

## Calabasas actress lends voice to the cause of Alzheimer's

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**Dina Sherman**

After losing both of her grandmothers to Alzheimer's, Dina Sherman of Calabasas pledged to fight the disease. But with two young children and an acting career, she found it difficult to find time for her promise.

After Sherman's husband urged her to "put her money where her mouth is," she decided to donate half her earnings as a voice-over actress to the Alzheimer's Association.

First to be diagnosed was Sherman's maternal grandmother, who moved in with Sherman's parents.

"My mother was with her until physically, she just couldn't care for her anymore," Sherman said.

They took her to a facility in Orange County called Irvine Cottages, which is owned by a woman named Jacque DuPont.

"We got really lucky," Sherman said. "This woman was so wonderful. She would go on to help all three of my remaining grandparents."

Inspired by DuPont's compassion, Sherman's mother went to work for her, first as a volunteer and now as an employee. She helps families with loved ones suffering from Alzheimer's or dementia find facilities that can help.

"My mother really helps people," Sherman said. "I watched my mom do this and wanted to do more. I used to volunteer, but with kids and work, I couldn't be consistent. It was very frustrating."

Finally, Sherman's husband, Steve Bloch, encouraged her to donate a portion of her earnings as an actress to a charity. She picked the Alzheimer's Association.

"He said, 'Don't just do a little bit. Make a difference. Let's do 50 percent,'" Sherman said. "It was an epiphany moment."

Sherman's had some onscreen roles, but she is chiefly a voice-over actress.

"Basically anytime you hear a voice but don't see a person," said Sherman, explaining her work. "I do cartoons, radio, television commercials, dialogue for movies, audio books, video games. I get to do everything. That's why it's so much fun."

Although the economy has taken a dive since Sherman made the decision to donate, she's stuck with it. Recent credits include work for video game Guitar Hero, animated show "Naruto" and soap opera "Days of Our Lives."

Sherman's agent, Wes Stevens, is also donating half his commissions from Sherman's bookings to the association. Sherman and Stevens will continue making their donations through the end of 2009.

"My mission is to raise funds and awareness," Sherman said. "This is not just an old person's disease. It affects not just the person who has Alzheimer's, but the caregivers too. It could be a mom, it could be a daughter—it affects everyone. And it's terminal. It's not going to get better. The numbers are staggering."

Sherman participated in the Alzheimer's Memory Walk in October, and the Sherman Tanks were one of the top money-raising teams, with no corporate sponsorships or major donations.

"It was mostly \$10 or \$20 donations," Sherman said. "The highest amount was \$200. It was all through friends and family. It was a very touching experience—all the support and generosity was amazing."

Sherman is also a member of Project Alzheimer's (PALZ), an organization for professionals dedicated to finding a cure for the disease through fundraising and awareness.

"I'm just doing what I can with the allotted time I've given," Sherman said. "This really means something to me and my family. I'm scared for myself and my children."

Sherman has two children, Sabrina, a third-grader at Chapparal School in Calabasas, and Ryan, 5.

"Sabrina helped me with the Memory Walk last year," Sherman said. "She got a bunch of the neighborhood kids together and sold lemonade to help raise funds. She took it to Indian Princesses, and she went door-to-door. I love imparting to her the need and desire to think outside her own world."

More than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. Every 71 seconds another diagnosis is made.

For more information on Alzheimer's, visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org).

Sherman's website is [www.dinasherman.com](http://www.dinasherman.com).