You, the caregivers who had the courage to open up and invite us into your journey. You, the compassionate people who give so freely of your time, talents, and hard-earned money. You are Jack’s Caregiver Coalition. And we are more resilient than ever for one reason. You keep showing up.

And as you keep showing up, here is a glimpse of our challenge and of the world we are building.

Consider these words from Allison Applebaum, the founding director of the Caregivers Clinic at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center: “For all caregivers, the challenges endemic to caregiving have the potential to eventually serve as learning and growing experiences that can help them to live more full, authentic lives both during caregiving and after.”¹

I completely agree with Allison. And I believe the sooner a caregiver finds the courage to open up about his experience the sooner his potential is unleashed. For far too long, far too many caregivers reach full-blown burnout before they ever open up. And I suspect many of us never find the courage it takes. All this inaction may not be costing us our life, but it is costing us our fully authentic life.

While we’ve made a respectable impact in the Twin Cities, the reality is that we still have a staggering number of guys to reach in the Twin Cities alone. And according to AARP there are 16 million guy caregivers in the United States.²

The world we are building is one where guy caregivers don’t feel weak when they open up; they feel strong. A world where everyone in his life respects the colossal challenge that caregiving is. Where there is ceremony and tradition around becoming a caregiver, much like we honor and respect so many of life’s other important milestones. Where after that ceremony others are not just inspired to help, they know exactly how to help, and that caregiver knows exactly how to let them.

A world where the healthcare system regards that caregiver as a keystone extension of the healthcare team rather than just a “visitor” as they so often did during the height of the pandemic.³ A world free of stereotypes that prevent so many guys from bringing their entire selves to the role. A world full of caregivers seizing all their opportunities including their deep capacity for strength and resilience, and their ability to create a deeper, more intimate relationship with the person for whom they are providing care.⁴

I hope this report helps you feel your impact. I hope it helps you feel your opportunities too. I hope it inspires you to level up your involvement. Become a member. Become a volunteer. Become a donor. Become the resilience that advances us towards our vision. Our coalition needs each of us now more than ever because more caregivers currently count on us than ever before. Please keep showing up.

Kyle Woody, Founder & Executive Director

As an organization for caregivers, it is often easier to remember the adverse events that happen each year as our caregivers progress through their caregiving journey. This is especially true for me, as my journey transitioned from ‘caregiver’ to ‘widower’ in 2021. My wife, Alison, succumbed to colorectal cancer after nearly 7 years of ‘living with cancer.’ But I wasn’t alone in my transition -- several other members joined our “alumni” group, including my good friend Joe who came to my house the day after Alison passed away to pay his respects and to support me however possible. He lost his wife a couple weeks later. That’s the world we live in, as caregivers -- and it is during this time that Jack’s Caregiver Coalition stands the tallest.

One of our long-standing goals is to create a world where guy caregivers never feel alone.

As someone who lost their spouse last year, I can reaffirm that – caregiving is incredibly lonely. But what most people may not appreciate is how incredibly lonely it can be AFTER losing your spouse. All of the time spent caregiving, running errands, sitting in the hospital, waiting rooms and infusion chairs – it’s all GONE. All that time, which amounts to a full-time job for many of us, is GONE.

Caregiving is lonely – and so is ‘life after caregiving.’ Which is why I’m so proud to be a member of Jack’s Caregiver Coalition.

On the day my wife passed away – there were members of Jack’s Caregiver Coalition there. And the following day, more members stopped by to check in on me. Then, virtually via text, email and social media, more members kept tabs on me, checking in on a near-daily basis to make sure that I was ok and to see if there was anything they could do to help or support me.

Remember – these are people who were caregivers – or who are STILL caregiving. They get it. They know how hard this journey is. And they are there for one another during good times and bad.

And as the Chairman here at Jack’s Caregiver Coalition, this sentiment…this behind-the-scenes camaraderie….this support…this fierce loyalty and “I’ve got your back” -- is the sentiment that I’m most proud of. Yes, our events are great. Our Klatch meetings are spectacular. The Firepit Fridays, Thirsty Thursdays, fishing outings, go-kart racing – they are all wonderful. But we do them for one primary reason – to create a support network of people who are willing to walk side-by-side and shoulder-to-shoulder as we go through one of the most difficult journeys we’ve ever faced…together. These events help foster and build long-lasting friendships that bond us like super glue.

I have personally sat with other Jacks outside of a hospital room as a fellow member said his final goodbye to his spouse. I’ve cried at funerals – not for the deceased, but for the caregivers who lost the most important person in their life.

The Coalition is strong – and getting stronger every year. We are financially stronger than we’ve ever been. We supported more Jacks with more events, more volunteer hours, more donors and we sponsored more one-on-one calls/meetings and welcomed more new members than ever before.

And I couldn’t be more proud. Thank you to all the members who inspire me. Thank you to all the volunteers and donors who contribute with their passion, time and money.

And thank you, whoever you are, for reading this annual report and showing interest in our nonprofit. We look forward to continuing our mission, with your support, in 2022 and beyond and encourage you to get involved in whatever way you can.

Regards,

Richard Anderson, Chairman and Alumni member

Rich and Brielle (18)
“To me the more important courage isn’t the heroic kind. Because we have the opportunity to practice the less flashy, ordinary kind of courage every day. The kind that requires us to speak openly and honestly about how we’re feeling and about who we really are deep down inside. Ordinary courage happens when we’re afraid and yet we still take the actions our values require of us.” - Kyle Woody

“Resilience is all about advancing despite the adversity we face. Being a Caregiver taught me what it truly means to be resilient and how that allows us to get the most out of our precious time we have with friends and loved ones.” - Justin Nicolay

“PattiJo Verdeja lost her mom to COVID and very nearly lost her brother too. Family is everything to PattiJo so these experiences were excruciatingly beyond words. In her day job she has a leadership role with the Guthrie Theater. As she’ll tell you, closing down a theatre when a pandemic hits is a thousand times easier than opening one up while that pandemic is still raging. In the fall of 2021, she still had a lot of really emotionally heavy work to do in the form of grief. And she also had all this physical and intellectual work to do at the Guthrie. And, as if that’s not enough, she had the role of Chair at our premier annual fundraiser that fall too. If you know PattiJo at all you would not be surprised to learn that our fundraiser was the most successful fundraising campaign in our entire history. I have never witnessed someone navigate more adversity and advance, despite it, in my entire life.” - Kyle Woody

“Compassion is seeing your pain reflected in another person’s circumstances and then choosing to sit with them in the dark so they don’t have to be alone. Compassion recognizes the dignity we all deserve and connects us in our shared humanity. Someone who is compassionate often gives themselves freely to others, often at their own expense, so that those they serve may feel less alone or maybe even be relieved of some of the burdens they bear.” - Dustin Cesarek

“Kathy Bucher is relentless in her compassion. When she shows up for the caregivers we serve they become the center of her universe. They become an urgent priority and she won’t relent until they find relief. She has an extraordinary network of relationships that she’s carefully cultivated over many years all towards the end result which is a powerful and compassionate community of support. A community that she can mobilize at any moment with the snap of her fingers. Highly regarded therapists, funds that help people in financial distress pay their mortgage, organizations that provide highly specialized services no one has ever heard of. She knows them all. She’s constantly introducing me to more programs I had no idea existed. She gives so freely of herself it’s hard to comprehend. And there are times where there isn’t a countermeasure or a solution, and she knows how to be compassionate in that situation too. How to just show up and help people feel heard and seen and sit in the dark with them and just be. She knows how to help them feel less alone. Everyone in our community lives our core value of compassion, but there is no one I know who does it more consistently and more effectively than Kathy Bucher.” - Kyle Woody

“If you know Alan Christensen, you know he is himself wherever he goes. He’d make a terrible politician. And this award goes to him for that exact reason. Alan lives in alignment with his values every day, a set of values that were no doubt significantly changed by his caregiving experience. When you need someone to forge a new path, Alan is your man. He thrives in the uncertainty of a new challenge. For our 2021 #GiveToTheJacksDay fundraising campaign he helped us produce what amounted to a live streamed video telethon. People were able to call in and go live on the show. It was awesome. And of course there were glitches, there always are when you take a risk of any consequence. And that’s also why he wins this award, because he navigated those glitches and never lost one iota of his focus, determination, and passion to break new ground and to achieve the mission of the campaign.” - Kyle Woody
“On a beautiful fall day we were volunteering to help Jack’s at the ColdOnes4Caregivers 2021 fundraiser, and it turned into a day I will never forget. My wife Ashley surprised me once again. She nominated me for the Jack’s Caregiver Cup. The executives at Jack’s believed I was worthy of winning it this year. But why…how can taking care of someone you love deserve to win an award? What about the Jacks who have lost a loved one? It was a day of mixed emotions. I have never felt so humbled, speechless, and honored at the same time. I never claimed to know how to navigate through this caregiving journey. But I guess I must be doing something right. Thank you Jack’s Caregiver Coalition for existing. I especially want to thank my wife Ashley for encouraging me to join Jack’s and for nominating me.” -Eric Schepers

Winner of the 2021 Caregiver Cup

“2021 Winner: ERIC SCHEPERS

This caregiver role is no easy task. Having to take care of someone is tough, trust me I wouldn’t want to take care of me. Jack’s is a place for my husband to go to fit in. These guys understand each other, they all can relate in some sort of way. It truly is a blessing for my husband to be able to be a part of Jack’s. All caregivers deserve this award but I guess 2021 is my husband’s year. Congratulations Babe! I love you more than words can say. Thank you for everything you have done for Madelyn and me!” -Ashley Schepers

Past Winners:

- 2020 – Doug Dallmann
- 2019 – Rich Anderson
- 2018 – Travis Robertson
- 2017 – Dustin Cesarek
- 2016 – Dan Guider

Presented annually to the “Jack” of the Year.
**Program Feature ➤ CAREGIVER KLATCH**

Coed caregiver discussion groups focused on learning, sharing, and exploring the ways we think, feel, and act in support of our loved ones.

"The Jack's Caregiver Klatches remain so important to me and integral as a support mechanism in my own journey as a caregiver to my wife Cassie. I continue to stay involved in the Klatches because of the people I meet and the sense of community it provides. I also learn so much! That said, 2021 felt like a year of transition for the Klatches (like so many other things). We were online, then in person, then not. It was frustrating and I worried that we might be losing caregivers who needed the support. At the same time, even when it was just a few of us connecting it remained powerful and powerfully helpful. I look forward to more Jack's Klatches in 2022 with hope and excitement." -Dan Cramer

"I joined a Jack's Caregiver Klatch after 20 months of full-time caregiving. During my wife Cheryl's battle with pancreatic cancer, we had excellent medical care. What I failed to recognize was my need for personal support. At the Klatch, I discovered a welcoming group that shared a common challenge. While the group was guided by a trained leader and a simple process, the attendees set the agenda and were the substance of the meeting. I experienced genuine sympathy and gained practical solutions to the challenges I was facing. I wish I had joined Jack's sooner." -Jake Jacobsen

**Program Feature ➤ JACK-TO-JACK**

Get connected to a guy who's been in your shoes. You might laugh together, cry together, or just grab a coffee or some beers and, well, shoot the shit.

"I wanted to champion the Jack-to-Jack program because in my caregiving experience I always got the most out of standing face-to-face with another caregiver. Listening to someone who had walked a mile in my shoes always made me feel less alone and more capable of overcoming the immediate stresses I was dealing with. 2021 has been a year of reflection for this program. Without a dedicated champion prior to last year, most of my energy has been spent connecting with coaches and learning more about how each coach approaches their role. What I’ve learned is that our coaches are hubs of knowledge who, regardless of their present circumstances, are consistently enthusiastic about meeting new caregivers and sharing their experience in the hope that they will help new caregivers struggle less than they did. This program is the "pay it forward" mentality that Jack’s was founded on and we are ready to put more supports in place to bring this program to the next level."

- Dustin Cesarek, Founder & Jack-to-Jack Program Champion

"I joined Jack's and was paired with a Jack-to-Jack Coach," says Allan. My coach has 2 kids, who are slightly older than mine. He lost his wife to cancer a little over a year ago and is essentially living on the other side of my biggest fear right now – losing my spouse, living through the overwhelming challenges of raising kids as a widower. Seeing that it can be done and that he can be happy makes that monster a little less scary.

Friends and family are willing to discuss Hilary’s health, but they are less eager to talk about the potential, less desirable outcomes.

They might consider even talking about the 'worst' cases as 'giving up the fight'.

Having someone to talk to who’s been through ‘it’ has been helpful to me in navigating the initial avalanche that comes with receiving a stage IV cancer diagnosis. Having a coach who is open to talking about those ‘worst’ cases; being able to talk through some of my fears with him is something that helps me. It makes the whole thing not quite as scary." -Allan Hammell
“In November of 2021, I was struggling with the whole mental health aspect of caregiving, not just my own but also my wife’s mental health dealing with the emotional consequences of a cancer diagnosis. I initially was struggling to find any mental health resources available to us that did not have an extended wait list. Out of desperation I reached out to Jack’s for advice and was immediately connected with Kathy Bucher, the volunteer Care Navigator. She immediately got me on the phone and took down some details like our insurance and got more information about our situation. She then reached out to her network and found a therapist that specializes in caregiving support and who was willing to meet with us immediately and bypass his waitlist. Initially he was working with me and then several weeks in he met with my wife. And he subsequently volunteered to take her on as a patient too. The results of him working with my wife and I have been life changing. And Kathy didn’t stop there. She reached out to my wife and continued to check in on her and ask her if there was anything more she needed, and she also offered to connect with us in person. Kathy went above and beyond. I could not be more thankful for Kathy’s support and the support of the Jack’s organization over this past year.” - Caregiver

Program Feature ✧ CARE NAVIGATOR
Come alongside caregivers and their loved ones to bring encouragement and equip them to navigate the complexities of the healthcare system as well as make them aware of resources available to them.

Program Feature ✧ TANK DRIVING
Live out your 80’s action hero dreams while driving a friggin’ tank or firing a belt fed machine gun! Begin your day with safety training & an extensive history of tanks, their uses, & common misconceptions. Take your new knowledge down to the battlefield in a 5-ton troop transport. Then the moment of truth as you jump down the hatch of an Abbott SPG and move out onto the training grounds. This isn’t any open field but a densely wooded course that will test the limits of not only this fighting vehicle but also you, its operator. Next get ready to test fire a piece of history, an authentic STEN machine gun.

“I wanted to volunteer my time and money to make this Tank Driving event happen because I knew it would be a once in a lifetime experience for the guys who belong to Jack’s. It was a year and a half after my wife Katie passed away, and the day made me remember why this organization is so vital to the cancer and caregiving journey. To see the smiles on these guys’ faces made the day SO worth it!” - Travis Robertson
Program Feature • THIRSTY THURSDAY

Share our news and needs with guys who get it. Grab your favorite beverage (Tea, beer, OJ, coffee, wine, it’s all fair game)... and join us.

“As the facilitator, or bartender, of the Thirsty Thursday virtual happy hour I approach this gathering a little different than the way most of the other programs are run within Jacks. I like that Thirsty Thursday is more informal and I really let the group determine how the time and conversations flow.

I try to keep this as close to a true happy hour feel with guys as possible. We will talk about anything and everything that is going on that you are comfortable sharing. I look at this as an easy way for us to get together and hang out for an hour, get away from our troubles, and catch up with the guys.

I’ve had some good one on ones with some guys to full group discussions about what a guy is going through and it’s rewarding to see them leave with the knowledge and tools ready to tackle whatever was concerning them. Or see that they are in a better mood than when the got there because they were able to get away from their troubles for a short time.” -Mark Mattson

Program Feature • FIREPIT FRIDAY

Get out of the house and connect.

“As caregivers we tend to hide some of the more gruesome parts of our caregiving journey from other people. Here we get to share our experience and ask hard questions without being judged. Then we get to go back to joking around and telling funny stories. It is the monthly pick up that we need. Firepit Friday is hands down my favorite Jack's event.” -Logan Greene
2021 TRIBUTE DONORS

In Honor Of Amy Koland
Rich Koland

In Honor Of Cassie and Dan Cramer
Andrew Charon
Darla Kashian
Jake Blumberg
James Haggar
John Larsen
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Patricia Kline
Richard Anderson

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Becky Gartzke

In Honor Of Ryan Menning
Jane Menning

In Honor Of Sarah, Doug, Alison, Kyle, Mick, and Lachlan
Sarah, Stacey, and Owen Manes

In Honor Of The Kotten family
Audie Miller
In Memory Of Alison Anderson
Brett Anderson
Carol Kottom
Diana Copeland
Kyle Woody
Richard Anderson
Stephanie Clarke

In Memory Of Sarah DeBord
Kyle Woody maintains the Sarah DeBord Fund
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Merrick Woody
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Randy Lee

In Memory Of Melissa Zahn
Brian Zahn

In Memory Of Patricia J. Miller
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In Memory Of Sara A. Christensen
Alan Christensen maintains the Sara Christensen Fund
Anonymous
Janelle Calhoun

In Memory Of Teri Mattson
Charles Mattson
Thomas and Andrea Hogg

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In Memory Of Steve Gartzke
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OUR TEAM

STAFF

Kyle Woody | Executive Director

KEY VOLUNTEERS

Kathy Bucher | Care Navigator Program
Dustin Cesarek | Jack-to-Jack Program
Kristen Ciarochi | Communications
Alan Christensen | Campaign Production
Dan Cramer | Caregiver Klatch Program
Rachel Engstrom | Caregiver Klatch Program
Logan Greene | Private Facebook Group
Pat Kline | ColdOnes4Caregivers Campaign
Randy Lee | Caregiver Klatch Program

Sarah Manes | Campaign Production
Mark Mattson | Thirsty Thursday Program
Mike McGarry | Jack’s Blog
Rylie Moore | ColdOnes4Caregivers Campaign
Travis Robertson | Communications
Trevor Scott | Photography
Antoine Valley | Caregiver Klatch Program
PattiJo Verdeja | ColdOnes4Caregivers Campaign
Diane Woody | Accounting
Our Team

JACK-TO-JACK COACHES
Rich Anderson  Nick Meysembourg
Cullen Bahn  Justin Nicolay
Dustin Cesarek  Andrés Parra
Alan Christensen  Travis Robertson
Dan Cramer  Eric Schepers
Paul Gartzke  Rob Smith
Mark Mattson  Kyle Woody
Mike McGarry  Brian Zahn

2021 FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN HONOREES
Dustin Cesarek  Ashley Schepers
Cassie Cramer  Rob Smith
Allan Hammell  Scott Taylor
Tracy McGarry
Amanda Meuleners
Roger Miller
Joe Peterson

2021 PROGRAM GATHERING HOSTS
Rich Anderson | The Smokeshow
Alf Christensen | Firepit Friday
Aaron Hill | Firepit Friday
Mark Mattson | Firepit Friday
Chris Meuleners | Tank Driving & Firepit Friday
Justin Nicolay | Guided Tonka Fishing
Andrés Parra | Firepit Friday
Joe Peterson | The Smokeshow
Travis Robertson | Pinball Tourney
Patrick Triemert | Firepit Friday
Charles Wuest | Doing Poetry
Pete Young | Firepit Friday

2021 CORPORATE SUPPORT
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Cariloop
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Northland Concrete and Masonry Company, LLC
Transparent Financial, Inc.
Whole Care Network, Inc.

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Cassie and Dan Cramer Fund
Colon Cancer Coalition
The Janice Gardner Foundation
Bruce and Beth Hammell Giving Fund
Meysembourg Family Charitable Fund
Randy Lee / Brenda Van Vugt Memorial Giving Fund

2021 IN KIND GIFTS
Rich Anderson
Block Portrait Studios
Burnin’ Blue Band
Conversations with Kelly
Imagine IT
Sarah Manes
Diane Woody
Kyle Woody
In 2021 we experienced a 244% growth in volunteers holding ongoing volunteer positions.

In 2021 alone we showed up for caregivers 608 times, a 95% increase over 2020.

Since our inception through December 31, 2021, we have shown up for caregivers a total of 1,353 times.
I volunteered to do the bookkeeping for Jack's for the simple reason that they could stop paying a CPA firm for this service. I believe in Jack's vision for helping caregivers. Before taking over the bookkeeping I thought I knew a lot about Jack's. I have since learned so much about the tremendous amount of time and effort that many volunteers lovingly give to Jack's in order to help caregivers. It warms my heart to be able to help Jack's do a little bit more. -Diane Woody, CPA - Volunteer Accounting Lead
Our mission is to improve the way guys think, feel, and act through every phase of their caregiving journey.