

HEART BEAT

THE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER OF THE JOE MARTIN ALS FOUNDATION

December 2020



Left: Neil delivers loaner equipment to a person with ALS using our wheelchair-accessible van

***"Although 2020
has been a
difficult year, it
has been full of
silver linings."***

A message from
Neil Cottrell,
JMALSF President

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This year's newsletter highlights that despite the many challenges we've faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, our community is stronger than ever. The Joe Martin ALS Foundation has continued to provide a high standard of caregiving support and resources to people with ALS and their families. We continue our mission to help families navigate ALS with our traditional services, such as home care, wheelchair transportation, and loaner equipment. This year, however, virtual technology has given us another tool to help families with the many challenges of living with ALS. Out of necessity, we discovered fun, impactful ways to reach families and bring our supporters together safely and interactively online.

In early March, we helped prepare the ALS community for the pandemic by providing a plan of action on how to protect people with ALS and their caregivers from contracting COVID-19. Our in-person caregiver workshops had to be cancelled, but we adapted and held virtual workshops instead. Using technology to connect with families in the safety of their own homes worked amazingly well. PALS and CALS who typically would not have been able to attend due to distance or lack of wheelchair transportation were able to join us.

Joe's Camp, our weekend adventure camp for kids whose lives have been touched by ALS, went virtual as well! The kids loved it! I was concerned they might be tired of online meetings from school classes, however, they really enjoyed it. They embraced the opportunity to share how they were coping during the pandemic and how ALS affects their families. Virtual Joe's Camp was such a success, counselors and campers are now having monthly check-ins via Zoom to stay connected.



**Zoom board
meetings
and online
caregiving
workshops
in 2020**



Thank you for being a friend to our Foundation this year!

Partner Spotlight: Vann Matthews - "Best All-Around" and the inspiration for our new "Spirit Award"

Known his whole life for having a big heart, and a bigger personality, Vann Matthews is suspected to have also been the longest-living recipient of a heart and lung transplant, which he received as a freshman in college. Vann enthusiastically embraced the life that the transplant had given him, bringing joy and laughter, as well as a dedicated work ethic, to benefit his family and community. His wife, Alice, shares that Vann was always active and engaged, even participating as a (winning!) contestant in "Dancing for the Future Stars" to benefit the Boys and Girls Club.



Friends since 7th grade, Alice and Vann (pictured left) were inseparable. Vann was an athlete; he was inducted into the Gaston County Sports Hall of Fame for football and track. In his senior year, both Alice and Vann were voted "Best All-Around." Vann was "gregarious," she says.



Alice and Vann married in 1986 and had two daughters. Vann worked and volunteered in Gastonia until his retirement in 2014. Alice shares that they "had just started having fun." They bought a home in the mountains of N.C., and "had a ball" together. Even when he received his ALS diagnosis in 2018, Vann took a positive view that encapsulated his faith and his view of life: "Vann said he was grateful for all the good years he had...we have tremendous gratitude for all his good years. He was a man of God; he never questioned his circumstances."

In his style, generous and thoughtful towards the needs around him, Vann and Alice in Summer 2020 made a significant gift through the David Belk Cannon Foundation to The Joe Martin ALS Foundation. This incredible contribution provides for immediate needs, and positions us for growth that will perpetuate both Joe Martin's and Vann Matthews' legacies of caring for the community and for those who need support the most.

Together with the Matthews Family, we have created a special award; the *Vann Matthews Spirit Award*. This annual award will recognize a young camper (from Joe's Camp) and a caregiver who have made significant contributions to their families and communities; who have gone above and beyond to provide help when needed, humor when possible, and to extend the mission of The Joe Martin ALS Foundation to ensure that people with ALS can live actively every day. We are deeply grateful to the David Belk Cannon Foundation, to Alice Matthews and the Matthews Family, and to Vann, for this heartfelt gift, and for becoming lifetime partners in our work.



A snapshot of our virtual adventures!

Presented By



**2021 Camp Dates
(in-person)
are June 11-13th!
Don't forget to
sign up!**

For more information email:
help@joemartinalsfoundation.org

Campaign Corner

"Pat's BOwesZO's" Walk for ALS Team Sprints Past Their \$20,000 Fundraising Goal!



Thank you Pat, Nancy, and Pat's BOwesZO's for your incredible support!!

Pat Bowes has been a long-time supporter and advocate for people affected by ALS. Pat lives actively with ALS, and for several years has rallied a dynamic team of friends and supporters, "Pat's BOwesZO's," to raise money and walk for ALS. This year, Pat and his wife Nancy, pictured at right, rallied a team together with the goal of raising \$20,000 for The Joe Martin ALS Foundation through a Walk for ALS that was originally scheduled for this past November.

Due to the pandemic, the walk itself is on hold, but thanks to Pat and Nancy's incredible community, they had already exceeded their fundraising goal in late October! To date, this fundraiser has brought in more than \$24,275 through 116 individual donors! In a year when so many non-profits, including JMALSF, have had to change plans and prepare to tighten our belts, this outpouring of love shows us that a community of people who care can accomplish anything.

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You shop. Amazon gives.

Did you know you can shop on amazon.com and support the Foundation by using AmazonSmile? When you shop through **smile.amazon.com**, you'll find the exact same shopping experience,, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase value to The Joe Martin ALS Foundation at no additional cost to you.

Simply visit **smile.amazon.com**, enter "Joe Martin ALS Foundation" in the charity search, and select the Foundation. It's easy and every bit helps!



Thanks to the ongoing generosity of our friends at Snowflake Village, we were able to provide free Christmas trees to PALS and their families again this year! Our wonderful volunteers helped deliver the trees and get them set up in each home. Thank you!

2020 Spring Campaign: Thank You to our Caregiver Heroes!

May is ALS Awareness Month, when we launched our spring fundraising campaign. This year we asked our community to show us, with homemade signs, how they were staying "ALS-Strong at Home." Our fundraising goal was \$6,000 - which we doubled, raising \$13,000 online in one month!



Most importantly, we had the opportunity to thank essential caregivers - staff and family - who help people with ALS stay strong every day!

Thank you caregivers!!



purpose. joy.
believing. hope.

Living, Completely

Wisdom from Joe Martin for Today: Our Annual Live Every Day Dinner Goes Virtual

The *Live Every Day Dinner*, held each September, is one of our most meaningful gatherings, bringing friends and supporters together for a night that recognizes the advocates and caregivers who inspire us. It is also our largest source of funding, so we were quick to "pivot" when we realized that an in-person gathering would not be possible this year.

Thanks to you, this year's event in its new 'virtual' format, was incredibly successful, raising over \$110,000!



Our 2020 theme was "Living, Completely"; drawing from Joe Martin's message that with tools like faith, love, joy, purpose, and the support of our community, we can live a life that is *complete* - no matter our circumstances. Dr. Ken Menkhaus (pictured above) shared his experience as an ALS advocate and why your support is more important than ever today for nonprofits like JMALSF.

We wanted to bring Joe's voice right to you - into your homes - and we achieved this thanks to a recorded speech given by Joe Martin in 1997, combined with innovative animation and audio engineered together by Aaron Putnam of Joyride Productions. If you have not watched this moving short film, please visit our website to experience this and be inspired by Joe to embrace purpose, joy and hope today: www.joemartinalsfoundation.org/LED2020/

Live Every Day 2020 was made possible by the generosity of Ann Andersen and J. Thomas Hurvis, Bank of America, Atrium Health Foundation, J.D. Goodrum, the Mackin Family, Grace & Stone Communications, Joan Zimmerman, Pinnacle Financial Partners, LKN Mechanical and committed Giving Circle Supporters.



We provide all our services free of charge, thanks to supporters like you. If you'd like to join us, view our Giving Circles and make a donation easily online or by sending a check to the address below:
www.joemartinalsfoundation.org/donate

WHAT WE DO

- Daily Living Assistance
- Range of Motion/Exercise
- Wheelchair Accessible Transportation
- Adaptive Technology and Support

- Travel Planning
- Medical Equipment Loans
- Caregiver Workshops & Training
- Home Accessibility Assessments
- Joe's Camp

STAFF

Neil Cottrell - President
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Laurie Foster - Office Administrator
Felicia Stevenson - Home Care Provider
Lynne Stinson - Home Care Provider
Doug Larter - CNA II
Erin Horton - Home Care Provider



Our mission is to empower families as they face the challenge of living actively with ALS by providing home care and other services at no cost.

Visit Us Online to Learn More: www.joemartinalsfoundation.org

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