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UW-Green Bay Volleyball Teams Up with Alzheimer’s Association to Host 1st Annual Alzheimer’s Awareness Match

GREEN BAY, Wis. — The Green Bay volleyball program will be hosting its first-annual Alzheimer’s Awareness Night on Friday, October 19 at the Kress Events Center. Pairing with the Alzheimer’s Association Greater Wisconsin Chapter, the team will be bringing awareness to a devastating disease that affects 110,000 Wisconsinites and their 194,000 unpaid caregivers.

The Alzheimer’s Association is inviting the community to a free pep rally prior to the match by hosting a hospitality room; including a visit from Coach Abbey Sutherland, Phlash the Green Bay Phoenix mascot and pizza. Donations will be collected throughout the match. Fans are encouraged to wear purple to raise awareness, and bring cash to donate during the match’s Dash for Cash fundraiser. The Alzheimer’s Association will also be accepting donations at the door.

The match will feature the Green Bay Phoenix against the IUPUI Jaguars, beginning at 6:00 p.m. The Alzheimer’s celebration event and hospitality room will open at 5:00 p.m.

A Cause That Hits Home
This event is deeply meaningful for volleyball head coach Abbey Sutherland, whose mother has been living with Alzheimer’s for approximately 10 years. “When I was hired at Green Bay, I told our team that we will serve our community and make a difference. We have a unique opportunity because of our platform and voice, and we choose to make a difference by raising
money and awareness for Alzheimer's. In turn, we hope this makes people excited about Green Bay Volleyball and our mission."

She shares her personal experience with the disease, adding, "We are "Attacking Alzheimer's" in honor of my mother, who is 62, and has been living with the disease for about ten years. It is a devastating disease that affects people of all ages, not just the elderly. It's especially hard on caregivers like my father. There is still no cure, no relief, no effective treatment and those diagnosed are growing."

**Growing Awareness**

Coach Sutherland predicts that Alzheimer's will continue to become even more widespread in the future. "We need to continue raising awareness. We want people to know they're not alone. If you think something is going on with a family member, there are resources out there and people to talk to. Our family has seen the decline of my mother, and plenty of others have experienced equal devastation. Looking back, it was such a confusing time. I wish we would have reached out for more help."

On the bright side, that awareness is growing, particularly within the volleyball community. The volleyball programs at UW-La Crosse and UW-Stevens Point are hosting their own Attacking Alzheimer's events, encouraged by Coach Sutherland herself.

"Two of my previous assistant coaches (and dear friends) have seen firsthand how Alzheimer's has affected my family, and they also have student-athletes whose families are affected by this horrible disease," said Coach Sutherland. "It is humbling and an honor to be in this fight together."
The Alzheimer's Association is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. For more information about Alzheimer’s disease and local services visit www.alz.org/gwwi or call the Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

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