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## Supermarkets raise \$123G for Red Bank support group

### Donations to benefit those who have Lou Gehrig's disease

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MIDDLETOWN — Saker ShopRites employees and customers hit a home run for amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, when on Saturday a \$123,000 check was presented to the Joan Dancy and People With ALS Support Group.

The money represented customer contributions over the past month to Saker ShopRites Strike Out ALS fundraiser from its 26 stores throughout central New Jersey, which the company matched. Richard Saker, 55, of Millstone had been working with other people to establish a local ALS support group.

“There’s a tremendous need for help, and when we saw what our dear friend (Joan Dancy) went through, we became aware of others who also needed help,” said Saker, ShopRite’s president.

Dancy, a Middletown resident, died of ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, at age 54 last July. She and her fiancé, 60-year-old Terry Magovern of Rumson, utilized the services of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the ALS Association because there were no local groups. Dancy wanted Magovern to establish a local ALS support group. He did, becoming founder

Saker ShopRites Vice President of Operations Thomas Saker (from left), and Richard Saker, its president and CEO, present Patricia Schaeffer, a hospice nurse for Joan Dancy, who died from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis last year, and Terry Magovern, who was Dancy’s fiancé, with a check to help expand a local support group started by Magovern for people with the disease.

#### LOU GEHRIG’S DISEASE

ALS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly called Lou Gehrig’s disease, affects nerve cells in both the spinal cord and brain. The disease causes motor neurons to degenerate and eventually die, leading to muscle paralysis. ALS can strike seemingly healthy adults between 40 and 70 years old at any time, with limited options of treatment.

Lou Gehrig, a Hall of Fame New York Yankees baseball player born in 1903, brought attention to the disease when he had his career cut short in 1938, after 13 years with the team. Usually a .300 or better hitter, his hitting suffered for unknown reasons until doctors diagnosed him with ALS.

He retired from baseball in 1939. In his farewell speech, Gehrig said, “. . . I may have had a tough break, but I have an awful lot to live for.”

Gehrig died of ALS in 1941.

and president of Joan Dancy and People with ALS. The group works in collaboration with the ALS Association's Philadelphia chapter, helping patients and their families by providing monetary support and facilitating requests for respite care or medical equipment.

"We couldn't do this without Richard and (his wife) Laura Saker," Magovern said.

Patricia Schaeffer, 60, of Jackson, the group's nurse coordinator, said the funds would go toward adding to the times and places where the group meets; it currently meets on the first Tuesday of the month at Riverview Medical Center in Red Bank. She would like to see that go to twice a month, with the second meeting at Jersey Shore University Medical Center in Neptune.

"We'd also like to expand our home health aide program. It costs \$250,000 a year to care for an ALS patient," said Schaeffer, who was also Dancy's hospice nurse.

"It's nice to think we can take care of the world, but we can't. So we're going to give the best possible care of people from the local community," Magovern said.

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