

# Why I Walk

## Jo Ann O'Malley Team Wolfgang Walk to End Alzheimer's Dane County

### One Families Journey

Jo Ann O'Malley and her family have been active participants in the Walk to End Alzheimer's Dane County for six years. Their team, Team Wolfgang, walks in honor of Jo Ann's father, Edward, who has been living with Alzheimer's for eight years. "My dad owned a local auto repair business for 40 years and was the 'go-to guy,' Jo Ann shared. "He was very knowledgeable, especially in anything related to vehicles, house projects, yard work – you name it, he could help you. It was difficult for our entire family when we started to see changes in him and the signs of Alzheimer's."



### Joining Walk

"The Walk provides an opportunity for us to connect with people who are in the same situation," Jo Ann said. "It provides comfort to our family to be part of this community. Especially for those serving as caregivers every day, like my mom, it's comforting to see others who are on the same journey."



Team Wolfgang has rallied each year and continues to surpass their fundraising for the mission. "The first year we participated in Walk, we raised about \$600," Jo Ann said. "As our team grew, we became more creative with our fundraising and in 2021 we have already raised over \$23,000." A few of their larger fundraisers include a 50/50 cash raffle every Spring at the Madison Speedway and a mum sale in the Fall.

### A Message for Caregivers

"I would encourage anyone new on their journey to reach out and take advantage of resources to support them," Jo Ann shared. "Our family didn't know about resources like the Alzheimer's Association and their 24/7 Helpline, and it can feel like you're very alone. So many things we have now learned, like the ability to recognize the signs, are so important. And even after diagnosis, classes and social engagement opportunities are so valuable to families."



At the 2021 Walk, Edward will be representing the blue flower – someone living with Alzheimer's – and his wife, Judy, will represent the Yellow flower – caring for someone with the disease. You can support Team Wolfgang on their Team Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/Team-Wolfgang-Alzheimers-FundraisingEventsInfo-Page-102146058610985](https://www.facebook.com/Team-Wolfgang-Alzheimers-FundraisingEventsInfo-Page-102146058610985)

