



Allan Schur – Research supporter (his wife has battled Alzheimer’s disease for 14 years)

- Allan and Sharon Schur have been married for 47 years.
- They had many plans to travel after Allan retired as a navigator in the U.S. Air Force stationed at Offutt. But, the couple had to move their travel plans up after Sharon, now 68, was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer’s disease at the age of 54 (anything age 65 or under is considered early onset).
- Before Sharon was diagnosed, Allan started noticing Sharon’s memory gaps but he chalked it up to stress when Sharon, then a nurse case manager, had a doubling of her patient caseload.
- She had problems remembering patient names. But, when their daughter and grandchildren came to stay with them temporarily, the daughter told her father something was wrong. She ultimately was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.
- The disease has altered their work and retirement plans. Allan is thankful that he could make the choice not to continue working so he could take care of Sharon at home.
- Eventually the physical and mental demand of caring for Sharon forced Allan to find her a 24-hour nursing home, where she has lived the past five years – bed and wheelchair bound.
- Sharon hasn’t said Allan’s name for more than five years. She has been in the last stage of the disease for the past six years. There is no prognosis of how long someone with Alzheimer’s can live.
- There are no treatments, cures or prevention for Alzheimer’s disease. Only medications that can mask the symptoms but not stop the progression of the disease. Sharon and Allan have done a lot of public speaking in the past about Alzheimer’s disease and early onset Alzheimer’s disease and have participated in research studies.
- Allan continues to take any opportunity he can to educate the public on what he calls “a devastating disease.”

Norah Kurz – Research subject

- Age 13 (turns 14 next month)
- 8th grader at Beadle Middle School in the Millard Public Schools
- She has been participating in a brain development study at UNMC since she was 9 years old. Each year, she gets a brain scan at UNMC and is given some cognitive tests.
- The brain is comprised of many “networks” (distinct brain regions that talk to each other). This study seeks to understand how these brain networks develop in healthy children, and how such development is related to increases in cognitive and emotional functioning as we get older.
- Norah is one of 225 children participating in the study. Each research subject is monitored between the ages of 9 and 12. If more funding is received, it’s likely the study will be extended through age 17.
- All the research subjects receive a photo and a 3D model of their real brain.
- Norah has enjoyed being in the study and learning about the brain.
- She is hoping to pursue a health care career in physical therapy.