

# Marathon MaRS



## 24-HOUR EXERCISE MARATHON WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

*We are scattered all over the world.*

**Marathon MaRS is a successful sports charity event in the field of Multiple sclerosis organized by Endowment Fund IMPULS (the Czech non-governmental non-profit foundation) which involves both, MS patients, their families and healthcare professionals and also the general public.**

### 1. Objectives

- 🧩 To motivate people suffering MS to an active approach to the disease, to a healthy lifestyle and to draw their attention to the necessity of regular exercise during the therapy, as an essential part of successful treatment of the disease,
- 🧩 To activate MS patients and people involved in MS therapy to work for patient's interests,
- 🧩 To raise awareness about MS within the general public.

### 2. Initial Ideas

- 🧩 Exercise therapy has beneficial effects in MS patients.
- 🧩 Regular physical activities and healthy lifestyle can improve the overall condition of MS patients, reduce fatigue and have a positive impact on the quality of their life.

### 3. How It Runs

- 🧩 Term: 03 – 04/03/2017 (always first Friday and Saturday) in March
- 🧩 The Event has been running in a form of 24 hours of continuous indoor exercises appropriate for MS patients in dozens of cities in the Czech Republic and other countries (Slovakia, Switzerland, and France).
- 🧩 Target groups and participants are patients, doctors, nurses, therapists, family members, friends, celebrities, partners, supporters, public authorities.
- 🧩 All sports events are supervised by qualified physiotherapists and trainers.

Exercise activities are set up to practise all functions that patients have deteriorated due to illness. In some places people alternate circuit training, do group exercises based on Pilates, yoga, etc., using different techniques and forms of rehabilitation suitable for MS treatment. Also immobile patients can participate at the event; they do exercises at home or directly in gyms.

The idea behind the project is the togetherness, team spirit, solidarity with people with MS and understanding for their needs. The Marathon MaRS is designed as a puzzle composed of interconnected venues throughout the CR and abroad. Therefore, a symbol of the project is a piece of puzzle symbolizing different interconnected people, places and types of exercise.

The biggest MaRS' event takes place in Prague. Events in other cities are hosted by patients, volunteers and members of the Czech MS society and professionals from different rehabilitation centers including specialized MS centers, health resorts, and care homes.

The Prague MaRS event is running nonstop for 24 hours. Other cities join for a certain period of time according to their possibilities. The Prague headquarters is connected to other places via internet and telephone, so the participants can watch and encourage each other, which is important to maintain the idea of mutual solidarity. A supplementary program regarding healthy lifestyle, rehabilitation & sports activities is prepared in most cities.

#### 4. How Did It Start

The idea of an exercise event for MS patients originated in September 2011 when physiotherapists in MS Center, Department of Neurology and Center of Clinical Neuroscience at Charles University in Prague, started to organize special group lessons for MS patients (aerobic-resistance circuit training). Patients wanted to share their experience and to encourage other MS patients to exercise. Together with IMPULS, Endowment Fund, specialized in helping people with MS, and that covers the course of the event, they started building a unique event for people with MS in the Czech Republic.



#### 5. Results Overview

##### First Year – 2012

- 84 participants in Prague
- 24 teams of MS patients, their families, friends, doctors, nurses and physiotherapists



##### Second Year – 2013

- 194 participants in Prague
- Teams of MS patients, their friends, families, doctors, nurses, some sponsors
- Proceeds 490 EUR for Endowment Fund IMPULS (support of rehabilitation in MS)



##### Third Year – 2014

- 630 participants
- In Prague and other 10 cities in the Czech Republic
- Proceeds 5.200 EUR to purchase rehabilitation equipment for patients



##### Fourth Year – 2015

- Almost 1.000 participants
- In 10 cities in Czech Republic plus one in Slovakia and one in Switzerland (Clinic Valens)
- Proceeds 4.160 EUR for support of rehabilitation and purchase of rehabilitation aids and equipment



## Fifth Year – 2016

- 🧩 2.000 participants
- 🧩 In 23 cities in the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, France
- 🧩 Proceeds 9.930 EUR for support of rehabilitation, purchase of rehabilitation aids and equipment

## 6. Benefits

- 🧩 In 5 years, the Marathon MaRS became a successful and cost effective charity and sports event attracting attention of patients, therapists, MS organizations, local communities, students etc., supported by public authorities, patrons, sponsors and celebrities.
- 🧩 It gained a prestige of charitable activity generating funds (donations, sponsorship, admission, merchandising etc.) to cover necessary rehab equipment and support rehabilitation and sports activities of people with MS which are not paid by public insurance or government.
- 🧩 The MaRS event offers a range of advantages and promotional opportunities that attract sponsors and partners; it is an opportunity to recruit corporate sponsors, and to involve service users and beneficiaries.
- 🧩 The Event by itself attracts media attention and establishes good reputation – reading of media outputs based on the Marathon MaRS 2016 reached over 105 million readers.



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