Through December 1, 2000

The Multiple Sclerosis Association of King County is registered with the Office of the Secretary of State of Washington in compliance with the Charitable Solicitation Act. Further information is available by calling 1-800-332-GIVE. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Memorial gifts are a wonderful way to remember or recognize special people while helping the MSA in its vital fund raising efforts. These thoughtful donations assist in providing a variety of services and programs to those individuals with MS in the King County area. If you would like to send a gift in memory of a loved one, to recognize a birthday, anniversary, wedding or other event, call (206) 633-2606 or mail them to 753 North 35th, Suite 208, Seattle, WA 98103. Also be sure to indicate who the gift is in recognition of and if you would like acknowledgements of the donation sent to anyone.

Memorial gifts, during the period of September 1, 2000 through December 1, 2000 have been received at the Multiple Sclerosis Association of King County. The memorialized (in italics) are followed by names of contributors who made donations in their name.

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Ms. Nancy A. Parks  
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Mr. and Ms. Thomas Reaume  
Mr. Ken Reynolds  
Mr. Ralph Rillero

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Mrs. Jeanette Schultz  
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Mrs. Pat Shipley  
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Mr. Carl Thorgerson  
Ms. Nancy H. Trenbeth  
Ms. Denise Vincent  
Ms. Cynthia Weber  
Mr. David M. Wellman  
Mrs. Marilyn D. White  
Ms. Kathy Wilmering  
Ms. Wilma Woods  
Ms. Kimberly Worthy  
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Tara Mitchell  
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Rick Peery  
Kenneth Reynolds  
Kelly Ringoen  
Kelly Roberts  
Monique Saniee  
Donald Schill  
Dick Selin  
Douglas Thorne  
Diane Trim  
Donna Vincent  
Toni Weber  
Eric White  
John Wright

## GERTRUDE from page 2

and thanks to his father, listening to jazz masters like Art Tatum and Stan Getz. A trip to California and a visit to the Jack Benny radio show kindled his interest in broadcasting, which he began studying at the University of Washington.

"Then the Korean war came along and I enlisted in the Marine Corps in January 1953. Of course North Korea found out I'd enlisted so they called off the war." Returning to Washington he married, had children, finished college, and got a job at KIRO-TV as a film editor/floor director.

"They were doing this J.P. Patches thing. One day J.P. picked up a block of wood that looked like a phone and talked to this mysterious telephone operator named Gertrude. J.P. asked her to bring him a ham sandwich because he wanted to have a picnic. God had looked down a long time ago and said this kid's gonna have a high voice, so when the phone didn't hang up or whatever, I screamed into the microphone 'Okay Julius, I'll send it right down.' Later one of the director's wives made me a Raggedy Ann dress and a mop and I went on as Gertrude." The rest is history.

Does Newman still have unfulfilled goals?

"I hear about goals all the time, but the only goals I know anything about are at the end of a football field. I just keep on chuggin!"

## Flu Blues Brings Bonanza

While scarcity of flu serum has had health care providers and the public both singing the blues, it's meant a bonanza for the MSA flu shot fundraiser.

Although the shipments were delayed, the MSA of King County received its full order of 2000 shots. It sold them all plus 300 more that it bought from the M.S. Society of Portland, Oregon. An increase in serum price necessitated a raise in the price of shots from \$10.00 to \$15.00.

The scarcity of serum combined with the price increase resulted in rocketing this fundraiser's revenue to over \$22,000 and it could end up netting between \$18,000 and \$19,000 after expenses. If those figures hold it will make the flu clinics one of the MSA's most

successful fundraisers, surpassing the raffle and in line with the annual golf tournament. The total compares to a net of less than \$1,000 in 1998, the first year of the flu clinics, and about \$9,000 last year. This year's total was raised among fewer participating organizations, as three sites from last year were unable to reschedule after the shipment delay.

The clinics were conducted at Bank of America-Fifth Avenue Plaza, Bank of America Tower, Fisher Business Centers, Key Tower, One Union Square, Rainier Square, Smith Tower, and the West Lake Union Center Building.

Equipment for the fall clinics was donated by Care Medical Equipment, Choice Medical Supplies, Swedish Hospital and

Medical Center, Synergy Logistics, Inc., The Polyclinic, Teva Marion Partners, and Virginia Mason Hospital.

Our thanks to flu shot committee members Irene LaVergne, Rita Selin, and John McKinley for their fine work in recruiting volunteers and supplies. All have agreed to serve on the 2001 flu shot committee.

Thanks also to the many nurses and volunteers who donated time to administer shots and clerical work. They include: several members of the Boeing Blue Bills, Irene Lavergne, John McKinley, Bernadette Florindo, Helene Rodowsky, Margaret Kitch, Carol Eastham, Lois Alexander, Pat Neilson, Molly Yoneyama, Amanda Smith, Elizabeth Lisle, Betty Power, Anne Marie Correa, Sharon

## **VOLUNTEERS** *continued from page 1*

according to the Association's Volunteer Coordinator, Gregg Robinson. He notes that they can do so as personal assistants, through peer support, with fundraising events or activities, in the MSA's office, through special services such as massage therapy, or with programs such as hydrotherapy. Robinson points out that over 200 volunteers provided 5,150 hours worth of service to the MSA and its clients in the past fiscal year and that 119 clients were directly helped through personal assistance, peer support, hydrotherapy or massage therapy.

"Volunteers help us in every facet of our operations," emphasizes Robinson. "That includes everything from helping in people's homes to doing the unglamorous, but critical jobs like stuffing envelopes or making phone calls. They're truly the backbone for our organization," Robinson says.

John McKinley, like Heflin, has M.S. and when he decided to start volunteering two years ago, the MSA seemed like a logical place in which to do so. Several times a week you can see McKinley assisting in the MSA's Fremont office, answering the telephone, putting the library in order, helping with the mailing of the *Contact*, or working with MSA Development Director Tom Barr on one of its numerous fundraising events.

"It gives me a chance to be useful with a good cause," says McKinley, an area native, "and because I have M.S., I also learn a lot just by being in the office."

In crunch times, such as during the annual raffle fundraiser, John may spend up to 20 hours a week volunteering and in the last two years had the honor of being the top raffle ticket seller for the MSA.

For some others, the advent of M.S. striking a family member encourages involvement by one or

more other family members. In the case of Diane Peters, a diagnosis for one of her daughters—Tori—has led to her joining the MSA Board of Directors and assisting at numerous fundraisers. Tori, a University of Washington student, and her sister Christina, a Bellevue Community College student, are also involved with fund development events that have included the raffle and the annual golf tournament. Additionally, all three have assisted with *Contact* mailings.

"We think the MSA is awesome and has done so much to help us that we want to give something back," says Christina.

As Robinson points out, fundraising and office assistance aren't the only areas where volunteers fill a need for the MSA. Peer assistants such as Patty Heflin offer practical and moral support either in person or over the telephone, while personal assistants such as Alice Shelly and Eunice Beledford visit M.S. clients and help with such tasks as grocery shopping, house cleaning, paying bills, running errands or taking them on recreational outings.

"Volunteering has given me a greater understanding of the physically challenged," says Beledford, a retired U.S. West employee who now pursues social work. She visits an MSA client in Seattle a couple of hours a week, primarily just to talk with her. "It's made me more aware that our society doesn't make enough accommodations for them, especially in terms of transportation."

Hydrotherapy and massage therapy are two areas of service offered by the MSA where volunteers may also have an impact. Massage therapist Fred Baker, started volunteering seven years ago and is presently seeing 11 clients with multiple sclerosis. Some are covered by insurance, so are paid clients, but several receive their massage free or at a reduced rate

due to very limited finances.

"Working with M.S. clients happens to be my passion," notes Baker, who received his training from the Brenekkee School of Massage in Seattle. This is particularly true because he was diagnosed with the disease in 1963 and he has a niece with M.S. as well. Baker points out that massage offers many benefits to those with M.S., including a loosening of contracted muscles that can lead to increased movement, and a feeling of increased lightness in legs that typically feel heavy to those with the disease. "Anything you do for them is deeply appreciated," Baker says of his M.S. clients.

Likewise, Barbara Mogden combines paid with volunteer work through the MSA's hydrotherapy programs. She teaches 3-4 classes a week in Kent and Queen Anne (paid), but also volunteers at Seattle's Helene Madison and Fircrest swimming pools in hour-long classes.

"I love to be able to volunteer when time and finances allow," says Barbara, who is a certified physical therapy technician and massage therapist, and has taken courses in therapeutic pool activities. "Hydrotherapy allows clients to move in water in ways that they can't do on land and to move muscles they can't normally move."

Barbara's involvement also illustrates the positive effect of networking among volunteers and the sense of community created by involvement with the MSA. "I learned about the MSA through Fred Baker and I got to know him through my massage therapy internship," she notes.

"The MSA could not exist without our multi-talented and committed volunteers," concludes Robinson.

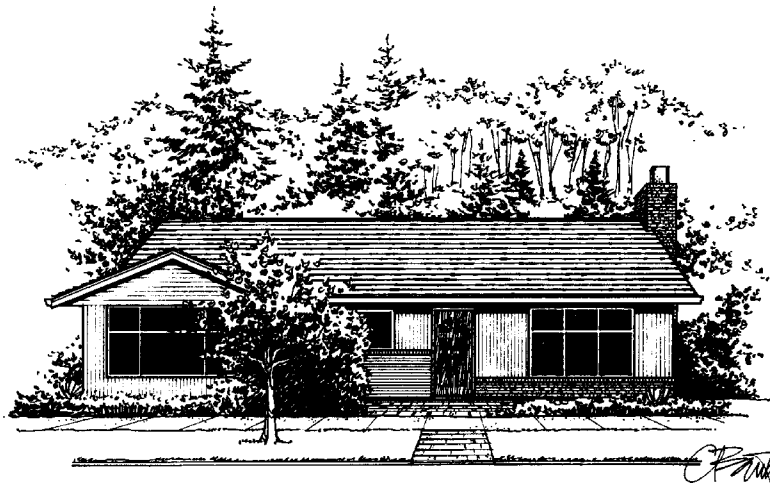
For further information about volunteering for the M.S. A. contact Gregg Robinson at 206-633-2606.

# Accessible Residence For People With MS Grows Closer!

The applications have been sent, the contractor has been selected and the remodel of Ariel House is soon to begin. Many of you were sent a pre-application form in November seeking potential applicants for our totally accessible MS Home in West Seattle. Since then, a number of people living with MS have responded by completing a pre-application. Anyone still interested in applying to live at Ariel House beginning in the summer of 2001 should call MSA for an application.

After an extensive interviewing process, Synergy Construction of Woodinville, Wa. was selected to complete the remodel. Synergy has an outstanding reputation for building and remodeling for 100% barrier free housing. They have worked with United Cerebral Palsy, Compass Women's Center, Aids Housing of Washington and many other not for profit organizations. Work can begin as soon as permitting is completed.

Additional funding for this project is still needed but recently the Church Women of St. Stephen's granted the MS House \$1,950 for household equipment and supplies. Hyltan B. Hard, the Chair of the Cloud 9 Grants Committee, stated that the funds were generated through the



operation of the Cloud 9 Consignment Store, which is run totally by church and community volunteers.

MultifaithWorks and the MSA, who have jointly developed this low-income accessible housing program, wish to publicly thank the Church Women of St. Stephen's for their generous donation. We encourage others to support this important residential alternative for people with MS who can no longer live safely in their own homes by making a contribution to the MS Housing project.

For more information or to learn how you can help, please call Merrill Ringold at (206) 633-2606.

**MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS ASSOCIATION**

**OF KING COUNTY**

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