



Alzheimer's and doughnuts

Published on Wed, Aug 18, 2010

by **Pam Scott**

**SENIOR
CROSSROADS ...**

Pam Scott

Alzheimer's disease may not be the most pleasant topic of conversation, but ever since Ronald Reagan's heartfelt and emotional speech about his own battle with this disease, the Alzheimer's ghost has started to emerge from the closet.

Still, this remains a silent disease - silent from the standpoint that no one really wants to talk about it. They don't want to admit that they know someone with Alzheimer's. Many treat you like you have the plague and if they acknowledge it, that they somehow will get the disease themselves.

We want people to understand this disease because it is only through educating people that we are going to get the funds we need to help fight Alzheimer's. Not only has Alzheimer's started to creep into more and more conversations, it recently has moved up the ladder to become the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States. And with that move up the ladder comes more eye-opening statistics. There are more than 5.3 million people with Alzheimer's, at an estimated annual cost of \$172 billion dollars.

That cost does not include the more than 10.9 million unpaid caregivers. And Alzheimer's knows no age boundaries. From the 30-somethings afflicted with early-onset to those in their 80s and 90s with end-stage, the ravages of this disease are far-reaching.

Alzheimer's is a progressive and fatal brain disease that destroys brain cells, causing memory loss and problems with thinking and behavior severe enough to affect work, lifelong hobbies or social life. Alzheimer's gets worse over time and the side-effects of this disease are fatal.

Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, a general term for memory loss and other intellectual abilities serious enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 50-80 percent of dementia cases and has no cure.

Overcoming the disease

But treatments for symptoms, combined with the right services and support, can make life better for the millions of Americans living with Alzheimer's. There is an accelerating worldwide effort under way to find better ways to treat the disease, delay its onset or prevent it from developing.

Alzheimer's is a sleeping giant and as the baby boomers age, Alzheimer's will continue to impact more lives. From 2000-2006, Alzheimer's disease deaths increased 46.1 percent, while other selected causes of death decreased. Strategic investments in other diseases have resulted in declines in deaths, and we need to see the same type of investment for Alzheimer's.

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to finding a way to end this disease. Their vision is "A world without Alzheimer's disease" and their mission "To eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health."

On the move - to an end

So right about now, you're probably thinking, "what do doughnuts have to do with Alzheimer's?"

As a means to raise funds for research and provide support services, the Alzheimer's Association puts on an annual Memory Walk, "We're On The MOVE To End Alzheimer's." Walk participants hold fundraisers and get community members to donate and sponsor them. All the funds raised go to the Alzheimer's Association.

Here on the North Olympic Peninsula, the "Discovery Trailblazers" are hard at work raising donations for their team. They will be participating in the Olympic Peninsula Memory Walk on Sept. 18 at the Waterfront Park in Silverdale. And you're probably still wondering what doughnuts have to do with this. The "Discovery Trailblazers" will be selling Krispy Kreme doughnuts from 9 a.m. until they sell out on Tuesday, Aug. 24, at the old First Federal building in the JCPenney parking lot on Washington Street in Sequim and at the Sequim Walmart.

The "Discovery Trailblazers" team members also are accepting donations and sponsors.

For more information, call Discovery Memory Care at 683-7047 or e-mail info@discovery-mc.com. To donate online, go to memorywalk.kintera.org/olympicpeninsula/discoveryteam.

Many thanks to KWA HomeCare for stepping in as a gold sponsor and partnering with the "Discovery Trailblazers" in their fundraising efforts.

Every 70 seconds, someone in the United States is diagnosed with this disease. The next person diagnosed may be someone close to you. We're On The MOVE To End Alzheimer's. Please help.

For more information on Alzheimer's disease, help and support, and their fundraising efforts, log on to the Washington State Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association at www.alz.org/alzwa/.

Pam Scott is the community relations director for Discovery Memory Care in Sequim. For more information and resource assistance, e-mail Pam Scott at info@discovery-mc.com or call 683-7047.