Advocate finds her calling through the Association

Barb Cole was diagnosed with younger-onset Alzheimer’s disease at the age of 53. She and her family were heartbroken. “Alzheimer’s was the last thing any of us expected it to be because of my age,” said Barb. “It was really devastating for me personally to know I’m not in this alone.”

Today, Barb is part of multiple advocacy efforts on behalf of the Alzheimer’s Association, which she calls “the gold standard for information and resources on Alzheimer’s disease.” She has spoken at her chapter’s Reason to Hope Breakfast and visited the state capitol, where she met with legislative staff about increasing funding for Alzheimer’s research. And, Barb is now an Alzheimer’s Congressional Team Member to Virginia Speaker of the House, Rep. Bill Howell (R–28).

Her many accomplishments in the face of her diagnosis are a testament to her strength and resilience. Barb feels that her life experiences have prepared her to be an advocate for the Alzheimer’s Association. “I was put on this earth to do this,” said Barb.

“The Alzheimer’s Association has done so much for me personally to know I’m not in this alone.”

You can learn more about the Association’s advocacy efforts at alz.org/advocacy.

Don’t just hope for a cure. Help us find one.

Alzheimer’s Association TrialMatch® is a free, easy-to-use clinical studies matching service that connects individuals with Alzheimer’s, caregivers, healthy volunteers and physicians with current studies. Our continuously updated database of Alzheimer’s clinical trials includes more than 225 promising clinical studies being conducted at over 700 trial sites across the country.

You can find potential studies in four easy steps:

Step 1. Access TrialMatch online at alz.org/trialmatch. For additional assistance, email trialmatch@alz.org or call 800.272.3900.

Step 2. Complete a brief questionnaire to create a profile.

Step 3. The Alzheimer’s Association will compare your unique profile to its comprehensive, continually updated clinical study database.

Step 4. You will receive information about studies for which you might be a good fit based on your preferences, location and personal characteristics.

To learn more, visit alz.org/trialmatch or call 800.272.3900.

Advocate finds her calling through the Association

Barb Cole was only in her late 40s when she first realized something was seriously wrong with her memory. All of a sudden, routine tasks started taking her twice as long to accomplish. She’d forget if she washed her hair or even brushed her teeth. As someone who had always been very articulate, she was especially confused when she started struggling to find her words.

“I would compare my train of thought to blowing bubbles,” said Barb. “Some thoughts would last a while and float around. Others would pop quickly and simply be gone.”

After years of extensive testing to determine the underlying cause, Barb Cole was diagnosed with younger-onset Alzheimer’s disease at the age of 53. She and her family were heartbroken.

“Alzheimer’s was the last thing any of us expected it to be because of my age,” said Barb. “It was really devastating for me personally. I could no longer work because I couldn’t memorize important information anymore, and with that I lost my sense of identity.”

Determined to not let her diagnosis derail the remainder of her life, Barb reached out to the Alzheimer’s Association for help. She quickly became involved with her local chapter and emerged as a leader in advocacy efforts.

Barb was thrilled when the Alzheimer’s Association selected her to be a member of its National Early-Stage Advisory Group. Advisors are living in the early stage of Alzheimer’s or other dementia and help raise awareness and reduce stigma of the disease. “It’s a very vibrant group — and it’s a tremendous benefit to me personally to know I’m not in this alone.”
Caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease

Caring for a friend or family member with Alzheimer’s disease can take a physical and emotional toll. But you are not alone. Last year, more than 15 million family and friends provided 17.9 billion hours of unpaid care to those with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias.

Whether you provide daily care, participate in the decision making or simply care about a person with the disease — there’s much to do and plenty to know. The Alzheimer’s Association provides free resources, tools and support that can help make the caregiving journey as rewarding as it is challenging.

The Alzheimer’s and Dementia Caregiver Center provides reliable information and easy access to helpful resources.

alz.org/care

Free online workshop: Living with Alzheimer’s: For Caregivers series.

alz.org/training

Support groups, education programs and more available in communities nationwide.

alz.org/findus

24/7 Helpline — Available all day, every day.

800.272.3900

Clinical trial breakthroughs

More than 4.5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s, and without significant progress, that number could reach 7.1 million by 2025. Take action. Raise funds and awareness by participating in The Longest Day.

To learn more, or to start or join a team, visit alz.org/thelargestday or call 800.272.3900.

It’s not too early to start planning for The Longest Day®, one of the signature events of the Alzheimer’s Association. Held annually on the summer solstice, the duration of this sunrise-to-sunset event symbolizes the challenging journey of those living with the disease and their caregivers. Thousands of teams are encouraged to create their own experience as they fundraise and participate in an activity they love to honor someone facing the disease.

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June 20 is The Longest Day®

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