

CART program

Rotary Club program helps fund research for Alzheimer's

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After focusing attention on CART (Coins for Alzheimer's Research Trust) in 2017, the Kernersville Rotary Club is helping raise funds for Alzheimer's research with the help of Kernersville area residents.

Tom FitzGerald, chair for the Kernersville Rotary Club CART Fund, explained that this year alone, 5.8 million people will have Alzheimer's disease.

According to the history of

Rotary's CART Fund, it was started in October 1995 through the Sumter, SC Rotary Club, led by Roger Ackerman and Dr. Jack Bevan, who initiated the effort to prove that Rotarians voluntarily emptying their pockets of change for a good cause could produce significant levels of funds to support Alzheimer's disease research.

In May 1996, the CART Fund was introduced at the Rotary District 7770 Conference and

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was enthusiastically received. During the 1996-97 Rotary year, CART programs were presented in 62 of the 68 clubs in District 7770. The response was overwhelmingly in support of the grassroots project and the district officially adopted CART as a district-wide program in 1997.

FitzGerald said that in 2017, he asked the late Arnold King where the Rotary CART buckets were and told him he would chair the program with the premise that the Rotarians would empty their pockets during meetings every Wednesday into 20 buckets they had around the room.

"We raised \$1,006 that year just at Rotary meetings," he said.

Then, in August 2018, FitzGerald mentioned to CART's district chair that he would like to double the amount they raised. The following month, FitzGerald said he noticed other civic clubs had coin boxes out near the register at local restaurants, so he decided to put out six CART coin boxes around town and, in 2018, they raised \$4,269.

"There is a team of six

Rotarians that go around and collect change from these (now 17 boxes)," he said, noting that their goal this year is to raise \$5,000. "Our year started on July 1, and so far this year, we've already raised \$1,600."

FitzGerald noted that 67 percent of the money they raise comes from the coin boxes.

"It's been such a success that the district, which includes 56 clubs, has started rolling it out to other clubs in our district and is now rolling it out nationwide," he said.

FitzGerald said they have now started corporate partnerships with Kerner Ridge and Triangle Vision, with hopes of adding more.

"Over 50 percent of the people in (assisted living) are in there for memory issues, so those families have a vested interest," he said.

FitzGerald noted that 100 percent of the donations go back to research.

"We put the money in the bank and the interest goes to pay for the overhead, so 100 percent of the donations go back to research," he said. "There is a scientist at UNC

Pembroke that has gotten grants for research from this."

Currently, FitzGerald said Rotary is very focused on eradicating polio, a project they have been working on for over 30 years. He explained that they have come really close to doing so, with only three to six cases worldwide this year.

"When Rotary turns their full attention to CART, I believe they will see a treatment for Alzheimer's," he said.

The 17 locations where CART Fund coin boxes can be found include 421 Market & Grill, Gagny's Restaurant, Captain Tom's Seafood & Oyster Bar, Clark's BBQ, Express Oil Change, Fitz on Main, Genuine Car Care, Kernersville Ace Hardware, Low Price Mart & The Grill, New Era Alterations, Dry Cleaning & Shoe Repair, Olympic Family Restaurant, 1 Stop on West Mountain Street, 1 Stop on Vance Road, Prissy Polly's BBQ, Ridge Care, The Loop Kernersville, and Triangle Vision.

For more information about the CART Program, visit cartfund.org.