September Program to Focus on Research and Drug Development of the Michael J. Fox Foundation

 Jocelyn Kakavas will speak at the Asheville Parkinson's Support Group meeting on September 3. Kakavas, a Michael J. Fox Foundation (MJFF) ambassador for the Southeast and a member of the Foundation's advancement team, will give a brief overview of MJFF's role in the Parkinson's community accompanied by a research update covering biomarker breakthroughs, current drugs up for regulatory approval, and drugs in the pipeline.

Kakavas will highlight the MJFF's Parkinson's Progression Markers Initiative (PPMI). Launched in 2010, PPMI aims to validate biomarkers of Parkinson's onset and progression. It expanded in 2020 to include more participants and sites. The initiative follows people with and without PD over time to understand disease progression, leading to better diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. The Foundation shares its extensive data set and bio-sample library to support other studies and accelerate breakthroughs. The study has grown to over fifty international clinical sites and aims to increase participant numbers significantly.

Kakavas will talk about recent drug research advances, including drugs to improve mitochondrial function and targets surrounding alpha-synuclein aggregation which could slow or stop Parkinson's progression.

She will share how members of the Asheville Parkinson's Support Group can become involved in MJFF's drug and therapy trials across the nation.

The Fox Foundation was founded in 2000 by actor Michael J. Fox. It is dedicated to finding a cure for Parkinson's disease through an aggressive research agenda and ensuring the development of improved therapies for those living with the condition. The Foundation funds promising research opportunities worldwide, focusing on innovative projects that have the potential to make significant advancements in understanding and treating Parkinson's disease. A portion of the presentation will allow for allotted time for attendees to ask questions of clarity or information not covered in this presentation.