



Member Spotlight: Kasey Minnis Multiple Sclerosis Foundation

A participant of the Florida Association of Nonprofits' SCNM classes, and raised in South Florida the Co-Executive Director, Kasey Minnis, has devoted 31 years to the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation, fondly referred to as MS Focus. With national headquarters in Fort Lauderdale, the organization services direct service to patients throughout the US and Puerto Rico.

Starting in 1986 as a small grassroots organization when no treatment for the illness existed, MS Focus has expanded to assist patients maintain their quality of life by providing home care, emergency payments, medical equipment, medication, assistive devices, transportation and more.

MS Focus has done much research on the effect of diet, exercise, stress management, sleep to mediate one's immune system and control inflammation, physical and speech therapy, but critical pharmaceutical treatments for MS are the second most costly of all diseases.

With the average age of onset between 20-50, patients often experience stigma surrounding MS, sometimes being forced to leave the workforce due to their symptoms. Although not considered a fatal illness, fatal complications can occur in advanced stages.

Kasey explained that the pandemic has affected giving patterns which has cut the budget in half to \$4 million. She is proud that expenses were reduced to be able to maintain the staff of 75 and the level of service for patients, including the quarterly patient-focused newsletter she edits and distributes to 70,000 individuals with MS.

Florida Association of Nonprofits spoke with Kasey Minnis about the joys and challenges of her work.

What's the best part of your job and what challenges you most?

Every day I go home knowing I've made someone's life better that day – made someone's survival possible. However, knowing that despite all best effects, this disease still ravages. I've had multiple auto immune diseases since 9 years old, when my passion about disability advocacy began and I'm gratified that I now help create an environment in work and community that allows people with disabilities contribute to society.