

RFL honoring cancer survivors with dinner on Saturday

Written by From Staff Reports
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Relay For Life Committee will be honoring cancer survivors this Saturday, with a special dinner in their honor, and reminds teams and community members of several upcoming events and deadlines in readiness for the May 16 Relay For Life.

This year, the RFL of Hopkins County Survivors Dinner will begin at 6 p.m. Saturday, April 5, at League Street Church of Christ. The meal will be provided by the Aguilar family.

Any and all cancer survivors are invited to attend the event, free to them and their immediate family or caregiver. However, those planning to attend are asked to let organizers know their intent to participate to help better plan for the event.

While raising funds for the American Cancer Society and its programs, research and awareness efforts are important, RFL of Hopkins County Committee members also emphasize the importance of honoring those who are currently battling or have won a personal battle with cancer.

That's why early each year the RFL Committee hosts this special dinner just for survivors and their families, to celebrate them and their fight.

"Our first Survivor Dinner was held Feb. 14, 2006, with 25 including committee. Now, we have over 200," said Amber Henry, RFL Committee publicity chair.

For more information or to confirm attendance, contact Joyce Davis at 903-885-6176 or Judy Worley at 903-439-8449.

Cancer survivors and their caregivers are encouraged to participate in the opening lap of RFL May 16. It's always a very moving opening recognizing the many battling or who have battled and the people who have cared for them through it.

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Usually, those survivors who are registered in advance receive T-shirts recognizing them. Survivors can register by calling Davis or Worley, or online at www.relayforlife.org/hopkinscotx

RFL also will remember and honor people affected by cancer during the luminary ceremony at RFL. Anyone can honor or remember a loved one by dedicating a luminary candle to be lit during the 9 p.m. ceremony at the May 16 event on Celebration Plaza downtown. Luminaries can be ordered for a minimum donation of \$5 each from any RFL team, committee member or online or mailed to Relay For Life Hopkins County, P.O. Box 772, Sulphur Springs, Texas 75483. Luminary candles will be placed in bags around the walking path on the square. Each bag contains the name of the person being remembered if deceased or honored if alive, along with whatever short message the donor adds on the order form.

If mailing a form, be sure to enclose the donation, the person donating's name, mailing address, home and cell phone numbers, who is being remembered or honored, their short message, total amount contributed and if the luminary is to be credited to a particular person or teams.

Luminaries may also be purchased at the Relay for Life event, but committee members encourage those who are able to order theirs in advance so they'll be prepped and ready to go during the relay.

Two other ways to honor or remember a loved one who has battled or is battling cancer are with a RFL Torch of Hope or RFL Garden of Hope plant. Each is available for a minimum donation of \$50 each and will be displayed at RFL. Torch of Hope and Garden of Hope plants order forms and payment must be received by RFL by May 1. Each will contain a plate with the name of the individual it was purchased for and who it is from.

Torches and plants too are available from any RFL team captain or member or committee member, or may be mailed to Relay For Life Hopkins County, P.O. Box 772, Sulphur Springs, Texas 75483. Each form should contain either the name of the person the torch or plant is given in memory or honor of, who it's given by, which team to credit, the donor's address and phone number, along with a check payable to American Cancer Society.

There's always still room for more teams. So far, according to RFL website, 24 teams with a total of 256 participants have registered to participate in RFL. Ideally, the committee would like

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to see 30-40 teams participating to generate more funds for RFL, which goes to the American Cancer Society. So far the teams, according to www.relayforlife.org/hopkinscotx, have raised \$14,761.37.

Each team is to decorate a baton, which will be judged at 6 p.m. May 16. As team members take turns walking the path during the 12-hour RFL the representative walking is asked to carry the team baton.

Teams are encouraged to dedicate laps through the night to someone special, with the entire team walking at the same time for that person. Just let Johnna West know what time the walk will be so it can be announced.

Pictures remembering those who've battled cancer that are shown on the memory slide show that plays during the luminary ceremony and at various times during the night must be turned in by April 15. Contact Johnna West at jwest@saltilloisd.net or Amber Henry at 903-271-1475 for more information.

Two teams have also posted some upcoming events to help raise funds for RFL.

- Team Saputo will be holding a garage sale and bake sale Saturday, April 5, in the grass field on Saputo property on Bill Bradford Road, the team captain reports.
- Deb's Dream Team will be offering a hamburger and drink for \$1 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, April 5, at Atwoods, according to Annette Wilburn.