“MINI-HOUSE” PANDEMIC PROJECT MAKES A GIANT IMPACT
A Special Message from Our President & CEO

Despite enduring more than a year of pandemic challenges, you have remained steadfastly committed to our important mission of providing support, services and education to individuals, families and caregivers affected by Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias nationwide, and to fund research for better treatment and a cure. That continued support has helped us do even more.

This issue of Teal Times focuses both on the amazing people who are giving back and the impact that everyone’s gifts are having. Some of the people and organizations you will read about include:

- **Melissa Dorsch**, a 26-year-old granddaughter who is participating in an Ironman this June in honor of the two “Iron Men” in her life, her grandfathers
- **Annie Kampfe and husband Cliff Donnelly** who turned a pandemic hobby—building a fully-furnished mini modern house—into a fundraiser for AFA
- **More than 110 golfers and sponsors** of AFA’s 2020 Golf Classic
- **VLP Law Group** that donated holiday auction earnings to AFA
- **Virtual walking and running teams** in Florida, Rhode Island, and New York
- **Pegasystems staff** who honored a retiring executive by making an AFA donation
- **GSN Network gamers** who delivered more than $140,000 in winnings

AFA is incredibly grateful to them, and to you, because these collective efforts are supporting initiatives such as:

- **The Apartment**: A full-scale model dementia-friendly apartment in AFA’s headquarters that serves as a tool to teach families nationwide how to adapt any home
- **Funding awards to NYU Langone Hospital-Long Island and Gateway Community Service Board (Georgia)** for research as well as **Alzheimer’s Texas** for infrastructure that enables family members to safely visit at assisted living facilities
- **Our children’s book, Dancing with Granddad**, available in English and Spanish, that helps family members to begin a conversation about Alzheimer’s with a young child
- **A new respite care relief park** in the works in Yonkers, NY, to combat caregiver burnout and indoor isolation with an outdoor peaceful, dementia-friendly setting
- **Our Children’s Book, Dancing with Granddad**, that helps family members to begin a conversation about Alzheimer’s with a young child

We hope that these wonderful stories about AFA supporters and our recent initiatives inspire you. We are inspired and so very grateful.

With gratitude,

Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr.
President & Chief Executive Officer

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**INSPIRING OUR MISSION**

**A GRANDDAUGHTER’S IRONMAN FOR HER IRON MEN**

On the day Melissa Dorsch’s grandfather Poppops passed away in October 2020, she was crushed. This was a second beloved grandfather she had lost to a dementia-related illness.

Her first, eight years earlier, was Grandpa Larry who had Lewy Body Dementia. Both grandfathers were decorated veterans of the United States Navy and both “loved their families with vigor.”

So this Jacksonville, FL, 26-year-old who was an NCAA Division I swimmer in college signed up for her first Ironman: June 27, 2021, in Coeur D’Alene, Idaho. “It was the only way to cope with it,” she said.

Dorsch decided to use the opportunity to raise awareness about dementia-related illnesses and donations to help AFA fund research, support, and education for families just like hers. As of press time, she has already raised more than $3,000.

“My family, through the years, taught me that service and community are so important,” she writes on her AFA fundraising page. “I want to raise money for the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America during my training process, with hopes that in the coming years, research for dementia will be funded more heavily. Patients and their families deserve support, and for brilliant scientists to keep researching for a cure.”

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The Ironman is one of the world’s toughest mental and physical challenges—a 140.6 mile triathlon comprised of a 2.4 mile swim, followed by a 112-mile bike ride and 26.2-mile run. The entire race must be completed in less than 17 hours.

Training for such an event is arduous. In addition to workouts up to six days a week, along with a full-time job and studying for her MBA, Dorsch competed in a half Ironman this April in Haines City, FL, where she finished a 1.2 mile swim, a 56-mile bike ride, and a 13.1-mile run in just over 7 hours and 20 minutes. “In full awareness of how corny this may sound, I could hear my Poppops’ voice saying, ‘Go Bean!’ through every pain point of the race,” Dorsch wrote. “I know he was there cheering me on and Grandpa Larry was sitting proudly next to him smiling down on me.”

Follow Dorsch’s progress on her AFA community fundraising page at fundraising.alzfdn.org. “Ironman for My Iron Men.”

“The strongest steel is made in the hottest fire.”

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**GIVE THE Gift of Love, Care, & Hope**

Please continue to give love, care, and hope to families affected by Alzheimer’s disease by giving today at www.alzfdn.org/donate.
Team Shenanigans
Intrigued by a popular Wine 5K race she saw on social media last summer and moved by all the nonprofits unable to hold in-person fundraising events during the pandemic, Ide Koulbanis of Westerly, RI, decided to gather 14 pals and register for a race. It didn’t take long for the group to pick up the pace.

“We had so much fun that we decided to make it a monthly tradition,” said Koulbanis. “But instead of signing up for unknown foundations, we wanted to make it more personal. So each month one of us chooses a charity of choice along with the date to walk, and takes responsibility for themed cocktails.”

The group aptly call themselves Shenanigans.

Friend Lori (Salo) Wycall chose AFA for the month of September in honor of her dear dad, Barry Salo, who passed away in 2006 after living more than 10 years with Alzheimer’s. “It’s one of the few diseases out there with no cure, and treatment is so limited and not super effective. I know it’s important to donate to this cause.”

Shenanigans raised $360 for AFA and more than $2,500 for other charities, local, national, and international since its inception.

Team Changemakers Interfaith
Syosset High School junior Nina Rashid wanted to make a difference in her Long Island, NY, community by helping others embrace religious differences. Last year, the 16-year-old founded a new club called Changemakers Interfaith. The group invites discussion with religious leaders as well as advocates for changes that broaden acceptance, such as Kosher and Halal lunch options at school.

Changemakers want to give back and make a difference in their community, too. They organized a Thanksgiving food drive to benefit a local food pantry and donated Halloween goody bags to a Boys & Girls Club.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Rashid spent more time with her grandmother who is living with Alzheimer’s and began to understand more fully how difficult the disease is. She wanted to do something about that as well. So she organized a Changemaker virtual walk, with 30 family and friends, and raised $790 for AFA. She was “excited” to be able to walk for this change—more education, support and research for those living with Alzheimer’s disease.

Gasparilla team leader Matt Koeppen with team member and wife Shelby Koeppen

How does a virtual race work? Runners had the option to choose where they would run anywhere in the world using the RunKeeper app, including one of the traditional legs of the 44-year-old race, Bayshore Blvd. in Tampa, FL. Koeppen’s team selected Bayshore Blvd.

Their inspiration: Koeppen’s great grandmother Eugene Geis (Grandma Gene), born 11/11/11, who passed away at 99; and Shelby and Chelsea’s grandmother, Toni Cobb (Gramma), born 8/1/39, who passed away at 79.

“All of us were excited to be running for Alzheimer’s. We all have been impacted by it, and it gave us extra purpose while we were training. I’m positive it gave us all the extra boost we needed on race day, too,” said Koeppen. At time of publication, the team had already raised over $2,000.

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While Tampa’s long-running Gasparilla Pirate Festival was cancelled this year due to the pandemic, the Gasparilla Distance Classic lived on as a virtual event in May, giving more runners a chance to do what they love while raising funds for the causes they care about.

Matt Koeppen took on his first Gasparilla race for AFA with a five-member family team bonded over their shared experience with Alzheimer’s. Koeppen ran the half marathon with sister, Kaitlyn Hofeldt, and her fiancé, Trent Johnson. Koeppen’s wife, Shelby Koeppen, ran the 15K and her sister Chelsea Marrow, the 8K. All were able to do this with the flexibility of the Gasparilla race offerings, which accommodate every fitness level.

Gasparilla team leader Matt Koeppen with team member and wife Shelby Koeppen

Great grandmother Eugene Geis (Grandma Gene)

Grandmother Toni Cobb (Gramma)

Great grandmother Eugene Geis (Grandma Gene)
**TEEING OFF AGAINST ALZHEIMER’S**

More than 110 golfers teed off at Glen Head Country Club on Long Island to support AFA and the fight against Alzheimer’s disease at the 2020 AFA Golf Classic.

The event, held in memory of Oro and Joseph Halegua, featured a round of golf on a 6,700 yard, par 71 golf course designed by renowned golf course architect Devereaux Emmet and honored three long-time and generous AFA supporters:

**ROBERT CATELL, Chairman**, Advanced Energy Research & Technology Center at Stony Brook University

**ARTHUR LAITMAN, ESQ., Managing Partner**, Rosenberg, Fortuna & Laitman, LLP, and a member of AFA’s Board of Directors

**ANDREW WINSTON, Owner**, Metropolitan Abstract Corporation

The event raised more than $156,000 to help fund AFA’s programs and services, including the AFA Helpline, the National Memory Screening Program, virtual activity and therapeutic programming, and caregiver support groups.

AFA thanks everyone who played and generously supported the event, including our sponsors:

**GRAND TOURNAMENT SPONSORS**
- Nathan Halegua
- Edward Miller

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- Illuminado Partners, LLC

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**PUTTING GREEN SPONSORS**
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- Elder Care Homecare
- Richard Kaufman
- Sebonack Golf Club
- Social Capital Resources

When Rob Buccieri volunteered to co-chair the 2020 VLP Law Group holiday drive, he knew he was in for a lot of fun. The firm’s more than 50 lawyers scattered across the U.S. make donations to a virtual auction—bottles of wine, home-baked goods and specialty chocolates—and over a two-week period outbid each other to secure their most coveted items. The other part of Buccieri’s co-chair job is to select one of the charitable groups that is lucky enough to be awarded half of those winnings—more than $5,000.

When he created his list of charities to consider, AFA stood out to him for two reasons: its mission efficiency in using funds and his own “near and dear” personal interest—a much loved grandfather, a father figure, who had passed away from Alzheimer’s disease. What Buccieri didn’t know was how pervasive Alzheimer’s disease was among the lives of his own VLP colleagues. He was “shocked” to learn that “literally the entire partnership had been touched by the disease.”

Among them, VLP Director of Administration and HR Director Coryn Lake who knew the disease well. Her mother was diagnosed with young-onset Alzheimer’s when she was just 59 and her father-in-law in his ‘70s. Lake’s mom had a slower progression, recognizing her own changes early, purchasing a smaller home to be closer to one of Lake’s siblings to maintain independence, and even giving up her car to a family member who needed it. She also publicly spoke to groups about her changes. Her father-in-law’s disease progressed much more quickly. He found it difficult and frustrating to allow others to help him and to give up all the things he once was able to do.

Managing Partner Tim Browers’ mom has been living with Alzheimer’s disease for the last six years. Doctors believe her situation may have been accelerated by the stress of the diagnosis of stage 4 multiple myeloma of Browers’ father—which ended up being a misdiagnosis in the end. Browers is grateful that he is still able to “see some joy” behind his mother’s eyes and can support both parents with full-time aides in his childhood home.

“A Alzheimer’s is so cruel. It steals your memory; it steals your independence which we all take so for granted. My heart breaks for family members. There is no harder job,” said Lake.

This is the second year that the law firm donated to AFA. “Near and dear” and “close to my heart” is how these three VLP colleagues describe their commitment to Alzheimer’s support services, programs and research, for which AFA is grateful.

*Photos courtesy of Rob Buccieri, Coryn Lake, and Tim Browers*
**PEGASYSTEMS STAFF HONOR RETIRING LEADER WITH AFA DONATION**

During a successful 26-year career at Pegasystems, the software solutions company based in Cambridge, MA, Andy Elliott, Vice President of Client Success, helped companies maximize digital processes and customer engagement. He also led teams where he had the privilege of driving enterprise transformation of many of the world’s largest financial institutions. Earlier in Elliott’s career, he managed the product group where he was responsible for the development and release of many of the applications deployed today.

When it was time for his retirement, the Pegasystems team wanted to do something that would have great meaning for him—and it had everything to do with the loved ones in his life. The staff donated on his behalf to the Alzheimer’s Foundation to make a difference for people living with Alzheimer’s disease.

“I have been married to my wife Annette for 35 years and became very close with her parents,” Elliott told AFA. “Her mother, Pamela, first started showing signs of dementia in her mid-70s. As the years progressed, so did the disease, turning her from a happy wife, mother and grandmother into a woman who didn’t recognize those around her and who became quite angry at times as well. It was so sad to see and, in some ways, it was a relief to her family when she passed away 18 months ago, at 86.”

Elliott added, “Unfortunately, her husband—my father-in-law—John, who was her caregiver throughout her battle with dementia, also succumbed to the disease in his later years and he passed away last Christmas at 90. Watching two strong, loving and caring people change the way they did was heartbreaking for all those around them.”

“Dementia in general, and Alzheimer’s in particular, is a cruel disease that robs the person of who they are, the memories of their loved ones and their independence,” said Elliott. “When my colleagues said that they were starting a fundraiser in my name to celebrate my retirement and wanted to know if I had a preferred charity, AFA was an easy and obvious choice given my personal experience with my in-laws.” The Pegasystems team raised $1,600.

**“Watching two strong, loving and caring people change the way they did was heartbreaking for all those around them.”**

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**“MINI-HOUSE” PANDEMIC PROJECT MAKES A GIANT IMPACT**

Building a fully-furnished house, complete with electricity, all on your own, is quite a challenge. Now imagine doing it at a scale of one inch=one foot!

That’s exactly what Annie Kampfe of Kansas City, MO, a former interior designer, and her husband Cliff Donnelly did—creating a “mini modern house” from scratch, entirely by hand. Construction on the mini modern house began in 2018 and subsequently became a pet project for the couple during the COVID-19 pandemic isolation. It has working electricity, includes three bedrooms, a game room, living room, laundry room, boiler room and garage with a working door. There’s even a grill with Kansas City barbeque ribs!

Photo tweets of the house by Kampfe’s son, Scott Miller, went viral, with the first one garnering more than 226,000 likes and more than 52,000 retweets since January 30. Kampfe and Donnelly’s creation was featured nationally by Today, and in more than 30 major local outlets in cities such as Kansas City, Miami, Charlotte, Fort Worth and Sacramento.

Given the mini modern house’s celebrity status, the family decided to add a charitable component to the house, encouraging social media fans to donate to the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America. The cause is personal to the family. Kampfe is a caregiver for her beloved mom, who is living with Alzheimer’s disease. More than $3,000 has been raised to date.

“Every day I am amazed that what started as my husband and my hobby has brought joy to so many people,” Kampfe told AFA. “When we went viral on my son’s Twitter, I knew this attention could be turned into something positive. The first thing that came to my mind was the Alzheimer’s Foundation. Our hearts became so full when we saw how many people were donating and supporting AFA. Alzheimer’s has directly impacted our family, and we feel grateful to be able to bring attention to AFA. We so appreciate every single person who has been following our journey and those that have donated.”
GSN GAMES DELIVER $140,000+ JACKPOT FOR AFA

GSN Games is one of the top game creators and publishers in the world—their solitaire games alone have more than 600,000 active daily players. When all those players band together to support AFA, the result is a jackpot.

Since 2018, GSN Games has been a wonderful supporter of AFA—hosting 24-hour fundraising days through its Solitaire Tripeaks mobile app. Because the AFA mission resonates so strongly with both employees and players, GSN Games even upped the ante this year—adding 24-hour fundraising days for its Bingo Bash and GSN Casino games, in addition to Solitaire Tripeaks.

Solitaire Tripeaks donated 100% of the net proceeds from a volcano cards sale while GSN Casino donated 20% of all purchases, and Bingo Bash, 10% of gross bookings. The new offerings resulted in raising over $140,000 just this year alone. Over the last four years, GSN Games and its players raised a whopping $418,000 for the fight against Alzheimer’s disease, for which we are full of heartfelt gratitude.

INSPRING OUR MISSION

One of the easiest ways to begin a conversation about Alzheimer’s disease with a young child is with a picture book. That’s why AFA created Dancing with Granddad: An Alzheimer’s Story for Children and Their Families.

Written for children entering kindergarten through third grade by Linda Bozzo and illustrated by Mudassir M. Abid, the book, available in English and Spanish, takes young readers on the journey of learning in an age-appropriate way that the grandfather of seven-year-old Nia has Alzheimer’s and will need to move to a new home. They also learn that while Nia’s grandfather is changing, the love they have between them never will. The book gently introduces behavior changes (such as retelling stories, wandering, and confusion). Nia’s caring parents arrange a transition to an assisted living facility where he will be safe. The book, a jumping off point for every family, includes a message from AFA about how to talk with children about Alzheimer’s disease.

THE CONVERSATION: How do you talk to children about Alzheimer’s?

“Both children and adults will connect with the tender relationship between Nia and her Granddad as they use this special book to begin or continue the often challenging conversations about Alzheimer’s.”

-DALE V. ATKINS, PHD, PSYCHOLOGIST

It’s never too early to start talking about Alzheimer’s. You can order AFA’s children’s book Dancing with Granddad (for ages 5-8) at shop.alzfdn.org or call 866-232-8484—available in English and Spanish.

“Both children and adults will connect with the tender relationship between Nia and her Granddad as they use this special book to begin or continue the often challenging conversations about Alzheimer’s.”

-DR. MEHMET OZ, THE DR. OZ SHOW

“All members of our families can love better when we understand our ailments, especially Alzheimer’s.”

-DR. MEHMET OZ, THE DR. OZ SHOW
NEW RESPITE CARE RELIEF PARK IN THE WORKS

Located just 25 minutes north of Manhattan, Yonkers is one of New York State’s largest cities and home to approximately 200,000 people. AFA is working with the City of Yonkers to add another distinction—home to a new AFA Respite Care Relief Park.

AFA’s Respite Care Relief Park initiative aims to combat caregiver burnout and harmful indoor isolation by creating dementia-friendly places where caregivers can feel comfortable bringing someone with dementia to get out of the house, relax and enjoy a peaceful outdoor setting. Parks are designed to be an educational resource as well as a recreational one, where individuals can learn about dementia-related illnesses, caregiving, and support services.

The Yonkers park is modeled off of AFA’s first-in-the-nation Respite Care Relief Park, located in Lindenhurst, NY, and created together with the Town of Babylon. AFA gratefully acknowledges the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation for awarding grant funding to support this wonderful project.

Your generous contributions enable AFA to invest in hope by funding important, innovative projects and services throughout the country. Below are three recent projects which received AFA grant funding thanks to your support:

NYU Langone Hospital-Long Island (New York)—$250,000

NYU Langone Hospital-Long Island received an AFA grant in February to expand and accelerate research being conducted to uncover the underlying causes of Alzheimer’s disease, with the goal of developing new treatments and slowing the progression of the disease. This AFA award follows a $100,000 grant in 2019 that began the cutting-edge research project.

The NYU Langone research study enables a team of clinicians and scientists to achieve what they believe is the closest approximation to brain behavior possible by reprogramming human cells derived from Alzheimer’s patients. Based on genetic information collected through a single voluntary blood donation from many patients, the team can distinguish where Alzheimer’s neurons diverge from healthy neurons. From there they can take corrective action, allowing the team to non-invasively explore the potential development of new treatments.

Gateway Community Service Board (Georgia)—$50,000

Gateway Community Service Board was awarded an AFA research grant in February for a study exploring the links between behavior and cognitive function. The goal: find new ways to predict and detect cognitive diseases such as Alzheimer’s and other dementia-related illnesses sooner when therapeutic interventions and lifestyle modifications are more effective.

The study examines the relationship between behavioral impairment and early markers of cognitive decline using the Mild Behavioral Impairment (MBI) scale. MBI measures five components: apathy (impaired drive/motivation); mood and anxiety; inhibition/self-regulation (agitation, impulse control problems); impaired social cognition (social inappropriateness); and psychosis (abnormal thoughts/perception). The study also explores the impact of COVID-19 anxiety on MBI, as well as the mediating influences of factors such as lifestyle, exercise, sleep, social supports, and overall health.

Study participants are periodically given an MBI checklist, as well as a cognitive assessment, with the results examined to see if there is a correlation of scores on both assessments. The goal is to determine whether the MBI checklist can provide additional early detection of potential cognitive impairments before some of the symptoms of dementia emerge.

Alzheimer’s Texas (Texas)—$25,000

Alzheimer’s Texas won the 2020 Anne & Irving Brodsky Innovation Grant for a unique program to help family members safely visit and communicate with their loved ones at memory care centers and assisted living facilities in the midst of COVID-19.

The program created “social booths”—outdoor, six-foot social visitation stations with visibility materials—to facilitate safe, social interactions at rural memory care facilities throughout Central Texas and address one of the most significant challenges created by the coronavirus pandemic—being isolated and unable to spend time with loved ones.

INVESTING IN HOPE, THANKS TO YOU
THE APARTMENT: INSPIRING DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY HOMES NATIONWIDE

Almost every part of a home can impact quality of life for someone living with a dementia-related illness. Even seemingly cosmetic choices like color schemes, furniture patterns, and dishware make a difference, but most residences are not built with these needs in mind. So how do you adapt a home to make it dementia-friendly?

That's the answer AFA provides through The Apartment—a model, full scale dementia-friendly studio residence it built as a teaching tool to help families across the country learn how to make a home safer and more comfortable for someone living with a dementia-related illness.

Each area of The Apartment—including the kitchen, bedroom, bathroom, living room and dining area—showcases different steps, designs and adaptations that can improve quality of life for individuals with dementia and their caregivers. From simple choices like paint colors and lighting to high-tech products like smart refrigerators and app-controlled safety features, The Apartment demonstrates many tools families can utilize in their own homes—whether they live in a house, apartment, condominium or townhouse.

The Apartment is located in AFA’s New York City headquarters and can be “visited” virtually through AFA’s website at www.alzfdn.org/theapartment. The site includes a video tour and a 20-page companion guide that details the features and products used in each room.

AFA gratefully acknowledges the following organizations for their support in creating the AFA Apartment: Aetna, Biogen, Daryl & Steven Roth Foundation, Eisai, Furnished Living, Google Nest, Ike, Liberty Medical Services, Macy’s, Panasonic, Pier 1, Pottery Barn, Robert & Dale Rosen Charitable Foundation, Samsung, Sears/Kmart, Senior Helpers, The Allergan Foundation, The Bristal Assisted Living, and Tryten. Rosemary Bakker, President of Age-Friendly Design, is the interior designer of The Apartment.

Take a virtual video tour of The Apartment and its many features at www.alzfdn.org/theapartment

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

INVEST IN HOPE

More than 5.8 million people are living with Alzheimer’s today. This number is expected to nearly triple by 2060 if new treatments or a cure are not found.

Philanthropic support enables AFA to push the field forward, provide innovative research and enrich the lives of those with Alzheimer’s and their caregivers.

Make a gift of $1,000 or more for programs, better treatment and a cure and become a member of AFA’s Gift of Hope Society.

JOIN AFA’S NEW GIFT OF HOPE SOCIETY TODAY

SPECIAL BENEFITS  RECOGNITION  NAMING OPPORTUNITIES

Make your gift online at www.alzfdn.org/donate or use the enclosed envelope.

CONTRIBUTIONS MAY BE DESIGNATED FOR:

EDUCATION  CARE  RESEARCH

Gift of Hope members receive:
• Invitations to special events and educational conferences
• Free subscription to AFA’s Alzheimer’s Today magazine, Teal Times, and other publications
• Recognition in AFA’s annual report

Naming opportunities are available for programs and special initiatives.

Reach out to Charles Fuschillo, AFA President & CEO, cfuschillo@alzfdn.org, or our development office at 866-232-8484.

100% of all contributions designated for research go exclusively for funding research. 88% of all other contributions go to programs and services. AFA is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.
More than 5.8 million of our parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors living with Alzheimer’s disease need our help.

SAVE THE DATE

AFA Virtual Alzheimer’s Walk in the Park

NOVEMBER 2021

Alzheimer’s Awareness Month

Opening Ceremony

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2021

A national event making an impact right at home, raising funds for care, education and research for a cure.