



The American Cancer Society's *Relay For Life* is a life-changing event that gives everyone in communities across the globe a chance to celebrate the lives of those who have battled

cancer, remember loved ones lost, and fight back against the disease. At *Relay*, teams of people camp out at a local high school, park, or fairground and take turns walking or running around a track or path. Each team is asked to have a representative on the track at all times during the event. Because cancer never sleeps, *Relay* is a 24 hour event.

*Relay* began in 1985 when Dr. Gordy Klatt, a colorectal surgeon in Tacoma, Washington, ran and walked around a track for 24 hours to raise money for the American Cancer Society. Since then, *Relay* has grown from a single man's passion to fight cancer into the world's largest movement to end the disease. Each year, more than 3.5 million people in 5,000 communities in the United States, along with additional communities in 20 other countries, gather to take part in this global phenomenon and raise much-needed funds and awareness to save lives from cancer. Thanks to *Relay* participants, the American Cancer Society continues to save lives. Although every *Relay For Life* is different, there are certain traditions at all *Relays*, no matter where they are held. These traditions help participants celebrate, remember, and fight back.



On Saturday, May 22, 2010, at the Sonora High School track, survivors began the *Relay* walking the first lap with 31 teams of over 350 members circling the track cheering them on. As the survivors passed by each team joined in. There was energy in the air as the twenty-four hour *Relay* began. During the 24 hours all teams participated in sideline games as well as keeping at least one team member on the track at all times.

The Groveland Fire team included: Team Captain, Sarah Pennington, John Sewald, Corey Armstrong, Jim Burdick, Gary Burns, Drew Collier, Teddy Day, Chris Goodnight, Steve Grunder, Joey Hall, Jim Haslam, Ralph Hengel, Justin Nethercott, Jon Rock, Josh Scheib, Ryan Silva, Bernie Sperk, Kurtis Tripp, Shane Warner, and Steve White. Many of these team members stayed at *Relay* for the entire 24 hours. The Groveland Fire team raised over \$7,000 for the American Cancer Society.



After dark, during the Luminaria ceremony *Relay* honored people who have been touched by cancer and remembered loved ones lost to the disease. Luminaria bags, sold before the *Relay* by team members, surrounded the entire Sonora High School track. Candles were lit inside the bags bearing the name of a person touched by cancer. The ceremony is a time that truly highlights the

importance of defeating this disease. The ceremony was an awe inspiring experience for those participating. With bagpipes playing participants walked the Luminaria lap in silence taking time to remember those lost to cancer.

There was also a Fight Back ceremony, where participants made personal commitments to save lives by taking up the fight against cancer. The personal commitment may be to get a screening test, quit smoking, or talk to an elected official about cancer. By taking action, people are personally taking steps to save lives and fight back against a disease that takes too much.

The very impressive Closing ceremony paralleled fighting cancer to fighting a fire. Fire apparatus new and antique drove around the track while firefighters stood “ready to fight.” Cancer is a lot like fire. It starts with a single flame and if not detected early, can spread into an uncontrollable inferno. It doesn’t sleep, doesn’t sympathize, and can destroy everything within its path. But, when preventative measures are taken it



can sometimes be avoided all together or detected and suppressed early before it rages out of control. By taking part in *Relay*, we hope to help the American Cancer Society save lives and “extinguish the flames.” Fire Departments represented at the Closing ceremony were Sonora City FD, Tuolumne FD, CAL Fire, Tuolumne County FD, and Groveland FD.

The *Relay for Life* teams raised over \$76,000 for Tuolumne County. This will be used for research to find a cure for cancer. This is \$26,000 more than was raised last year. The American Cancer Society’s *Relay For Life* represents the hope that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, those who face cancer will be supported, and that one day cancer will be eliminated.