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Alzheimer's group cuts ties to association

Executive director says Wisconsin organization maintains local focus.

BY CRAIG D. REBER TH STAFF WRITER



Photo by: Contributed

Becky DeBuhr

LANCASTER, Wis. -- The South Central Wisconsin Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association has received a major makeover.

The association recently announced its separation from the National Alzheimer's Association to become the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin. Paul Rusk, the association's executive director, explained that while its name has changed, its services, staff, board of directors, local support and commitment to serving people affected by Alzheimer's and dementia in Wisconsin have kept a local focus.

Rusk said the organization's board voted unanimously to separate from the national association, which has become increasingly focused on raising money to support national awareness and research activities. He said the South Central Wisconsin chapter was required to turn over more than 40 percent of funds it raised to the association for national efforts every year, which detracted from the chapter's local focus.

"We want the people who have come to count on our organization for local support and programs to know we're still

here, we're stronger than ever and we are still firmly and deeply committed to our local mission," Rusk said.

Becky DeBuhr staffs the organization's Grant/Richland regional office in Lancaster. It was established in 2006.

"Alzheimer's disease is well-known, but with any disease one may not give it much of a thought until it hits unexpectedly," she said. "That's where our services come in. Our organization is a source of information for those living with this challenging diagnosis."

Since July 2006, her office has reached more than 5,200 people in Grant County with its educational programs and resources.

alzheimer's update

The Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin (ADAW) serves nine counties: Columbia, Dane, Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, Richland, Rock and Sauk. Regional offices (branches of the main office located in Madison) are located in Lancaster and Portage.

The ADAW is a nonprofit organization designed to provide a link to resources for people with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.

The Lancaster office is located at the Grant County Social Services building. Hours are 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday through Friday, or by appointment.

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