

# 2016 1st Quarter Sponsorship

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We are honored to share the story of PFS' Client, Mark Hamrick of Aurora, IL.

My wife Sharon first began exhibiting signs that something was not quite right in 2000. She occasionally slurred a word or two and commented that her legs didn't feel right. After trips to various doctors and numerous tests that ruled out most common causes, we ended up at Northwestern Hospital in Chicago where we received confirmation of the preliminary diagnosis. Sharon had amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.



The Hamrick Family in 2005

In a word ALS is devastating but for those who don't know how it devastates: ALS is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and the spinal cord. Motor neurons that travel from the brain to muscles die and voluntary muscle control is lost. As a result, people may lose the ability to speak, move, and breathe. ALS normally strikes people between the ages of 40 and 70. The fatality rate is 100%, typically three to five years after diagnosis.

Sharon's condition worsened over the following years. Driving was the first big loss, followed not long after by the inability to walk, dress, bathe and feed herself. Swallowing became a challenge. We bought a wheelchair lift equipped van and hired

full time help at home so I could continue to work and maintain some normalcy in our lives. We were blessed as Sharon didn't spend one day in the hospital. We continued to RV (during the first few years), do other road trips, eat out, and go to church. Sharon lived graciously until 2006 when she left our world from her favorite chair with our sons Rick and Alex and I holding her hands.



Rick and Alex walking for their mom in the Greater Chicago Chapter Walk

The ALS Association is one of many organizations supporting the fight against ALS. Their mission is “Leading the fight to treat and cure ALS through global research and nationwide advocacy while also empowering people with Lou Gehrig’s Disease and their families to live fuller lives by providing them with compassionate care and support.” Rick, Alex and I participate in the association’s Walk to Defeat ALS, one of several events used to raise awareness and funds. It is our small contribution to the effort to eliminate this horrible disease.

Please visit the [Walk to Defeat ALS Greater Chicago Chapter site](#) for more information.

\*The donation caps at \$2000/quarter

### [Make a Personal Donation to the Walk to Defeat ALS](#)

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