

UW Oshkosh will host 2nd-annual Relay for Life

by Vanessa Virbitsky - Wednesday, April 23, 2008

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/778/uw-oshkosh-will-host-2nd-annual-relay-for-life/>

In a collaborative effort to fight cancer and speed-up the momentum for cancer research, entire communities from across the nation join together each year to take part in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

On April 26 and 27, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh students, friends, faculty and alumni will take up the fight against cancer by walking, dancing and singing from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. in the second-annual UW Oshkosh Relay for Life in Kolf Sports Center, 785 High Ave.

At the overnight event, each team is asked to raise funds and to have a representative on the track at all times during the night — because cancer never sleeps. Participants also take part in a moving Luminaria celebration that adds light to a darkened and silenced track in honor of those who have lost the battle with cancer.

“My favorite part of the event is when they have the cancer survivors walk and when they dim the lights for the luminaries to glow,” Amy Bartram, a UW Oshkosh nursing major, said. “It brings tears to my eyes and is a very emotional and moving moment.”

In addition to walking, other relay events include a cake walk, dodge-ball tournament, silent auction and talent show.

According to the UW Oshkosh Relay for Life [Web site](#), there are 69 teams and 675 people signed up for this year's event. The fundraising target is \$25,000.

The nation's top university-hosted Relay for Life is held at Georgetown University, where more than \$220,000 was raised in 2008.

Building a tradition

UW Oshkosh students involved with the Oshkosh Chapter of Colleges Against Cancer decided in 2007 that the Oshkosh campus community should host its own life-saving Relay for Life.

More than 700 Oshkosh community members came together to build 55 teams in the fight against cancer in 2007. Those participants raised more than \$48,000, making UW Oshkosh the most successful first-year, college Relay for Life donor in the event's 27-year history.

By raising \$300 in 2007, Bartram was one of the individual who helped to make last year's event such a success.

“It was such a moving experience that hits close to home for me,” Bartram said. “I had attended the

Relay held in Wild Rose while my father was suffering from Esophageal Cancer. I now continue to be active as a team member through the Oshkosh Student Nurses Association and walk in memory of my father who passed away in December of 2000.

“I also walk for other family members and friends who have cancer and who I have lost to cancer. It’s an unbelievable rush of emotions to be there to help and support those who encounter this awful disease,” she said.

Students get involved

Participants like journalism and communication major Shana Pawlowicz, a cancer survivor, are setting the pace for this year’s relay to be just as successful as 2007.

Pawlowicz, who raised \$600 for Relay for Life in 2007, already has matched that mark and hopes to rally more donations by Saturday’s event for her team, “Eureka’s Castle.”

“Last March I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer and underwent two surgeries to have my thyroid removed,” Pawlowicz said. “I also have had many family members diagnosed and understand what a great help the American Cancer Society is to those in need. If I can help anyone deal with one less stress in such a time by donating one night and some money, I will do all I can.”

To raise funds for the 12-hour relay, Pawlowicz has tried to talk to as many people as possible — classmates, professors, family and friends — about donating to The American Cancer Society.

“I think it is important to show them that giving even a little can change someone’s life,” Pawlowicz said. “I am going to be one of the speakers this year, so I am very excited to be able to share my story with others and hopefully inspire them to get out and make a difference for such an important cause.”

Led by team captain Pat Detmer, the UW Oshkosh wrestling team also will be walking at this year’s relay.

“I think the wrestling team has been so involved in this fundraiser because, like most people, we’ve all known someone who has had cancer, and it’s affected each of our lives,” Detmer said. “This is also a team that likes to spend time together and have fun, and this event gives us a chance to do both of those things while also making a difference.”

To raise money for their Relay team, the wrestlers hosted a flag football tournament April 19, raising more than \$350.

The UW Oshkosh Relay for Life still is accepting registrations and donations. To visit the site, [click here](#).