

HOW TO START A SUPPORT GROUP

Theresa (Penny) LaMons

What Is Sarcoidosis?

For additional information about Sarcoidosis, visit the Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research at:
<http://www.fightsarcoidosis.org>.

Want to Join a Sarcoidosis Support Group?

<http://www.sarcoidosisnetwork.org/> offers newsletters, a network of resources, and local Sarcoidosis support groups.

Have Other Health Questions?

Contact the National Institutes of Health, <http://www.nih.gov> and check out the My MAHALI[™] Resources page.

About the Author

Mayor Coleman of Columbus, Ohio presented Ms. LaMons with a Certificate of Recognition for her achievements.

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What do you do if there is no support group in your community? Start one of course. Ms. LaMons explains how she did it.



I am founder and President of Columbus Support Foundation for Sarcoidosis. Here is how I organized it.

My name is Theresa LaMons and I have Sarcoidosis. What is Sarcoidosis? Sarcoidosis is a multi-system illness, which can involve the lungs, lymph nodes, liver, eyes, brain, kidney, bones, skin, heart, nasopharynx, and even the genital organs. This disorder can be silent, severely disabling, or even fatal. I go to Cleveland Clinic for the care for my Sarcoidosis. They have a support group that meets on the second Thursday of the month. Because I live in Columbus, Ohio, Cleveland is two hours away. So, I talked to Glen Fulton of Chicago, IL, the headquarters of The National Sarcoidosis Foundation. I started a support group here.

- 1. You have to find a meeting place** that has handicap assistance, wheelchair access, and is free.
- 2. Pick a time** when people can come after work, but is not too late in the evening.
- 3. Advertise** to let the public know about the meeting – Newspapers, television, radio, and flyers to hospitals.
- 4. Establish the association** after two meetings: A) elect officers to help organize the meetings and B) pick committee persons to remind members of meetings, send out cards, or to call just to say, “Hi.”
- 5. Have varied agendas** – We have different events, not just pity parties. For example we have potlucks, auctions, guest speakers.