

WALK NEWS

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION - GREATER MICHIGAN CHAPTER | JUNE 2014

Walking for Dad & All of Us

When I used to think about Alzheimer's disease, I would picture old people — much older people — those well into their retirement years. I'd picture people forgetting where they put things or temporarily misplacing a memory. Or, even not recognizing someone right away. But now? Now I know better. Because my dad has younger-onset Alzheimer's disease — a disease that is so much more than misplaced keys or forgotten names. Dad was diagnosed when he was 59.

I was just 29 when he was diagnosed. And I immediately felt my dreams of him walking me down the aisle disappear. Of him playing with my kids becoming an impossibility rather than an expectation. I saw so many things I'd wanted to experience with my dad start to slip away. Thankfully, though, I soon met the man I today call my husband, and Dad did get to (slowly) walk me down the aisle.

Not that this is about me. It's not. And it's not just about my dad. Because Alzheimer's disease has affected all of our lives. All six of us kids, dad's grandkids and great-grandkids. And my mom. Every day it affects my mom. As Alzheimer's disease steals my dad from us, my mom

loses more and more of her partner for life, her happily ever after.

My dad was a lifelong farmer who could do anything. I can still remember how he smelled as I sat with him on top of his tractor, driving through the rows and rows of cherry trees. He was always the first one I'd turn to with math questions because he just had a way with numbers. And he could build us anything we wanted -- without plans or diagrams. My dad was, in my mind, a genius.

And as he slowly started showing early signs of Alzheimer's disease, we watched him lose more and more of his talents and skills. We watched him lose more and more of himself.

In the beginning things slipped away and then came back, Dad losing words or memories momentarily. They'd reappear at random times later in the conversation. But today? Dad is a shell of his former self. Not the man we all grew up adoring, not the man my mom expected to have by her side until old age.

But, we move forward the best we can, clinging to the happy memories. We visit as often as we can, knowing

Fundraising Tip: Send Your \$10! June 23 - July 2

Asking your friends and family to donate to your Walk campaign can be intimidating for some Walkers. If that's true for you, take advantage of our Send Your \$10 Challenge! Last year we held the challenge for a few of our Walks and it was so well received this year we're doing it Chapter-wide!

A donation doesn't need to be big to make a BIG difference. The Send Your \$10 Challenge is simple: every day you get at least a \$10 donation toward your Walk campaign, you'll be entered into a regional giveaway drawing for Alzheimer's Association swag! Walkers who receive a donation every day will be entered into our Chapter's grand prize drawing. The Chapter's highest fundraiser and Walker who receives the greatest number of gifts in the 10-day period will receive a special prize!

Make a self donation the first day and use social media and your participant center to send out emails to ask your contacts to make a donation to your Walk campaign and help you in the challenge. Most people can spare \$10 - that's a trip to the movies, lunch out, or coffee twice a week. It's a great way to earn your official 2014 T-Shirt!

If you have any questions about the Send Your \$10 Challenge or Walk, don't hesitate to contact your Walk staff:

Hannah Dayton (hdayton@alz.org | 616 459 7467)
Shawn Ruetz (sruetz@alz.org | 616 301 3230)

WALK LEADERS

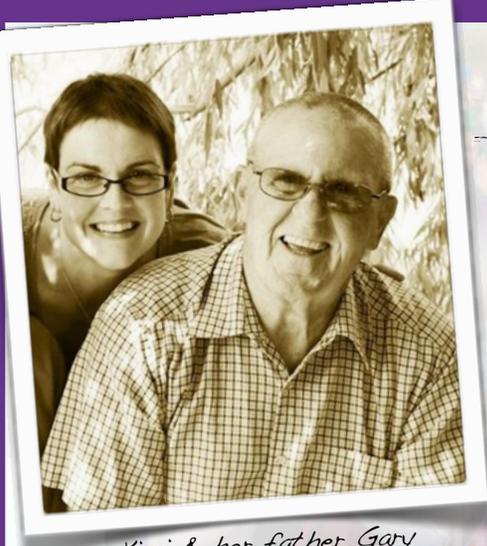
Top Teams

1. Janice Hurt - \$3,245 (GR)
2. The Longest Goodbye - \$3,027 (Detroit)
3. Green Acres Greenville - \$2,571 (Montcalm County)
4. Real Estate One - \$2,405 (Detroit)
5. The Bank of Holland - \$2,250 (GR)
6. Memory Keepers - \$2,180 (Detroit)

Top Participants

1. Janice Hurt - \$3,060 (GR)
2. Lenore Wengert - \$2,417 (Detroit)
3. Sarah Smith - \$2,230 (GR)
4. Melissa Kooyers - \$2,112 (Holland)
5. Cathy Grube - \$2,000 (Detroit)





Kimi & her father Gary

*Walking for Dad &
All of Us Continued*

that long visits can be very stressful. We call Dad, realizing he won't necessarily realize who he is talking to or what end of the phone to put to his ear. We laugh at the odd jokes my dad makes -- unsure if it's really a joke or just the only sentence he can string together. When Mom told Dad I'm expecting a baby, he was happy. His first question, though, was who I'm having the baby with. He was relieved to find out my baby's dad is, indeed, my husband. These are the few moments we can find humor. These are the slivers of lightness

that we must grasp onto. Because so much of this disease is heartbreaking. So much of this disease attempts to steal the happiness and lightness from all of our lives.

Mostly, though, we cling to each other. Because it's not just Dad whose dreams and hopes have been taken by Alzheimer's disease. It is all of our dreams and hopes. Alzheimer's disease has many victims: those who have the disease and those who love those who have the disease. And it helps to know we are not in the fight alone.

When people ask me why I walk, I tell them: I walk for my mom and my siblings, my nieces and nephews. I walk for my future children, and I walk for me. But, mostly, I walk for my dad — the man with the biggest heart of anyone I've ever met, the brightest eyes, the warmest smile and the strongest arms that give the world's best hugs. His hugs? They may be the only things that haven't changed.

Kimi Baker is a true Alzheimer's Association champion and Walk to End Alzheimer's Planning Committee member in Grand Rapids, visit her [Walk page to learn more](#). Do you have a story to share? Contact Hannah (hdayton@alz.org | 616 459 7467).

Chapter Sponsor Highlight:

Waltonwood Senior Living hosted its fourth Annual Chuckles for a Cause event at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle on June 4, 2014 featuring comedian Mike Green.

The Waltonwood Culinary Team showed off its creative talent with a Polynesian themed menu including homemade sushi rolls, deconstructed seared Ahi Tuna and wasabi bites, slow roasted pork sliders, and seasoned steamed shrimp. The desserts boasted homemade pineapple upside down cakes, lemon-berry tarts and chocolate cupcakes with bacon and chocolate frosting.

Waltonwood Senior Living is currently one of three 2014 Greater Michigan Walk to End Alzheimer's Chapter Sponsors. Along with parent company Singh Development, Waltonwood hosts year-long fundraising events across the company to raise money for the Alzheimer's Association.



UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday June 25, 12:00 pm - 1:00pm
Tips & FAQ Call - In**

Want to know more about Walk? Have a logistics or fundraising question? Join us for our Frequently Asked Questions Call - In with Event Director Shawn Ruetz! Participants Chapter-wide welcome. Call 877 298 7930 and enter guest code 12397# during the allotted time

Are you having a Walk fundraiser you would like included in our newsletter or on Facebook? Contact Hannah (Info to the left).

WELCOME NEW GRAND CHAMPIONS CLUB & CHAMPIONS CLUB MEMBERS

GRAND CHAMPIONS

- Carol Grube, Detroit
- Lori Kontry, Detroit
- Nancy Lamb, Grand Rapids
- Sarah Smith, Grand Rapids

CHAMPIONS

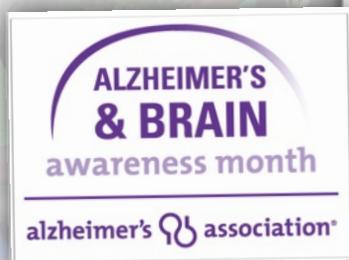
- Carol Crosby, Detroit
- Eric Anderson, Detroit
- Lori Bohlen, Detroit
- Lynn Radziloski, Genesee County
- Mary Kiefer, Grand Rapids
- Melissa Wedberg, Grand Rapids
- Val Moody, Grand Rapids

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

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month!

There are at least 44 million people worldwide living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, and those numbers are expected to grow to 76 million by 2030. **This June during the inaugural Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month** the Alzheimer's Association is asking people around the world to wear purple — the color of the Alzheimer's movement — and use their brains to fight Alzheimer's disease.

Despite being the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States, Alzheimer's disease is still largely misunderstood. Often thought of as minor memory loss, many of us know Alzheimer's is actually a fatal disease that kills nerve cells and tissue in the brain, affecting an individual's ability to remember, think and plan. As the disease progresses, the brain shrinks dramatically due to cell death. Individuals lose their ability to communicate, recognize family and friends and care for themselves.



Will you help us **GO PURPLE** for Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month? Here's what you can do:

- **Share the facts** — Post and tweet about Alzheimer's disease and brain risk throughout the month. Let people know you're walking and ask them to donate to your campaign or join your team.
- **Be social** — Turn Facebook purple using an END ALZ graphic as your profile picture-make sure to link it back to your fundraising page!
- **Go purple** — Wear purple all month but especially on Saturday, June 21, the longest day of the year, to support those facing the devastation of Alzheimer's disease every day. **Check out how the State of Michigan is joining us by going purple!**
- **Use your brain to fight Alzheimer's disease** — Become an Alzheimer's advocate and write your members of Congress to ask for more federal funding for Alzheimer's research.
- **Get Fundraising!**
 - * Vote for **Patti G in the DSW Shoe Lovers Care Program** to win \$75K for the Alzheimer's Association
 - * Download the **Charity Miles App** and designate the Alzheimer's Association when you walk, run or bike
 - * Join us at the **Detroit Tigers Alzheimer's Awareness Game** vs. Oakland Athletics, July 1, 2014 7:00 pm.
 - * Recruit others to join your team--the more people we get involved, the greater impact we make!

THE GREATER MICHIGAN CHAPTER HAS RAISED \$183,252 OF OUR \$1,088,000 GOAL!



PROGRAM & SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

Summertime is here and for many it is a time of family, friends, vacations and fun. With careful planning, those with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia can fully enjoy summer trips with family and friends. Whether planning a day trip close to home or a longer vacation, here are a few tips to help you plan your next vacation:

- Plan out your trip in advance and write down your itinerary -
- Allow for ample travel time, including time to rest.
- Keep things simple by avoiding overcrowded areas, busy itineraries and loud places.
- Determine your mode of transportation based on what is most comfortable and convenient for everyone.
- Keep a copy of prescribed medications, allergies, doctors' office phone numbers and emergency contacts

for the person with memory loss with you at all times.

- Before you leave home, identify local hospitals and medical centers at your destination for use in an emergency.
- Keep it familiar by sticking to the daily routine as much as possible while away from home and by visiting places that were familiar before the onset of dementia.
- Enroll in MedicAlert + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return, which is a 24-hour nationwide emergency response service for individuals with Alzheimer's or a related dementia who wander or have a medical emergency. We provide 24-hour assistance, no matter when or where the person is reported missing. To register or to get more information on financial assistance, please contact our Helpline at 800 272 3900 .

For more information on travel safety, visit our [online Caregiver Center](#).