

Community

Fighting Alzheimer's, one step at a time

Inspired by her father, Paramus woman was among yearly walk's top fundraisers

AIDA M. TORO
NORTH JERSEY

A Paramus resident went above and beyond in raising money for the Alzheimer's New Jersey's "Walk To Fight Alzheimer's" Northern Regional Walk.

The walk was held at Bergen County Community College on Oct. 30 and has been an event for the past 14 years in Bergen County.

"This year's Walk to Fight Alzheimer's in Paramus was fabulous, full of energy, enthusiasm and a commitment by our walkers to make a difference," said Kenneth Zaentz, president and CEO of Alzheimer's New Jersey.

Pamela Mellor has been participating in the Walk to Fight Alzheimer's in Paramus since 2009 with her team "Certified's Foot Soldiers."

"My father, Ralph Fedeles, passed in 2012 after a ten year battle," said Mellor. "While he was still here and in assisted living, we decided to walk."

Mellor said "Certified's Foot Soldiers" is a team sponsored by the office she works for called Certified Financial Services, a firm where all kinds of investments and insurance planning is done.

"Luckily I have very generous bosses who want to give back to the community and agreed to sponsor," she said in regards to Certified Financial Services. "In addition, at least five other asso-



Alzheimer's New Jersey held its Walk to Fight Alzheimer's at Bergen Community College on Oct. 30. At the ribbon-cutting, from left, is James J. Tedesco, Ken Zaentz, John Elliott, Russell Rothman and Elaine M. Winter.

PHOTO/BOB KING

ciates at Certified Financial Services have lost immediate family members."

For this year's event, Mellor was considered to be the top fundraiser.

"Pam has been involved in the Paramus Walk for eight years and is currently this year's top fundraiser, raising over \$12,000," said Zaentz. "Her fundraising success and ability to raise awareness about the needs of other families who are impacted by Alzheimer's is an example of how an individual can really make a difference."

Throughout the years, Mellor's average amount of money raised is \$13,000.

"This year should put us over the 100K mark," she noted in regards to the total

raise of the Northern Regional walk in Paramus.

Aside from raising money for the event, Mellor stated she looked forward to catching up with friends, family, and co-workers who understood how difficult it is to care for and lose someone with Alzheimer's.

She said she enjoys the camaraderie with coworkers but mostly witnessing individuals who assisted with caring for her father.

"It also helps keep dad close to our hearts and minds," expressed Mellor. "It helps us all feel close to those we have lost and feel good knowing hopefully someday people and caregivers will not

have to suffer as much because of funds we raised."

As a result, Mellor achieved \$12,347 along with Certified Financial Services raising \$16,635.

Overall, the proceeds from the Walks to Fight Alzheimer's will go towards supporting local programs and services such as the Helpline, Care Consultations, the Respite Care and Wellness program along with all of the walk's donations being utilized to support New Jersey individuals and families.

Donations can still be made to the Walk to Fight Alzheimer's organization on their website alznj.org/get-involved/donate/.