

Relay For Life ready to launch in Winter Park

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Guest Writer

In 1985, a surgeon from Tacoma, Wash., committed to run/walk around a track for 24 hours in order to increase awareness and raise money for the American Cancer Society. Decades later, this event occurs in more than 5,000 communities nationwide, involving more than 3.5 million people uniting to celebrate the lives of those who have battled cancer, to remember loved ones lost and to empower individuals and communities to fight back against this disease that takes too much from too many.

That tradition continues in our city as the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life Winter Park 2012 prepares to launch. All Winter Park community members and business leaders are invited to the Team Kick-Off Celebration on Wednesday, Nov. 30, at the Winter Park Community Center on New England Avenue. Visit us to learn how to create a team of participants and gather information about this year's event and goals.

Relay For Life Winter Park 2012 will be held May 18-19 at Showalter Field. Winter Park-based businesses, schools, organizations and individuals will form teams and fundraise throughout the year and at the



event itself. Teams always have at least one member walking on the track. Donations contribute to research, patient support and services, early detection and prevention programs for every type of cancer.

The 18-hour event is symbolic of the emotional state of a cancer patient undergoing treatment, where the light and darkness represent the physical effects.

Along with providing in-depth information and resources, the American Cancer Society has developed several programs designed to assist cancer patients on

their road to recovery. These include:

- "Look Good ... Feel Better," which teaches beauty techniques to female cancer patients who are in chemotherapy or radiation treatment.

- "Lifeline Transport," a program that provides multiple transportation resources to get cancer patients to and from their treatments.

- "R.O.C.K Camp (Reaching Out to Cancer Kids)," which offers children with cancer and their families a summer camp, educational weekend and college scholarship program.

Each year, about 98,000 Floridians are diagnosed with cancer. Money raised through Relay goes directly to help our community provide patients with these wonderful and free services.

An American Cancer Society board member summed up Relay's mission by saying, "Supporters make it possible, scientists make it happen and survivors make it personal."

I invite everyone from Winter Park to join in and make it possible as Relay For Life continues the battle against cancer.

Donna Santoro-Bowman is Senior Client Coordinator at Resource Consulting Group and the volunteer event chair for Relay For

Life Winter Park. Contact Donna at Relay-ForLifeOfWinterPark@gmail.com or 407-506-3267 for more information on starting a team, joining a committee or becoming an event sponsor.

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