3-2-2011

Judy Turner interview for a Wright State University History Course

Ashley Whitaker
Judy Turner

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Once I pulled into the driveway of the Alzheimer's Association I had to walk to the back of the building to get in. There was a big gate in front of the building that was built for the residents there so they could safely go outside. I had to take the elevator because the floor was upstairs. Walking down some hallways I saw the receptionist who lets Judy know I'm there. She comes to get me from the waiting room and leads me through more rooms to get to her office. Her office is messy and scattered about but she informed me it was because she was getting ready to retire this year and she was clearing her stuff out. She sat down at her desk and I sat
facing her. She had a computer behind her which flashed pictures of her family as well as a cabinet next to me that had family photos hanging up. She was married and had children. Her husband is deceased.

Judy Turner is an Executive Director at the Alzheimer’s Association in Dayton, Ohio. She has been with them since 1991. The Alzheimer’s Association’s mission is to eliminate Alzheimer’s disease through the advancement of research, to provide and enhance care and support for all affected, and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. The Miami Valley Chapter is a tax-exempt, non-profit, donor-supported organization. Programs and services are made possible through contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations. The chapter uses 75% of monies raised for programs, services and research efforts. They provide services in Champaign, Clark, Darke, Greene, Logan, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, and Shelby County.

The services they provide are a 24/7 helpline, local service providers (such as doctors and nursing homes), newsletters, education programs on caregivers and people with Dementia, support groups, individualized care plans, respite care funding, safety services, and reducing disability in Alzheimer’s disease program (RDAD). The helpline offers 140 languages, the local providers maintain updated information on home care, adult day care, care coordination, assisted living, skilled nursing facilities, eldercare lawyers and transportation available in the community. Individual plans include assessment of needs, assistance with planning and problem solving, family meetings, home visits, and supportive listening. Respite funding is provided by the state of Ohio for caregivers to receive limited respite care if they qualify.

If qualified, a person will receive 4 hours of in home care per week, 2 half days of adult day care per week or one full day of adult day care per week. Safety services include medic alert and safe return, which is a nationwide identification, support and enrollment program that provides assistance when someone with Alzheimer’s or related dementia wanders and becomes lost. Assistance is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If an enrollee is missing, one phone call immediately activates a community support network to help reunite the lost person with his or her caregiver. The comfort zone is a new web-based GPS location management service that can help families stay active. They use the internet and a device to track the location of a person with Alzheimer’s.

Ohio missing adult alert was passed by Ohio because there was a big response to growing numbers of missing adults with memory impairment. It went to effect June 20, 2008. This alert is similar to Amber Alert in that emergency personnel across the state will be notified through this system in the event that an adult with a mental impairment has gone missing. RDAD is offered to families interested in improving function of the person with dementia and learning how to better handle behaviors and other issues related to Alzheimer’s.

To help with funding a fundraiser is held every year called the Walk to End Alzheimer’s. This fundraiser raises the awareness and funds for Alzheimer’s care, support and research. Since 1989, the Walk has raised more than $300 million for the cause and the participants are involved in efforts year-round to help defeat this devastating disease.

I felt she was worth interviewing because she gives a lot to help with the elderly. This is something that can benefit a lot of people because she helps with everything that deals with the elderly. She is very devoted to her work of 20 years and she is a very family oriented woman. She showed me how much love she still had for her husband, deceased for 2 years, and
how she instills so many family values to her family and her staff. She is a great woman who is greatly appreciated.
Oral History Interview
Name of the Project: Fighting for Memories: An Oral History Interview with Judy Turner
Name of the project director: Marjorie McLellan, Department of Urban Affairs and Geography, Wright State University
Archives or repository

Interviewee/narrator name: Judy Turner

Interviewer name: Ashley Whitaker
Others present
Place: Miami Valley: 3797 Summit Glen Drive, Suite G100, Dayton, OH 45449 (Office room)

Date: March 2, 2011
Length of recording: 51:28s
Original format: Flip Camera with built in SD card

Notes: Once I pulled into the driveway of the Alzheimer’s Association I had to walk to the back of the building to get in. There was a big gate in front of the building that was built for the residents there so they could safely go outside. I had to take the elevator because the floor was upstairs. Walking down some hallways I saw the receptionist who lets Judy know I’m there. She comes to get me from the waiting room and leads me through more rooms to get to her office. Her office is messy and scattered about but she informed me it was because she was getting ready to retire this year and she was clearing her stuff out. She sat down at her desk and I sat facing her. She had a computer behind her which flashed pictures of her family as well as a cabinet next to me that had family photos hanging up. At the end of the interview she showed me a picture of her and her husband at the Top 10 awards ceremony. He had just got out of physical rehab and was very sick and she wanted me to see how wonderful, proud, and supportive he was of her. I did not receive any information or material from her personally. The issue I had with the Flip camera recorder was that it went dead after 51 minutes and I had to use my cell phone for the last 11 minutes but it did a really bad audio of the interview and was therefore not usable.

Key words:
United Cerebral Palsy and the Hearing and Speech Center
Junior League of Dayton
Hospice
Husband’s sister
Dad
Saint Elizabeth’s Hospital
Grandfather
Willie Walker
Sid
ALS Association
Children
Dementia
Husband
Sister
Mother
Walk to End Alzheimer's
CAANE
United Health and Rehabilitation
Teen Connection
YWCA
George Foster Home
Memory Walk

Indexed by: Ashley Whitaker

Index

0:00:00-0:17 Introduction to the recording.
Information listed above.

0:00:17-09:53 Childhood
Talks about how she started with volunteering with her sister because of her mother.
Taught school for several years. Moved to Toledo with kids and husband. Husband
told her to make her own life. Published a nursing home guide. When children got
older she decided to go back to work not with teaching but at the YWCA. Served with
a committee that helps abused elderly.

keywords:
United Cerebral Palsy
Speech and Hearing Center
Hospice
George Foster Home
YWCA

0:09:53-17:02 Family background
Talks about how parents got sick and she had to help them. She was born in
Middletown but lived in Toledo. Helps to stop abuse of elderly with CAANE. Explains
who is all involved with CAANE.

keywords:
CAANE

0:17:-02-44:25 Volunteer work
Biggest fundraiser they have is the Memory Walk. Her daughter’s high school friend had ALS and died and so did Turner’s husband. She discusses challenges with a nonprofit organization. Explains how she felt with working with people with diseases.

Keywords:
Memory Walk
Junior League
Willie Walker

0:44:25-51:28 What it means to be an Alzheimer’s Association worker
There are different types of Dementia. Explains how doctor’s used to be. Believes people have the right to know what is wrong with them.
Notes: Once I pulled into the driveway of the Alzheimer’s Association I had to walk to the back of the building to get in. There was a big gate in front of the building that was built for the residents there so they could safely go outside. I had to take the elevator because the floor was upstairs. Walking down some hallways I saw the receptionist who lets Judy know I’m there. She comes to get me from the waiting room and leads me through more rooms to get to her office. Her office is messy and scattered about but she informed me it was because she was getting ready to retire this year and she was clearing her stuff out. She sat down at her desk and I sat facing her. She had a computer behind her which flashed pictures of her family as well as a cabinet next to me that had family photos hanging up. At the end of the interview she showed me a picture of her and her husband at the Top 10 awards ceremony. He had just got out of physical rehab and was very sick and she wanted me to see how wonderful, proud, and supportive he was of her. I did not receive any information or material from her personally. The issue I had with the Flip camera recorder was that it went dead after 51 minutes and I had to use my cell phone for the last 11 minutes but it did a really bad audio of the interview and was therefore not usable.

Transcribed by: Ashley Whitaker

Interview transcript

Whitaker: Today is March 2, 2011. I the interviewer, Ashley Whitaker, am interviewing Judy Turner, in her office at the Alzheimer’s Association. Okay, for my first question today um, with dealing with your Alzheimer’s Association, how did you get involved with community issues or community service?

Turner: You want only through the Alzheimer’s Association or earlier?

Whitaker: Up to this point, mm hmm, from the beginning.

Turner: Okay, well actually it started many years ago when I was a child.

Whitaker: Mm hmm.
Turner: My mother did a lot of volunteer work in the community, and um, she had my sister and me involved in a very early age. We began by-my mother was very um, involved with at that point it was United Cerebral Palsy and the Hearing and Speech Center, and so when we were junior high age we became kind of camp counselors at a camp for children and young adults who were suffering from Cerebral Palsy. Okay, then I went on, grew up, went to school, taught school for several years, um, had my children, moved to Toledo where life was pretty boring for me (laughs). I- I've always been involved in things and I really wasn't so, when I came back my precious husband said, "don't wait", he traveled, and he said, "don't wait for me to come home on Friday nights, make your own life", so I did, and I got very involved in the community at that point as a community volunteer through the Junior League of Dayton, and my interest there was always the community. I was involved in the setup of a program we did for Hospice, I was involved in the setup of a program we did for the George Foster Home, I was involved in a project at the YWCA, I was also involved in- in what was a very unusual project at that time um, which was about-we published a nursing home guide and we visited a lot of nursing homes in the area and at that point they really weren't the quality that they are today, so it was kind of an eye opening experience. As my children got older and my youngest was in sixth grade, I decided it was time to go back to work, and I really knew that I didn't really want to go back to teaching. I had taught high school and junior high and um, I wanted something different, so I went to what I knew. I applied for a position at the YWCA of Dayton, and I started a program there, which was called Teen Connection, and it was basically dealing and trying to help pregnant and parenting teens and we worked with a vast array of agencies in the area. It was a coalition and it was a wonderful experience, and then after that, I was promoted to Director of all their programs at the Y, then I became Operator-I-I was kind of getting my roots and trying to get involved in different things, I knew I wanted eventually to be an Executive Director somewhere, so I became Operations Director, I did communications, I really got my feet wet in a little bit of everything, and then I was ready to move on. There wasn't a position for an Executive director at the Y, so I kind of had feelers out, was was starting to look. I was told about this one by a friend who was a member of the board and I remember thinking to myself, "uh, do you really want to go sit and be depressed every day?" I thought, "Well I'll follow it through." Um, it's been the most rewarding and challenging thing I have ever done, obviously I've been here 20 years, I love 99% of what I've done here. When I came here I knew nothing about Alzheimer's, I knew management. I didn't: I barely knew what Alzheimer's was. Within 2 years, both my parents had dementing illnesses, so it's almost like I've always had this feeling that I was meant to be here. Um, it's been challenging, rewarding, wonderful, sad, you know I mean, I've met-I've never met so many wonderful people in all my life. Let alone the staff, but when you talk about families who are dealing with this devastating disease, such wonderful, strong, courageous people, loving people. It has been truly a labor of love the last 20 years.

Whitaker: With the um, hearing and speech and the cerebral palsy with your mother um, what roles did she play there?

Turner: My mother was on the board and she was also very active they-and I believe they: it's now um, United Health and Rehabilitation is what that agency became and one of the highlights of the things she did and she also got us involved in that when we got older um, was the telethon.
Whitaker: Mm hmm.
Turner: We worked on the telethon also that they do every year which was fun.
Whitaker: And you said your husband traveled um, what was his job?
Turner: My husband was a salesman.
Whitaker: Was he into any volunteer or anything like that: any volunteering?
Turner: He was always my staunches, and I’ll try very hard not to get emotional, I lost my husband (teary eye).
Whitaker: I’m sorry.
Turner: Um, he was my staunches supporter. Whatever I did he was right there schlepping along with me (laughs) and backing me up, you know, um, so he yes he spent a lot of time (laughs) doing volunteer work through the years.
Whitaker: (laughs). Your program um, that you were with, um, that you helped to start with Hospice, what did that—what did that do?
Turner: In those days there was no inpatient unit at Hospice. It was in the very early days of Hospice, when it was—was brand new. We just really helped to get it going and helped them get materials and additional staff and helped them grow. I remember well working on that in my living room.
Whitaker: (laughs).
Turner: I’ve always been very proud of that organization.
Whitaker: How long did you help with that?
Turner: Um, basically within um, most of the projects that we did through the junior league were usually maybe a 2 year project. We tried to do a vast array of projects that the community needed.
Whitaker: And what about the program for the George Foster?
Turner: The George Foster Home we tutored. We would go out to the home um, every week and tutor the young men who were living there.
Whitaker: And for the YWCA, what was your role there at the beginning?
Turner: Um, Teen Connection coordinator, oh and the battered: that was the battered women. That was cleaning up the shelter and helping: helping to make the good shelter a nicer place for battered women and their children, helping to stock it, helping to make it a nice facility. You’re a good listener.
Whitaker: Thank you. And then for my next question, how has your involvement in community life changed um, throughout your life?
Turner: Has it changed throughout my life?
Whitaker: Mm hmm.
Turner: Um, yes definitely changed. Number 1, it was for so many years, as a community volunteer, then as a staff person at the different organizations, your volunteer activities for the most part, mine anyway, with limited time needed to be more geared to my real world job. For: for instance I served on the board of community health charities of Ohio, which is the federal governments um, United Way Program, it’s a: its donor work place. I ended up serving as: as chair of their board. I served on various committees that deal with the elderly. I’ve worked a lot to: like on the human service levy, worked on that in the beginning. When a couple years ago we went to get specific funding for the elderly added to that. I now serve on a committee through the human service levy that helps to select programs for levy funding. I also serve on a
task force that deals with what is a serious problem that a lot of people don’t really think about is abuse of the elderly.

Whitaker: So do you feel that this has overtime has made you more stronger, more passionate about your job?

Turner: Oh absolutely. I think to begin with too, I mean when I as I told you, when I knew nothing about the disease and when I saw my own parents affected and became a care giver, not a full time care giver, but a care giver for my parents, it helped me really understand what the families that we work with deal with, from: and it: it made me better at my job, unfortunately.

Whitaker: Did your mother ever express to you why she decided to get into the hearing and speech and the cerebral palsy?

Turner: Don’t know that there was: she, like myself, was a very active volunteer with the junior league and it probably came up, you know, as a project, and I think she knew a couple people on the board, and it was something that she: we did not have any direct contact in our family with someone with cerebral palsy, or someone who had a hearing problem, but again, like me, something about it appealed to her and she ended up getting very, very involved, and that was one of the many things she did but it was her prime thing.

Whitaker: With your trips to different nursing homes, when you established the nursing home guide, what involved that, what was-what was put into that guide?

Turner: We had a template that we dealt with that we went on site, there were teams: different teams, I was actually the chair of that project, and there were different teams that went to different facilities, and you know, we had a template that we would rate what we saw, what we thought, different things like that, then we put together a guide that was available to the public, and (laughs) that was: that was an interesting experience and a little aside to that, I: I learned a valuable lesson with that because we-we saw: you gotta remember that that was back in the 80s basically. Um, we saw some nice things but we saw some really bad things and you: it wasn’t our job, I mean, you don’t go out there and say, “oh, well xyz facility on-on Main Street was just God awful and terrible.” You tried more to say, by not saying, you have to be careful, and I was: I remember being interviewed on a television show, live, and the reporter looking at me going, “tell us-tell us about the awful things”, you know, (laughs) and I sat there and smiled, “well you know for the most part”, (laughs) so you just learn. That: that was a good experience and always keeping a straight face and being (inaudible) I guess, would be the best way to put it (laughs). I’ll never: I’ve never forgotten that though never ever, ever. Cuz I could’ve really blown it big time (laughs).

Whitaker: If you said the wrong thing (laughs).

Turner: Mm hmm.

Whitaker: And then you say since you didn’t know anything about the Alzheimer’s Associations when you came here um, do you think you would’ve came this way if you’re- if your friend never really moved you this way, like did you ever: did you ever have any type of wanting to work with the elderly at all?

Turner: other than I had in-in a, you know, broad um: umbrella since work with a lot of different population since was I driven to work with the elderly, no, you know other than the fact that I had aging parents at the time, not they weren’t- they weren’t really elderly they were probably at that point I believe they were in their early 70s, um, but no, I-I- my interests were
very broad, obviously you know as I said working with teens, with people at the end of life, with Hospice, I just liked being in the community. I loved working-helping people in the community.

Whitaker: Are you from the community?
Turner: Yes.

Whitaker: Okay, born and raised Daytonian.
Turner: (laughs). Yup, well actually I was born in Middletown, but we don’t count that.

Whitaker: (laughs).

Turner: I lived by far the bulk of my life, except for 3 years, as I said we moved away, my husband’s job took us to Toledo and I always chuckle at that cuz I always said I’d never leave unless it was somewhere exciting.

Whitaker: (laughs).

Turner: You learn to eat your words as you get older (laughs).

Whitaker: (laughs). And with the abuse um, of the elderly, you’ve actually seen that from where you used to work?

Turner: Oh sure.

Whitaker: Um, have you taken any type of um, aide or guidance in trying to stop it or putting the word out there or anything like that?

Turner: Yes, that’s the this task force that I’m involved in is called CAANE, Citizens Against Abuse and Exploitation of the Elderly, and it’s a- it’s a great group, it’s maybe about a year old, and it involves people in all different areas that work with the elderly, it’s got law enforcement, it’s got um, adult protection services, we’ve got credit unions, um, we have nursing homes, we have um, legal aid, we have attorneys; its-it’s just a group it’s really banded together to try to get the word out that abuse of the elderly is not just physical abuse or emotional abuse, but you think of the scams that happen to people, particularly the el-elderly, their very, very vulnerable, very vulnerable.

Whitaker: And how long has this campaign been organized?

Turner: About a year, a little over a year.

Whitaker: Were you the primary founder?

Turner: No, no, but I feel very honored to be a part of the group.

Whitaker: What are some of the obstacles, frustrations, or challenges that you’ve faced in your community work?

Turner: Um, I would say one of the obstacles would be, again my own self when your employed full time, you don’t have a lot of time, to give you know extra to the community. It’s a challenge um, also dollars are always a challenge, in any thing you do whether it’s volunteer, whether it’s for pay um, but people having enough dollars to have their programs and be able to reach out and help people. It’s an interesting question, I’ll think about that a little bit more.

Whitaker: Okay, we can always come back to that one. Um, as far as since you said that sometimes you have problems with funding, do you have any fundraisers that you do to help you?

Turner: Yes, our biggest fundraiser here um, this would be actually the 21st year for it. We do what was previously called, the Memory Walk, and it is changing now it’s going to because a lot of information showed that what does the Memory Walk tell you, you don’t really know what it’s for.
Whitaker: Mm hmm.

Turner: So our walk is now going to be called, a Walk to End Alzheimer’s, and it is by far the biggest fundraiser. Last year we raised $275, thousand dollars (laughs). Big whoop!

Whitaker: (laughs). Maybe if it was you know, when it first started that would’ve been awesome. I was saying $275, okay.

Turner: (laughs).

Whitaker: And that’s every year?

Turner: Yes. Annual event, we do 6 of them at 5 different sites with obviously Montgomery County being the largest.

Whitaker: Mm hmm. And is it um, something that’s free to join or I meant do you just donate or do you pay to- to walk into it or anything?

Turner: We used to charge a registration fee, we don’t any longer, you know, but yes the purpose of it is to raise funds, so we hope people donate and most of them do.

Whitaker: And when you used to charge them the registration fee, did you see that there was more money involved with that since they kind of had to?

Turner: No actually, we kind of went in kicking and screaming when we were- we-what- we have a national organization and- and the model primarily became no registration, and we kind of always went, “oh my goodness what happens if it rains, wh- you know blah, blah, blah”, and I had to kind of eat crow. Um, we actually raised more money. Last year was the 1st year we actually did it without a registration fee, and it- we did raise more money, so they were right and I was wrong.

Whitaker: What has been the relationship between your work and your community involvement?

Turner: Well as I said a lot, you know at the- at- through my career here my volunteer work gave me the impetus to get involved in nonprofits, and then like now whatever you’re doing I think you tend to gravitate, you know, my kids are grown, I used to do a lot of school activities, I was the PTA president all those things, at that time when that was where the focus of my life was. You know, but now that the focus of my life is on elderly issues that’s pretty much the impetus for what I’m able to do. And what I’m looking at in retirement. I mean now without question when I’m looking at things I want to do as a volunteer my head and heart automatically go to the elderly, cuz that’s where my- my passion is.

Whitaker: So even after retirement you still want to volunteer?

Turner: Mm hmm.

Whitaker: Do your- does your- is your children involved in any volunteering?

Turner: My children like my husband (laughs) volunteered wherever I worked for many years. And yes, my daughter- my daughter particularly I have to tell you how proud, I’m proud of both my kids their fantastic, but I told you I lost my husband. Well I lost my husband to ALS, which is another horrible disease, (inaudible) disease, awful, awful, awful. Um, when he was ill my daughter ended up reconnecting with a high school friend. My daughters just turned- she’ll be 38 in July, found out that one of her high school friend’s husband, at age 37, had Lugaricks disease, so with a passion because of her dad and because of her friend Kris, we got very involved in the um, ALS Association and walked in their walk a year ago and my daughter organized a team and raised over $15,000 for the (Whitaker: Wow.) ALS Association (laughs), plus in her, again like as i said, like your career um, my daughter was a pharmaceutical rep and
one of the doc’s she called on had a child with cystic fibrosis, so Carrie got very involved when she lived in Cleveland, she just moved here, but in the cystic fibrosis walk to help her friend, and you know, business associate. And my son served as chair of different events for Rotary they- they’ve both had a volunteer background and yes they’ve both done a lot of volunteering. Both been active with their kids in school.

Whitaker: (laughs), kind of continuing on, keeping the family tradition.

Turner: Yup, Yup.

Whitaker: How have your motivations for engagement and service changed over time?

Turner: I think you- I’ve- I’ve always been passionate, but as time goes on and you- you are more aware the needs and you see the needs and you wanna do whatever you can you just become more and more passionate and more and more motivated and- and maybe a little smarter about going about how- how you do things through experience, you know getting things done motivated to get them done. (Phone ringing).Do not disturb button on, okay.

Whitaker: What lessons do you carry away from your involvement in community and community service especially now since your retiring (laugh)?

Turner: Wow, I know that here, and I know in many things I’ve been involved in we would not with the organization that we are without volunteers um, particularly in the nonprofit world where there’s not a lot of money um, thank heavens for volunteers, thank heavens for people who are willing to give of themselves to make sure things happen.

Whitaker: And you’ve- we’ve already touched on the involvement with your family and with you and your community work um, do you think this made a big im-may this- has made a big impact on them?

Turner: Oh absolutely, absolutely I think that they are um, they’ve both ended up being very involved in their communities as I said and with their children, they saw what I did as a volunteer- when I was a volunteer, I actually ended up having (laughs) a full time job for free I ended up as president of the junior league and it was a full time job for free, so I mean its-it’s just part of our family culture.

Whitaker: Is the junior league still going on now?

Turner: Yes, mm hmm.

Whitaker: Looking back, what do you see as some of your most satisfying contributions or accomplishment?

Turner: Satisfying, probably everything I’ve done in the community. Most satisfying um, you know, my family is my number 1 pride and joy, I couldn’t be more proud of them all um, I feel good about what I’ve done, I feel that I have contributed to try to make the little areas I’ve been involved in better. Do you all- does that always happen? No, but I’ve given it my all and really tried and I can’t imagine my life if I hadn’t- if I hadn’t been able to do that. Um, I’m not a person who sits still a lot, I like to be involved, I like things to do, and I like to have meaning. When I go to bed at night, I like to feel good about what’s happened.

Whitaker: Um, can you explain to me more about your involvement here, about what you do?

Turner: What do I do- I do here? Well I always tell everybody in the early days I did a little bit of everything, I did pretty much all of it because we had a very small staff, there was no money, we were in the red, so I had to do kind of every job that there was to a degree. Um, we only had 5 positions at that time. Now (laughs) we laugh and I say my—my um, associate director, who actually is gonna end up being my successor always says that’s why I get paid the big bucks
because life is a lot easier- really in many ways other than responsibility falls on me. If anything goes wrong or any problems it’s my issue, but I’m blessed to have a fantastic team, a fantastic team, who are the best at what they do than anybody could possibly ask for, and I’m so proud and so rewarded to see what’s happened you know, in the last 20 years since I’ve been here and I feel that I’ve have helped that happen. I’ve always said I could do any job here. Today mm mm\{no\}. You put me in the finance department we’d have real problems (laughs)... (Inaudible) things have changed so in 20 years, they’ve changed!

Whitaker: (Laughs) starting out at the beginning, were you ever on the verge of closing, was it ever gonna?

Turner: Well there was one time I had to go the board chair I remember and saying to him, his name was Sid, I said, “Sid (laughs) moneys really”,- we had no reserves I mean we had nothing we had what we got in every week. I said, “Moneys really tight”, I said, “(laughs)... (Inaudible) I’m trying to meet payroll um, I can afford to pay everybody but myself (laughs) and I can’t afford to work for free”. So, did we have some issues? Yea, but you know it was always kind of like when times would get bad then something wonderful would happen. Like that week I remember we got a $5,000 check from a donor you know who had no idea of the issues of- of what was going on. So, um, would we have closed- I I would’ve probably up to a month ago said no, but when I see that the Dayton Urban Leagues had to close that breaks my heart. I worked very closely with the Urban League. Um, I can’t believe it I mean that that to me was always one of the strongest, so if it could happen to the Urban League it could happen to anybody would be about what I’d say (laughs).

Whitaker: And you said you had 5 positions then, do you know about how many positions you have now?

Turner: Yea, now we have a staff of 13.

Whitaker: Is that including volunteer positions?

Turner: No.

Whitaker: No.

Turner: Oh no, no, no, no. we have several hundred volunteers who do all sorts of things so we couldn’t do it all you know we serve 9 counties around here. We have support groups throughout those counties, we have trainings, we have programs, we have all sorts of things and without volunteers we couldn’t accomplish what we’ve accomplished.

Whitaker: Besides fundraising, are you supported by the government or the state or anything like that?

Turner: No, not really except that we do have a way of 1 grant um, the state of Ohio has a line item in the state budget and that’s to provide respite care and we choose to do that we have a family assistance staff, who are basically trained social workers, who work with families. We can provide a little bit of help couple times a week, but fin- often for our care givers that’s the only help they get. They- their 24/7 so if we can give them 8 hours a week of respite care that may be the only time they have to go to the grocery store or to do anything. Um, so that’s the only state funding- we- we have through the years like at one point, we were able to obtain a grant through the state which was fairly sizeable, and we provided training for nursing home staff that’s one of the things that we do. We think if we don’t train people who’s gonna do it for one thing, so we de- developed a training program, on persons (inaudible) care and delivered it at 12 sites through the state. Um, so other than periodic- like right now we have a grant through
the state but it's not - it's a grant. Grants don't last forever. You know, its-it's not an (inaudible) part of our- our budget.

**Whitaker:** How long before they closed did the Urban League stay open?

**Turner:** Oh when they announced it publicly, not very long. You know I think they- there was word for maybe not quite a year. Willie Walker um, was a phenomenal man, and Willie had been there for years and when he retired things just kind of never seemed to get in the groove, I mean they had a succession of Directors, they started losing some funding, and then they had a big gala that was- they were notorious for doing every year and they announced it wouldn’t be held that year and then shortly after that they closed their doors.

**Whitaker:** With so much help and with the- the experience and as long as they’ve been around do you- do you have any idea why they- they would have been able-had to close?

**Turner:** I- I think a lot of it probably you know, there are rumors of different things but I don’t by rumors that you necessarily here. A lot of the issues are funding I mean you know the economy, what’s happened with the economy, times have been tough for all of us um, and I’m sure that had a lot to do with it.

**Whitaker:** Before you joined the Urban League, were they-were they...?

**Turner:** Um didn’t belong to them I’m just...

**Whitaker:** Um, yea for your- your volunteering with them?

**Turner:** No, I didn’t volunteer with them.

**Whitaker:** Oh, mm hmm.

**Turner:** I- when I worked for the YWCA um, I told you we were part of a coalition of a lot of agencies in town and um, I headed up that coalition and that’s really how I got to know Willie Walker from the Urban League because they had a lot of fine programs for teenagers. They had it for- in fact um, you met our receptionist, Ivory, when you came in. Ivory came to us originally from a program that the Urban League did- when I came here they had a program where they trained seniors and we had several different receptionists that we got through that program and what was really cool about it, was they would pay that person’s salary for a year and then you could opt to higher them or not higher them. We hired Ivory and she’s been with us good Lord a long time.

**Whitaker:** (Laughs).

**Turner:** So when they closed, I mean there were problems- programs for kids, adults with work retraining, seniors with jobs, um, a lot of people were hurt with that closing.

**Whitaker:** Will you still be involved with CAANE when you retire?

**Turner:** I don’t know. I hope to. I know that I’m going to maintain my involvement with the levy committee that I serve on because I think it’s critical. I mean I think it’s critical that people who understand different programs throughout the community um, are able to help select work that’s funded and if I’m not involved with CAANE my successor will be because the Alzheimer’s Association, that piece of it has to be part of it.

**Whitaker:** When you tutored at the George Foster Home um, were: were they just guys or were they a mixture of genders?

**Turner:** No, it was just guys. Guys who been through the juvenile court system and who for some reason or other their home situation was bad. Um, they had set up the George Foster Home as a place to live.

**Whitaker:** Do they still have that now?
Turner: Yes, it's out on Salem Avenue.
Whitaker: And what kind of tutoring did you have to do?
Turner: Um, I was an English reading teacher. So it was reading. I tried to work- help improve some of their skills- their reading skills. Nobody would have asked me to tutor them in math, trust me (laughs).
Whitaker: (laughs) and then for- since yours was the English reading did any- did any of the other people who were tutoring did they have to get any type of training or anything like that?
Turner: Oh yea, we had- if- most of the people who were interested in that kind of project were teachers by background so, that's basically what it was.
Whitaker: And is the Teen Connection still going on?
Turner: Yup, still a program, I was very proud of that and I literally started that with a telephone. (Laughs) I hate to say it on tape but I had a lot of learning to do about sexuality.
Whitaker: Mm hmm (laughs).
Turner: So again it was something l- I sometimes I would say, "oh Lord why me, why me?" (Laughs) but it was a real learning experience too.
Whitaker: (laughs) and do you ever keep in contact with any-any of the people that you've met during your volunteering?
Turner: Oh sure, absolutely. In fact many of the people that I've met through my volunteering it- its funny one thing with Alzheimer's unfortunately it's so far reaching. There are about 5 million people right now who have Alzheimer's disease and- and once you get involved you never go anywhere that someone doesn't tell you. My grandfather, my mother, my sister, my brother and um, many of the people that I've known in the community for many year through volunteering ended up serving on the board here because they had a connection and plus I knew their capabilities- ab-ability to help others.
Whitaker: And going back to your childhood um, what were your experiences growing up with your volunteering?
Turner: What were my experiences? (Laughs) l- my mother taking us to camp variety was probably one of the best things she could've done for us because we led a pretty sheltered little life and really I would say were not aware of a lot of hardships that people endured and working with the young adults and the teenagers who had life so tough um, couldn't help but to cause you to appreciate who you were and what you had and that life isn't always easy. But these um, but these- I'll never forget these- these people- these youth and young adults the vim and vigor the- they- one of the big highlights at that time was they got to take a trip to New York, they organized and I mean they- these were kids that were pretty severely affected by Cerebral Palsy, and a group of them was laughing hysterical because on the plane or something, someone had thought one of them was drunk. You know, because of their- their motions from Cerebral and they loved that, they loved to tell that story. They had the best sense of humors, the best desire to live, the- you know, wonderful families, they- they were- it was a wonderful experience, wonderful experience and they just got the biggest kick out of that, that someone thought they were drunk.
Whitaker: (laughs) and then also with your childhood um, can you tell me about the experiences of your family the- the stuff that they had went through, with your parents and um, also your other sibling?
Turner: What do you mean by the experiences?
Whitaker: Um, the different experiences that they have dealt with with their volunteering or um, trying to get you to volunteer um, anything like that, that they tried to instill in you the value, or anything that they've seen to make them want to put it into their kids.

Turner: Yea, just primarily my mother who that had been her- her life in those days to (inaudible) my mother didn't work you know, oh heaven to Betsy, no, no, no. (inaudible) when my sister moved to Virginia, my mother told her that to meet people she should get involved in a bridge group um, but, so she didn't work outside the home you know, so I think- and my mother was a very vital, strong woman who loved to give back and loved to be interested in and um, so she's the one who- who got us involved plus we came I- I'm blessed to say I had I think two of the most wonderful parents in the world. They were always there, always kind, always supportive. My dad was a doctor. He had a very busy life um, but we never felt sided. We never felt- was dad there for dinner? Most nights, no. Did he get to come to most of our events? Not often, but my sister and I knew no one loved us more and I think that's it, it was the background of love and caring that um, helped shape us into good women we both became, and my sister was very active- was a volunteer also through her career.

Whitaker: What has some things that she's done?

Turner: Uh, my sister was also involved in the Junior League and um, we were the first sister act actually. After- years after she (inaudible) even I- she would quickly tell you (laughs). Um, she also became president, which was kind of neat you know we called my mother the queen um, she was so proud- so proud of us, it meant a lot to her. Again my sister was very active in her children's lives um, just very- I'm- I'm tryna think, she- she was probably more of a volunteer, she was more of an administer volunteer, those are more her skills than mine, where I was more involved in the community.

Whitaker: Does she still do volunteer now?

Turner: Um, she does some yea, she lives in Washington, D.C., her kids are grown, she just retired and she still does volunteer at the (inaudible) school where she worked.

Whitaker: She's younger than you and she's- she's retired already?

Turner: Yes, (laughs) I've been very jealous.

Whitaker: (Laughs).

Turner: It's my turn.

Whitaker: and as you were growing up as a teenager did your mother still keep you in volunteering or did you start volunteering on your own?

Turner: Oh yea, yea, I did things like I remember well working with Saint Elizabeth's Hospital as a candy striper and again that was probably my first experience working with elderly because I think as kids you know, and volunteering um, sick (inaudible) people with diseases are kind of scary and I remember we worked in the laundry room (laughs) I remember my friend and I worked in the laundry room together and then- then one of the jobs we had was feeding patients and just my mother always felt that that was important, (inaudible) and encouraging so, I really can't remember a time when I didn't do you know, as I said school, church, community, didn't do something.

Whitaker: Now with you saying that it can be scary working with um, people that have these diseases, did it take you a while to learn how to be around them or try to?

Turner: I think the experiences gave me the ability to do it to realize their just like anybody else you know, but again I- as I said I learned that at a fairly young age because mother got us so
involved so early, so that coming here when I say I didn’t know a thing about Alzheimer’s I- I- I think I’ve known one person with it and that was a friend of my parents that I knew but didn’t know well. Was I scared of it? No, you know, as an adult it’s life. It’s- you see lots of sadness, lots of tragedy um, and I think as your older you try to make things better whenever you can.

Whitaker: And also um, can you tell me about your relationship to your extended family?

Turner: Oh yea, I’ve got a wonderful extended family. Um, as I said my sister- my sister has three kids, my husband had I sister um, she lives in California, she has three beautiful daughters. Um, she and I are still very close. My dad was 1 of 4, so he has- I still have um, aunts and uncles and cousins and all though were scattered all throughout the country we all have maintained relationships. Families- families to me is what it’s all about and I- and that’s one of my big things here as a leader, I always tell staff that their family comes first no matter what, their family comes first.

Whitaker: And have you instilled that into your kids as well?

Turner: Oh yea, (laughs).

Whitaker: Are they- are they like that with their kids too?

Turner: Yes, they are.

Whitaker: (laughs).

Turner: My kids served wonderful parents, wonderful family people, they have great families um, I’m so proud of them, they’re so cute.

Whitaker: (laughs) and what did you teach when you taught school?

Turner: I taught civics, economics, and English and I tell my poor staff here that they’ve had to put up with (inaudible) for the last 20 years (laughs). I drive them nuts at times cuz I don’t want anything going out from our agency that isn’t grammatically correct. They laugh- they laugh with me (inaudible).

Whitaker: after a while they get- they’ll understand and they’ll know then they’ll have it done before you have to look at it (laughs) again.

Turner: that’s right.

Whitaker: They’ll (laughs) already have it finished.

Turner: you got it.

Whitaker: we’ll double check 10 times cuz we know she’s gonna double check it 15.

Turner: Yup, cuz they know that.

Whitaker: and is your family in laws are they- any of them into volunteering or was ever into volunteering at all?

Turner: Um, yea my husband’s sister was very, very involved in volunteering. Um, did a lot of volunteering for one thing in her church. She now has a dementing illness which is sad.

Whitaker: when you were a child when you first started getting into volunteering with your mother, did you know anyone who had Cerebral Palsy or any other types of disease or anything like that?

Turner: No.

Whitaker: so you were just brand new to it and?

Turner: You know, thinking back onto my mother, what I had forgotten, was maybe part of her interest in the beginning was she had a childhood- had actually 2 friends with Cerebral Palsy and maybe as an adult that probably prompted some of her interest in being involved in that organization. The 2 young girls that had grown up next door to her had Cerebral Palsy.
Whitaker: were your parents also from Dayton?
Turner: Middletown, Dayton, yes.
Whitaker: Okay, see the more questions the more memory comes back (laughs).
Turner: (laughs) it's kind of fun.
Whitaker: what are the most interesting or compelling programs or events that you've been involved with and why?
Turner: you name them. You mean through here or through everything?
Whitaker: (laughs) everything.
Turner: I have no negative feelings about anything I've done. I think absolutely everything I've done, I felt like to some degree it made things better. Um, again as I said obviously I mean, through- when I first got involved in volunteer work it was the- I probably should've been a social worker, instead of teacher, it's probably really, when I look back, I probably should've been a social worker because I really liked to make things better in the long run and there's not a program I've been involved in that hasn't had lots of rewards and you know I just- I do have a vast experience cuz I've done so many, but having been here 20 years obviously I would say the overriding um, one that's most rewarding is the work we've done for people living with Alzheimer's and so much of that has changed. Again when I started 20 years ago and I- you would've said, "well what do you do?" I would've said to you, "we work with families of people who have Alzheimer's". We work with professionals, we didn't do anything with people living with the disease you know, I mean in fact, we would say, "families, oh no don't bring them to the program. You know, it might- it would bother other people, it might bother them and the"- a lot of that's changed because in the last 5,6,7 years they've become a lot better at diagnosing Alzheimer's. So, people are finding out earlier while they still have cognition left, that they have Alzheimer's. The theory again used to be like mother. When my mother was diagnosed my dad wouldn't let us tell her. He didn't- he kept saying to me, "I don't wanna hurt her, I don't wanna hurt her." (Inaudible) my dad was a doctor remember. I said, "Dad it's nothing invasive". "No that's not what I mean," and finally it dawned on me he didn't want her to be told she had Alzheimer's disease. Where today that theory is very different, and- and thank heavens it is. What if I said you, "Ashley you have cancer", what would you say to me? What would you ask? I just said, "Okay Ashley you have cancer what would you want to know?"
Whitaker: How? Why?
Turner: Or how about what kind?
Whitaker: Yea, and how long?
Turner: Yea, people would go to a doctor and again the theory was, don't tell them what's wrong with them, let them think their crazy that's okay. You know, so they would use vague a terms like well you have some memory issues, that's what we told my mother or um, you have dementia. Dementia is really an overriding term that literally means loss of mind, so a lot of doc's will say, "well Ashley you have Dementia". So you have to explain to them that that's just a group of symptoms, it's like cancer, it's a group of symptoms, but it doesn't say you have breast cancer. So that has changed so much, I mean, people have the right to know and they also have the right if they're so capable of doing it of helping to plan for their future and knowing what the future- and appreciating their time they have with their families and also knowing their not nuts their not crazy. Alzheimer's is a disease, it's not a normal part of aging, it's a disease.
Whitaker: So Dementia is a part it's just another- pretty much another symptom another term for?

Turner: It's an umbrella, it's literally an umbrella with seven different kinds- seventy different kinds of Dementia with Alzheimer's being the leading one. But a doc telling someone they - have yet conversely, there is still no 100% diagnose- diagnostic tool for Alzheimer's. A doc will give the answer, "you have Dementia, probably Alzheimer's". There are some differences in the different kinds of Dementia like the next leading cause of Dementia is um, called m-multi (inaudible), which is a result of high blood pressure. So people have the right to know.

**Glossary:** Any special terms, events, people referred to in the interview and/or transcript

- United Cerebral Palsy and the Hearing and Speech Center
- Junior League of Dayton
- Hospice
- Husband's sister
- Dad
- Saint Elizabeth's Hospital
- Grandfather
- Willie Walker
- Sid
- ALS Association
- Children
- Dementia
- Husband
- Sister
- Mother
- Walk to End Alzheimer's
- CAANE
- United Health and Rehabilitation
- Teen Connection
- YWCA
- George Foster Home
- Memory Walk