

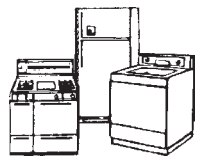
The Community Page



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A walk for life

Teams walk for fight against cancer

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Daily News
Teams of eight to 15 members will gather with tents and sleeping bags at 7 p.m. Friday, Aug. 15, at the Sherman County Fairgrounds to participate in the largest fund-raising walk in the nation.

The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life is an overnight event that brings together communities throughout the country to celebrate cancer survivors, remember loved ones and raise money for the fight against cancer.

Micki Scherling, a survivor from Goodland, said the event celebrates overcoming cancer. Scherling was diagnosed with breast cancer on May 15 last year.

In the past year, she went to a doctor in Dallas 12 times and had four surgeries, including a mastectomy. Scherling said she is now cancer-free. Research done even in the last five years has made breast cancer 100 percent treatable, she said, if the disease is caught early.

Scherling said early detection was a major factor in her recovery.

"It is very important for women to have mammograms," she said, "and to know their own bodies."

She said she didn't have to have chemotherapy or radiation because her cancer was found before it had spread to the lymph nodes. But the surgeries and the trips for treatment were overwhelming, she said.

"It's important to have a support system," she said.

Scherling said her family was a great support. She and her husband kept a journal, she said, and have enjoyed reviewing the things written in it and seeing how far she has come.

Scherling said the experience helped her faith to grow.

"You don't know what God can do," she said, "until you can't do anything yourself."

Teams participating in the relay seek sponsors before the event and sell luminaries, small lighted paper bags, to raise money for cancer research and education. The luminaries, representing people who were lost to cancer and survivors, are placed around the track.

Last year, 604 luminaries were sold for \$10 each, and \$11,935 was raised at the Sherman County event. This was double the amount raised the previous year, said event chair Michelle Shoff.



Teams of walkers participated in the annual Relay For Life event at the Sherman County Fairgrounds last August. The walkers raised money for the fight against cancer. Photos by Eric Yonkey/The Goodland Daily News

The walk kicks off with a survivors' lap, and Scherling said she is excited about joining that.

"It gives you goose bumps," she said, "as you didn't know all these people had cancer until you see them walking that lap."

The teams try to keep at least one member on the track at all times during the walk. The all-night walk symbolizes a cancer patient's struggle, beginning with the sun setting, paralleling the time a person is diagnosed with cancer.

The day gets darker, representing the cancer patient's state of mind as he or she feels his life is coming to an end. As the evening goes on, it gets colder and darker, as the emotions of the cancer patient do.

The time from 1-2 a.m. represent the time when the cancer patient starts treatment. The

patient becomes exhausted and sick and wants to give up. Participants in the relay feel the same way.

The time from 4-5 a.m. symbolizes the end of treatment for the cancer patient. He sees the light at the end of the tunnel and knows that life will go on. The morning light brings a new day of life and excitement for the cancer patient.

When participants leave the relay at 7 a.m., they can think of cancer patients leaving their last treatments.

Just as the participants are weak and tired, so are the patients.

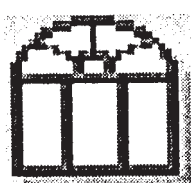
For information on becoming involved in the relay, call Shoff at (785) 899-3676. For information on cancer, call the American Cancer Society at (800) 227-2345.



Luminaries lined the track where Relay For Life participants walked last year. The lighted paper bags are monuments to people who were killed by cancer.



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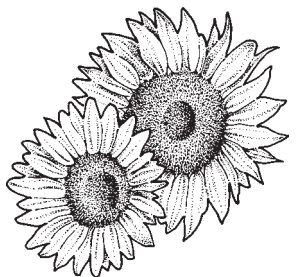
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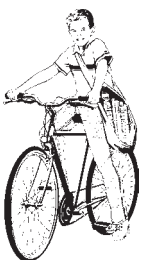


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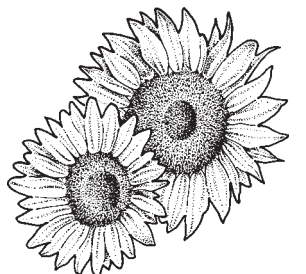


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