

# Why I Walk

*Laura Albright, Sheboygan County*



A special shout out to Walk to End Alzheimer's Sheboygan County volunteer Laura Albright. This is her second year on the Walk committee and she is an active volunteer in the community year-round, supporting those on a journey with dementia.

## A Special Calling for Caregiving

"I have a special place in my heart for the elderly population," Laura shared. "I love to listen to their stories and hear about who they are." She has a personal connection to Alzheimer's. When Laura was a teen she lost her grandma to Alzheimer's, after an eight-year battle. Then in 2017, her mother-in-law, Mary, was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment. "When my mother-in-law was diagnosed, it was natural for me to help with her care," Laura said. "I researched everything I could and took advantage of Alzheimer's Association programs, to learn how to best support her. She moved into an assisted living facility in 2020 and is doing well."

## Creativity Brings Joy

Laura uses her creativity to bring joy to those on a journey with dementia and to help raise awareness for the mission of the Alzheimer's Association. "I volunteer at The Gathering Place, with those living with dementia, and we're always looking for projects," Laura said. "Our latest was a painted rock project. I collected about 50 rocks and we painted them all shades of purple. We hand them out to people and encourage them to put them down around Sheboygan to create awareness for Alzheimer's and promote the Walk." Laura also volunteers at Songbird Pond Assisted Living, where her mother-in-law lives. She always wears an Alzheimer's shirt and is commonly known to residents as the "Alzheimer's lady."

## Spreading kindness

"Spreading kindness is very important to me," Laura shared. "To someone new to Alzheimer's, patience is key. It's a long journey and it's a difficult disease to manage because it's so different for each person. When I volunteer with seniors, I try to learn about what they were like as a younger person. Our Walk Team name is The Heart Remembers. It's a quote I always liked - 'The heart remembers, even when the mind forgets.' I try to think of this each day."

