

## Celebrate Cancer Survivors! May 22-23, 2010 at Sonora High School

by Firefighter and Team Capt. Sarah Pennington



pictured L-R top: Yvonne Mattox, Sarah Pennington, bottom: Joey Hall, Steve White, and Jon Rock

Groveland Fire Department's Relay For Life Team has 21 firefighters who have risen to the challenge to FIGHT BACK against cancer. Our 22<sup>nd</sup> and honorary member is Yvonne Mattox. She is not only a cancer survivor, but an inspiration and symbol of strength and courage. Yvonne was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, T-cell killer #5. She endured many cancer treatments, some of which were experimental - yet successful, but unexpectedly damaged her heart. As a result, she now lives with an internal defibrillator.

Following treatment and surgery, Yvonne's condition was fragile and at one point she was told she would not make it through the night because she had developed pneumonia. Because of the continuing advanced research, endless amount of support, and her astounding strength and perseverance, Yvonne has survived and slain the ultimate beast "cancer."

Survivors are honored in numerous ways at Relay, one of which is the Luminaria. A luminaria is a bag purchased and personalized to honor a loved one who has been touched by cancer. Luminarias may be purchased for \$10 at the Groveland Fire Station. The Luminaria bags collected from all around the county are set aglow with tea lights at 9 pm and placed around the track at Relay for an inspirational ceremony. **(Join us for a special Groveland Fire Luminaria Display at the station on May 15 at 8 pm.)**

An important part of Relay is the celebration of nearly 11 million cancer survivors who are alive in the U.S. today. Whether you are currently fighting your battle, or have been cancer-free for many years, **YOU ARE A SURVIVOR!** Survivors show we are making great strides in our fight. We also celebrate the many caregivers who have provided countless hours of care and support.

*"In a firefighter's line of work, slaying the beast signifies fighting fire, for Yvonne and cancer patients it signifies fighting for life!"*