



The American Cancer Society Relay For Life represents the hope that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported, and that one day cancer will be eliminated.

What is the American Cancer Society Relay For Life?

Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's signature activity. It is a unique event that offers communities an opportunity to participate in the fight against cancer. Relays are 24 hours in length and are overnight. Teams of 10 to 15 people camp out at a local high school, college, park or fairground and take turns walking, jogging or running around a track or path. Each team is asked to have a representative on the track at all times during the event.

Relay For Life is a community gathering rather than an athletic event. Anyone and everyone can participate. Businesses, clubs, families, friends, hospitals, churches, schools and service organizations form teams. These teams share a common purpose – their support of the American Cancer Society's mission.

Why Relay For Life?

The power of Relay allows a community to grieve for those lost to cancer and to celebrate those who have survived. For a newly diagnosed patient, Relay For Life offers an opportunity to meet others who have had the same type of cancer and survived. For the cancer patient in treatment, Relay offers the opportunity to share experiences with others. For the long-term survivor, Relay brings recognition that the community cares about their struggle and closure to a trying time in life.

Another group finding hope in Relay For Life is the caregivers. These individuals give their time, love and support to family, friends and neighbors who face cancer. At Relay, everyone understands the challenges and joys of being a caregiver. There is peace of mind knowing that together we can face the challenges ahead.

The History of Relay For Life

One person can make a difference. Nowhere is that more evident than with the story of the American Cancer Society Relay For Life which began in Tacoma, Washington as the City of Destiny Classic 24-Hour Run Against Cancer.

In the mid-1980s, Dr. Gordon Klatt, a Tacoma colorectal surgeon, wanted to enhance the income of his local chapter of the American Cancer Society. He decided to personally raise money for the fight by doing something he enjoyed – running marathons.

In May 1985, Dr. Klatt spent a grueling 24 hours circling the track at Baker Stadium at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma for more than 83 miles. Throughout the night, friends paid \$25 to run or walk 30 minutes with him. He raised \$27,000 to fight cancer. That first year, nearly 300 of Dr. Klatt's family, friends and patients watched as he ran and walked the course.

While he circled the track those 24 hours, he thought about how others could take part. He envisioned a 24-hour team relay event that could raise more money to fight cancer. Months later he pulled together a small committee to plan the first team relay event known as the City of Destiny Classic 24-Hour Run Against Cancer.

In 1986, 19 teams took part in the first team relay event on the track at the colorful, historical Stadium Bowl and raised \$33,000. An indescribable spirit prevailed at the track and in the tents that dotted the field.

Due to its fundraising success and overwhelming support of the American Cancer Society's mission, Relay For Life was declared the American Cancer Society's signature activity in 1996. Relay For Life celebrates survivors, funds research advancements and cancer education; inspires the public to become involved in the American Cancer Society's advocacy efforts; and makes important services possible for patients and their families.

In 2007, 3.5 million people participated and over 500,000 cancer survivors walked the opening laps. Relay For Life raised \$405 million at 4,800 sites throughout the United States and took place in 23 other countries evolving into a worldwide movement to end cancer.