

November 22, 2019

Dear Friends of the Scleroderma Foundation Rocky Mountain Chapter,

The last seven months have been a whirlwind. I want to thank the staff, Chapter Board, volunteers and members for making me feel so welcome in my new role as Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Chapter.

I met Carol at my very first support group meeting in April. Carol's struggle was visible. Wheelchair pulled up to the table, Carol was quiet, with tears in her eyes. "Kimi made me come!" Born in Detroit, Carol served in the Marines and later the Army Reserves, taking part in operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. She arrived in Colorado in the summer of 1996 and soon found her niche working in Optometry. Carol and her wife, Kim traveled extensively nurturing Carol's passion for bird photography.

During a November 2017 trip to Easter Island, Carol's legs began to swell up to the point that she could barely walk. By January of 2018, Carol had continued to decline and was now having trouble breathing. Dr. Aryeh Fischer made the diagnosis of scleroderma. The disease has attacked Carol's lungs, kidneys, GI system, muscles, skin and joints leaving her unable to walk and tube feed dependent.

In 2019, Carol and Kim became a fixture at support group meetings and even made the trip, wheelchair and all, to Chicago for the Scleroderma Foundation's National Conference. Carol and I attended the closing keynote by Rocky Mountain Chapter member, Betsy Craig, titled UNSTOPPABLE: When Strong is All There Is. Betsy's message was captivating and powerful. Before we left the table, Carol turned to me and said "it is time to get off of the couch."

Carol surprised us all when she walked from her car into our August support group meeting. Not a dry eye in the room, we all celebrated Carol's gutsy achievement. Carol continues to improve her strength and flexibility by walking laps around the house, attending physical therapy, and by exercising at the local wellness center.



*"You gotta give up on
anger at the disease,
and deal with trying to help yourself."*



During the past 7 months with the Chapter, I have seen many patients like Carol transform thanks to the support of members like you. Some of you sent a donation. Others shared your story to raise awareness of scleroderma or to aid in our fundraising efforts. Chapter members have signed advocacy letters and met with Colorado representatives. Many have volunteered at an event or have simply lent an ear to listen and support someone who is struggling with this disease. We have even come together to honor the lives of those that we have lost. This is our Rocky Mountain Scleroderma Family!

As the year comes to an end, I would love to hear from more of you! Join our Colorado Gives Day efforts by making a donation to the chapter. Tell your story or volunteer. Attend our 2020 events. Follow us on the different social media channels. Stop by the office or give us a call. If you are not receiving our monthly emails, please send an updated email address to cochapter@scleroderma.org.

Thank you for being part of our scleroderma family,

Maria Dastur
Executive Director

P.S. The Rocky Mountain Chapter is poised to grow exponentially in 2020. We cannot grow without your participation and support. Be the hero in someone else's scleroderma journey!



coloradogivesday.org/rockymntscleroderma

2019 Highlights



Over \$140,000 raised at fundraising events.

100+ volunteers supported chapter activities.

Members attended 34 support groups.

375 walkers participated in our Stepping Out to Cure Scleroderma Walks.

275 people attended Food Fight for Scleroderma



Countless lives touched!

