This past year was an extraordinary year for the Alzheimer’s Association and those we serve. As the number of individuals living with Alzheimer’s in the United States reached more than six million, we also experienced a pandemic that particularly affected those with dementia and Alzheimer’s. We all experienced the hardships and losses our Alzheimer’s community faced. Being there for those who needed us most – those with Alzheimer’s and dementia, their families, their caregivers and those who work in memory care facilities – drove our work. Through it all, we continued to shed a light on this disease, deliver critical services, fund research throughout the world and advocate for an end to Alzheimer’s and dementia. Together, with our supporters and volunteers, we celebrate the accomplishments of the past year.
We provide programs and services for individuals and families impacted by Alzheimer’s with the most up-to-date information about dementia through our extensive education, care and support efforts. Resources on topics including cognitive decline risk reduction, early warning signs of dementia, identifying various stages and behaviors, care options and caregiver health resources are key components of our comprehensive programs.

- Our care consultants delivered nearly 3,000 customized care consultations, providing a roadmap for families impacted by Alzheimer’s and dementia, including information about the disease, resources for housing, and financial and legal planning.

- In collaboration with the University of North Dakota and the Dakota Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program, we presented a successful conference to 310 registrants, educating them on the ten warning signs of Alzheimer’s and best practices in diagnosing the different types of dementia. We also facilitated important discussions surrounding the caregiver experience.

“You will never feel more cared for or understood than when you call the Association’s Helpline or talk to their staff or volunteers. These people are working every single day to find a cure and raise money for the cause. They are a bright light when everything feels dark. I cannot say enough good things about the work they do and how much they helped caregivers, like myself and my family, who so often feel like there is no one to turn to.” – Aubrey Hagen
Our North Dakota staff worked with educators to update teaching modules used to instruct health care workers about Alzheimer’s disease and dementia through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

We continued to address challenges and concerns in rural communities with community listening sessions in many areas throughout the Chapter. We partnered with the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging to hold two sessions for individuals in Douglas, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, Grant, Ottertail, Becker, Clay and Wilkin counties. The sessions resulted in a newly created caregiver support group in Alexandria. Similarly, we collaborated with the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency to identify community education needs in northeastern Minnesota and the Iron Range.

Nearly 3,000 calls came into our 24/7 Helpline

448 support group meetings were held
Not every person has equal access to health care. In our work, we know that access to proper diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer’s is a barrier for many people. Ensuring all those facing Alzheimer’s and dementia have access to the resources and support they need is core to our mission.

- Primary care is frequently the gateway to serving individuals who may have dementia. Through our collaborations with six health systems in Minnesota and North Dakota, we have worked to improve detection, diagnosis and care for people with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia.

- Our collaborations with health systems and community clinics to elevate Alzheimer’s and dementia awareness and detection is an important part of our work. Our Project Echo program connects dementia care experts with primary care practices through free telementoring continuing education. Avery Memory Clinic in Marshall, Minn. and Washburn Family Clinic in Washburn, N.D. participated in this program this year.

- Working with Essentia Health, a health care system with facilities in our region, we provided consultation services to assist in the implementation of evidence-based clinical models to help patients and their families with the complex medical, behavioral and social needs of Alzheimer’s.

“Diagnosing an individual with dementia can be very complex, and knowing the warning signs is essential for physicians, patients and caregivers. Knowledge sharing is a vital component in our strategy to reach more people and those people who need help the most. Our collaboration with the Alzheimer’s Association is one way we are meeting this objective.”

– Dr. Donald Jurivich, Professor of Geriatrics, University of North Dakota School of Medicine
In June, we witnessed the FDA conditional approval of aducanumab, a groundbreaking new drug designed to slow the progression of Alzheimer’s for those in the earliest stages of the disease.
OUTREACH

We recognize that individuals often do not have adequate information about Alzheimer’s and dementia. As a result, our educational and outreach efforts are at the heart of what we do. At the same time, research indicates that some communities are disproportionately impacted by Alzheimer’s and other dementias. Women, African Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, Native Americans/Alaskan Natives, LGBTQ people and those living in rural America are more likely to develop the disease, less likely to receive an early diagnosis and more likely to encounter barriers when seeking assistance.

• Our staff and trained volunteers delivered educational programs and 207 community classes on such topics as “Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia” and “Healthy Living for Brain and Body.” Nearly 5,000 people participated in these presentations.

• With our Young Champions, a group of young adult Association volunteers, we piloted a new initiative in the Twin Cities to help communities become more dementia-friendly. We conducted surveys and developed customized plans for communities in western Hennepin County with growing diverse populations. Building upon community strengths, we identified opportunities where we could increase and improve our efforts.
OUTREACH

• We collaborated with the Spirit Lake Tribe in North Dakota on a multi-year grant to create a dementia-friendly environment, incorporating Alzheimer’s Association programming with traditional Lakota values. Dementia-friendly communities have a culture in which diagnosed individuals and their caregivers are supported by the community with opportunities to live a full life.

• Our outreach with businesses and corporations has led to creating workplaces where there is a greater understanding of Alzheimer’s and dementia and the needs of employees who may also be caregivers. Last year, we collaborated with a number of businesses including 3M, Sage Legal, Deloitte, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Rainbow Treecare, Uponor, Securian Financial Group, Paradigm, RBC, Ryan Companies, Ameriprise Financial Services and Dorsey & Whitney.

• New partnerships with community-based organizations, such as Rainbow Health and Mujeres Latinas Unidas, helped to expand access to more constituents, including those disproportionately impacted by Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia.

475 VOLUNTEERS advocated for legislation, delivered support programs, assisted with events and contributed 7,500 hours.
Ensuring Alzheimer’s disease is a priority in federal and state legislation in Minnesota and North Dakota is paramount in our work. Despite COVID-19 restrictions, our volunteer advocates and public policy team made their voices heard, resulting in legislative victories for those living with Alzheimer’s and dementia.

• In Minnesota, we passed legislation that will aid law enforcement searches when a person with dementia is missing, and also sets standards for law enforcement training to include dementia tools and resources.

• North Dakota successes include an 8% increase in state funding for the Dementia Care Services Program, which provides a lifeline for thousands of families impacted by an Alzheimer’s or dementia diagnosis.

• In Washington D.C., bipartisan legislation was passed to develop materials to assist federal law enforcement, prosecutors, judges and others who encounter individuals living with Alzheimer’s and other dementia.
With the growing number of individuals and families impacted by the disease, our organization relies heavily on supporters, donors, community partners and volunteers. We could not do all that we do without the tremendous support from so many individuals and organizations who help us create awareness of disease, fund our services and help deliver critical programs.

- In an effort to expand our reach and impact into communities, our volunteers continue to deliver a variety of programs to people impacted by Alzheimer’s. This past year, we recruited, trained and mobilized more than 200 new volunteers and coached, mentored and managed 275 existing volunteers. We also trained more than 125 volunteers to provide education, support groups and early-stage programs.

- Even with COVID-19 restrictions, 5,000 people walked in their neighborhoods to participate in 18 Walk to End Alzheimer’s in our Chapter in 2020, raising nearly $2 million for the Association.
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- Community members volunteer their time and talent to serve on our Board and our working committees of Concern and Awareness, Care and Support, Development, Public Policy, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Medical and Scientific Advisory Council; and our Gala, The Longest Day, RivALZ and Walk to End Alzheimer’s planning committees.

- The Purple Gala, held at Allianz Field, attracted 450 participants who contributed more than $700,000.

- Our supporters also rallied around such events as Reason to Hope, The Longest Day, and RivALZ football games, as well as Allianz’s Driving to Donate virtual event.
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