

STORIES OF HOPE

A HOMEMADE EFFORT TO FUND RESEARCH

For the past 23 years, Dianne Dean, Richmond, Va., and a fellow Amaranth member have spent hundreds of hours annually to make and sell homemade preserves and apple cake in a jar to raise money for diabetes research.

Last year, 700 jars of jams and jellies in 11 flavors, including one featuring blackberries grown in Dean's backyard, and nearly 300 jar-baked cakes loaded with apples, pecans and butterscotch morsels, along with sales of pewter snowflakes and chances to win two hand-painted swan feathers brought in \$9,100 – all for research.

"I'm just trying to help people with diabetes," says Dean, an IT program manager with a major utility and no family history of diabetes. "We need more people to do that."

Dean was introduced to the fight against diabetes through the Order of the Amaranth, an international, Masonic-affiliated organization that made diabetes research its sole philanthropic venture in 1979. Since then, the Amaranth Diabetes Foundation has donated more than \$11 million to the American Diabetes Association Research Foundation.

Dean is like many of Amaranth's 20,000 members. She doesn't just write a check; she puts time and effort into a grassroots fundraising event. "Any way we can to make money for research," Dean says, includes bake sales, yard sales, bingo, bowling, galas, auctions, golf tournaments and more.

"This is the only organization I belong to," Dean says. "I devote all of my spare time to raising funds for research. It's a life of service."

"I devote all of my spare time to raising funds for research. It's a life of service."

A former world-class softball player, Dean admits that she competes to raise as much money as possible. She sells her jarred treats at work, at the state Masonic Home Day, and when she travels. She also shares ideas on how to raise more funds with other Amaranth members.

"One hundred percent of what we raise goes direct to diabetes research," Dean proudly states. Amaranth charges no administrative expenses, so every dollar passes through to research projects selected by the Research Foundation. Amaranth now raises about \$500,000 a year and provides grants to support five research projects led by world-class diabetes investigators.

"We need to support research because diabetes affects so many parts of the body," she says.

A 25-year member, Dean has held numerous leadership positions in the organization, including president of the Amaranth Diabetes Foundation in 2009 and international coordinator of fundraising for diabetes research.

Now wherever she goes Dean spreads the word about the need for diabetes research and Amaranth's efforts to speed medical advances: "Let's let people know what we're doing, so they can join us in the fight." ▲



Dianne Dean