



MARCH 2, 2016

Vol. 25, No. 9

Shelby - Utica News



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Shelby Township kicks off 10th annual Relay for Life

BY SARAH WOJCIK
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SHELBY TOWNSHIP — On Feb. 27, the Shelby Township Relay for Life held its 10th annual kickoff event in anticipation of the main relay event that will take place from 10 a.m. May 21 to 10 a.m. May 22 at River Bends Park. The theme is “Lights, camera, cure!”

The Oscars-themed craft and vendor show at Steiny’s Restaurant and Banquet Hall was the first open-house-style kickoff event of its kind. Shelby Township Relay for Life co-founder Lauren Conn

said organizers hope to make this year bigger and better than ever.

Approximately 15 vendors represented 12 or 13 teams selling everything from baked goods to jewelry to pet accessories, but Conn said that was just a snapshot of the event’s progress. At press time, 32 teams had registered — many more than had registered at the same time in years past, Conn said.

The local event has been growing in the number of teams, participants, survivors and money raised for the American Cancer Society every year for the past de-

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Lauren Conn, of Chesterfield Township, left, and Nicole Vitale, of Shelby Township, right, pose during the Oscars-themed Shelby Township Relay for Life kickoff event at Steiny’s Restaurant and Banquet Hall Feb. 27.

Photo by Donna Agusti

Relay

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cade. So far, Conn said, the Shelby Township event has raised approximately \$1.2 million.

"To think of how much it's grown in 10 years — I think it's more than any of us could have thought, and we're all so incredibly happy," Conn said.

The goal this year, she said, is 53 teams and \$153,000. She said organizers chose the theme "Lights, camera, cure!" to amp up the 10th anniversary.

"We just wanted to go over the top and have it be the glitz, glamour, Hollywood-type feel," Conn said. "We left it up to the teams. It's movies. It's TV shows. It's whatever they pick. We like our teams to have that ability to be creative so they're not just stuck in one limiting type of theme. The sky's the limit."

She said the ultimate goal is to be able to get together and celebrate finding a cure for can-

cer, but until that day, the Shelby Township Relay for Life team will continue to do what it's doing to raise money to help fund research and advocacy.

"All of the money stays local," Conn said. "With events like this, we want to get the word out about who we are, what we do and what Relay for Life is all about. We hope more and more people will come so they can join us in the fight."

Charlie's Angels, an original Shelby Township Relay for Life team, is one of the largest fundraisers. Its more than 30 active members raise funds throughout almost the entire year. Already, the team has raised more than \$25,000.

Shelby Township resident Kevin Humphries, one of the founding members of Charlie's Angels, said it began as a family affair. His father — Charles Humphries, for whom the team is named — and mother-in-law both passed away from leukemia.

"We've been successful at raising money due to the fact that

our team members are very driven," Humphries said.

He said Charlie's Angels holds several fundraisers throughout the year, including creating and selling a car-themed calendar and hosting a women's game night.

The next team captain meeting is set to take place at 6 p.m. March 10 at Steiny's Restaurant and Banquet Hall, located at 55161 Shelby Road, north of 25 Mile Road.

River Bends Park is located at 52700 22 Mile Road, west of Shelby Road.

For more information, visit www.relayforlife.org/shelbytownshipmi, call the American Cancer Society at (248) 663-3419 or email rochelle.holman@cancer.org.

Call Staff Writer Sarah Wojcik at (586) 498-1029.



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Photo by Donna Agusti

Lisa Peters, of Shelby Township, sells her Wildtree products to Kevin Humphries, of Shelby Township, during the Shelby Township Relay for Life kickoff event at Steiny's Restaurant and Banquet Hall Feb. 27.

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