

Join Us! *Never Surrender Inc.*

Funding the Fight Against ALS

November 2025
NEVER SURRENDER INC
ALS NEWSLETTER



HOPE DRIVES LIFE

At Never Surrender Inc., we have one goal, and that is to help people live with ALS. Our organization was built when one of our family members, Kevin Kolquist, was diagnosed with ALS. Kevin always said, "hope drives life," and that is what we aim to do at Never Surrender.

We offer three VIP experiences where our fundraising participants combine their passion for fighting ALS with a passion for the great outdoors: Black Woods Blizzard Tour, Kolar Toyota ALS Fishing Tournament, and Tomassoni Tour - Cycle for ALS.

We will continue to push fundraising limits in hopes of ending this disease. We will *Never Surrender to ALS*.

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
HAVE FUN.
REGISTER TODAY.**



Black Woods Blizzard Tour
February 11-14, 2026



Kolar Toyota ALS Fishing Tournament
May 29 - 30, 2026

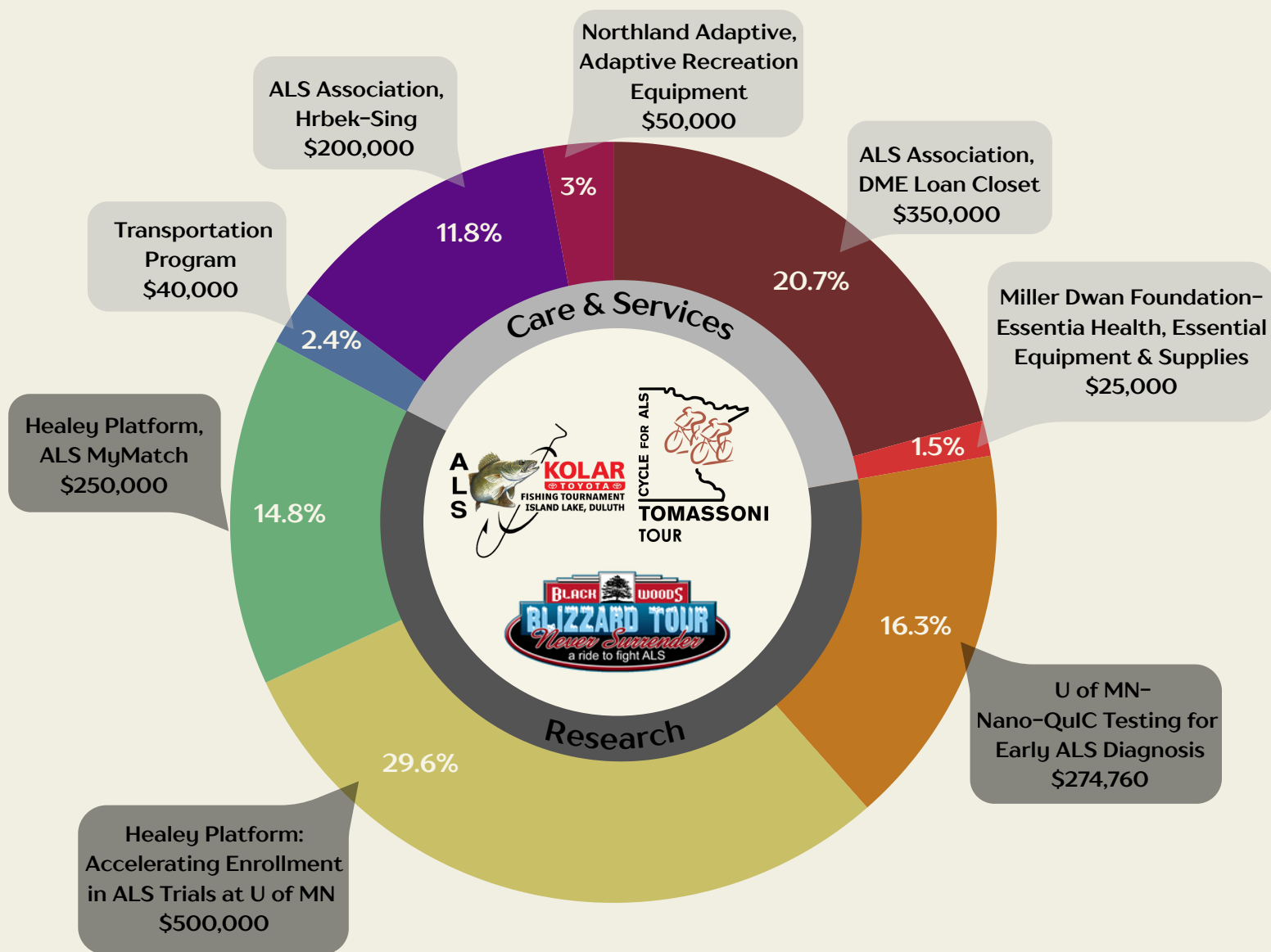


Tomassoni Tour
September 17-19 2026

Never Surrender Inc. Where YOUR work goes

Funding the Fight Against ALS

The Black Woods Blizzard Tour, Kolar Toyota ALS Fishing Tournament & Tomassoni Tour-Cycle for ALS allowed Never Surrender Inc to donate \$1,689,760 in 2025



Thank you for Funding the Fight Against ALS!
With your help, we will *Never Surrender* to ALS!



WHY I CHOOSE THE BLACK WOODS BLIZZARD TOUR

By: Matt Bordson, Event Chair

Every February, when the nights are long and the temps usually dip low, something amazing happens in northern Minnesota — hundreds of riders and volunteers come together for the Black Woods Blizzard Tour. On the surface, it looks like a snowmobile ride. But for me, and I think for everyone involved, it's so much more. It's a mission. It's a family.

The Blizzard Tour began in 1999, when four Duluth men — Randy Bannor, Larry Bannor, Dennis Nelson, and Greg Sorenson — rode around Lake Superior to raise awareness for ALS. A year later, the official ride launched with 38 riders. It rained, the snow disappeared, and organizers thought they'd have to cancel. But those 38 said, "No — we're coming whether we ride or not." That moment defined the spirit of this event and gave birth to the motto we live by today: Never Surrender.

While I am not a rider, every year, I see how this event brings people together — riders, families, sponsors, and volunteers — all rallying around one cause: to fight ALS and support those living with it. The money raised doesn't just fund research; it directly impacts people's lives by providing adaptive equipment, communication devices, and support services that help families navigate an incredibly tough journey.

When you see the determination of someone living with ALS or hear from a family who's been helped by Never Surrender Inc., it changes you. It reminds you that hope truly does drive life — and that each of us can play a part in keeping that hope alive.

I volunteer because I believe in what this event stands for. I believe in the riders who brave the trails no matter the conditions — even in years with little snow — and I believe in the Blizzard Tour family that refuses to quit.

That's why I keep coming back — to lend a hand, to share the miles, and to make sure no one facing ALS ever feels alone.

Never Surrender.

3rd Annual Tomassoni Tour – Cycle for ALS Breaks Fundraising Record



The wheels keep spinning, and so does the impact. The Tomassoni Tour – Cycle for ALS celebrated its third year on the scenic Mesabi Trail this and achieved its largest fundraising total yet: \$321,000 to support individuals and families battling ALS.

Despite a rainy forecast, spirits soared as 95 cyclists and 25 dedicated volunteers came together to ride for a cause that continues to grow stronger every year.

Among the cyclists was former Minnesota Twins great Terry Steinbach, who has returned each year since the event began.

“I am super pumped to be here for a third year,” said Steinbach. “This event is growing in popularity with lots of new cyclists. My wife, Mary, joins me, and we have a great time. I’m proud to be involved with Never Surrender Inc – who does an outstanding job with all their events.”

The Tomassoni Tour is one of three signature events hosted by Never Surrender Inc, alongside the Black Woods Blizzard Tour and the Kolar Toyota ALS Fishing Tournament. Collectively, these events have raised an astonishing \$2,277,872 in 2025 alone, fueling local ALS research and providing critical support such as durable medical equipment and communication devices to people living with the disease.

The weekend also celebrated outstanding contributions within the ALS community. At Saturday’s banquet:

- Ardy Nurmi-Wilberg received the Todd Lauer Award, honoring passion, perseverance, and dedication to ending ALS.
- Ski Hut was recognized with the B2 Bank – US Steel Sponsor Award for their unmatched commitment to the event’s mission.

“Honoring a Legacy”

The event is named after the late MN State Senator David Tomassoni, whose tireless advocacy secured \$25 million in funding for ALS research and care in Minnesota. His vision and passion continue to fuel the fight.

“David believed deeply in building a better future for families affected by ALS,” says a friend. “This ride is about carrying that legacy forward—mile by mile, rider by rider.”

The Tour isn’t slowing down. Planning is already underway for next year’s ride on September 17–19, 2026.

NEVER SURRENDER EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

How well do you know Sandy Judge?

Chances are, if you have been a part of any Never Surrender Inc event, you know Sandy Judge. For years, she was a one woman show – the only employee at NSI, leading an army of volunteers. Today, even as NSI has expanded to four employees, Sandy remains central to all the work that is done. Let's get to know a little bit more about Sandy.

Sandy has been helping to Fund the Fight Against ALS since 2007. She has always been the go-to person for everything related to the Black Woods Blizzard Tour, Kolar Toyota ALS Fishing Tournament, and Never Surrender-related business. Her selfless dedication to the organization is recognized by all.



Sandy is married to Terry, with two adult children, Kurt and Abby. She has one grandson Makai, who is two. Sandy and Terry recently celebrated their 36th anniversary. If Sandy isn't working at her computer on everything NSI, you can find her sitting at her campfire lakeside enjoying the quiet moments, on the back of Terry's Harley, reading a good book, or dropping a fishing line – in open water or on the ice.

When asked about why she does what she does, it is in large part due to the memory of her mother, Dolores Weber, whom she lost to ALS on April 2, 2001, and also due to the great work done by the Never Surrender Inc (NSI) family. Sandy has seen firsthand how NSI makes a tangible difference for people living with ALS.

Sandy also enjoys the people within the ALS community. She loves helping the participants, enjoys meeting with sponsors, and values what the volunteers and donors contribute. She wears many hats (event coordinator, marketing, social media, updating websites, creating fundraising tools – including our vast array of raffles); however, Sandy believes it doesn't matter the job: as long as you have good people, anything can be accomplished.

Sandy is preparing for retirement – although we don't know when that will be, she hopes it will occur sometime in 2026. As she looks ahead, first and foremost, she is excited to spend more time with family – including watching Makai grow! She looks forward to enjoying the winter months ice fishing and spreading holiday cheer throughout the month of December. With a love of fishing, walking, and taking motorcycle rides, Sandy hopes to take mini vacations around the State of Minnesota seeing all that it has to offer.

Volunteering at NSI may also be in her retirement plans. Sandy says she has “Enjoyed working with the best volunteers in the country for the past 20 years!” We certainly hope that Sandy will find time to join that army of volunteers in the future.

ALS Research Opportunities:

Never Surrender Expanded Access Program

Never Surrender Inc., through Massachusetts General Hospital, has generously provided funding to the University of Minnesota to support Expanded Access Programs (EAPs) in ALS. We have completed enrollment in one EAP under this program and are moving forward with two additional expanded access programs. For more information on the current EAP opportunities, please contact Julia Munoz (munoz156@umn.edu).

Multicenter ALS Imaging Study

The purpose of the study is to test new biomarkers of ALS using MRI scans. A biomarker is a measurable characteristic that can be used as an indicator of a particular disease state. Identifying biomarkers in ALS will help test new treatments and may help us make diagnoses earlier. Please visit the study website for eligibility information and to contact a research coordinator to enroll: <https://studyfinder.umn.edu/studies/31594>

Biorepository to Support ALS Research in Minnesota

The Minnesota ALS Biorepository at the University of Minnesota is a state-sponsored effort to provide critically needed samples of biological specimens to advance ALS research. The Biorepository collects blood and other biological specimens from people living with ALS, healthy individuals without ALS, and people with some other neurological diseases. In addition, the biorepository coordinates donation of brain and spinal cord specimens obtained after death from people who had ALS, to further ALS research. Please visit the study website for eligibility information and to contact a research coordinator to enroll: <https://studyfinder.umn.edu/studies/31786>

HEALEY ALS Platform Trial

The HEALEY ALS Platform Trial is a research trial that tests the safety and effectiveness of multiple treatments in ALS. A regimen is a specific course of treatment, each with a different study drug. We are doing this research to find out if different treatments have an effect on ALS. We also want to find out if these treatments are safe to take without causing too many side effects. Please visit the study website for eligibility information and to contact a research coordinator to enroll: <https://studyfinder.umn.edu/studies/22142>

Clinic-Based Multi-Site ALS Natural History & Biofluid Study

This is a clinic-based natural history study and registry. Once a participant enrolls in the study at the clinic all data collection will occur remotely. At this point in time, we are only able to enroll patients who are currently being served by the Natural History Consortium ALS Clinics. Biospecimen (e.g. blood) collection will be done at the UMN ALS Clinic in alignment with the participant's care schedule. More information can be found at this website: <https://alsnaturalhistory.umn.edu/>

Access for ALL in ALS

Funded by the NIH/NINDS, the Access for ALL in ALS Consortium (ALL ALS), is a community of two coordination centers and 35 research sites across the United States, conducting a combined longitudinal natural history study and biomarker collection study for ALS. This study will include both people currently living with ALS, and asymptomatic ALS gene carriers. Please visit the study website to review eligibility criteria and enroll in the study: <https://studyfinder.umn.edu/studies/32254>

Upcoming Educational Webinars **hosted by University of Minnesota:**

If you are interested in attending a webinar, please email Amanda Rueter at arueter@umn.edu with your name, email address, and webinar of interest (or state that you are interested in all of them!)

November 13th, 2025, 11:00am CST

Stem Cells and ALS

Presenter: Dr. Nathan Staff, Mayo Clinic

Rescheduled for Spring 2026 - firm date coming soon!

Tasty Meals at Any Texture

Presenter: Lisa Molnar and Amanda Jackson, Hennepin Healthcare

Community Events

Date Event Location Details

November 15, 2025

Designer Handbag Bingo For ALS The Hideaway

Babbitt, MN Full Throttle Fundraising is kicking things off with a designer handbag bingo. Bags from designers Coach, Kate Spade, and Michael Kors are included. Festivities kick off at 3 pm. Call or text Travis for a voucher to reserve your spot: 218-780-8944.

November 22, 2025

Designer Purse Bingo The Emporium

Hudson, WI Denise is becoming very successful with her purse bingos. Join in on the fun! Show up and have a blast in Hudson!

December 6, 2025

ALS Meat Raffle Jonesy's Local

Hudson, WI Who doesn't love a meat raffle? Head on over to Jonesy's and support a great cause!

January 10, 2026

ALS Meat Raffle Jonesy's Local

Hudson, WI Another opportunity to play the meat raffle if you were unable to attend previous ones.

January 24, 2026

Designer Purse Bingo The Emporium

Hudson, WI Denise is hosting another purse bingo - find out what this new craze is all about and show up at the Emporium!

When you hold a fundraising event to raise funds for a Never Surrender event, you can receive additional promotion by letting us know via email at

info@neversurrenderinc.org

Find us on social media



www.neversurrenderinc.org

