

Volunteer Spotlight

Bonnie Cloer, Wausau Support Group Facilitator

Why I Volunteer

Bonnie is a caregiver for her husband Lawrence, who is living with Lewy body dementia. The two met in a grief group in California, after they had both lost spouses, and they have been married for 18 years. Lawrence was a professor until 2016 when he noticed he was having a hard time keeping track of things. "Teaching began to be too much for him," Bonnie said. "As his symptoms kept progressing, we decided to move to Wisconsin to be closer to my daughter, who is a physician." While Larry was originally diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, in 2021 he was re-diagnosed with Lewy body dementia.

Volunteering for a Support Group

Bonnie started leading a virtual Support Group for the Alzheimer's Association in February 2021 and the group is now again meeting in person. "The group is made up of caregivers and I really enjoy it," Bonnie said. "Support groups are helpful for everyone. You don't have to say anything, but if you want to share, it's the one place where you can say what you think and many people automatically know what you're going through. One man who recently joined, shared that the group is 'saving his life.' It's also a wonderful way to get ideas and tips so you aren't muddling through it alone."

Re-emerging after the Pandemic

"The pandemic has been challenging for all families who are on a journey with Alzheimer's," Bonnie said. "Everyone has different challenges. For us, it was isolating to not be able to see family or being able to go out in the community. I'm happy Larry is able to go to adult day center again and we have someone come to the house and help out several days a week."

We salute Bonnie for serving with the 198,000 other caregivers in Wisconsin. And for her commitment to volunteering to support other families on a similar journey.



"Alzheimer's Association volunteers deliver support and education, raise funds, advocate for Alzheimer's and more to help achieve our vision of a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia®. Whatever your skills and whatever time you have available, we have opportunities to provide vital support for people living with Alzheimer's and their families.

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