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## **Cancer survivors are at the heart of Relay inspiration**

The Pottstown Relay for Life has become well-established in recent years as a fund-raising machine for the American Cancer Society.

The local effort raised more \$1 million in 2007 and was fourth in the world in the amount of money raised.

Of the thousands who participate in Relay each year, many are connected to the fight against cancer through the loss or the survival of loved ones.

But, it is the survivors themselves whose presence epitomizes the “HOPE” spelled out in luminaria in the Pottsgrove High School stadium.

Hazel LeVan and Mae Mogul are two of those survivors profiled recently in *The Mercury*. Mogel, whose husband Pete is also a cancer survivor, is the grand marshal for this year’s Relay, leading the survivor lap at the track on May 31.

“I’ll be a 24-year-survivor April the second,” said Mae Mogul of Limerick. A breast cancer survivor, she was only 48 at the time of diagnosis. Even though her body is cancer-free, she says that her life revolves around the disease -- helping others to cope and volunteering for Relay to work toward a cure.

She is a volunteer at Pottstown Memorial Regional Cancer Center and has helped raise nearly \$100,000 through her church’s Relay team.

Hazel LeVan has a similar story. Diagnosed with cancer in 1984 at the age of 51, this Boyertown woman didn’t talk about it even while undergoing surgery and treatment.

“Cancer just was not talked about,” she said. To help correct that situation for future generations, LeVan got involved with starting a breast cancer support group through the Pottstown cancer center.

For LeVan, Relay is an opportunity to take action and produce something tangible in the fight against cancer, something she desperately wanted to influence given that she didn’t want her children and grandchildren to face a diagnosis like she did.

“I had four daughters,” Hazel said. “That’s four daughters I don’t want to go through this.”

LeVan also volunteers with Reach to Recovery, a program that pairs volunteers with people who are battling cancer, and helps give them practical information, such as helping a woman who has undergone a mastectomy the best places to get a bathing suit, and other things that will enable them to move on with their lives.

The stories of these survivors demonstrate the commitment and compassion of the corps of survivors that inspire everyone involved with the Pottstown Relay.

The Relay in Pottstown is about a community that takes up the fight, and these survivors are the ultimate fighters -- for themselves, those around them and for the future.

They keep the candles of HOPE burning bright.