

Exclusively for Diabetes Research

The Order of the Amaranth's fund-raising sets "an incredible example"

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Members of the Order of the Amaranth (from left) Larry Dobbins, Supreme Royal Matron Lynda Dobbins, Supreme Royal Patron David Ekren, and Carol Ekren visited the American Diabetes Association home office in 2013. "Their goal is the same as ours: to get rid of diabetes," David Ekren says.

Do donations raised through golf outings, bake sales, and 90-year-olds shaking contribution cans outside discount stores add up? Prepare to be impressed. Such efforts, coordinated by the Order of the Amaranth, have raised almost \$14 million for diabetes research.

The order is a social, fraternal, and philanthropic Masonic organization dedicated to "truth, faith, wisdom, and charity"—and supporting the search for a cure for diabetes. Since 1979, the order's

Amaranth Diabetes Foundation, its philanthropic arm, has raised money exclusively for the American Diabetes Association's diabetes research program.

"There is no volunteer organization with a longer history with the American Diabetes Association that has given at the level of the Order of the Amaranth," says Association CEO Larry Hausner. "The members set an incredible example, and we are so grateful for the impressive contributions they are making to our mission."

The Order knows that diabetes touches everyone. "There isn't anybody who isn't affected by diabetes, whether personally or a relative or a friend," says Lynda Dobbins, the supreme royal matron of the Order. Dobbins, of Hartville, Ohio, should know: She has **type 2 diabetes**, which developed after she was diagnosed with gestational diabetes in 1983. As supreme royal matron, Dobbins travels North America to meet with local courts and support their fund-raising efforts, from grand galas to "kiss-a-pig" events. "Right now we have 356 courts across the country and around the world that are all focused on finding a cure," she says.

Each member's personal story provides even more motivation. Whenever George "Stoney" Pavlik, the president of the Amaranth Diabetes Foundation, travels beyond his home in Mount Union, Pa., he brings along a copy of a 1986 American Diabetes Association book, *Children with Diabetes*. On the cover is a picture of his daughter, Audra, when she was a little girl. The book is a visual reminder of why he has dedicated his life to raising funds for diabetes research. Audra died in 2012 of complications related to **type 1 diabetes**, at the age of 34.

"This is the reason why I'm so dedicated to this," he says, his voice catching. "There's an impending tsunami, a puzzle that is pressing the whole medical community. Finally, we might get all the pieces together."

Dobbins says that with every effort, big or small, members of the Order hope they're one step closer to finding the "golden dollar" that funds the research that will find a cure. Typically, the money the Order gives to the Association supports from three to five researchers each year—more than any other organization working with the ADA. Current researchers funded by Amaranth are looking into helping people with neuropathy regrow nerves and identifying how inflammation may trigger type 1 diabetes, among other topics. This and other research focuses on improving the lives of people living with diabetes and the ultimate goal—finding a cure.

More

To learn more about the Order of the Amaranth, visit amaranth.org. To read the latest about the ADA's research efforts, visit diabetes.org/research.

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