

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
First Name Last Name
American Cancer Society
Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX
Email: firstname.lastname@cancer.org

Take a Lap in the Race to End Cancer

GAINESVILLE – Take steps to end cancer, honor cancer survivors and remember lost loved ones during the 2013 American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Gainesville.

Teams of Gainesville residents will gather at Santa Fe College, located at 3000 NW 83rd St. on April 12 at 6 p.m. for an overnight relay against cancer. Relay For Life is a family-oriented team event where participants walk relay-style around the track and take part in fun activities off the track. Teams can include coworkers, club members, family and friends who have gathered donations prior to the event.

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide, community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States.

Local businesses, clubs, organizations and youth groups will be participating by creating fundraising teams up to the date of the event, as well as selling food and hosting games the night of the event. Volunteer teams at the event will also host fundraisers to add to the festivities.

“There will be lots of fun, games, food, entertainment and activities for the entire family,” said Connie Criswell, American Cancer Society community representative.

“There is no admission charge. Please come out and enjoy the Relay For Life experience,” Criswell added.

The event kicks off with the Celebrate: Survivors Lap honoring cancer survivors. At 9 p.m. during the Remember: Luminaria Ceremony, survivors will circle the track rimmed with glowing luminaria while the names of survivors and those lost to the disease are read aloud. The event will close with the Fight Back Ceremony at noon on Saturday, which is meant to acknowledge those who stayed at the relay the full 18 hours.

Funds raised at Relay For Life will enable the American Cancer Society to support local services and resources for cancer patients and their families such as Hope Lodge, which provides free housing for patients and caregivers, Road to Recovery, a group of specially-trained volunteer drivers, Look Good – Feel Better, a free service that helps patients improve their appearances and self-image, and Reach to Recovery, a support program matching trained breast cancer survivors.

Funds also support critical cancer research and community education programs designed to teach people how to reduce their risk of developing cancer. Local sponsors for Gainesville Relay are AvMed and Community Cancer Specialists.

For more information, visit the website <http://www.relayforlife.org/gainesvillefl> or find us on Facebook and Twitter. Connie Criswell, connie.criswell@cancer.org, 352-240-5055, is the community representative for this event.

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