

VOICES OF THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Great Lakes Division, Inc.



Sharing Stories of Hope, Progress, and Answers Across Michigan and Indiana

v.2, 2006

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No matter who you are, we can help.
800.ACS.2345
www.cancer.org

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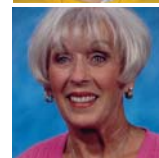


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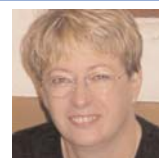
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community focus

Volunteers planning new Relay For Life events display teamwork and passion



For some communities, Relay For Life is a longstanding tradition and a familiar part of summer. For 27 others, this year will be their first experience with the



Society's 24 hour event that raises awareness and dollars to fight cancer, bringing the total number of Relay For Life events to 301 in the Great Lakes Division. Three

such communities are Greenwood, Carmel, and Brownsburg, Indiana. While starting a major event from the ground up may seem like an overwhelming challenge, community members organizing start-up Relays have a strong sense of teamwork and pride.

Some community members became Relay For Life volunteers by being approached by the Society, others came to the Society with or without Relay experience of their own. No matter how they come on board, volunteers are the heart and soul of any Relay. "It wouldn't be possible without them," says Andrea Mills, a community development director for the Society's Central Indiana Area Service Center.

One of Andrea's new volunteers is Dianna Brooks (*pictured top left*), who is serving as the sponsorship chair for the new Greenwood Relay in Johnson County. "I've had to do some educating because a lot of people in the area don't know what Relay is," she says. Dianna was touched

by cancer through her friends and her father, who is a three-time cancer survivor and has been involved with Relay. Her experience of starting a new event has been "very rewarding," she says. "When I get on a roll talking with someone about Relay, there's not enough time for me to get it all out."

In addition to her enthusiastic work on the committee, Dianna has felt a lot of support from Andrea. "She has just been awesome to work with and our Relay would not be as successful as it's going to be without her leadership," says Dianna.

Another new Relay in central Indiana will be the Carmel event in Hamilton County, led by Julie Criswell (*pictured lower left*). She has been on different Relay committees for the past six years and can't speak enough about the great work her committee has put forth to make their Relay possible.

"If anyone can come out to Relay, even just for an hour, you realize what all the time and money and research goes to—and that is to find a cure for cancer," she explains. "If you can be there...to meet one survivor or a family with cancer, then that will be with you the rest of your life; it will empower you to do something better."

Meanwhile, in Hendricks County, Lori Morrison is a volunteer preparing for the new Brownsburg event. She was involved with Relay in the past, but never on a planning committee, and is excited to see how much the community has embraced the idea of having their own Relay. "We're doing this together," says Lori. She is sharing her position on the committee with a more experienced volunteer, Deb

Kersteff, and has also met with volunteers from surrounding Relay events to get ideas and advice. Lori understands both the need for raising dollars and awareness for cancer, two of the things Relay helps to accomplish. "The only way to defeat [cancer] is to have better research so we can get better drugs, but also to educate people about things we do in our lives to cause it." Lori lost her husband, grandmother, and sixteen year old son to cancer. Her new Relay committee is dedicated to the cause. "They want to see cancer destroyed," she says.

Dianna, Julie, and Lori are excited to introduce Relay For Life into their communities. To visit these three events call the Central Indiana Area Service Center at 317-347-6670 for locations and details:

Brownsburg event, Hendricks County:
June 3, 10 AM—June 4, 10 AM
Carmel event, Hamilton County:
June 9, 10 AM—June 10, 10 AM
Greenwood event, Johnson County:
June 10, 10 AM—June 11, 10 AM

If you are thinking of helping to start a new Relay in your area, know that you are not alone. You can be part of a committee, work with a Society staff person, and visit established Relay committees from surrounding areas for advice. Many people who have been involved with Relay For Life say that it is one of the best experiences of their life. If you want to become a volunteer to plan a Relay For Life event in your area, call 1-800-ACS-2345.

• survivorship and patient services

Young cancer survivors are invited to our fun-filled, annual summer camp



The American Cancer Society Great Lakes Division supports kids who have had a personal experience with cancer, and their families, through our annual camp

program, Camp Catch-A-Rainbow. At this camp, specifically for children who are 7–15 years old, “everyone’s in the same boat,” says Greg Dufner, the volunteer director. Campers are not ‘the kid with cancer’; they are just like everyone else and ready to have a great week-long summer camp experience. Medical professionals are on staff and most treatments can be given to campers still battling the disease on site or in a nearby cancer center.

The camp is offered free of charge to children living in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan, due to financial support from Relay For Life, Cattle Baron’s Balls, and other American Cancer Society events. Because of the continuous funding and the dedicated work of camp staff and volunteers, campers are able to attend a fun and exciting camp that also holds up to highest standards. Camp Catch-A-Rainbow is accredited through the American Camp

Association and licensed in the state of Michigan.

The program has been in place since 1987, when 14 kids showed up for the first camp. Twenty years later, the program has grown to about 100 kids, and there is room for more.

Megan LaForge (*pictured above left*) of Williamston, Michigan, will be going to the program again this year for the sixth time. “I always love going to Camp Catch-A-Rainbow because it’s really fun,” she says. “It’s like any other camp except for the fact that you see people that are exactly like you.” Megan lost her kidney when she was three because of a tumor. She was re-diagnosed with cancer when she was five, but has been cancer-free for six and a half years.

She loves the variety of activities available, which includes canoeing, swimming, archery, a ropes course, rock climbing walls, arts and crafts, and more. “It’s really fun and you don’t really feel left out or different,” she explains.

Megan’s parents appreciate Camp Catch-A-Rainbow because they see how happy it makes her. “She sees the same people, same counselors, year after year, it’s amazing. Some people travel from as far as California to be

counselors. They do so much, it’s unreal.” says Tom LaForge, Megan’s dad.

The hardest part of letting Megan go to camp for the first time wasn’t worrying about her health, it was the same worries any parent goes through when they drop off their child to their first camp: saying goodbye. “She was just gone,” he says with a laugh as he remembers how comfortable she was. “There’s so much stuff for kids to do and so many positive things going on in their lives there. It’s a good opportunity for kids to grow and it gives them a chance to be independent a little bit.”

Camp Catch-A-Rainbow is held at a YMCA facility in south-central Michigan, near Jackson. This year, camp will be held from June 18–23. On June 18, children who are 4–6 years old are invited to come for Young Campers Day, a one day program. Camper families must complete a registration form, including a medical form to be completed by the camper’s physician. Forms can be obtained by calling 1-800-723-0360 or by going online at www.cancer.org/camprainbow. If transportation is needed, the American Cancer Society’s volunteer Road to Recovery program can step in to help.

Relay For Life celebrates and supports survivors in your community



Celebrating the lives of cancer survivors and offering them support is a key component of every Relay For Life event. All survivors, including people who have recently been diagnosed or

are in treatment, are invited to not only attend the Relay event, but also a survivorship activity before the event. At this activity, survivors have an opportunity to meet other survivors, encourage each other, and learn about Society resources.

JoEllen Tucker (*pictured left*) is a 32 year breast cancer survivor from Lawrenceburg, Indiana, who organizes a luncheon for the survivors of Dearborn County. She knows that the luncheon is a source of strength for survivors, where they can meet others who have been through similar situations.

“If they’re just new in their journey, they’re excited to see someone who has gone through what they’ve been through and they’ve made it,” says JoEllen. “There’s always someone there that has been where they have been, so if they need to draw strength then that’s a good place to go.”

At the event, survivors get goodie bags with items such as a business card that highlights Society support services, a Relay T-Shirt, and a survivorship medal. The survivors also learn about the many resources that the Society has for patients and survivors, including our 24/7 toll free number, 1-800-ACS-2345; our website, www.cancer.org; the Cancer Survivor’s Network, www.acscsn.org; and the Community Resources Database, a directory of resources for someone who is navigating through a cancer experience, which are available from the Society as well as state and community organizations. When it’s over, all of the attendees are invited to

People with personal cancer experiences help determine funding for Society research



The American Cancer Society is the largest source of non-federal funding for cancer research. It receives about 1,600 grant applications each year from scientists who are trying to make

significant differences in the cancer field. These applications are judged by 18–20 Peer Review Committees to decide which of the numerous grant applications will receive funding. Each committee is comprised of 5–20 scientists and 2 volunteers, called stakeholders. Including stakeholders in the peer review process sets the American Cancer Society apart from any institution that provides funding for cancer research grants.

Stakeholders are people who have a personal interest in fighting cancer because they are a survivor, a caregiver, or a family member of someone who battled the disease. These volunteers do not need to have any medical background. Their role is to add their own perspectives in the review process to represent the opinion of all people who have been personally touched by cancer. Through their participation, they

also learn more about how the research process is working to control cancer.

The Peer Review Committees meet twice a year, once in January and once in June at the Society's National Home Office in Atlanta, Georgia, to review the grant applications.

Elaine Duemler (*pictured top left*) of Hudsonville, Michigan, served as a stakeholder for roughly three years. Before each meeting, she would receive boxes containing 60–80 grant applications. “I didn't have to understand all the science of the proposal, but I did need to understand approximately what it was trying to do, whether or not I thought it was new science, new information about a particular cancer, how important we thought it was to society right then,” she explains.

She read each grant's abstract, which is a one page summary that explains the hypothesis of the study, what the researcher hopes to accomplish, how the findings will help the general population, and other important details. It usually took her about two weeks to prepare for committee meetings.

Once in the meetings, scientists on the committee present the proposals of the grant applications. Then, the stakeholders and scientists assign each grant a number value. The grants that have the highest values move on to the Council of Extramural Grants, made up of leaders in the science community and stakeholders, for the final funding decision. Elaine's committee would send up to four grants to the council.

“I would do it again in a heartbeat,” she says of her time as a stakeholder. “It gives you respect for the research and what's going on for the people that are conducting it.” Because of her experience, Elaine feels better educated about the research process, and takes every chance that she can to educate others. “I think I'm helping people,” she says.

If you would like to become a stakeholder, request an application by contacting Lesley Dufner, epidemiologist, at Lesley.Dufner@cancer.org or 1-800-723-0360. Applications are accepted from September through November.

• survivorship/patient services (cont'd)

Relay For Life celebrates and supports survivors in your community (cont'd)

participate in the Relay For Life event, including walking in the survivor's lap.

Jackie Ball, a breast cancer survivor from Holland, Michigan, organizes a survivorship dinner in Allegan County, right before the Relay For Life event begins. At the Relay, Jackie always participates in the survivor's lap and invites other survivors to come so that they can experience it too. “It's emotional to see all those people as you're walking along that track, to see all those people you don't know that are clapping and cheering for you,”

she recalls. “I wouldn't trade it for anything.”

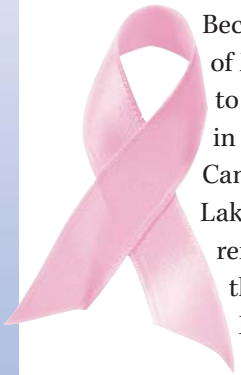
She knows that some survivors are not comfortable with being in the lime light. “If you don't want to be in the survivor's lap, that's fine. Come and talk with other survivors.”

Jackie knows that survivors are the symbol of hope at Relays for our fight against cancer. “We're celebrating life,” she says. “You're raising all this money and you're seeing the results by seeing survivors there,” she

explains. The number of people at her survivorship activity has grown over the years, as attendees are encouraged to spread the word.

For survivors who may be hesitant to come to their area's Relay for the first time, Jackie says the best thing to do is to simply try it and see if you like it. To find your local Relay For Life, call 1-800-ACS-2345 to be transferred to your American Cancer Society area service center.

All women over 40 need mammograms, a government funded program may help with cost



Because May is the month of Mother's Day, a chance to celebrate the women in our lives, the American Cancer Society Great Lakes Division wants to remind all women to get their mammograms.

Every woman needs to have a yearly

mammogram, starting at the age of 40. Women with a higher risk of breast cancer should talk with their doctor about the best approach for them.

Breast cancer is ranked as the second most likely cancer-killer of American women, after lung cancer. This year an estimated 212,920 women in our country will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer. With the help of mammography, these women's cancers may be found at an early stage, when options are most abundant and treatment is most effective. Mammograms are particularly important because the technology can detect breast cancer before a woman or health professional will notice any change in her body.

If you, or the women in your life, are not getting a yearly mammogram because of the cost, a state and federally funded program may be able to help. It is called the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) in Michigan and is known as the Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (BCCP) in Indiana.

To fulfill the basic eligibility requirements, women between the ages

of 40—64 need to be in a low-income bracket and have no health insurance, or an insurance plan that does not cover her needs. To enroll and confirm eligibility, women need to contact their local agency. "We're very open and clear about what services the program does cover," says Candeeda Grubb, BCCCP regional coordinator for the southern region of Indiana.

If eligible, the program provides women with a free mammogram, clinical breast exam, Pap test, and pelvic exam. In Michigan, an enrolled woman can receive services provided by the program at age 40. In Indiana, a woman is eligible for the program, office visits, and Pap tests by age 40, but needs to be between the ages of 50—64 to be eligible for a mammogram. However, the women enrolled in Indiana who are 40—49 years old may be able to get a free mammogram from an American Cancer Society fund.

If diagnosed, and the woman is a citizen of the United States or has been a legal alien for 5 years or greater, her treatment will also be financially covered through Medicaid.

Kimberly Dickson of Detroit, Michigan, called her local BCCCP agency after noticing a lump in her breast and discussing the change with a doctor. This was in March of 2002, when she was 39, too young to enroll in the program. After she called the BCCCP at the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute, she was able to receive a free breast exam. She turned 40 and was

enrolled in May, had a mammogram in June, and was diagnosed after a biopsy in July. Her cancer was in the late stages, and she went through chemotherapy, radiation, and four surgeries. Now, she says that her rollercoaster ride with cancer is over.

Kimberly is very grateful for the BCCCP and would encourage all women to enroll if they are eligible. "Without the program, I really don't think I would be here," she says. "I owe my life to that program and I know many people probably do as well."

She is still recuperating from the side effects of her cancer treatments, but she is optimistic, looking for a job with good insurance, and adopting her two nieces. "I'm ready to move on to the next step," she says.

Encourage the women in your lives to get their mammograms. It will give them and you peace of mind, and could save their lives. For more information on Michigan's BCCCP, call 1-800-922-MAMM or visit www.michigan.gov and search for "BCCCP". For Indiana, call 1-800-433-0746 or visit <http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/bcccp/contactinfo.htm>



Meet Sharon Simmons: a survivor joining the Society's efforts in Washington DC



Sharon Simmons (pictured left) of Fort Wayne, Indiana, became involved with the American Cancer Society when she joined Making

Strides Against Breast Cancer approximately one year after her cancer treatment ended. As a survivor, she wants to ensure that she is doing everything she can to eliminate cancer for the future. One way that she passionately makes a difference is through being an advocacy volunteer for the Society.

The Society knows that cancer is a political issue because elected officials can make decisions that affect the lives of cancer survivors, their families, and potential cancer patients. This is why we need volunteers, like Sharon, who help with our advocacy efforts. She makes her voice heard by going to Indiana Lobby Day, a statewide event that brings volunteers together at the capitol to speak with legislators about why cancer needs to be a priority in the government.

She also follows cancer legislation on a regular basis and responds to Action Alerts, which are e-mails sent out to Society advocacy volunteers, asking them to write to lawmakers to express their opinion on cancer-related issues.

Sharon's commitment to advocacy made her a perfect candidate to become a Society ambassador during Celebration on the Hill in 2002, our first major nationwide effort in which volunteers traveled from each state to Washington DC to speak with legislators about cancer issues. "I loved it," she says. "It was one of the most inspirational experiences I had, ever." After that, Congress doubled the National Institute of Health budget and added new federal dollars to cancer programs.

"It's a good thing to advocate," Sharon says. "If we don't speak up, [lawmakers] don't know what we want. We sent them [to office] to do our work; they want to hear from us. They're interested in what we have to say. The American Cancer Society makes it so easy. You can use information that's provided for you, and you don't have to make it personal if you don't want to."

Sharon is returning to Washington DC this fall, as one of the 196 volunteers chosen to be ambassadors from Indiana and Michigan to attend Celebration on the Hill 2006, taking place September 19—20. She feels the need to go back to Washington for the second event because, as effective as the first Celebration was, there is much more to do. She fears that the legislators may have lost their focus, especially after virtually all of the funding for federal cancer programs

is slated to be reduced across-the-board in the 2007 budget.

"I feel like there are so many issues right now that are so important that cancer's going to get lost and put on the back burner and I feel like we're making so much progress that we can't stop," she says. "We need to keep the momentum going, put their feet to the fire. I think we can lick the disease, but we can't stop." Sharon wants to make sure all of her elected officials know what it means to be a person who has been touched by cancer.

VOICES will be following Sharon as she prepares for her Celebration on the Hill 2006 experience. Watch for more Advocacy articles to cover her story.

If you want to go with Sharon to Celebration on the Hill 2006 as a supporter you may sign up now on www.celebrationonthehill.org. This is your Opportunity Highlight of the month from VOICES!



• advocacy (cont'd)

Sign the 2015 petition, make your voice heard in Washington DC



The Bush Administration announced a goal to eliminate American suffering and death from cancer by 2015,

but has since made plans to decrease the budget of cancer programs. Because the American Cancer Society knows that funding for cancer research and programs is critical to finding a cure, each 2006 Relay For Life event across the nation will give participants the opportunity to sign the 2015 petition.

People who sign the petition are making a statement that there should be increased funding for the National Cancer Institute for cancer research and programs. Petition- signers are also signing up to receive Action Alerts, which are e-mails that announce federal actions on cancer issues needing attention from volunteers.

“By signing the petition,” explains Sam Denton, Indiana grassroots coordinator, “you are declaring your desire to actively participate in the volunteer advocacy efforts of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network in an effort to eliminate suffering and death due to cancer by the year 2015.” The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network is the nonpartisan

sister advocacy organization of the American Cancer Society.

After being signed at Relays across America, the petitions will be handed over to legislators at Celebration on the Hill 2006, a major advocacy event that will bring volunteers from each Congressional district to Washington DC to speak with their representatives in government about cancer issues. The petitions will help to drive the message home at Celebration on the Hill that Americans care about cancer issues.

One volunteer that will help promote the 2015 petition at his local Relay in Holland, Michigan, is Skip Keeter (*pictured top left*). Skip is heading up the planning committee and plans to have an Advocacy tent where people can go to sign the petition. There will be volunteers available to explain its purpose.

Skip has been heavily involved in cancer advocacy issues because he has lost numerous family members to cancer. Through advocacy, he can take action to make a difference. “When you actually have the opportunity to engage our leaders, you know immediately that you’re having an impact one way or the other,” he says.

With the petition, he wants to send a message to Washington DC that there needs to be continued funding

for cancer research and programs so that we can find a cure. “If we’re not vigilant, we’ll lose funds,” he explains. “The more voices we have, the more impact we have, the better results we’re going to have.”

To sign the 2015 petition, log on to www.cancer.org/relay and look for the purple box on the right side of your screen, or call 1-800-ACS-2345, to find a local Relay For Life in your area. Events will be continuing until August.



• local area spotlight

The Hoosier Hills Area Service Center partners with health organizations to help more people in south-central Indiana.



The American Cancer Society understands the impor-

tance of partnering with health organizations in the area to provide increased support for anything cancer-related. The Hoosier Hills Area Service Center, serving the people of south-central Indiana, is an example of how the Society works with other organizations to reach out to more people and fulfill their needs through these partnerships. One of the organizations that the office works with is the Olcott Center for Cancer Education.

The goals of the Society and the Olcott Center are parallel: to serve and support people who have been touched by cancer. The Olcott Center offers specific services to the community that extend what the Society already has in place. Visitors can speak with registered oncology nurses, get resources from the lending library, attend weekly support meetings, and possibly access financial assistance provided by the local community.

The relationship between the Society and the Olcott Center can be described as one of give and take. When the Society has someone in need for a program or service that

they don't offer, the Hoosier Hills staff call the Olcott Center. Likewise, if the Olcott Center needs additional help, they will reach out to the Society. "We try to work with them as much as we can, not duplicating, but working alongside each other," explains Erin Wyatt, a registered oncology nurse and patient advocate at the Olcott Center.

The Olcott Center offers the Society's educational materials and resources to visitors, and gives referrals to Society patient services programs. Its staff supports the Society's colorectal cancer and skin cancer awareness initiatives, and has been involved with Society fundraising events, like Relay For Life and Daffodil Days, as well as advocacy events, like Indiana Lobby Day.

Another success that has come out of their team efforts is that the Olcott Center will now be hosting classes for Look Good...Feel Better, a Society program that teaches beauty techniques to women with cancer to keep them feeling beautiful throughout their treatments.

Tricia Bock, quality of life director for the Hoosier Hills Area Service Center, worked closely with staff from the Olcott Center to make the Look Good...Feel Better program a reality. "It's really nice to work hand in hand with them," she says.

Sukie Decker, area executive director of the Hoosier Hills Area Service Center, is thankful for the partnership. "It's a relationship in bloom and one that we want to recognize because we are working together for a common cause," she says.

We salute their teamwork!

For more information and resources available through the partnership between the American Cancer Society and the Olcott Center for Cancer Education, call the Hoosier Hills Area Service Center at 1-888-635-9254. Or, to find your local Society area service center, call 1-800-ACS-2345. The Hoosier Hills Area Service Center serves Brown, Greene, Harrison, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Monroe, Owen, Scott, Switzerland, and Washington Counties.



• resource highlight

We recently stopped a threatening Senate Bill through our Action Alert network. Read more about the importance of our advocacy efforts and learn how you can sign up to receive your own Action Alerts in this Resource Highlight.



The American Cancer Society recently saved many people's access to mammograms and other lifesaving

screenings by defeating a Senate bill that put them at risk. This milestone was made possible by thousands of Society volunteers responding to Action Alerts, e-mails that are given as a resource to volunteers who want to monitor cancer issues in government and take action when needed.

Senate Bill 1955, also known as the Health Insurance Marketplace Modernization and Affordability Act, would have bypassed state laws that were set in place to ensure health insurers cover mammograms, colon cancer screenings, Pap smears, clinical drug participation, and more. Had the bill passed, private health insurers could have refused to cover these lifesaving cancer screenings and treatments. Defeating the bill, which was stopped from even reaching a vote in the Senate, is a major victory for all Americans because more people will have access to critical screenings and treatments.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the Society's sister advocacy organization, led the campaign to

stop the bill. In an overwhelming response, volunteers throughout the nation sent 177,000 e-mails and close to 10,000 phone calls to the Senate. Americans contacted the Society's call center and were transferred to the Senate at a rate of about one call per minute.

One of the advocacy volunteers that took action against the bill is Tom Cleveland (*pictured top left*) from Kalamazoo, Michigan. Tom was diagnosed with cancer in his voice box in 1995 and became involved with the Society that year. In addition to Relay For Life, he joined the Society's grassroots advocacy efforts by becoming an advocacy volunteer and receiving Action Alerts.

"I do jump on them when I get them," says Tom. He says that the information in the alert is explained in terms so that everyone can understand the issue. "If I can understand it, anybody can."

When he received the Action Alert about Senate Bill 1955, he read the pre-typed message provided with the alert that he could send straight to his senator through e-mail. "I've gotten now where I can take the pre-typed message and put it in my own words," he says, to make his message more personalized. He also wrote a letter and called Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow's office.

Tom heard about the bill's defeat through another Action Alert from the ACS CAN. "It's a good thing that it went down," he said proudly.

If you would like to join Tom and begin receiving Action Alerts, please contact Sam Denton, Indiana grassroots coordinator at 1-800-233-6303 and Sam.Denton@cancer.org; or Jennifer Hunt, Michigan grassroots coordinator at 1-800-723-0360 and Jennifer.Hunt@cancer.org. Together, we can make a difference and make our voices heard.

