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Step Up for MSWA challenge returns

MSWA Member, Gemma Missen is back and ready to tackle the challenge of climbing the 1,103 steps to the top of Central Park on Sunday, 17 June. For Gemma, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) in 2015, this will be the second time she's taken part in the Shadforth Financial Group Step Up for MSWA.

"Before my diagnosis I lived an active lifestyle and I have tried to keep this up. Participating in Step Up was one of my health goals and I feel lucky that I'm still able to do it," said Gemma.

"In 2017, I participated in the One Up Challenge and reached the top in 18 minutes and 52 seconds and raised over \$4000. I feel such a sense of hope when I see how many people turn up on the day, and this year I'm hoping to smash my record."

Gemma explains that living with MS has its daily challenges. Fatigue affects her the most, and if she doesn't take care of her body and mind, it can contribute to a relapse.

"Brain health is really important, and a full night's sleep is always a priority. After connecting with MSWA, I was able to manage my symptoms better, and I'm so grateful for the support and services I've received, including counselling and nursing," Gemma added.

"Gemma really is an inspiration for all of us. Like Gemma, we find that many of the people who take part in our fundraising events, return each year, and for that, we are incredibly grateful for their support. It allows us to continue to invest in research and extend our services to the people who need them," said MSWA CEO, Marcus Stafford AM.

"Last year's event saw 1,027 participants raise almost \$250,000 – breaking records both in numbers and fundraising. These funds have allowed us to continue to support people living with MS and other neurological conditions in Western Australia," added Mr Stafford.

A portion of the funds raised have gone directly towards a MOTOMed bike at Osborne Park Hospital, which will be used by people living with Parkinson's disease.

MSWA Ambassador Josh Kennedy says he's always impressed with the participant's commitment leading up to the event, and on the day.

"I've got the easy part, all I have to do is press the starters' horn, the hard part happens when the steppers tackle the 1,103 stairs to the top," said Josh.

"It doesn't matter how long they take, they're helping to raise money for a great cause and they can leave knowing they've helped make a difference to the lives of people living with MS and other neurological conditions."

To take part in the Shadforth Financial Group Step Up for MSWA or to donate, go to www.stepupformswa.org.au

This year's Shadforth Financial Group Step Up for MSWA climb options include:

- One Up (ages 12+) - 1,103 stairs or 53 flights;
- Double Up (ages 18+) - 2,206 stairs or 106 flights;
- Mini Climb (ages 6+) - 435 stairs or 20 flights. An adult must accompany a child on the mini climb.

Online registrations close at midnight on Wednesday, 13 June. Climbers can register on the day for the One Up and Mini Climb, however limited spots are available. All Double Up participants must register online prior to the 13 June - there will be no Double Up registrations accepted after this.

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