Veronica Montoya has travelled New Mexico with her father and a host of friends, family members and supporters to participate in eleven Walk to End Alzheimer’s events in the last four years. What motivates her? Find out inside...
In this together. As far back as March, when New Mexicans were first instructed to stay at home during COVID-19, this was a concept trending heavily: “We are all in this together.” We began using hashtags like #WAITT, #alonetogether, our state government used #AllTogetherNM, and all over the media – social and otherwise – this idea was adopted by numerous groups, artists and organizations.

It may seem ironic that being together was so popular during a time of social distancing. But togetherness is powerful. It’s a motivator. There is power and strength in knowing that we are not alone. Understanding that others are experiencing similar adversity and that by coming together, virtually or in-person, we can overcome anything, no matter how daunting.

Since I’ve been involved with the Alzheimer’s Association, the slogan for the Walk to End Alzheimer’s has been “Together, we can end Alzheimer’s.” Notice that word again? Together.

Through the Walk, we do come together, in hope, in solidarity, in support. We join in the Promise Garden Ceremony, the colors, the sounds, the joy and the sadness, the camaraderie. We inspire others, and we inspire ourselves to keep fighting.

Alzheimer’s disease is daunting. But we set our sights on ending this crisis not just because it’s a noble effort (it is), but because it touches us all in one form or another. Often, in the most heartbreaking ways imaginable. Alzheimer’s disease is resilient, but so are we. Through the Walk, we continue to raise money for research, continue to engage each other and share our stories, and continue to get the word out to anyone who will listen because...

We are all in this together. **And together, we can end Alzheimer’s.**

I am looking forward to walking alongside you all this Walk season.

Tracy Ayers
Board President

Join the Walk to End Alzheimer’s today: www.alz.org/walk.

The unprecedented experience of the last few months has taught us many stark lessons. I certainly cannot pretend that they have all been positive. To say it has been a difficult time, would be a vast understatement.

But the challenges presented by social distancing has given us at least one illuminating insight into where we’ve come as a society: technology is a gift. Sure, it doesn’t always work the way it’s supposed to. But when it does, it gives us the valuable tool of access.

It allows us to share information, stay connected to family and friends, grants us the ability to work remotely when needed, and keeps us together even when we are physically apart.

Our success in converting many of our chapter’s in-person trainings and presentations into online webinars, accessible from the comfort and safety of people’s own homes, has been a transformative experience. It’s an innovation we continue, maintain and hone as we move forward; along with our on-going in-person programs.

In the early days of New Mexico’s stay-at-home instruction, it was essential that we continued to engage and inform our constituents, and remain both helpful and relevant to them in uncertain times. We provided presentations that addressed the challenges that caregivers were experiencing, giving practical tips for providing dementia care during the peaks of the crisis, along with our core programs.

We remain committed to providing vital programming in the form of online Care & Support, and I am grateful for the ability we have to reach each other in this way.

In this issue, you’ll see opportunities to participate in some of these online offerings. I invite you to take advantage of them and access what technology has given us.

Tim Sheahan
Executive Director

See class schedule section in this issue for more info on online and in-person presentations.
The Alzheimer's Impact Movement (AIM) is a separately incorporated advocacy affiliate of the Alzheimer's Association. AIM advances and develops federal public policies to overcome Alzheimer's disease and all other dementia through increased investments in research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Thanks to the support of its members, AIM has driven policymakers to take historic steps - but much more remains to be done. Here are some of the ways AIM is addressing this public health crisis...

**FEDERAL PRIORITIES.** The federal government must address the challenges the disease poses and take bold action to confront this urgent crisis, now. AIM is committed to advancing policies that improve the lives of those affected by Alzheimer's and other dementia. On a federal level, AIM is working to:

- Increase the commitment to Alzheimer's research
- Fund the Alzheimer's Public Health Infrastructure
- Educate Providers about Care Planning Available through Medicare
- Educate Providers on Palliative And Hospice Care

**STATE PRIORITIES.** State governments, including New Mexico, must also take bold action. Effectively implementing and updating State Alzheimer's Plans and supporting other policies will reduce the long-term impact of the disease on state budgets, and improve the lives of individuals living with dementia and their family caregivers. AIM is working with states to:

- Increase Public Awareness, Early Detection and Diagnosis
- Build a Dementia-Capable Workforce
- Increase Access to Home and Community-Based Services
- Enhance the Quality of Care in Residential Settings

**JOIN OUR ADVOCACY TEAM.** We need dedicated volunteers like you. There are a variety of ways to help. Whatever your experience and availability, we’re eager to have you on our advocacy team!

For more information, contact Tommy Hernandez, Public Policy Director at tjhernandez@alz.org, (505) 404-9845 or visit www.alzimpact.org.

TO OUR AMAZING DONORS:
Thank you! Your donations fuel our mission towards a world without Alzheimer’s and all other dementia.

You can donate by mail using the envelope provided in this newsletter, or by calling (505) 266-4473 or at our website, see below.

For a list of those who have contributed from October 1st, 2019 through March 31st, 2020, visit our website at this link: www.alz.org/newmexico/donate

Photo by Jim Myers
NEW MEXICO
WALK TO END ALZHEIMER’S EVENTS

TOGETHER, WE CAN END ALZHEIMER’S!

NE REGIONAL WALK - SANTA FE
Aug. 22nd - NM School for the Deaf – Check-in: 9am
Registration & Info: act.alz.org/WALKSF2020

NW REGIONAL WALK - FARMINGTON
Aug. 29th - Berg Park – Check-in: 9am
Registration & Info: act.alz.org/WALKFARMINGTON2020

NW REGIONAL WALK - GALLUP
Sept. 12th - Location TBD – Check-in: 9am
Registration & Info: act.alz.org/WALKGALLUP2020

SW REGIONAL WALK - LAS CRUCES
Sept. 19th - Young Park – Check-in: 9am
Registration & Info: act.alz.org/WALKLC2020

CENTRAL NM WALK - ALBUQUERQUE
Sept. 26th – Tiguex Park (tentative) – Check-in: 8:30am
Registration & Info: act.alz.org/WALKABQ2020

SE REGIONAL WALK - ROSWELL
Oct. 3rd - Pioneer Park – Check-in: 9am
Registration & Info: act.alz.org/WALKROSWELL2020

SE REGIONAL WALK - HOBBS
Oct. 10th - Lea Regional Medical Center – Check-in: 9am
Registration & Info: act.alz.org/WALKHOBBS2020

Note: Events are subject to change as we monitor health guidelines and best practices.
Our priorities are health and safety. Please continue to check in with www.alz.org/walk for updates.
Veronica Montoya has travelled New Mexico with her father and a host of friends, family members and supporters to participate in eleven Walks to End Alzheimer’s in the last four years. What motivates her? Veronica tells us in her own words...

Las Cruces, 2014, was the first Walk that Dad and I went to. We were joined by my daughter (now a college student), her cheerleading team, a neighbor, coworkers and compassionate former students of mine. Around this time I had quit my teaching job to be a full time caregiver and moved into my cousin, Bruce’s house.

We participated in that Walk again the next year, then Santa Fe, Farmington, Albuquerque and Roswell in 2016. Then last year, we travelled to Walks in Gallup, Truth or Consequences, Santa Fe, Albuquerque and Hobbs.
In the beginning it was just to support the organization and become more involved. I didn’t know that, eventually, the Alzheimer’s Association would help me with respite reimbursement, training classes, useful contacts and advice. They answered my calls in the middle of the night when Dad was struggling and I couldn’t call anyone else.

There are challenges, including weather and travel fatigue on my dad. Some Walks are scheduled close together, so we needed a longer break before traveling again.

There were gaps some years. In 2017, my dad broke his leg and couldn’t travel. The next year, he was on hospice care for an infection. That was two years ago when he supposedly was on his deathbed. Thank God the doctors got it wrong.

I call ahead and get specifics about locations, wheelchair accessibility and dog friendliness. In the end, I know we will be surrounded by others who understand my dad may not be easy to talk to, or that we move slowly, or that a morning of activity is fun, but also exhausting. People are encouraging. We get a chance to see vendors in each location to get new information on resources.

The reward is that we actually DO something to make an impact. Yes, we move at the speed of Alzheimer's, but my buddy (my dad) and I still make a difference. It's a bonus to inspire others. I'm glad we raise money and awareness using my Facebook account and emails. Friends and distant family beginning to see elderly parents show signs of memory loss know they can message me for guidance.

The Dogs. Snot (small white dog, bottom left corner) is actually Bruce's dog, but we take care of him, though he’s “snot” our dog. His real name is “Babies.” Snot went with us to all Walks in 2019. The black border collie’s name is Jewels because she’s precious like diamonds or rubies. She struggles in her old age, but has been there by my dad’s side. She lets me know when he needs help. She has been to all the dog-friendly Walks we’ve participated in.

WHY DO WE WALK? We walk in honor of our beloved sister/aunt. We walk to be among people who understand. We walk so others can know the Alzheimer’s Association helps families and supports research. We walk because it is good for my dad and me to have purpose. And we walk to say thank you for everything this organization has done for us.

Start your Walk team today at www.alz.org/walk.
In serving New Mexico, the diversity of our extraordinary state’s geography, demographics and cultural heritages demands ingenuity, sensitivity, resources and special dedication. Nowhere is this more crucial than when collaborating with our native populations.

New Mexico has 219,237 Indian citizens, which make up nearly 10.5% of the state’s entire population.* There are 23 Indian tribes - nineteen Pueblos, three Apache tribes (the Fort Sill Apache Tribe, the Jicarilla Apache Nation and the Mescalero Apache Tribe), and the Navajo Nation. The nineteen Pueblos are comprised of the Pueblos of Acoma, Cochiti, Isleta, Jemez, Laguna, Nambe, Ohkay Owingeh, Picuris, Pojoaque, Sandia, San Felipe, San Ildefonso, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santo Domingo, Taos, Tesuque, Zuni and Zia. Each Tribe is a sovereign nation with its own government, life-ways, traditions, and culture.**

Dementia brings considerable challenges whenever and wherever it appears. Few studies have examined the burden of Alzheimer’s and other dementias in the American Indian community, and the recently released Alzheimer’s Association 2020 Facts and Figures Report stresses the urgent need for more research on dementia’s impact on this population, along with other underrepresented groups.*** But we do know the American Indian people, like other populations, are living longer – and age is the number one risk factor.

“We know the need is there. We also know that care & support programs are critical for all families facing the devastating effects of dementia,” says Tim Sheahan (Executive Director, Alzheimer’s Association, New Mexico Chapter) “The question is how best to deliver those programs, because there are cultural considerations that can present challenges in that delivery.”

The NM Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association is fortunate to have found successful approaches to addressing some of those unique needs, having recently presented to the Navajo Nation in Window Rock, the Pueblo of San Ildefonso and helping to coordinate caregiver education in the Pueblo of Jemez. This was accomplished by employing sensitivity, dedication and innovative tools like the Healthy Brain Initiative: Road Map for Indian Country, a partnership created by the Alzheimer’s Association and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

“The Road Map is a comprehensive guide for public health officials of Indian Country to address Alzheimer’s and dementia in their communities,” says Tommy Hernandez (Public Policy Director, Alzheimer’s Association, NM Chapter) “It’s tailored to help them develop a broad response to the disease, including public health strategies that can be used to inform and shape a culturally appropriate and effective approach.”

Recruiting community members from within the tribe or pueblo to act as volunteer educators is an achievement on many fronts, and offers a powerful alternative to outsiders traveling to remote locations to present programs. These volunteers are keenly attuned to local sensitivities, culture and traditions. Language, for instance, might be challenge for outsiders. Many elders do not speak English. Theirs may be one of a dozen or so dialects of native language spoken in New Mexico.

“IT’S ALL ABOUT EDUCATING AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITY MEMBERS”

www.alz.org/newmexico
800.272.3900

8

Landscape pic: Don Johnson

by Don Johnson
Joseph Fragua is one of those key volunteers. He’s a member of the Pueblo of Jemez in north-central New Mexico, approximately 50 miles northwest of Albuquerque. Fragua is fluent not only in English, but also the Towa language which allows him to teach the Association’s “Skills for Dementia Caregiving” class, answer questions and offer ideas without an interpreter or translator.

Fragua cites awareness of the disease as a challenge in delivering the class, “Indian people view aging as a natural thing to be embraced and honored,” he says. “Many of the symptoms associated with Alzheimer’s may be viewed as part of the ‘circle of life’… returning to childhood, not as symptoms of a disease.”

Sensitivity to such deeply-held beliefs is a must when acknowledging the impact of dementia on caregivers and community. “What I try to do is give caregivers hope for themselves and their lives,” he says.

“Acceptance of Alzheimer’s as a disease is increasing with the younger generation. “It might be a result of technology, social media or education,” Fragua says. “But I’m seeing progress beyond dismissing dementia as just ‘old-timer’s disease’ to more understanding of what it is, what it represents and how to deal with it.”

In a recent visit to the Window Rock Navajo Reservation in Arizona, Denise Parras, (Interim Program Director, Alzheimer’s Association, NM Chapter) was encouraged by the interest and enthusiasm for information about Alzheimer’s. “We’re getting more invitations for presentations in New Mexico, especially from younger tribal and pueblo members.”

Denise says that “Skills,” “Know the 10 Warning Signs,” and “Understanding Alzheimer’s Disease” are among the most popular offerings from the Association. “The Respite Reimbursement Program can be a lifesaver for caregivers in desperate need of a break from the sometimes overpowering duties of caring for a family member with dementia.”
Taking cues from the Healthy Brain Initiative: Road Map for Indian Country, the Association works with community members and volunteers to:

• Understand brain health, early warning signs of dementia, and benefits of early detection and diagnosis for persons with dementia and their caregivers.
• Encourage community members to use effective interventions, best practices, and traditional wellness practices to protect brain health and manage risk factors, address cognitive impairment, and support persons with dementia and their caregivers.
• Provide information and tools to help older adults with dementia and their caregivers anticipate and respond to challenges that typically arise during the course of dementia.
• Promote engagement among tribal members in dementia issues by offering information and education on the basics of cognitive health and impairment, the impact of dementia on caregivers and communities, and the role of public health approaches in addressing this priority problem.

“Family members take the information and integrate it into the care they provide their loved one. It enriches their caregiving experience and raises awareness in a tight-knit community,” says Parras.

Keeping the focus on family and community is fundamental. Cultural and traditional teachings and practices build strength and resilience for these communities. High levels of social engagement with family and community are values deeply embedded in Indian Country, including the innate passion to “care for our own and do it at home.” This being said, Fragua makes the crucial point that “caregivers need to care for themselves to better care for their loved ones.”

There are still challenges to overcome. For instance, available healthcare providers may not speak native languages, be aware of traditions, or cultural sensitivities. Fragua says language can present immense barriers. “Diagnostic tests in English can cause problems with accurate assessment of dementia, its level and stages.” Such shortfalls complicate caregiving and management of the disease.

These are all issues that need to be addressed. But this Road Map, like any journey, begins with steps. The step of engaging health officials and community volunteers from within, like Joseph Fragua, blessed with the language skills, cultural sensitivity and credibility is an important one. They will make the greatest impact.

For more information, contact Denise Parras at (505) 266-4473, dnparras@alz.org.


NM Chapter presenting “Skills for Dementia Caregiving”, Navajo Nation at Window Rock
EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Alzheimer's Advocacy Day (Santa Fe, 2/5)

Our public policy advocates filled the Roundhouse with powerful and inspiring messages to our state’s lawmakers. For the second year in a row, we were honored to be invited to the Governor’s office to discuss the needs of families facing Alzheimer’s disease and other dementia.

The Longest Day (NM & Worldwide, 6/20)

New Mexicans joined people from across the globe in celebrating The Longest Day virtually. During this time of social distancing, participants followed best practices, using technology to create safe, DIY fundraisers with creative activities like trivia nights, crafts, dance classes and boardgame-a-thons.

save the dates

THE UNFOREGETTABLE GOLF CLASSIC:
Date TBD - Tanoan Country Club
Join us for the Alzheimer’s Association’s charity golf tournament to help fight Alzheimer’s. Registration, tickets and info: at bit.ly/2020alzgolf, Nicolette Garcia, nsgarcia@alz.org or (505) 404-9849.

PURPLE CARPET GALA: GOLDEN GLAMOUR “IN OLD HOLLYWOOD, EVERYONE’S A STAR”
April 17th, 2021 - Sheraton Albuquerque Uptown
Relive the glitz and spectacle of Hollywood’s golden era, all to help families facing Alzheimer’s. Tickets and info: at bit.ly/2020purplecarpetgala, Nicolette Garcia, nsgarcia@alz.org or (505) 404-9849.

CAREGIVER CONFERENCE:
Date and Location: TBD
Presentations designed to educate, inform, and improve the experience of caregiving. Tracks for both family caregivers and health care professionals. Call for info: (505) 266-4473.

OPEN HOUSE:
Albuquerque Office: Date TBD
Join us at our Open House in celebration of our wonderful volunteers, partners and friends! Call for info: (505) 266-4473.
This is only a partial listing. Additional classes and trainings are being added in all regions throughout the year. All events subject to change per health guidelines. For the latest updates, please call 1 (800) 272-3900 or visit www.communityresourcefinder.org (under “Alzheimer’s Association Programs and Events.”)
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Looking for more?

CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE RESOURCES!

Health precautions impacted our statewide scheduling of in-person classes, but there’s a wealth of opportunity online that you can access free, from the comfort and safety of your own home!

For the latest in our chapter webinars, call 1 (800) 272-3900 or visit www.communityresourcefinder.org, under “Alzheimer’s Association Programs and Events.”

Visit www.alz.org/training to access presentations like 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s or Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia - and more! Many with Spanish-language options!

Explore www.alz.org/help-support/resources/online-tools for online tools, answers, local resources and support.

Many Support Groups are available virtually. Contact: 1 (800) 272-3900 or visit www.communityresourcefinder.org.

COVID-19 PROGRAMS:


Discover even more at our free 24/7 Helpline staffed by trained professionals: 1 (800) 272-3900.
To our Valued Partners and Sponsors,

These last few months have been an unprecedented time for all of us. As a community, we have experienced so much change, so much uncertainty, and so much loss. But we have endured it together, innovated and overcome, as any strong community must. Challenging times create profound bonds. We want you to know that we appreciate all of you, our partners, in every capacity that we collaborate. Your support is deeply felt, and we hope you feel our gratitude as whole-heartedly. We have been in this together, and will continue to be.

We thank you all,
The Staff of the Alzheimer’s Association, NM Chapter

THANK YOU TO OUR ELITE & PREMIERE SPONSORS!

(July – December 2020)
Now more than ever, we need your support. Please donate using the envelope provided in this newsletter or visit www.alz.org/newmexico/donate. Thank you.

**NEED A BREAK?**
Caring for a loved one with dementia can be overwhelming. Learn more about our Respite Reimbursement Program that helps caregivers take a much-needed break by reimbursing some costs of respite services. This program is dependent on grant funding and reimbursements are available pending fund availability.

Contact Lorey Esquibel, Operations Director at (505) 266-4473, lesquibel@alz.org.

Start a Walk to End Alzheimer’s team today & fundraise all year long! Take the first step at alz.org/walk.

Remember to follow us online!

Check out our website at www.alz.org/newmexico

- www.facebook.com/alznmchapter
- @alz_nm
- @alz_nm_advocacy Our Advocacy News Twitter Account!
- www.instagram.com/alznm_

USE THESE HASHTAGS WHEN YOU POST TO SOCIAL MEDIA:
- #ENDALZ
- #Walk2EndAlz

INTRODUCING... THE SCIENCE HUB!

The Alzheimer’s Association Science Hub is your definitive source for the latest information about Alzheimer’s and dementia research.

It provides access to breaking news, viewpoints, and perspectives from leaders at the Alzheimer’s Association.