



“ I participated in the European Unity Walk and it was a wonderful event – fun but at the same time touching. We send our very big thanks to the organisers.”

MARJA PITKÄNEN, FINLAND



‘Yes, we did it... Together’

People with Parkinson’s and their families and friends reveal what the day meant to them

“ Me and my friends had the privilege of participating in the European Unity Walk, a disease close to my heart after my grandfather lived with Parkinson’s for more than 20 years. It was an experience I will never forget. Not only was it awesome to be a part of the EPDA’s first ever Unity Walk, but it was breathtaking to share this experience with more than 1,000 people from 25 different countries. I can now say that I was a part of a global community striving for the same goal – to find a cure for Parkinson’s and to raise awareness. I even shed a tear listening to the speakers before the walk. The EPDA did an amazing job of organising such a large-scale event for the first time. It also did a great job to spread the message as random people in the city of Amsterdam even stopped by to see what all the fuss was about.”

MARISSA WALTON, THE US



“ Thank you for everything. It has been so nice and great. I met so many kind people and, today, I really believe in my motto: ‘Hope never dies’.”

BRANIMIR ROCAVEC, SLOVENIA



“I hope they’ll repeat this event. Parkinson’s was discovered 250 years ago but we still have no cure. We want more investment and more focus, and this type of event will help us get it.”

DAVID ELLAM, THE UK



THAT’S ENTERTAINMENT

“Moving is the best medicine for people with Parkinson’s,” Veronica Clark, president of Malta’s Parkinson’s organisation said before the European Unity Walk, “and we’ve come here to move together.” Encouraging the hundreds of Unity Walkers to move throughout the day was always part of the EPDA’s plan, which is why there was so much entertainment on show on the day.

The morning began with traditional Dutch music courtesy of an original barrel organ. This was followed by a lively warm-up exercise routine from Dutch celebrity Olga Commandeur before a Caribbean marching band led the 1,000-strong group through the streets of Amsterdam.

The post-walk activities then featured a salsa class – so popular among people with Parkinson’s since they can focus better on small steps – before famous Dutch singer Dries Roelvink entertained the troops with a host of his most popular songs. These went down so well that the upbeat crowd began an impromptu ‘conga’ dance line that provided a fitting climax to a non-stop day of movement – both physically and metaphorically, which is exactly what the European Unity Walk set out to do.



“Yes, we did it... together, and we will do it again. I became happy and warm inside after meeting so many positive and happy people. We all moved together for a change.”

HEINO JESPERSEN, DENMARK



DRESSED TO IMPRESS

“The sea of Unity Walk-branded balloons, T-shirts and hats lit up the centre of Amsterdam – everyone was walking and talking Parkinson’s.” So said Lucilla Bossi, president of Parkinson Italia.

And she was not the only one who thought so. According to Magne Fredriksen, secretary general of the Norwegian Parkinson’s organisation Norges Parkinsonforbund, the European Unity Walk “has been excellent – we’ve seen people from different countries wearing their own flags and colours. Everyone was super motivated and inspired, and wanted to complement the official Unity Walk banners, signs and placards on show. No one could fail to see the unity of the event or the walk’s objective – of getting hundreds of people moving together for Parkinson’s.”

