



## BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE



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### Ernie Russom and Joseph's People of Central Delaware County

By Kaitlin Irwin

Ernie Russom lives in the Highland Park section of Upper Darby. He has spent much of his career in risk management, working in various financial service companies, such as PNC and EDS. He is deeply involved in the community, contributing to Temple's Fox School of Business (his alma mater,) and founding, co-founding and leading various job search groups across the region. His career has given him a comprehensive connection to employment in Delaware County. With his experience in staffing, he understands what job-seekers need and what companies are looking for. That empathy and understanding has been invaluable as he works with hundreds of people through Joseph's People of Central Delaware County.

Six years ago, Ernie started a job-search group at St. Laurence Church, where he provided insight and encouragement for anyone who would show up. It was so successful that he was asked to assist in forming a similar group at St. Mary Magdalene Church and Media Presbyterian. All of these groups belong to Joseph's People, a non-profit corporation spanning 5 counties. Ernie is one of the revered leaders in the Central Delaware County chapter. Joseph's People of Central Delaware County meets at a different church every 1st, 2nd and 3rd Tuesday of the month to help educate and motivate individuals of all denominations and backgrounds.

Working with about 80 people each month, Ernie helps organize workshops, meetings with professional speakers, training and more, free of charge. A variety of topics are covered each month, such as resume writing and interview preparation. With the understanding that job transition is intimidating and that only 20 percent of available jobs are publicly posted, Joseph's People is a safe place where the unemployed and under-employed can learn strategies

for job success.

This includes learning about stress management from psychologists, enhancing job-search strategies with HR professionals and hearing about job postings in their area. If individuals have particular questions or concerns, Joseph's People is always willing to help direct people to useful resources. There is even a Joseph's People Fund which can provide financial assistance to individuals with documented need by providing things like food vouchers and gift cards from local supermarkets. Members have even secured permanent jobs, and the organization has even assisted on-air news reporters at the national level. Totally inclusive, they are open to everyone from recent college graduates to retirees who still want to work.

Speaking with Ernie, it becomes obvious that he is dedicated to Joseph's People of Central Delaware County, and he can be found at the three monthly meetings, with a positive attitude and job search strategies. The 1st Tuesday meeting of the month is at St. Mary Magdalene Church; 2nd Tuesday meeting is at St. Laurence Church; and 3rd Tuesday meeting is at Media Presbyterian Church. All meetings are at 7pm. For information about Joseph's People of Central Delaware County, contact Ernie Russom at 610-405-4818, visit <http://josephspeople.org/>, or attend a meeting!

#### NOMINATE THE NEXT BEAUTIFUL PERSON!

Know someone who helps those in need without asking for anything in return? Let us help you say "thank you." Send an e-mail to [editorial@delcomag.com](mailto:editorial@delcomag.com) or give us a call at 610-789-0600.

If we choose your nominee, each receive a restaurant gift certificate.



## CHARITY FOR THE COMMUNITY



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### Shake it Off Turns Hopelessness to Hopefulness

By Kaitlin Irwin

When Jodi Cianci noticed weakness in her right hand in 2007, she was treated for a herniated disk, but the trembling in her hand continued. A few years later she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, but now, 8 years later, her symptoms have vastly improved and she is in great shape. She attributes much of that to her dedication to exercise and Shake It Off, an organization she co-founded with her husband, Chris. Shake It Off is dedicated to raising awareness of Parkinson's and encouraging people to "get a move on" to improve their overall well-being.

Wary of the side effects of Parkinson's medication, Jodi turned instead to cycling. She and her husband had always been active people, so when her daughter told her about a Cleveland Clinic study on the correlation between exercise and Parkinson's, she knew she had to check it out. In Ohio, she witnessed Parkinson's sufferers improving their quality of life through cycling. Inspired by this, Jodi adopted a high-intensity exercise routine and began cycling regularly. She found that her symptoms improved from the new routine, prompting the name "Shake It Off," as vigorous exercise has been shown to reduce or even reverse Parkinson's symptoms.

Parkinson's causes tremors in some people, as well as muscle constriction. Some sufferers are even wheelchair-bound or require canes or walkers. Doctors typically prescribe the medication L-Dopa because Parkinson's is due to a lack of dopamine in the brain. Yet, more studies are showing how high-intensity exercise (like cycling) can produce similar effects as the medication, without the risk

of serious side effects. Just like L-Dopa, physical activity produces dopamine and encourages neuro-plasticity in the brain. Exercise can give people a higher quality of life as well.

Shake It Off wants to share this awareness with others. Just last year, they donated to the

University of Delaware's Exercise Neuroscience Lab and the Michael J. Fox Foundation. Shake It Off also hosts annual fundraisers, such as the PD500 Rock N Roll Ride and the Philly Rabbit Run 5K at the Philadelphia Zoo. This year's Rabbit Run will be on March 26, 2016, and will precede Parkinson's Awareness Month (April.) Anyone and everyone is encouraged to come out and walk, run, or cheer on participants. The event features music, vendors and special guests (and maybe the Easter bunny will make an appearance.)

Something that many might not realize is that Parkinson's can affect younger people as well. Shake It Off is an organization for all ages, encouraging stronger bodies, minds, and relationships. Plus, being active has loads of other benefits, not just for those with Parkinson's, but for everyone. Shake It Off is located in West Chester, PA. Their website is [www.shakeitoff4pd.org](http://www.shakeitoff4pd.org) and they can be contacted at [info@shakeitoff4pd.org](mailto:info@shakeitoff4pd.org).

