

## Help Line

(800) 878-2062

## Website

[www.alsa-midamerica.org](http://www.alsa-midamerica.org)

## Kansas City Office

6950 Squibb Road  
Suite 210

Mission, KS 66202

P: (913) 648-2062

## Omaha Office

900 S. 74th Plaza  
Suite 106

Omaha, NE 68114

P: (402) 991-8788

## Springfield Office

2209 Petrus Circle  
Ozark, MO 65721

P: (417) 886-5003

## Wichita Office

3450 N. Rock Road  
Suite 211

Wichita, KS 67226

P: (316) 612-0188

## Meet the Care Services Specialist Team

The ALS Association Mid-America Chapter Care Services Team is comprised of nurses and master's- level social workers. Each Care Services Specialist has a geographic area in which they provide people living with ALS with consultations, family support, resources and referrals, and provide assistance with equipment through The Chapter's equipment loan program.

Each Care Services Specialist works as a liaison for local ALS Clinics. Their role is to provide assistance and education to the patients and their families about the services The ALS Association Mid-America Chapter has to offer. In addition, the Care Services Specialist functions as a liaison between the clinic staff and patients.

### Tara Dhakal, LMSW-

Tara graduated from the University of Kansas with a master's degree in social work and focus on aging. She has served as a social services consultant for long-term care companies, nursing homes and assisted living facilities. She has been with The ALS Association Mid-America Chapter since 2015 and works in The Chapter's Kansas City office. Tara works directly with people living with ALS and their families who are located in the Kansas City Metro Area (Missouri). She is also a liaison at The ALS Association Certified Treatment of Excellence at the University of Kansas Health System.



### Cheri Mathis, LCSW-

Cheri is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Palliative Care Social Worker. She graduated from the University of Kansas with a master's degree in social work and focus on aging. Cheri's experience includes hospital- based palliative care, hospice, mental health therapy, and non-medical private duty home care management. In 2019, Cheri began with The ALS Association Mid-America Chapter as the Springfield office's Care Services Specialist. She has now moved to The Chapter's Kansas City office and works directly with people living with ALS and their families who are located in the Kansas City metro area (Kansas). In addition, Cheri is a liaison at The ALS Association Certified Treatment of Excellence at the University of Kansas Health System.



### Ashley Smith, MSW-

Ashley graduated from the University of Louisville with her master's degree in social work. Her experience includes home health care; requesting and coordinating organ donations; substance use and co-occurring disorder counseling and casework; supporting bereaved families, and providing grief and loss counseling. She began with The ALS Association Mid-America Chapter this year and works in The Chapter's Springfield office. Ashley works directly with people living with ALS and their families who are located in Western Missouri. She also is the liaison at The ALS Association Certified Treatment Center of Excellence at the University



of Missouri Health Care in Columbia, Missouri, as well as the ALS Clinic of the Ozarks at CoxHealth in Springfield, Missouri.

### Missy Addison, RN-

Missy has a strong history of caring and professionalism in the healthcare and insurance industries, with over 20 years of experience. Missy graduated from Creighton University with a Bachelors of Science in Nursing. As both a Respiratory Therapist and Registered Nurse, she has experience working with and providing care to patients with ALS. Missy began with The ALS Association in 2018 and works in The Chapter's Omaha office and provides services to people living with ALS and their families located in Nebraska. She also is the liaison at The ALS Association Certified Treatment Center of Excellence at Nebraska Medicine.



### Kim Harber, LMSW-

Kim graduated from The University of Kansas with a master's degree in social work in 2014. She has worked as a crisis clinician at a community mental health center, rural health coordinator at the VA, and as a targeted case manager for adults with disabilities. Kim has been with The ALS Association Mid-America Chapter since 2019 and works in The Chapter's Wichita office. She works with people living with ALS and their families who are located in Central and Western Kansas. In addition, Kim also is the liaison for the Wichita ALS Telemedicine Clinic.



## Support Groups

Please RSVP for all support group meetings by calling (417) 886-5003 or e-mail Ashley Smith at [asmith@alsa-midamerica.org](mailto:asmith@alsa-midamerica.org)

### Tuesday, February 4

Caregivers Support Group- NEW  
(Video conference only)  
1 p.m.

For more information, contact Cheri Mathis at [cmathis@alsa-midamerica.org](mailto:cmathis@alsa-midamerica.org)  
Meets the first Tuesday of the month

### Tuesday, February 11

Springfield Support Group  
5:30 p.m.  
Cox-Wheeler Heart and Vascular Institute's Community Room  
3800 S. National Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65807  
Meets the second Tuesday of the month

### Thursday, February 27

Columbia Support Group  
4 p.m.  
The Wyatt Guest House  
1580 Jewell Avenue  
Columbia, MO 65203  
Meets the Thursday before clinic

# 2020 ALS Clinic Retreat

The Mid-America Chapter’s third annual ALS Clinic Retreat will be held on Friday, March 6th. The ALS Clinic Retreat is a day for health care professionals involved in the care of ALS patients to network, collaborate and learn. Attendees will include members of all five of The Chapter’s affiliated clinics and centers including: University of Kansas Health System, Nebraska Medicine, University of Missouri Health Care, CoxHealth, and the Wichita Telemedicine Clinic.

Topics that will be discussed will include current and future focuses of research, dialogue on challenges and potential solutions, and ways to integrate current strategies into clinical practice. In addition, discipline specific breakout sessions will be focused on creating clinical care flow charts.

The day will conclude with clinic teams attending A Night of Hope Gala at The Kansas City Convention Center. We are excited for another collaborative ALS Clinic Retreat!

## Join the National ALS Registry

Turn ALS research into ALS progress by joining the National ALS Registry.  
For more information about the National ALS Registry, visit: [www.cdc.gov/als](http://www.cdc.gov/als).

## Donor Spotlight

The ALS Association Mid-America Chapter has provided services to people living with ALS and their families for over 40 years. During this time, The Chapter has grown in order to account for the changes and progression of the disease. However, one thing that has not changed over those 40 plus years, is the commitment and dedication of our amazing donors. The ability to provide help and services to people living with ALS is a direct result of the donors.

One donor that continues the fight against ALS is Chris Tonniges. Chris’s dad, Dr. Tom Tonniges was diagnosed with ALS in 2013. Chris said, “We, the family, kind of acted stunned when he told us. There wasn’t deep sadness at first because no one really knew what it meant.”

Dr. Tom recognized the need for more awareness and understanding for people living with ALS and their families. A week after Dr. Tom told his family of his diagnosis, he arranged a meeting with The Chapter’s Care Services team, his family, two others who were recently diagnosed and their families. During this meeting Dr. Tom facilitated a Q&A to help with understanding ALS.

To continue the awareness, the Tonniges family, led by Dr. Tom, hosted a fundraiser/education event that highlighted the Nebraska Medicine ALS Clinic and The Chapter’s resources. A few months prior to the event, the clinic was certified as a recognized treatment center by The National ALS Association. The family’s hope was to build on the momentum of the funding for the clinic. The fundraiser was also an opportunity to spread awareness, as well as educate Dr. Tom’s colleagues and friends on the disease. While details on ALS is part of a medical school curriculum, it is not widely emphasized, resulting in physicians not being well versed in the disease.

Since Dr. Tom’s passing in 2015, Chris joined The ALS Association Mid-America Chapter board and has continued both his service on the board and as a donor. Chris currently serves as the president of the board. He said, “Taking my Dad’s voice and my Dad’s story and continuing to talk about the awareness for the disease is why I serve. It’s real easy to just take a loss like this, that is so tragic and tuck it away and not think or talk about it. But getting involved and staying involved and being active with The Chapter, has kind of helped with the healing for me personally.”

“It’s also really important for my family to make sure that no one else has to deal with what we had to deal with. Hopefully that means we have disease of maintenance and a cure.”


Chris’s continued involvement with The Chapter through service and giving is an invaluable tool. Donors are an incredible part of The Chapter, with their dedication and commitment, they make it possible for The Chapter to serve people with ALS and their families in the Mid-America region. Thank you, Chris, for your dedication.

## 2020 Walk to Defeat ALS

The 2020 Walk season is here and our Development Managers are hard at work to make 2020 a huge success. The Walk to Defeat ALS is a yearly family-friendly event that has a direct impact on people living with ALS and their families. Money raised from The Walk, provides funds for education, support groups, and access to care for people living with ALS. Last year, thousands of you came out in the rain, heat and even gorgeous weather, to fundraise and Walk to Defeat ALS. With everyone’s help, we had another record setting year!

Join us as we Walk to Defeat ALS this year!

### Mark your calendars!



**Columbia Walk to Defeat ALS**  
Saturday, August 15, 2020  
Cosmo-Bethel Park, Leech Shelter  
Registration opens at 9 a.m.  
Opening ceremony starts at 10:10 a.m.

**Springfield Walk to Defeat ALS**  
Saturday, August 29, 2020  
Life360  
Registration opens at 8:30 a.m.  
Opening ceremony starts at 9:40 a.m.

*A night benefitting The ALS Association  
Mid-America Chapter*

**FRIDAY | 03.06.20  
KANSAS CITY, MO**



*Bubbles  
& Bouties*