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Chuck Your Buttons for Alzheimer's

ETMN Media Market Consultant teams up with Alzheimer's to raise funds and awareness

“Ask anyone who knows me, and they will tell you I love being surrounded by family heirlooms and personal belongings that link me to family history,” Cindy DeVane, *East Tennessee Medical News*' media market consultant, related with a smile. “Coming from a large family and a mother we fondly nicknamed The Princess of Pack Rats, there is a wealth of material from which to choose, as my two sisters and I have downsized our mother, Margaret Long,



four times from the five bedroom family home to Broadmore Assisted Living, where she currently resides at 90 years young. We have been faced with reducing and distributing her belongings.”

Like most households, there was a box of buttons that had accumulated over a lifetime, and last summer, DeVane decided to take these buttons and create a bracelet for her mother, sisters, nieces, and daughter-in-law. As the bracelets were noticed, requests began to come in from friends, extended family, co-residents of her mother, and staff at Broadmore.

“I continued to make bracelets and present them to those who asked. Some people began to insist that they wanted to pay, but I just enjoyed making them and considered it a hobby. Some of the staff at Broadmore suggested that perhaps I could charge for

the bracelets and donate the profit to seniors with memory loss disorders.”

This spring, while the family was at a sister's home in Florida, they shopped together for buttons and made more bracelets. Cindy's niece, Erin, who helps manage a trendy, upscale clothing and accessory store in West Palm Beach, wore a bracelet to work. She described the idea of using the bracelets to benefit

the Alzheimer's Association, and ten co-workers wanted bracelets. This demand was the catalyst they needed to get serious about bringing the idea to a reality.

“Some of the family had been discussing a possible way to memorialize our brother, Chuck Long, who passed away in 2006 at age 57. While he did not have Alzheimer's, he did suffer from depression and addiction, which impacted

his mental health,” said DeVane. She contacted Tracy Kendall, director of the Mid South Chapter of Alzheimer's in Johnson City. She and DeVane could hardly contain their excitement at the possibilities with this partnership.

When asked by Kendall why they were chosen to be the recipients of Chuck Your Buttons, DeVane replied that it is important to continue raising

public awareness about mental illness of all types. “Although we have made a lot of progress as a society,” said DeVane, “I still see stigma associated with not only memory loss disorders, but also depression and addiction. If we can reach just one person with our efforts and reassure them that it is okay to seek the help they need, that will in my mind honor the memory of my brother, Chuck.”

Erin was also thrilled when it was suggested that they honor her and her sister Haley's dad in this manner.

“We chose the name Chuck Your Buttons for Alzheimer's. It is Erin and Haley's wish that our logo button be the beautiful shade of royal blue in honor of their dad. He was color blind, and this was one color that he could vividly process.”

Since then, the whole family has gotten behind the project. “From the logo to promotional materials to sewing buttons, we are all helping!” said DeVane with an obvious passion for the project. “In the beginning, we have relied on our circle of family, friends, and associates. We would like to widen the support out into the community and get more people interested in supporting this effort. Obviously, with donated materials, it means more money for Alzheimer's research.”

For more information, to donate buttons, or to order a bracelet, please email Cindy DeVane at cdevane@chartertn.net.

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