

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Terese Capizzi



"I promised my mother I would work to find a cure because no family should have to go through this." Those heartfelt words have fueled Terese Capizzi's incredible passion for the Alzheimer's Association's mission every day since she began volunteering with the Wisconsin Chapter in 2016. Terese's mother, Josie, lost a 14-year battle with Alzheimer's disease in 2014. "My mother worked until she was 70 and was the brightest woman," said Terese. "My father was her caregiver, with the help of my sister (all living in New York), until the last six months. At the end it took four of us to take care of her."

Over the last five years, Terese has shared her time and talents across multiple Alzheimer's Association pillars, intent on finding new and creative ways to advance the mission. She is Vice Chair of the Wisconsin Chapter Board of Directors, a member of the Executive Committee, chairs the Development Committee, was a past co-chair of the annual Gala and currently serves on the Gala Executive Committee, is a member of the Advocacy Committee and serves as Ambassador to state Senator Alberta Darling, and is heavily involved in the planning committees and sponsor acquisition for the Walk to End Alzheimer's in both Ozaukee and Milwaukee counties.

Before retiring, Terese was Director of Long Term Care at Northwestern Mutual. In her career she worked daily with wealth managers, financial advisors, and the field force on ways to bring security to individuals impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia. It was during those years that she realized the significant emotional, medical and financial toll Alzheimer's disease had on so many people. "There is a stigma about Alzheimer's disease, that we need to overcome to help families better navigate the journey," she said.

"I wanted to join the Alzheimer's Association Board because I felt like I could have an impact." As an astute business leader, Terese understands that funding is a key driver of many of the Alzheimer's Association priorities. "We need funding to help find a cure for this ugly disease. I've been involved as an Advocate on a state and federal level and it's so exciting to see the investments the NIH (National Institutes of Health) is making."

"We have great businesses in Wisconsin and it's important that employers understand how Alzheimer's affects their employees – either as caregivers or the employee themselves. Everyone benefits by supporting the Alzheimer's Association – we all know someone who is impacted and no family should have to do it alone."

Terese's passion for the mission has truly become a family affair. Her husband, Curt, is often by her side during many of her volunteer fundraising and advocacy efforts. Her adult children are also involved. "My children donate to my Walk to End Alzheimer's team instead of buying me birthday gifts," she said with a broad smile.

"It's so rewarding to volunteer," said Terese. "It's amazing to be part of an organization that provides so many free services to someone in their most desperate times. To be able to help people through the darkest of times is so uplifting. Even the little things – like learning how to speak with a family member with Alzheimer's or knowing there is a 24/7 800 number you can call – are all so important. We all need to work together towards a cure."