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## Leading the next generation against Alzheimer's



From left, Junior Committee Board and Chairs Erin Eininger, president; Marielle Mindlin, advocacy co-chair; Sharon Clott, community service chair; C. Scott Chabina, vice president; Mia Kazanjian, secretary; Jeff LeBlanc, treasurer; and Julie Scherr, advocacy co-chair pose at the 2010 Junior Committee Collective Consciousness Gala.

For Erin Eininger, president of the Junior Committee of the Alzheimer's Association New York City Chapter, every moment matters. Beyond her responsibilities leading a committee of 150 young professionals, she works full-time as a vice president at Citi and is pursuing her MBA at the New York University Leonard N. Stern School of Business.

But for Erin, juggling these commitments is a challenge that she's proud to tackle. Her efforts are for her grandfather, currently in the late stages of Alzheimer's disease, and for herself, as a way to combat the risk she has for developing the disease. Erin's determination is representative of a growing number of her peers who are taking action in the fight to end Alzheimer's.

Founded in the 1980s and restructured in 2000, the Junior Committee comprises a diverse group of 20- and 30-year-olds who are committed to raising awareness of Alzheimer's among a younger generation. For individuals like Erin, action through the committee alleviates the feeling of helplessness so many face when they cannot "save" a loved one with Alzheimer's disease.

"My grandfather has entered the later stages of the disease," Erin said. "He doesn't live in New York, so participating in the Junior Committee makes me feel as though I'm with him in some small way."

In recent years, the Junior Committee has seen an explosion of growth, attracting members interested in the group's focus on advocacy, fundraising and community outreach.

"We're constantly in a state of recruitment," said Erin. "At work, in social situations — if I mention the committee, I find people affected by Alzheimer's who want to get involved."

In 2009, the committee expanded its reach by securing 50 spots in the ING New York City Marathon. Runners from across the country were eager to fill the coveted race slots, usually awarded in a competitive lottery system. The race team — featuring Junior Committee members, New York City Chapter board members and other concerned individuals — exceeded all expectations by raising more than \$380,000.

"It was simultaneously one of the hardest and most rewarding experiences of my life," said Erin of completing the marathon. "I have to attribute our fundraising success to the passion of our team, which was evident to so many of our donors."

And the committee's impressive efforts did not go unnoticed; for the 2010 race, the group was awarded an impressive 60 spots by marathon organizers.

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The Junior Committee also hosts an annual Collective Consciousness Gala, a fundraiser designed to promote understanding of Alzheimer's disease while attracting a new group of young professionals to the cause. An open bar, dancing, live music and a silent auction — along with attendance from celebrity Champions like Elizabeth Hasselbeck and Soleil Moon Frye — make this a not-to-be-missed event in the Manhattan social scene. Between the marathon, gala and other fundraising efforts, the Junior Committee raised more than \$400,000 in fiscal year 2010.

Beyond its financial contributions, the group takes a leadership role in the advocacy arena. In March 2010, seven Junior Committee representatives attended the Alzheimer's Association Advocacy Forum in Washington, D.C., to network with other Alzheimer advocates, attend workshops and meet with elected officials on Capitol Hill.

"Our presence makes an impact," said Erin. "These legislators are not expecting people our age to be in the room, and when we are, they take notice. It makes them think about Alzheimer's differently."

Erin attributes the committee's ongoing growth and steady retention to a process that allows them to control how the funds they raise are used. At the end of each fiscal year, committee members meet to review program requests and vote on how to allocate

funds. Throughout the year, they receive regular reports on the impact of their support.

Recently, the committee sponsored two Alzheimer research projects in the New York City area, contributing valuable dollars to scientific progress in their community. In addition, the committee supported a Russian-speaking Medic Alert®+ Alzheimer's Association Safe Return® outreach associate and the chapter's first full-time physician outreach manager, extending critical Association resources to these audiences.

The committee's passion comes to life as the voting period begins and each member can express where they believe funds are needed most. "With our growth during the past few years, our roots are deeper in what we stand for, and our reach is greater," Erin said.

The committee also allocated some of their funds to supporting a full-time Junior Committee coordinator at the New York City Chapter. This position is dedicated to helping the committee organize events and work more effectively with the chapter — an addition that Erin said has made all the difference in their success.

"With a permanent presence in the New York City office, we've been able to form strong ties with the Association at a local and national level and grow



Sharon Clott, Junior Committee community service chair, and Erin Eininger, Junior Committee president at the 2009 ING NYC Marathon finish line.

at a greater pace,” she said. “We also have a greater synergy with the chapter’s strategic initiatives.”

In turn, the chapter has come to rely on the Junior Committee for their leadership throughout the year.

“We truly have a partnership,” said Lou-Ellen Barkan, Alzheimer’s Association New York City Chapter president and CEO. “They are such a valuable addition to our work in fundraising, volunteering, advocacy and anywhere else we need them. We depend on their support and participation in everything we do.”

Erin recognizes that the committee’s model is unique and hopes to see it duplicated in other Alzheimer’s Association chapters, and nonprofits, across the country. Currently, she is collaborating with the

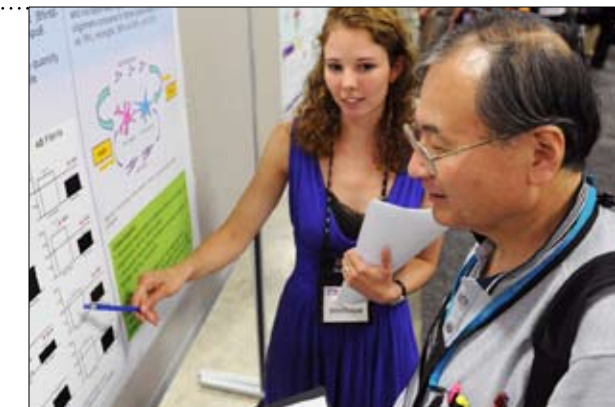
president of the Junior Committee at the Delaware Valley Chapter to write a guide for creating similar groups.

But for this committee, its message is already clear.

“Many people our age don’t get involved because they believe nothing will come from it — that they won’t be able to feel or see the results,” Erin said. “But we’re proof that you can have an impact. Our generation has to get involved now so we’re prepared for Alzheimer’s in our 70s and 80s.

“Our plan is to keep growing and growing until ultimately we disappear because we’ve already found a cure.” ■

## Accelerating research across the world



Alzheimer researchers from around the world gathered at AAICAD in July.

On July 10-15, the Alzheimer’s Association International Conference on Alzheimer’s Disease 2010 (AAICAD) brought nearly 4,000 leading scientists from around the globe together in Honolulu, Hawaii, to collaborate and discuss the latest advances in Alzheimer’s disease research.

“At AAICAD, we saw promising investigations being pursued on a variety of fronts — avenues that could very well lead to significant changes in Alzheimer diagnosis and treatment,” said William Thies, Ph.D., Alzheimer’s Association chief medical and scientific officer. “However, the chronic underinvestment in Alzheimer research continues to be the greatest obstacle to bringing new, more effective therapies to people.”

Breaking news released throughout the annual conference included:

The launch of Alzheimer’s Association TrialMatch™, a confidential, free and interactive tool that provides comprehensive clinical trial information and an individualized trial matching service for people with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias.

Findings indicating that a variety of factors may modulate risk of Alzheimer’s and cognitive decline, including physical activity, tea and coffee, vitamin D, an antioxidant-rich diet with walnuts and an obesity gene known as FTO.

A study revealing older African-Americans and Latinos with cognitive impairment live longer than whites and are less likely to be in nursing homes.

Results of a four-month clinical trial of intranasal insulin in Alzheimer’s and mild cognitive impairment (MCI), showing statistically significant benefits on certain tests of memory and functioning.

Evidence suggesting that having Alzheimer’s disease may increase the risk of getting other potentially disabling health conditions, including seizures and anemia.

Donors attending AAICAD had access to some of the gathering’s most exclusive opportunities via a well-organized Donor Summit. A select group of constituents were able to dine with leaders in Alzheimer research and care from around the globe, learn about major developments in Alzheimer science and gain unprecedented access to behind-the-scenes information.

“We had a wonderful experience at the conference and remain invigorated by all of the activity regarding Alzheimer’s,” said Dana Dornsife, a Zenith Society member and summit attendee.

In anticipation of AAICAD 2011 in Paris, we are pleased to announce that the conference will again include a Donor Summit. Stay tuned for more information on this unique opportunity. ■