

WINTER 2026

NEWS FROM THE MGH FRONTEMPORAL DISORDERS UNIT

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Staff Spotlight | 2  
MA Advocacy Day | 2  
Ski with David for PSP | 3  
From Care to Cure Season 2 | 3  
FTD Unit in the Community | 4  
Community Support | 5

**LEADS**   
Longitudinal Early-Onset  
Alzheimer's Disease Study

Have you or your loved one participated in the Longitudinal Early-Onset Alzheimer's Disease Study ([LEADS](#))?

The [Alzheimer's Association](#) is hosting the LEADS Family Meeting on Saturday March 7. This hybrid event will be held online and in-person at the MGH FTD Unit's research offices in the Charlestown Navy Yard, 149 13th St., Boston, MA. The in-person event will begin at 11:00 am and the online event will begin at noon. Parking and lunch will be provided to in-person attendees. Attendees will have the opportunity to share insights and experiences with each other and with researchers in the field.

Learn more about this free event by emailing Katie Brandt at [katherine.brandt@mg.harvard.edu](mailto:katherine.brandt@mg.harvard.edu).

## Dear FTD Unit Community Members,

We appreciate the opportunity to connect with you through our first newsletter of 2026. I'm pleased to report that we are rebooting our staff, patient and partner spotlights this year. In this newsletter, we profile Raseeka O'Chander, our long-serving Associate Director of Clinical Research and Operations. If you would like to be profiled in a future newsletter, please reach out to Amy Almeida ([AAAlmeida9@MGH.Harvard.edu](mailto:AAAlmeida9@MGH.Harvard.edu)) for more information.

This month, we are launching our second season of *From Care to Cure*, a podcast exploring care for a life lived with frontotemporal disorders, Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. In season two, Katie Brandt, our Director of Caregiver Support Services and Public Relations, will talk to various members of our clinical research team and community experts about the FTD care team, who should be on an FTD care team and the roles each individual plays within the team. Our first episode of season two will feature a conversation with Nneka Watson, from the Unit's speech language pathology team. (Nneka was the subject of a staff Q&A in our [Fall 2023 newsletter](#).) See the article on page 3 for more information. Don't forget to subscribe and share *From Care to Cure* with your family and friends.

Finally, I want to recognize [Rare Disease Day](#), which will be celebrated globally on February 28th. We know that living with a rare diagnosis, such as those diagnosed by our Unit, can increase feelings of isolation and loneliness and that is why we are committed to developing resources and events that build connections and support for persons living with a diagnosis, caregivers and family members. Remember that alone we are rare, but together we are strong.

We hope to see you at a community event, in clinic or online soon! Until then, take care and be well.



Bradford C. Dickerson, MD  
Director, MGH Frontotemporal Disorders Unit



## Staff Profile: Raseeka O'Chander



**Q: Raseeka, thanks for taking the time to chat with us today. Can you introduce yourself and explain your role in the MGH FTD Unit?**

**A:** So happy to be here! I am the Associate Director of Clinical Research and Operations in Dickerson Lab. I wear a few different hats in my role and am involved with managing a wide assortment of our group's academic programs, research projects, and general operations. I have been working with Dr. Dickerson for ten years, and feel so very lucky to work under his leadership. It is truly exciting to see cutting edge research unfold from behind-the-scenes. Knowing I am part of a team that strives to impact the quality of life for our patients and their families on a daily basis is so rewarding, both on a personal and professional level.

**Q: How does your role here fit in with your career goals?**

**A:** I have a master's degree in research psychology, with a focus on social cognition and development. I really enjoy our lab's focus on psychology and neuropsychology as we study dementia and related disorders. I have also found myself becoming increasingly more interested in biomarker research, especially the potential for blood-based biomarkers to be used as a diagnostic tool.

**Q: What do you enjoy outside of work?**

**A:** Outside of work, I enjoy keeping up with a variety of television shows and movies. At this time of year, my husband and I do our best to watch as many Oscar nominated pictures as we can in advance of the awards. It's an activity we take very seriously (there is a spreadsheet and schedule, it's all very official). I also love spending time with my two children, ages four and six, listening to audio books, and playing the New York Times games section.

## Massachusetts Advocacy Day



Join members of the MGH FTD Unit staff and the Boston-area FTD community at the Alzheimer's Association's Massachusetts Advocacy Day on Thursday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at the State House in Boston.

Join us to raise awareness of FTD, Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias while building relationships with our state legislators. You'll hear from legislative champions, be updated on bills supporting people living with dementia and their care partners, and meet with your legislators to discuss policy priorities established by the Alzheimer's Association. This is a great opportunity to make an impact!

Learn more and register now at <https://alz-ma.quorum.us/event/29603/>. Training and lunch will be provided. If you cannot make it to the State House and still want to make a difference, email Lainey Titus Samant, Northeast Territory Advocacy Director, at [Itsamant@alz.org](mailto:Itsamant@alz.org) to learn how to advocate from home.

**ALZHEIMER'S**  **ASSOCIATION**®

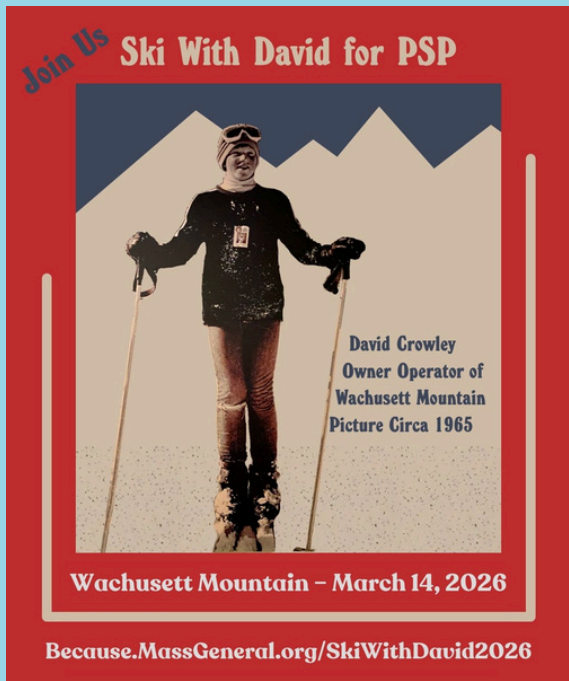
## Wachusett Mountain

March 14, 2026

Join the Crowley family to honor the memory of David Crowley and support the MGH FTD Unit at the fourth annual **Ski with David for PSP** on March 14<sup>th</sup> at Wachusett Mountain in Westminister, MA. The **event** will feature a ski race, education about PSP and a raffle.

As the co-owner and operator of Wachusett Mountain, David's career and life mission was to share the joy of skiing with the world. Several years ago David Crowley was diagnosed with Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP), a rare, degenerative, physically debilitating disease that affects all aspects of daily function. There is no known cure. David continued to ski using an adaptive sit-ski until his death in November 2024. The Crowley family hopes that all participants in *Ski with David for PSP* will share David's joy of skiing on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

Wachusett Mountain works to help people of all ages and abilities enjoy winter snow sports through its **Adaptive Program**. Email the program at **Adaptive@Wachusett.com** to learn how to participate in



the program and Ski with David.

*Ski with David for PSP* will benefit the clinical care and research programs at the MGH FTD Unit, bringing the cure of tomorrow closer to the care of today. Donate now at **Because.MassGeneral.org/SkiWithDavid2026**.

## From Care to Cure Season 2

Season 2 of *From Care to Cure*, the MGH FTD Unit's inaugural podcast will launch on February 20<sup>th</sup>. After a successful first season of ten episodes which were streamed thousands of times by listeners in 23 countries, Season 2 will highlight the FTD care team, both in the clinic and the community.

Season 2 will feature conversations with members of the MGH FTD Unit clinical research team as well as community experts that families rely on during a life lived alongside FTD. Host Katie Brandt will delve into the experience and inspiration of these experts and help listeners gain an understanding of how clinical and community expertise can smooth the bumps on the FTD journey. The first episode presents a conversation with Nneka Watson, a speech-language pathologist in the Unit, about the role of speech-language therapy in an FTD care plan. Listen to Season 2 on **Spotify** or **Apple Podcasts** beginning on February 20<sup>th</sup>.



### Missed Season 1? These episodes are available now!

- |                                     |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Introduction to the MGH FTD Unit | 5. Treatment for FTD                | 9. Living with FTD with Hope      |
| 2. What is FTD?                     | 6. Managing Symptoms: Behaviors     | 10. Recognizing Family Caregivers |
| 3. How is FTD diagnosed?            | 7. Managing Symptoms: Communication |                                   |
| 4. Introduction to care planning    | 8. Managing Symptoms: Motor         |                                   |

# MGH FTD Unit in the Community

Katie Brandt had a busy fall recording episodes of three podcasts, besides hosting the MGH FTD Unit's *From Care to Cure* podcast. Check out these episodes while you wait for Season 2 of *From Care to Cure*.



*Navigating the World with Your Aging Loved One* hosted “The Power of Early Diagnosis and Advocacy in Caregiving's Detective Work.” Listen [here](#).



*Engaging Aging* hosted “The Grief Backpack: Katie Brandt on Caregiving, FTD, and Finding Strength.” Listen [here](#).



*Caregiver's Compass* hosted “A remarkable journey of care with Katie Brandt.” Listen [here](#).

## A. Brandt Henderson Memorial Disc Golf Tournament



On November 29, 2025, disc golf players and friends of Brandt Henderson gathered at Borderland State Park to play disc golf, remember Brandt and raise funds for the MGH FTD Unit. 36 pairs teed off for 18 holes of disc golf on a beautiful late fall day, raising over \$11,000 for the Unit. The late Brandt Henderson was a devoted family man, member of the MGH Development staff, research participant and advocate for people living with FTD. Everyone agreed that he would have greatly appreciated the event!



## CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP TUESDAYS

Are you caring for a loved one living with Frontotemporal Dementia, atypical Alzheimer's Disease, or a related disorder? Our weekly online support groups meet for an hour over Zoom to provide care for the caregiver. Join us every week, or just once. You can attend on a schedule that works for you. We are here to offer support, resources and connections to our caregiver community at every stage of the journey with dementia.

We hope to see you soon.

**Registration is required.** Please email [FTD.Boston@gmail.com](mailto:FTD.Boston@gmail.com) to register for this free resource.

## Upcoming Caregiver Support Groups in 2026: Tuesdays @ 10: 00 am      Tuesdays @ 7: 00 pm

February 17  
March 3, 17, 24  
April 7, 21  
May 5, 19  
June 2, 16, 23  
July 7, 21  
August 4, 18  
September 1, 15, 22  
October 6, 20  
November 3, 17  
December 1, 15

February 10, 24  
March 10, 31  
April 14, 28  
May 12, 26  
June 9, 30  
July 14, 28  
August 11, 25  
September 8, 29  
October 13, 27  
November 10, 24  
December 8, 22



### From Care to Cure Podcast

The MGH FTD Unit has launched *From Care to Cure*, a podcast about frontotemporal disorders. The first season featured Dr. Brad Dickerson, renowned neuroscientist and director of the MGH FTD Unit, introducing our clinical research program, explaining what FTD is and examining the process of diagnosis. The podcast will feature the voices of our clinical research team and community experts as they discuss key topics such as care care planning, symptom management and available treatments.

The first season of ten episodes are available now on [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#). Episodes of season two will launch in February. Please follow and share with family and friends.

### KNOWLEDGE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS: THE MGH FTD UNIT YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Our clinical research team is committed to empowering our community with information to navigate life lived with a dementia diagnosis. We know how busy your lives are. To make these educational resources easily accessible, we have launched an MGH FTD Unit YouTube Channel.

**Subscribe to the MGH FTD Unit YouTube Channel today!**  
[YouTube.com/@MGHFTDUnit](https://www.youtube.com/@MGHFTDUnit)



[@FTDUnitBoston](https://www.facebook.com/FTDUnitBoston)



[@FTDUnitBoston](https://twitter.com/FTDUnitBoston)



[@FTDBoston](https://www.instagram.com/FTDBoston)



[YouTube.com/@MGHFTDUnit](https://www.youtube.com/@MGHFTDUnit)

### CONTACT US

[MGHFTDUnit@MGH.Harvard.edu](mailto:MGHFTDUnit@MGH.Harvard.edu)

### LEARN MORE ABOUT RESEARCH

[www.FTDBoston.org](http://www.FTDBoston.org)