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Queen Anne fundraiser brings Alzheimer's issue to new audience

By Jeff Bond, Editor

It is estimated that 110,000 people in Washington state suffer from Alzheimer's disease or some form of related dementia.

If that figure isn't worrisome enough, 5,000 to 11,000 of those individuals suffer from what is known as early onset Alzheimer's or dementia. While it is common to think of Alzheimer's as a disease that afflicts only the elderly, the truth is that increasingly younger people are being affected by the condition. Keri Pollock, the communications director for the Queen Anne-based Western and Central Washington State Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, said that early onset Alzheimer's now affects adults in their 40s and 50s.

One more scary statistic: experts say that the number of Americans suffering from these conditions is expected to triple by 2050.

These are just some of the reasons that Pollock and her organization is trying to spread the word to a younger generation that Alzheimer's is a condition everyone needs to be aware of in the future. To help bring the facts of this condition to younger adults, the Alzheimer's Association sponsored the Ales For Alzheimer's pub crawl earlier this month.

Participants paid a \$30 donation and received a T-shirt and series of tickets that could be redeemed for eight-ounce brews at the 12 bars, pubs and restaurants that took part in the Lower Queen Anne area.

Pollock acknowledges she didn't quite know what to expect when the office launched the event.

"We were hoping to get about 300 people," Pollock said. "But low and behold, by the day of the event, more than 400 people had bought tickets."



(From left) Jason Hall joins friend Ron Piland in meeting a third Ales for Alzheimer's pub crawl participant during the event. The crawl raised more than \$12,000 for research, while also creating more awareness about the disease to a different audience than usual.

By the end of the evening, the pub crawl had turned into a smashing success, raising more than \$12,000 to help fund research into this disease, which is now the sixth leading cause of death in the United States.

She said the event was such a success that her team will plan more in the future. Pollock said she was even more touched by the friends and families who took part to help raise money for this cause.

That included Magnolia resident Ron Piland, whose mother, Nancy, suffers from the disease. Piland said the pub crawl was a great way to raise money for research while enjoying an evening out. He even got to see the University of Washington basketball team win an overtime thriller at one of the pubs.

“It was a nice charitable event that didn’t hold you to one place for a long period of time,” Piland said. “You could have a few beers, catch up with friend and meet new people. Oh, and by the way, you are supporting a great cause.”