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Bradley Healthcare raises Alzheimer's awareness

by DELANEY WALKER Banner Staff Writer

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Alzheimers



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Bradley Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center is fighting back against the onslaught of Alzheimer's by raising awareness and money for the Alzheimer's Association through grassroots fundraising.

Tanya Vasbinder, certified dementia practitioner, is this year's chair for the fundraiser. She said the disease hits close to the center's heart, as 80 to 90 percent of the patients have Alzheimer's and dementia issues.

"We just want to bring awareness and raise as much money as we can to give to the Alzheimer's Association," Vasbinder said. "They will use the money for research and hopefully make things better for people down the line."

The local health care center recently donated more than \$3,000 to the association. Funds were raised through the selling of tickets, bake sales, AA merchandise and the annual flea market yard sale. The money was presented at the annual Walk to End Alzheimer's Saturday on the Greenway.

Vasbinder praised local businesses for their willingness to aid the cause.



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"I think they have participated so graciously because they do see the need," Vasbinder said. "It does hit close to home with so many people being affected by the disease."

Applebee's, Cupcake Divas, Starbucks and many other Cleveland-based food establishments provided gift cards and certificates used in September's weekly giveaways. Tractor Supply and Walmart also donated as well as various other businesses in the community. Vasbinder explained last month's fundraising blitz was buoyed by the numerous donations.

Themed baskets were created as another purchased ticket option. These included Pampered Chef, kitchen baking set, little boy items, little girl items, several spa baskets and a gourmet coffee basket.

Vasbinder had the help of Maria Shepherd, Miss Music City 2013, in picking the winning tickets. Shepherd, who will be competing in the Miss Tennessee pageant with Alzheimer's as her platform, was escorted by BHRC resident Charlie Tanksley.

Shepherd said the subject of Alzheimer's affects her on a personal level.

"My grandmother was diagnosed with dementia 13 years ago. It is a form of memory loss, as is Alzheimer's, so even though she does not have that progressive of a disease, we have still seen the impact it has had on our family," Shepherd said. "

Sometimes she doesn't remember who her grandkids are, and it is really hard on our family. When I realized the Alzheimer's Association has things set up all over the country to help people and families, I wanted to [get involved with] something I had experienced personally."

According to Vasbinder, Shepherd will continue to participate in the center's various fundraisers held throughout the year. Bake sales and gift card giveaways will continue through next September. The next large prize will be two pairs of tickets, sold separately, for the Tracey Lawrence concert set for Friday, Dec. 6 at Memorial Auditorium in Chattanooga. Rick Huckabee will be performing as the concert's special guest.

Tickets for the concert will go on sale starting Oct. 7, and continue into the first week of November. Individual tickets can be purchased for \$2. A pair of tickets can be purchased at the bargain of \$3.

Fundraising efforts will continue on a smaller, monthly basis throughout the year. The public is encouraged to offer suggestions and support the cause.

"We just want to make everyone aware of this horrible, horrible disease and continue to get everyone's support on this," Vasbinder said.

"We just aren't going to stop. We want the community to be a part of raising money for research."

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