



alzheimer's   
association®

**VOLUNTEERING**

*from the heart*

## Volunteering from the heart, working to make a difference.

Imagine a world without Alzheimer's — your talents can help make it happen!

Our volunteers are professional, passionate, and talented people, working together to help the fight against Alzheimer's and other dementias.

*Some of the many areas we need volunteer power include:*

- Public education
- Support groups
- Community outreach
- Special events, such as Walk to End Alzheimer's® or The Longest Day®
- Office operations
- Advocacy

Finding volunteer opportunities in your community is easy. Contact your local Alzheimer's Association at **1.800.272.3900** or visit [alz.org/volunteer](http://alz.org/volunteer) to see where your skills and talents fit best.

*Turn the page to hear from our volunteers — what brought them here and what keeps them coming back.*



from the heart



When I was caring for my husband, the caregiver support group I attended made me feel confident that I could weather just about anything. Other caregivers always had my back. Becoming a support group facilitator was a natural progression for me.

As a support group facilitator, I love to see people blossom with more confidence as they keep coming back, month after month.

Participants will not only share helpful caregiving hints with fellow caregivers, but also give much needed emotional support, with a hug or a verbal encouragement. I think sharing their particular journey helps them feel more in control of their situation.

*For 19 years, Vicky provided care to her husband Jim, a school psychologist and a family therapist, who lived with younger-onset Alzheimer's dementia. She lives in Pittsford, New York.*

## SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATOR

*Vicky Ruppert, Rochester and Finger Lakes Region Chapter*

## COMMUNITY EDUCATOR

*Mary Beth Heinicke, Long Island Chapter*

I volunteer as a community educator because of Elaine R. She looked at me one night and said, "Why is this happening to me? I just want to go home. This is not my home." I had no explanation and no plan. I gave her a hug and my heart broke.

I volunteer because there are so many Elaines and so many family members whose loved ones live with Alzheimer's or another dementia. They are looking for answers. When I deliver a training program or a workshop, I know I'm helping these individuals and families not only find some answers, but also acquire caregiving skills and gain access to the available community resources.

*Mary Beth is the director of Adult Day Health Care at Cold Spring Hills Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation in Woodbury, New York.*



I know how hopeless dementia caregivers feel as they get lost in the maze of medical appointments, household chores, and legal issues. When the Circle of Life ministry began looking for ways to assist caregivers, it turned to the Alzheimer's Association.

Each year, when Pastor Stephen Pogue asks those dealing with Alzheimer's or another dementia to stand, more than half of those in the church respond. We hold Purple Sundays to help decrease the social stigma associated with Alzheimer's and eliminate the isolation that caregivers often experience. Purple Sunday also includes the distribution of information, which is important because caregivers cannot always attend workshops.

*Nancy Norde, a former caregiver to her mother, heads the Circle of Life Ministry at the Greater Centennial A.M.E. Zion Church in Mount Vernon, New York.*

## FAITH OUTREACH REPRESENTATIVE

*Nancy Norde, Hudson Valley Chapter*



I have been volunteering at the Alzheimer's Association for about six years. While I enjoy facilitating caregiver support groups and delivering community education programs, leading our chapter's social engagement program is, by far, my favorite volunteer assignment.

Our Sunday Social program brings together caregivers and their loved ones who live with dementia for an afternoon of fun and camaraderie. When caregivers attend our Sunday Social, they know they will be cared for by volunteers and their loved ones will be treated with respect. There is something transformative and magical about it. Before every Sunday Social, I hope I can be a blessing for someone, but when I walk out after the event, I feel I've been blessed.

*Deborah Disbrow, a retired educator who spent 37 years working in the New York City school system. She lives in New Rochelle, New York.*

## EARLY-STAGE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT LEADER

*Deborah Disbrow, Hudson Valley Chapter*

## OFFICE OPERATIONS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE

*Ali Perry, Northeastern New York Chapter*

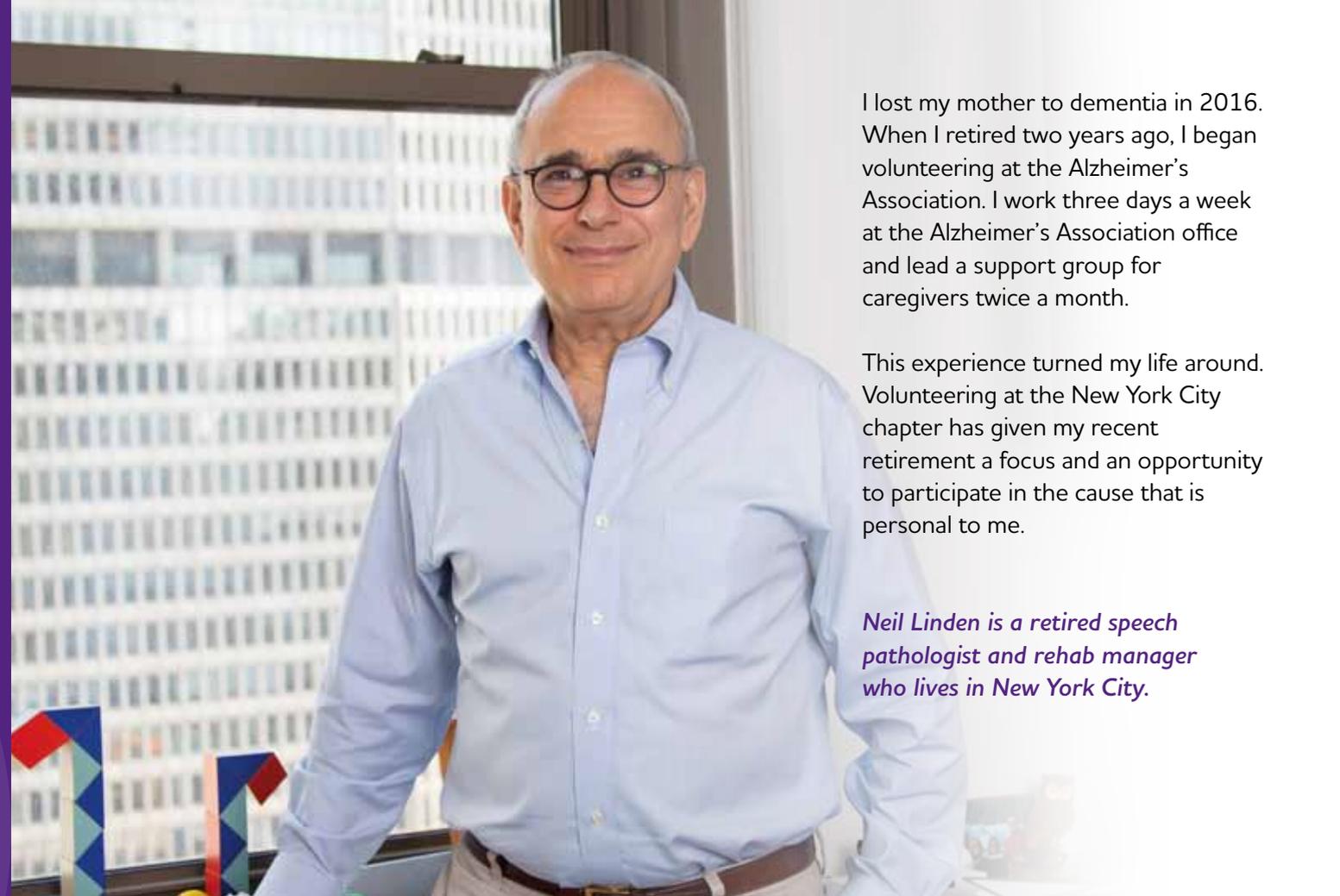


My grandfather was diagnosed and ultimately passed from Alzheimer's when I was growing up, and I saw the toll the disease took on his primary caregiver, my grandmother, and the rest of my family members.

I love contributing to the efforts of the Alzheimer's Association to eradicate Alzheimer's and other dementias and provide care to individuals and families affected by this devastating disease.

Whether it be helping out with various tasks in the office or educating the community about all the Alzheimer's Association has to offer, I enjoy promoting the vision of a world without Alzheimer's.

*Ali Perry is pursuing her master's in social work at the University at Albany.*



I lost my mother to dementia in 2016. When I retired two years ago, I began volunteering at the Alzheimer's Association. I work three days a week at the Alzheimer's Association office and lead a support group for caregivers twice a month.

This experience turned my life around. Volunteering at the New York City chapter has given my recent retirement a focus and an opportunity to participate in the cause that is personal to me.

*Neil Linden is a retired speech pathologist and rehab manager who lives in New York City.*

## OFFICE OPERATIONS AND SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATOR



*Neil Linden, New York City Chapter*

For some Spanish-speaking seniors the language presents a barrier in accessing community resources. I teach classes on dementia-specific caregiving to the Hispanic/Latino communities in Spanish. I also help connect members of the Hispanic/Latino community with additional services offered by the Alzheimer's Association in our area.

I love seeing the transformation of caregivers when they finish the course. When I first began volunteering, I never thought that I would use the knowledge I share with others in my personal life. All the tools that I learned as a community educator came in handy for me and my siblings as we cared for our mother.

*Estella Velez Upegui works at the Catholic Family Center in Rochester, New York.*

## PROMOTORA AND COMMUNITY EDUCATOR

*Estella Velez Upegui, Rochester and Finger Lakes Chapter*



## ADVOCATE

*Dr. Francisco Corbalan, Rochester and Finger Lakes Region Chapter*

As a geriatrician, I treat many patients who live with dementia and their family members who care for them. I became the Alzheimer's Association ambassador to Congressman Tom Reed to advocate on behalf of my patients and their loved ones.

When I meet with Rep. Reed, I urge him to support federal policies that improve the lives of those affected by Alzheimer's and other dementias. I also advocate for increased funding in critical research that will change the trajectory of the disease.

*Dr. Francisco Corbalan is a physician at Arnot Health and medical director at Chemung County Nursing Facility and Bethany Village Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living Facility. He lives in Elmira, New York.*



Despite numerous doctors' visits and hospitalizations, no one mentioned dementia. Doctors never told us what Ron's diagnosis was. If only I had known that he had dementia, our journey would have been entirely different.

I'm passionate about helping other caregivers understand and cope with the disease. Everyone needs to recognize the signs of dementia and be informed of the diagnosis.

When I became a community representative, reaching out to the local healthcare community, I started with providing my own doctor with information on how to communicate with patients and their loved ones about Alzheimer's or another dementia and how to connect families to the resources available through the Alzheimer's Association.

*For two years, Norma cared for her husband Ron, a veteran and a retired insurance broker, who lived with dementia. She lives in Buffalo, New York.*

## COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE AND SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATOR

*Norma Henstein, Western New York Chapter*



## WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBER

*Heidi Ranger, Central New York Chapter*



As I have worked with seniors over the last 10 years, I watched precious memories slip away from individuals. A spouse not recognizing their significant other. A parent not recognizing their own child. Every day is different, some not as good as others. Today may be their greatest day.

I have been participating in the Walk to End Alzheimer's for those who are fighting every day and for those who have lost their battle with Alzheimer's. I volunteer on the planning committee so I can make the Broome County Walk a success by generating new ideas and recruiting more participants.

*Heidi Ranger lives in Binghamton, New York*

*"There is something transformative and magical about it; I feel I've been blessed."*

*"This experience turned my life around."*

*"I'm passionate about helping other caregivers."*

*"I enjoy promoting the vision of a world without Alzheimer's."*

### ***What will your experience be?***

Contact your local Alzheimer's Association today.

*magical. blessed. passionate.*



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