



THE BRAINS BEHIND SAVING YOURS.™

For Immediate Release:

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3rd ANNUAL ALZHEIMER'S HIKE 4 HOPE

Southington, CT - The third annual Alzheimer's Hike 4 Hope - a family event for all ages - is returning to East Hampton this September. The AlzHike4Hope team invites children, parents and grandparents to the Air Line State Park Trail on Saturday, Sept. 17 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to run, bike or hike at your own pace.

"Everyone can enjoy the trail and our quaint village of East Hampton while at the same time raising awareness about the horrific disease of Alzheimer's and fundraising for research," said Laura Wirtz, hike coordinator.

The event raises money for the Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter's Walk to End Alzheimer's in Greater Hartford. The walk will take place on Oct. 16 at Rentschler Field in East Hartford. Wirtz's team, AlzHike4Hope, was the number one team at last year's walk, raising about \$17,000.

They hope to top that amount this year with a fundraising goal of \$25,000. After seeing about 100 people attend the hike event last year, the team aims to raise \$10,000 towards their goal at this year's Hike 4 Hope.

The hike event will feature face painting, free giveaways, raffle prizes for all ages and a representative from the Alzheimer's Association who can answer questions about the group's resources for those suffering from the disease and their caregivers.

It truly is a family event, Wirtz said.

"Last year, we had one family of six from town," she recalled. "They took a leisure walk on the trail with their six-month-old on their back and the other children in tow!"

The town of East Hampton will support the event by "painting the village purple." Local business owners will decorate their storefronts in purple - the color of Alzheimer's awareness - and donate a portion of their sales on that day to the AlzHike4Hope team. Wirtz would like to give a special thank you to New York Life for providing fifteen volunteers, loaning tents and their generous grant donation, as well as the eighteen businesses, local and out of town participating by purchasing trail markers.

Wirtz, an East Hampton resident for 30 years, started the walk with her team in 2014 as a way to raise awareness of Alzheimer's. Wirtz lost her foster sister to the disease and has been volunteering with the Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter for nearly a decade since. She was a member of the Connecticut Chapter's Women Champions Class of 2015, along with fellow team member and current board member Marissa Crean. Wirtz's daughter, Jenilee Wirtz, is a member of the current Women Champions Class of 2016, as is their team member Peggy Poresky.

The team members hope to spread their passion for ending Alzheimer's with the town of East Hampton and everyone who joins the Hike 4 Hope. Online registration is open, and costs \$13/person. Registering the day of the event involves a \$16 donation to the cause. Kids under 11 are admitted for free. Learn more about the hike at www.alzhike4hope.org.

The Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter estimates there are more than 74,000 people in Connecticut with Alzheimer's disease and a growing population of early onset Alzheimer's in the state. There are 177,000 caregivers who provide more than 200,000 hours of unpaid care each year to family, friends and colleagues. Alzheimer's disease is the 6th leading cause of death and the only one of the top ten that has no way to be slowed, stopped or prevented. There is no cure. The Alzheimer's Association offers care and support through the 24/7 Helpline, support groups, care consultations and community education. To find out more contact the Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter at 860-828-2828 or visit alz.org/ct.

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Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is the world's leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. It is the largest nonprofit funder of Alzheimer's research. The Association's mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. Its vision is a world without Alzheimer's. Visit www.alz.org/ct or call 800-272-3900.



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Attorney Meredith McBride of Tibbetts, Keating & Butler, LLC Named
Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter Women's Champion
*Participating in the Fairfield County Walk to End Alzheimer's in memory of her Grandma
Ninga*

Southington, CT - Meredith McBride thinks of her grandmother every St. Patrick's Day. She remembers her Ninga - a nickname for grandma she used as a child - and her ability to love and treat each of her 11 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren as if they were all her favorite. Meredith remembers how the strong Irish woman, born on St. Patrick's Day, loved to get together with family and celebrate the holiday with corned beef, cabbage and chocolate cake.

Even after Ninga was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, she continued to cherish the family's St. Patrick's Day tradition.

"Although she could no longer communicate, we don't really know who she recognized and her corned beef and cabbage had to be basically blended, there were still a few things that were very clear," Meredith said. "Her sweet tooth remained intact as she had the biggest smile after having her chocolate birthday cake and she was very happy to see my family's black lab, Diggy, who also missed her terribly."

Ninga passed away in 2011. To mark the five years since then, Meredith is participating in the Fairfield County Walk to End Alzheimer's, sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter. The Norwalk resident who works as an attorney at Tibbetts, Keating & Butler, LLC, will be walking with her team at Calf Pasture Beach in Norwalk on Sept. 18.

Meredith aims to raise \$5,000 for her walk team, named "Memories for Ning."

"I set this goal to recognize three things," Meredith said, "the five years since my grandmother passed, the 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer's and the \$5,000 it costs a year for a family to care for a loved one with Alzheimer's."

Meredith saw firsthand the challenges of caring for someone with Alzheimer's. Her mother was Ninga's primary and full-time caretaker for years.

Although her mother should have been entering the freedom stage of her life with her youngest child entering college, she instead made sacrifice after sacrifice to care for Ninga. The simple task of running to store the became an obstacle, Meredith recalled, and the ability to visit Meredith's brother for Parent's Weekend at school was an ordeal as her mother struggled to find someone who Ninga could stay with.

These are challenges that nearly 200,000 caregivers like Meredith's mother face in Connecticut each year. The Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter estimates more than 74,000 people in the state have Alzheimer's, and their caregivers provide thousands of hours of unpaid care each year.

The challenges for those caregivers aren't just logistical. As Meredith came to learn, there is an emotional toll too.

The most heartbreaking moment from Ninga's struggle with Alzheimer's came on Mother's Day, Meredith recalled. Ninga came down to the kitchen and Meredith's mother said "Hi Mom! Happy Mother's Day!" In response, Ninga said, "Same to you. You know, I have been meaning to ask you, is your mother still alive?"

"I can only begin to imagine how heartbreaking that must have been for my mother," Meredith said.

But through all the hardships, Meredith and her family were able to find a silver lining.

"The one amazing thing this disease has is the massive amount of love it brings out in people. Love that can often times be unreturned," Meredith said.

Meredith and her mother felt that love for Ninga, and they also received love and care from the Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter.

"It was a great resource for my mother," Meredith said, "and since I have been involved, I have grown to see just how truly wonderful an organization it is and the amazing people it brings together."

A member of the chapter's Women Champions Class of 2016, Meredith plans to be a champion to #EndAlz for all those suffering from the disease and their loved ones. The Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter Women's Champions is a collective group of empowered women who have made a commitment to make Alzheimer's a priority in their lives, work and philanthropy moving us closer to a world without Alzheimer's. The group in its second "Class of Champions" comes from around the state with different life experiences, but all are connected by this devastating disease and their passion to do something about it.

"Being named a Woman Champion has inspired me to continue to do more and be sure to live up to the honor, not only this year but every year until we end Alzheimer's," Meredith said. "I want to end Alzheimer's for all of the families and friends across the world who could be affected by the disease so that no one has to experience it."

The Walk to End Alzheimer's is the largest fundraiser for the Alzheimer's Association to raise funds for research, care and support for those affected by Alzheimer's disease. There are over 600 Walks across the country and six in Connecticut throughout September and October. To find a walk near you or register visit alz.org/walk.

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