

ADVOCATING FOR ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS ONE STEP AT A TIME



The Veterans Park in Black River Falls is the new host site for this year's Walk to End Alzheimer's event to be held on Sunday, September 17, 2023. For Jackson Electric member Mary Gerdes, this event is much more than a walk; it's her passion. "My mom was diagnosed with dementia in 2016 and lived with me until her passing in 2020," shares Mary. "It's important to get involved because you never know when it could affect your family or yourself."

Step 1: Diagnosis and Caregiving

According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, nearly 3,000 people in Jackson, Monroe, and Clark counties will be living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia by 2030. Unfortunately, dementia is very likely to impact you, a family member, or someone you know. Mary advocates for advancements in research, awareness, and a cure for the disease because of her personal experience. "Being a caregiver is a very emotional and difficult role," Mary says. "There were times when I was frustrated, but I would do it all over again."

The Walk to End Alzheimer's raises funding to advance research, implement policies, and support the Alzheimer's Association's free 24/7 helpline. Wisconsin's 27 Walk to End Alzheimer's events held in 2022 raised over \$2.7 million that impact local residents, like Mary. She recalls utilizing this helpline several times, grateful for the knowledge and support provided during some of her most difficult times as a caregiver. "Someone was always there for me," says Mary. "Once I learned to live in my mom's reality and redirect conversations, we had a much better relationship."

Locally, Mary attended the Dementia Caregiver Support Group meetings, offered in partnership by Interfaith Volunteers, Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) of Jackson County, and the Alzheimer's Association. "This support group allowed me to have conversations with other caregivers and helped me realize I wasn't alone. The support of resources and my family are what held me together," she says.

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Mary Gerdes and her grandchildren walk with purpose in memory of Mary's mom, Caroline Kersting, who lost her battle to dementia in 2020.



The colors in the Promise Garden represent how individuals have been impacted by Alzheimer's or another dementia.

Step 2: Resources

“Dementia is an umbrella term for over 60 types of diseases associated with decline in memory skills,” says ADRC Dementia Care Specialist and Outreach Coordinator Darby Rush. “Alzheimer’s disease falls under the dementia umbrella, and the terms are often used interchangeably because Alzheimer’s accounts for 60-80% of cases.”



The Walk to End Alzheimer’s is a family event.

The Dementia Caregiver Support Group is a safe space for caregivers to have conversations with others who are going through similar experiences. Led by staff, the group also receives education and programming on the topics they are interested in. Darby says, “We plan to revamp the support group this fall, starting with a dementia caregiver picnic this month [September].”

Darby’s job is to connect families and individuals with resources as they go through care planning phases. ADRC also provides memory screenings to identify if there is an abnormality in a person’s memory. “The dementia resource closet contains free items available to those with dementia/memory loss that can be helpful in managing different symptoms of the disease,” explains Darby.

Interfaith Volunteers also provides their Time For You Dementia Respite Program. “Time For You provides caregivers a break while their loved ones participate in stimulating activities for those experiencing memory loss,” shares Lori Chown, Interfaith director. “This program helps participants find a

sense of purpose. The sooner families participate, the easier their dementia journey becomes.”

Time For You is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Interfaith’s new facility. The family-style setting and dementia-friendly design of the building create a comfortable and safe space for participants to build friendships with other participants going through a similar experience. “We utilize trained staff and volunteers to provide programming to 13 current participants,” says Lori. “Participation helps family members to keep their loved ones home longer, eases caregiver fatigue, and decreases behaviors.”

Lori notes that Interfaith has a great partnership with ADRC. Rather than duplication of services, they work together to provide the resources needed in the community. “We are planning a six-week early memory loss program this fall,” shares Lori. “There are also bi-monthly Memory Café activities held at the library for caregivers and care receivers to complete a fun activity together.”

Step 3: Advocacy

After her mom’s diagnosis, Mary immediately started her research to obtain as much information as she could. She quickly learned that no two dementia patients are the same, and every case is different. “Knowledge and education are key,” says Mary. “Advocacy in general is important, but I also learned it’s very important to become an advocate for your loved one, especially when they lose the capability to advocate for themselves.”

Mary got involved with the Alzheimer’s Association after her mom’s passing, starting with raising funds and then becoming a Walk to End Alzheimer’s Committee member. Because of her passion for this organization, she was recommended to advocate in Washington, D.C. She, along with over 900 advocates representing all

50 states, met with representatives. “We advocated for FDA approval of dementia related medications that slow the process of dementia,” explains Mary. “These medications are currently lumped into a group of medications that are denied coverage by insurance companies.”

After her visit to D.C., Mary says she is hopeful. “We had many great conversations, and the representatives understand this can touch anyone’s family. It was also a great opportunity to hear advocates share their personal stories on how their lives have been touched by Alzheimer’s.”

Advocating with the Alzheimer’s Association allows Mary to give back to an organization that provided so much support and guidance to her as a caregiver. You can join Mary in advocating for a cure by either registering to walk on September 17, volunteering, attending a meeting to gain understanding, or making a donation in support of the Alzheimer’s Association. There will be a raffle for a Terry Redlin print, you can listen to the Ho-Chunk Nation Drum Group, purchase a Promise Garden Flower, have fun with your friends at the selfie station, and visit some of the vendor booths. “My favorite part is the opening ceremony when they talk about the Promise Garden and the meaning of the different colored flowers,” concludes Mary. “You can be part of finding the cure.”—*Brandi Shramek, Member Relations Advisor*

Event Details

2023 Walk to End Alzheimer’s

Sunday, September 17, 2023

Veterans Park

120 N Water St, Black River Falls, WI 54615

Event opens at 8:30 a.m.,

Walk begins at 10 a.m.

Resources

- Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900
- Dementia Caregiver Support Group and Time For You: Call 715.284.7058 or email interfaith@jcivc.org for more information.
- Memory screenings, resource closet, Memory Café: contact ADRC at 715.284.4301 ext. 521



CAPITAL CREDITS ALLOCATION: IT'S YOUR OWNERSHIP IN THE COOPERATIVE

Your September billing statement will state your capital credits allocation, the amount earned and credited to your capital credits account for the year 2022. This is notification of your allocated capital credits amount in Jackson Electric. This is not a capital credits retirement check or credit.

Jackson Electric operates at cost. Any excess revenue (called margins) is allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

What is an allocation?

Net margins of the cooperative are allocated or proportionately divided amongst each membership and then set aside into the member's account to be used by the cooperative as operating capital for reliability improvements and maintenance over a period of years. An allocation, which is determined by Jackson Electric's board of directors, is made annually based upon the member's patronage from the previous year. These capital credits will eventually be retired or paid out to members.

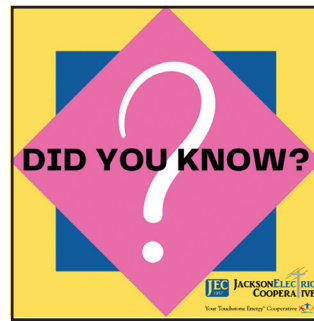
In December, some members may receive a capital credits retirement check or credit on their billing statement. Annually, the board of directors decides the amount and years to retire based on the financial needs of the cooperative.

If you move from our service lines, please inform us of

your new address. We are then able to keep you updated on your capital credits account and send any retirement you are eligible to receive. Unclaimed capital credits are forfeited to the Federated Youth Foundation to be used for educational and charitable giving.

What is the Federated Youth Foundation?

The Federated Youth Foundation (FYF) was established on December 2, 1970, as a means for electric cooperatives to forfeit unclaimed capital credits of members to give scholarships or loans to students. FYF was formed in response to the state legislature passing the Uniform Unclaimed Property Act.



Jackson Electric's youth ambassador program was established in 2010 because there wasn't a program of its kind available to educate youth in our service territory on the cooperative business model while developing important leadership and life learning skills. Since then, we've educated more than 89 students!

ZOOMING IN ON JESSE

You could say he's the Jack of all trades, or a "Jesse" in his case. Jesse Hansen, Jackson Electric's crew foreman, was working for a concrete contractor in Milwaukee when he learned about the line worker profession. "My dad's friend was a substation electrician for We Energies," says Jesse. "Talking with him sparked my interest in becoming a lineman."

Jesse readily applied for Chippewa Valley Technical College's electrical power distribution program. After



completion, he was hired at Jackson Electric in May of 2008, starting out as a 1,000-hour employee, and advancing to a journeymen lineman. "I enjoy working outdoors in different parts of the service territory and getting to meet our members," he says.

In addition to line worker duties, Jesse has gained experience in solar over the past five years and completed additional training to become a photovoltaic associate. When he's not in a bucket working on lines, you may find him completing a JacksonSolar site assessment or installing a solar system at a member's home. He was also recently promoted to crew foreman. "I oversee the outside operations, give directions from the line superintendent or assistant line superintendent to the crew, take care of job briefings to ensure that paperwork is correct, and enforce safety," says Jesse.

In his spare time, Jesse enjoys hunting, trapping, snowmobiling, and



taking his kids boating. Asked about a dare he accepted and later regretted; he recalls: "I was dared to eat a three-pound burger in a half-hour. Then I cut trees all afternoon."

While eating a three-pound burger likely isn't in the list of Jesse's favorite memories, the birth of each of his children is at the top of the list.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT HELPS WITH POWER RELIABILITY

Jackson Electric hires a professionally trained tree trimming contractor to assist with vegetation management within the service territory. Vegetation management is on a rotational schedule that covers our entire system with each substation being maintained every nine years.

Service reliability depends on vegetation management.

Power outages are sometimes caused by trees or branches contacting overhead power lines. These outages can be a momentary blink or a lengthy outage that impacts several accounts.

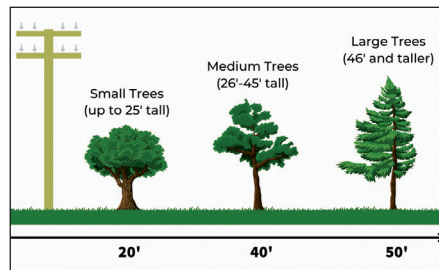
Public safety.

Trees near a power line could be dangerous. If something or someone, such as an animal, adult, or child, were

to climb that tree and contact was made to the energized power line, serious injury or death could occur.

Think about the tree size before you plant.

There are certain fast-growing species that should never be planted under a power line. Trees that will reach 25 to 50 feet high at maturity should not be planted within 30 feet of overhead electric lines. Trees that will reach 50 feet



or more at maturity should not be planted within 50 feet of overhead electric lines. Trees that are leaning, split, or hollow also pose safety and service reliability threats.

Low-growing trees that will not grow taller than 20 feet may be planted closer to overhead power lines.

Trees or shrubs should not be planted close to power poles or any padmount transformer or junction box. Please refrain from planting within 15 feet of all utility lines and equipment.

Vegetation management improves service reliability for you, the members Jackson Electric serves.

Jackson Electric is responsible for vegetation management within 15 feet on both sides of the power line. Trees and shrubs outside of the right-of-way are the responsibility of the landowner.

Nothing says "peace of mind" like SmartHub's Usage Alerts

Usage Alert

You have the following usage alerts:

Values are in kilowatt-hours (kWh)

- Jackson Electric Account 123456 with meter RF123456 had usage of 47.26 at 6/20/2022 12:00 AM - 6/21/2022 12:00AM.
- Jackson Electric Account 234589 with meter RF 123457 had usage of 31.03 at 6/20/2022 12:00 AM - 6/21/2022 12:00 AM.

Jackson Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Whether you have a seasonal account or primary residence, enrolling in SmartHub's usage alerts could give you peace of mind.

Set high and low usage thresholds to catch issues before they become problems or figure out a high energy usage culprit in your home.

Go to SmartHub to enroll or contact our office.

DID YOU KNOW?

That 80% of electric vehicle charging is done at home. Before purchasing an EV, it is recommended that you contact Jackson Electric to ensure that your transformer is sized properly for the additional electrical load. Your electrician will also confirm if your home's electrical service will need upgrades.

JACKSON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Customer Service 715.284.5385
800.370.4607

Outage Reporting 855.222.DARK (3275)

Diggers Hotline 800.242.8511

Card Payments 844.759.3984

www.jackelec.com

Mailing Address: N6868 County Road F
Black River Falls, WI 54615

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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