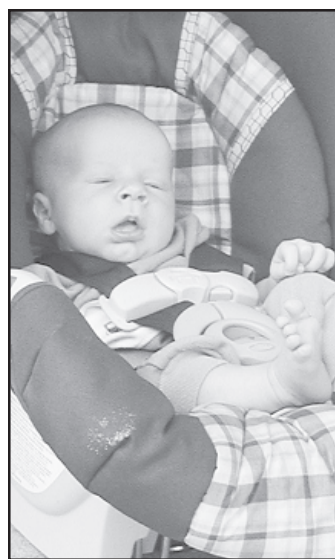




SURVIVORS' WALK — The survivor's walk in this year's Relay for Life celebration was held at the park on Saturday. The balloon arch, donated by Greg and Susie Walz, was impressive and those walking as the sun went down noticed an eerie appearance each time walkers went through the arch. Those carrying the banner are Harland Rogers, Norm Dorsch, Bonnie McQuillen and Jolie Jamison.



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TAKING A LAP — Sara Miller, Elaine Kite, Dr. Mary Beth Miller, Terry Miller and Marvin Miller walk together; RonanShay is the youngest person to attend the Relay; Skip and Robin Petersen auction off the gift baskets; Phyllis Roelfs sets up a luminaria; Kari Gilliland serves Lynn O'Leary at the barbecue.

Herald staff photos by Karen Krien

Weather forces participants to quit walking

Residents of Cheyenne County made a giant step towards a cure for cancer on Saturday when they participated in the eighth annual Relay for Life in St. Francis.

Nine teams and many other people came together during this year's relay to raise in excess of \$20,000. The final tally will be announced later, as money is still coming in.

Money raised during Relay for Life helps fund the American Cancer Society's research, education, advocacy and service programs. The Society is the largest nonprofit supporter of new cancer research and the largest voluntary health organization fighting cancer in the country.

"We appreciate all the support we received from each of the teams, as well as from our sponsors, the committee and the public," said Sherry Schultz, Relay Committee member.

The top fund-raising adult was Judy Vaughn; and Heidi Yonkey raised more money than any other youth. "Forever in Blue Jeans" and "The Bracelin Bunch" were Silver Fund-Raising Teams, which means they raised over \$3,000 per team.

"We are especially grateful to the many volunteers and their families for all of their hard work to make this event happen," Mrs. Schultz said.

Relay for Life is a family-oriented event where participants enjoy the camaraderie while also raising funds to support the activities of the American Cancer Society. Participants camped out and, when they were not taking their turn walking around Sawhill Park, they took part in fun activities. The relay also raises awareness about cancer by honoring cancer survivors.

The St. Francis Chamber of Commerce cooked hamburgers and hot dogs. Eagle Communications provided ice cream bars. The Shrine Candy Wagon served pop, bottled water, popcorn, cotton candy and snow cones. Proceeds from these activities were donated to the relay. Dale Pattons and family members had prepared breakfast burritos for a 6 a.m. breakfast.

The relay began at 7 p.m. with a welcome by Mrs. Schultz, the Pledge of Allegiance led by Girl Scouts, Bailey Merklin, Ally Schlepp and

Kylie Sherlock. The national anthem was sung by Gavin Smull, and a prayer was offered by Pastor Jeff Landers, Christian Church. Music was donated by Music by Dan, Dan Harris of Bird City.

The Survivor's Lap was the first lap of the relay, and more than 60 participated, with Harland Rogers, Norm Dorsch, Bonnie McQuillen and Jolie Jamison carrying the banner. The second lap was made by the survivors and their caregivers, followed by all the teams. Someone from each team was on the walk then, until the National Weather Service reported a large band of storms and lightning were headed toward St. Francis. The Society has a policy of not allowing walkers to be on the track if the possibility of lightning exists so the walk was stop about 10 p.m.

After the Survivor's lap, activities began in the band shell. First was the "Locks of Love" ceremony. Individuals who have at least 10 inches of hair to be cut, donate that hair for wigs for cancer survivors. Donors were Carol Redding, Rosemary Powell, Liz Semler, Kattie Schmid, Kimberly

Voeller, and Lester Bishop. Their hair was cut by Denise Andrist, Crystal Ludowese and Leisha Hilt. Others who had their hair cut earlier for donation were Courtney Echhoff, Journey Lee, Cristita Tygart, and Cara Hunt.

At 8 p.m., the basket auction was held. Auctioning was done by Skip and Betty Petersen and their daughter, Robin. Over 10 decorative and fun donated baskets were sold. Basket themes included sports, childrens, food, massage certificates and were donated to earn funds for the relay.

At the end of the auction, Mrs. Schultz introduced Jennifer Van Eaton, Community Management Development of the American Cancer Society from Colby. Mrs. Eaton was very instrumental in helping the local committee plan and execute this year's relay. She then introduced the local committee. The honored guest of the evening was Mrs. Weiter, regional vice president of Kansas for American Cancer Society, drove all the way out to St. Francis from Topeka to attend the relay, and told her own family story of why she is so

dedicated to Relay for Life. She was very complimentary of our local committee, facility, and community.

Immediately following her remarks, Jeneva Northrup, St. Francis, shared her survivor's story with the crowd assembled at the band shell. She is a 41-year survivor, and told a very interesting story about how long her diagnosis took, and the successful surviving of cancer. It was an inspiration to all, and gives hope to current cancer patients who sometimes wonder if they can survive, too.

The luminaria service began at 9 with Betty Petersen and Betty Loudon reading all the names of the people for whom luminarias had been purchased. They were both in honor of a survivor or in memory of a family member or friend who lost their fight against cancer. The luminarias were then lit, lining the park sidewalks, and the band shell for quite an awesome scene. The Marino family donated the use of their greenhouse carts for the committee to use in placing the luminarias all around the park. The local lumberyard and contractors donated the wood pieces to hold the pa-

per sacks down. This year, the committee used battery-operated candles in the sacks, and the glow was lovely. Many adults and children helped to place the sacks around the park.

The start/finish line was marked with a pin; the purple and white balloon arch was donated and installed by Walz Welding shop, Greg and Susie Walz. It was truly an inspiration to see.

Many fund-raising events were held prior to this year's relay, including committee workers staffing Pizza Hut for a night, teams selling hand-crafted items, a hamburger cookout, sales of daffodils and donuts and a Hawaiian Luau. And, who can forget the flocks of flamingos that mysteriously appeared in yards around town to brighten the days!

"Even though the relay was shortened by bad weather possibilities, the committee feels like it was a great success, and our community is to be congratulated for all their support and love," said Susie Walz, survivor chairman. "Don't forget our new date, Friday night, June 6, 2008. See you there."