

## Consider yourself invited

Written by Pam Ackerman  
Thursday, 28 July 2011 13:41 -

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You are invited to the 17th Annual American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Dawson County on Friday, July 29, at Haymaker Stadium in Cozad.

Anyone who has spent a night participating in an American Cancer Society Relay For Life knows how tiring—yet fulfilling—the event can be.

The idea is simple. You get about 8-15 of your friends and/or coworkers together on a Friday night. You raise money or take donations from people who can't participate. Then you walk—for at least 12 hours straight. To simplify things, the rule is that at least one person from each team agrees to walk at all times. Easy right?

The events always begin with one lap with most of the participants standing on the sidelines. Why? Because this first lap is reserved to honor cancer patients, cancer survivors and often caregivers.

Groups camp out near the walking area and spend the hours talking, playing games, taking turns walking the track and encouraging one another. The festivities grow a little subdued with the lighting of memorial candles that line the walking area.

Sometime after dawn, the tents are taken down, the candles are blown out, and everyone goes their separate ways knowing they spent the night raising money for a good cause.

And, thankfully, a large number of dedicated people and businesses take the opportunity to participate and raise money for cancer research and programs to help cancer patients.

But the success of the Relay For Life events also has a deeper meaning. Sadly, at some level or at some point in everyone's life, we all have or will deal with cancer.

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If we are not individually diagnosed with the disease, we all can name a coworker, friend, sibling, an aunt or uncle, or even a parent who had cancer. Cancer knows no race, economic background or geography. It can affect us all.

Many of the volunteers and participants at the Relay events are there for someone else, either in their memory or to personally support someone's fight with the disease. Few events combine laughter and fun so closely with pain and tears.

So to all those who have walked or generously given money to walkers, we offer congratulations on personally making a difference in the fight against cancer. To those of you who have not participated in the past, take a chance, take a stand and fight back against a disease that takes too much.

Join us this Friday. The activities start at 6:15 p.m. Cancer doesn't rest at night and neither will we!

Pam Ackerman, Relay For Life of Dawson County

W.C.S.G. Garden of Hope Team Captain