

WALK NEWS

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION - GREATER MICHIGAN CHAPTER | JULY 2014

Walk Gives us a Fighting Chance

When I was a junior in college, my parents came to visit me on campus and take me to breakfast. Over scrambled eggs, in the middle of perfectly pleasant conversation, my dad blurted out "I have Alzheimer's." My mind seemed to go blank. As a twenty-year-old, worrying about your parent being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease at the age of fifty-four is simply not something that ever comes to mind. A few days later, my parents told my fourteen-year-old sister about my dad's diagnosis.

Our lives were forever changed. My sister had to become an adult long before her time. My mom had to take on the role of both dad and caretaker. As the disease progressed, I found that I missed spirited debates with my dad. I missed being able to ask him for advice or guidance. I missed our pre-Alzheimer's relationship.

Alzheimer's tends to leave those diagnosed and their families and friends in a rather helpless place. As a society, we know the future of someone with Alzheimer's. We know there is not a cure to magically retrieve and restore our loved ones. Our family knew

in some ways what to expect from my dad's diagnosis, having seen my dad's mom slowly fade away in her eighties due to Alzheimer's.

In 2010, my sister organized a team for the Walk to End Alzheimer's in Grand Rapids. David's Dream Team was born, as a nod to my dad's days as a high school basketball star. For three years, we walked in Grand Rapids. Last year was our first year walking in Detroit and we are so excited to be walking in Detroit again this year.

Being a part of the Walk has played such a valuable role in our journeys as caretakers. It has made my mom, my sister, and me feel that we have a fighting chance against Alzheimer's. It has allowed us to take action, rather than feeling hopeless. It has connected us with others on similar paths, rather than feeling isolated and alone. It has allowed us to be optimistic that someday there will be a world without Alzheimer's. It has *(next page)*



Fundraising Tip: *Put the FUN in Fundraising*

What do you love to do? If you're Walking in honor of a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, what did they love to do? How can you use that passion to fuel your fundraising efforts?

For Michael Moran of the Alzheimer's Association - Rochester and Finger Lakes Region, the answer was obvious. His brother, Kevin, who died of younger-onset Alzheimer's at 54, loved roller coasters. To honor Kevin, Michael embarks on a series of "coaster crawls" at amusement parks around the country riding as many roller coasters as he can. Donors pledge a per coaster amount, last year he raised nearly \$9,000!

Sarah Smith, from the Greater Michigan Chapter's own Grand Rapids Walk to End Alzheimer's, loves her dog and to craft. Sarah's been a veteran top fundraiser for the last several years. This year to honor her mother, Mary who is living with Alzheimer's disease, Sarah has been fundraising by selling dog (and cat!) bow ties with her dog Cheezits for a suggested minimum donation of \$15. Sarah has six patterns and the bow ties have been a hit! So far she's sold over 100 and raised over \$2,500 in just two months!



WALK LEADERS

Top Teams

1. David's Dream Team - \$5,425 (Detroit)
2. Walking with Papa Joe - \$5,160 (Midland)
3. Singh - Tracy's Portfolio - \$4,282 (Detroit)
4. Janice Hurt - \$3,245 (Grand Rapids)
5. Memory Keepers - \$3,180 (Detroit)

Top Participants

1. Joe Lubbenhusen - \$5,160 (Midland)
2. Lori Kontry - \$4,025 (Detroit)
3. Janice Hurt - \$3,060 (Grand Rapids)
4. Sarah Smith - \$2,680 (Grand Rapids)
5. Tina Battle - \$2,665 (Detroit)



*Walk Gives
us a
Fighting
Chance
Cont'd*

helped us believe that countless others will have brighter futures than that of my dad.

The Kontry Family: David, Jacqueline, Jennifer & Lori

It has now been ten years since my dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. The road we are traveling with him has been bumpy. More often than not, it has been trying and difficult. We cherish the moments we catch a glimpse of the David of years past when he makes a joke or bursts out into his infectious laughter. It has taken us a while, but we have even been able to find humor in our situation. Like when my six-foot-four dad put on my five-foot-four mom's yoga pants and asked her "Is this what I was supposed to put on?"

At the end of the day, whether it was humorous or trying, we know we would not be the people we are today without all we have learned and the ways we have grown on this journey with my dad.

Visit [Jacqueline Kontry's page to learn more](#). Do you have a story to share? Contact Hannah (hdayton@alz.org | 616 459 7467).

We Need Your Help to Advance Research!

Through clinical trials, researchers test new ways to detect, treat and prevent Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Recruiting and retaining clinical trial participants is now the greatest obstacle, other than funding, to developing the next generation of Alzheimer's treatments.

We need your help. Without participation, finding a cure is virtually impossible. The Alzheimer's Association TrialMatch® is a free, easy-to-use clinical studies matching service that connects individuals with Alzheimer's, caregivers, healthy volunteers and physicians with current studies. Our continuously updated database of 130+ Alzheimer's clinical trials includes both pharmacological (drug) and non-pharmacological (non-drug) studies being conducted at nearly 500 trial sites across the country.

People with Alzheimer's, caregivers and healthy volunteers are all needed today to participate in Alzheimer's and dementia research.

When you join a clinical trial, you have an opportunity to participate in vital research that could change the course of this disease and improve the lives of all those it affects. Your participation in clinical trials gives us optimism for today and promise for the future. Visit our [TrialMatch web page to learn more](#).

trialmatch™



UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday July 14, 12:00 - 1:00 pm
National Teams Call

National Teams are invited to join Event Director Shawn Ruetz to learn more about National Team Benefits and engagement opportunities with the Alzheimer's Association Greater Michigan Chapter.

**WELCOME
NEW
GRAND
CHAMPIONS
CLUB &
CHAMPIONS
CLUB MEMBERS**

GRAND CHAMPIONS

- Tina Battle, Detroit
- Mary Ceccanese, Montcalm County
- Melissa DeBoer, Grand Rapids
- Joe Lubbenhusen, Midland
- Brian Mack, Grand Rapids
- Lynn Radzilowki, Genesee County
- Beth Veier, Detroit
- Melissa Wedberg, Grand Rapids

CHAMPIONS

- Kimi Baker, Grand Rapids
- Laurie Ludeman, Detroit
- Gina Mocerri, Detroit
- Colleen Sanders, Detroit
- Kim VanSolkema, Grand Rapids

Join them! Raise \$500 to join our Champions Club and \$1,000 to join our elite Grand Champions Club!

I'M ROCKIN' THE WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S



AMP UP YOUR FUNDRAISING!
Keep an eye out for details on our upcoming challenge week!

Send Your \$10 Update

June 23 - July 2 marked the Greater Michigan Chapter's Send Your \$10 Challenge. Walkers were encouraged to secure a \$10 donation each day for 10 days. As a whole our Chapter raised \$16,200! Special shout out to our Grand Prize winner Kimi Baker from the Grand Rapids Walk. Congratulations and thanks to Lori Kontry from our Detroit Walk for raising the most and Brian Mack from our Grand Rapids Walk for receiving the greatest number of gifts within the 10 day period!



Our brochures and posters are ready for distribution! Can you help us get the word out?

Please contact your local Walk Staff (below) if you are available to help distribute promotional materials. Your nail salon, hairdresser, dry cleaner, grocery store, place of worship, community board and neighborhood hot spot are great drop off points! The more people we reach, the more people we have involved and the greater impact we make!

We want to hear from you!

If you have any questions about the Walk, don't hesitate to contact our Event Director:

Shawn Ruetz (sruetz@alz.org) | 616 301 3230

about any of our Greater Michigan Chapter Walk to End Alzheimer's events.

THE GREATER MICHIGAN CHAPTER HAS RAISED \$232,506 OF OUR \$1,088,000 GOAL!



PROGRAM & SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

A diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or related dementia often comes with stressful challenges for both those living with the disease and their caregivers. In order to help families through the difficulties of dementia, the Alzheimer's Association - Greater Michigan Chapter (GMC) offers several support groups that meet at various times and days of the week to accommodate the needs of those who attend. Individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, or other related dementias, as well as their caregivers, can participate in a non-judgmental setting and exchange coping skills, gain educational information, and support one another in their journey.

One unique group that we offer is the Dial-in Caregiver Support Group. Caregivers are welcome

to call in the 2nd Tuesday of every month between noon and 1:00 p.m. if they are unable to get to a support group, missed attending their regular group, or just prefer to meet by phone. The facilitator leads the group in discussion with a prepared topic, and the participants are encouraged to participate or just listen if they desire.

If the groups mentioned above do not fit your particular needs at this time, we have many other groups that may work for you. Please call our Helpline at 800 272 3900 for more information about a support group in your area.