

Riverhead local

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Downtown Riverhead walk to end Alzheimer's raises more than \$27,000

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by Denise Civiletti



Eighteen teams of people participated in the Second Annual Riverhead Walk for Alzheimers downtown this morning. They raised more than \$27,000 for the Alzheimer's Disease Resource Center of Bay Shore, which support local medical research and helps patients and caregivers cope with the devastating illness.

The USO Liberty Bells show troupe performed song and dance numbers for the crowd assembled in Grangebél Park for the kickoff ceremony in advance of the walk along the riverfront to the aquarium, where they were treated to a clambake and buffet lunch.

Riverhead Supervisor Sean Walter presented ADRC with a proclamation declaring today Alzheimer's Awareness Day in Riverhead. He spoke of the recent diagnosis of a family member with the disease, which strikes an estimated one in eight Americans.

"We'll be there for his caregiver," ADRC executive director Maryann Ragona told the supervisor. "And we'll take care of her. We will stand by her. We will guide her. And we will support her through this disease process," she said.

"I was watching a little girl on a pony ride this morning," Ragona said, referring to the two ponies brought in for the event — along with a small petting zoo. "And I thought, what a great thing to have these kids here with us today, because those are our children, they are our future, and they should be able to grow up and have productive lives and not fear Alzheimer's disease. That's what this walk is all about," Ragona said.

The top fundraising team was "Sisters United," which raised more than \$5,000. The second-place team was "Team Parisi," which raised more than \$4,000, Ragona said.

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