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Relay For Life in Lamorinda

By Sophie Braccini



Tracee Eberhart and Ashley Miller in Moraga, introducing Relay For Life Photo Sophie Braccini

of Puget Sound in Tacoma, covering more than 83 miles. Throughout the night, friends paid \$25 to run or walk 30 minutes with him. He raised \$27,000 to fight cancer, which he donated to ACS. While he circled the track, he thought about how others could take part. He envisioned a 24-hour team relay event that could raise more money to fight cancer. Months later he pulled together a small committee to plan the first team relay event. In 1986, 19 teams took part in the first team relay event and raised \$33,000. In 2010, more than 5,100 communities nationwide held their own relay (each of the events are run by local volunteers), raising more than \$388 million.

Kelli Nahas, the event manager of the Lafayette Relay, is looking for volunteers and teams. Her event had a set back due to the original team moving to a different relay, but Nahas is trying to pull the event together and encourages Lafayette residents to contact her if they want to fund raise for ACS.

Eberhart also needs to find committee members in Lamorinda to support the Orinda event. "We expect about 10 teams, or 100 people, to attend," she says, "we will have speakers, local musicians and we'd love to get in touch with others who would like to support the event."

The Saint Mary's College Relay in October is opened to anyone with a campus affiliation. Moraga and Lafayette residents who are not students, parents, alumni, teachers, or staff of the university are encouraged to assemble a team for one of the other local events.

All the money raised goes to ACS. The non-profit was founded in 1913 by 15 doctors and business leaders in New York City. It is a nationwide, community-based voluntary health organization, which, according to its mission statement, is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing it, saving lives, and diminishing suffering, through research, education, advocacy, and service. ACS is rated by the Charity Navigator as a 3 out of 4 stars non-profit. 75% of its over \$1 billion revenue goes to programs directly related to its mission, such as funding for research, education, or free patient services.

To be a volunteer or team captain at one of the local relays contact:

Lafayette

Ashley Miller began a recent presentation by asking who in attendance had been impacted by cancer, or had supported someone who had; almost everyone raised their hands. The young American Cancer Society (ACS) Relay Manager came to Moraga to spread the news that ACS' signature fundraising event, "Relay For Life," is coming to Lamorinda. The first relay race/walk is set for August 6-7 in Lafayette at Springhill Elementary School, the second on August 27-28 in Orinda at Pine Grove Field, and the third is a Saint Mary's College Relay to be held on the campus October 7-8.

Relay For Life events have been held in the East Bay for years. The idea is to create teams of 10-15 people who camp out at a park that has a walking path, with the goal of keeping at least one team member on the path at all time throughout the 24-hour event. "A lot of teams bring a pop-up or tent, tables and chairs where they have informational material on a subject they choose," explains Eberhart, who has been a relay participant herself in support of both her parents, "often teams raise money prior to the event, but others choose to do it on site."

Teams are asked to research a specific cancer and come to the Relay with a related fight- back message. Different activities are held during the events, such as an in-memoriam luminary, a Survivor lap, and other games held to promote fun and connectedness. "It is big campout with lots of energy, emotion, fun and music," said Dawn Ramsay, who is a lead volunteer and team captain in Vacaville where the Relay has been going for 13 years.

In the mid-1980s Dr. Gordy Klatt, a Tacoma colorectal surgeon, decided to personally raise money for the fight against cancer by doing something he enjoyed—running marathons. In May 1985, Klatt spent 24 hours circling the track at Baker Stadium at the University

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