



"It has been really life-changing to see how many people want to come together for something bigger than ourselves. It's such a good feeling to see the difference we can make for people with Alzheimer's and their families."

GINNY CHACOS

K.C. ALFRED UT

In the beginning: The yearly "Tackle ALZ San Diego" all-female flag-football fundraiser is a serious venture, and co-captains Ginny Chacos and Shannon Gearing have the training hours and sore muscles to prove it. They are also serious about filling the Alzheimer's San Diego coffers. Tackle ALZ has contributed nearly \$157,000 to the organization so far.

GINNY CHACOS
(RIGHT)

SOUTH MISSION
BEACH

**SHANNON
GEARING**
(LEFT)

DOWNTOWN
SAN DIEGO

ALZHEIMER'S
SAN DIEGO

"We spend half the year planning this, and there are definitely moments of stress," Gearing said. "But when you get thank-you notes from people who come to the Alzheimer's San Diego classes and when we get feedback from the organization, that's when you take a pause and realize what you're really doing this for."

Good works: The co-captains recruit women for their two teams and find men who are willing to play cheerleader. They organize fundraising events, training sessions and social gatherings. And when the athletes drop in on Alzheimer's San Diego's classes for people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers, they see a string of victories

that will go on long past game day.

On the record: "These are really strong, athletic women, and this game is very competitive. There is real structure and a real rigor to what they're doing. I always say, 'You have no idea how serious this is.'" — Mary Ball, president and CEO of Alzheimer's San Diego