



NEWS RELEASE

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St. Clair Caregiver Heading to Wash., D.C. as Alzheimer's Ambassador

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – Cindi Thomas has worked as a caregiver for the elderly throughout her career, specifically devoted to dementia and Alzheimer's. In March, Thomas, an employee at St. Clair Street Senior Center, will travel to the nation's capital to serve as the new Alzheimer's Association Congressional Ambassador to Fourth Congressional District U.S Rep. Scott DesJarlais.

"I currently work for the City of Murfreesboro as a Caregiver Information Coordinator at the St. Clair Senior Center," said Cindi Thomas. "My work with seniors as a practical nurse is also associated with the Resource Center for The Mid-South Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. I lost my grandmother to this mind-stealing disease as well as many clients and friends. I want my grandchildren to have hope for a cure."

Thomas will travel to Wash., D.C., March 23-25, to forge relationships with members of Congress and staff. As an Alzheimer's Ambassador, Thomas will work to enhance the Association's federal legislative agenda by building relationships between Ambassadors and key members of Congress.

"As an Ambassador, one of my key tasks is to hold congressional representatives accountable on their commitments to fight Alzheimer's," said Thomas. "Fighting the disease and helping those suffering from the disease requires federal legislation and funding."

Her 30 years in healthcare includes more than seven years as a member of the Rutherford Alzheimer's Walk Committee. Alzheimer's research and finding a cure for the disease has long been a personal and professional commitment. Ambassadors have been instrumental in passing key legislation, including the historic National Alzheimer's Project Act. "We intend to build on that success," added Thomas.

When Thomas returns from Washington, D.C., she will be responsible as an Ambassador to maintain contact with Representative DesJarlais and his staff and serve as an advocacy spokesperson with local news media.

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During her nursing career, Thomas worked primarily with veterans at the Alvin C. York VA with clients suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's diseases. A licensed practice nurse, Thomas is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University with a Bachelor of Science in Health and Human Performance with a concentration in Public and Community Health.

In the United States, there are more than 15 million Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers, providing an estimated 17.7 billion hours of unpaid care. According to the Alzheimer's Association www.alz.org, Alzheimer's is a complex neurological disease that is the most common form of dementia. A progressive, irreversible neurological disorder, most victims are older than 65, but Alzheimer's can strike in the 40s and 50s. Symptoms include gradual memory loss, impairment of judgment, disorientation, personality change, difficulty learning and loss of language skills.

In October, the City of Murfreesboro was pleased to highlight awareness and urge citizens to arm themselves with the best information on Alzheimer's. The City Hall rotunda was illuminated Oct.13-Oct. 31, 2014, in purple.

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Photo caption: *Cindi Thomas.jpg*