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MILESTONE RELAY FOR LIFE GOES OFF WITHOUT A HITCH

BY SARAH WOJCIK

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SHELBY TOWNSHIP — On May 21 and 22, the Shelby Township Relay for Life celebrated its 10th year in a row of striving to raise awareness and fund research for all types of cancer through the American Cancer Society.

More than 1,000 people participated in the 24-hour event at River Bends Park, including 41 teams and 90 registered cancer survivors. The event had raised approximately \$137,000 at press time. The ACS will accept funds through Aug. 31.

This year's theme was "Lights, camera, cure!" Teams decked out their campsites with Hollywood-re-

See RELAY on page 11A



A group walks along the track at River Bends Park during the 10th annual Shelby Township Relay for Life, a 24-hour cancer research fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, May 21.

Photo by Erin Sanchez

Relay

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lated swag, bought and sold goods, walked laps around the track, celebrated cancer survivors, and observed a luminaria ceremony.

"It was perfect," Shelby Township Relay for Life co-founder Lauren Conn said. "We had dry weather all day, which was great, and it didn't get too hot. It was the right amount of comfortably warm."

Conn said that the energy of the event felt more powerful than in years past.

During the survivor ceremony, Brock Humphries, the son of an original committee member, spoke about how his involvement with the Shelby Township Relay for Life helped him receive a grant from the ACS to pursue a doctoral degree in cancer research at the University of Michigan.

During the after-dark luminaria ceremony, Conn's mother, Shelby Township Relay for Life co-founder Margie Conn, shared her story about beating breast cancer after a nearly two-year battle by opting for a double mastectomy and starting the fundraising event.

Rochelle Holman, the event's ACS staff partner, said the Shelby Township Relay for Life is the 12th-largest in the state of Michigan in terms of funds raised. This year is her third season partnering with local relays and her first time with Shelby Township.

"Shelby is a phenomenal event," Holman said. "The community is very supportive. The Fire Department, the Optimist Club, the municipal employees, the Girl Scouts, the high schools, the middle schools were all involved."

Holman said she believes the event's ongoing success hinges partly on the loyal support of many original members.

Each year, Lauren Conn said, the event continues to grow.

She estimated that the Shelby Township Relay for Life event has raised approximately \$1.25 million during its tenure.

At 6 p.m. June 23, volunteers and participants of the event are invited back to River Bends Park for a wrap-up event to seek feedback about what worked and what could



Stefanie Sarti, 19, of Macomb Township, left, and Blair Degroot, 23, of Shelby Township, right, walk for Annjenette Cole, who passed away from liver cancer last year at the age of 21, during the 10th annual Shelby Township Relay for Life event at River Bends Park May 21.

Photo by Erin Sanchez

Taylor Spots, 3, of Chesterfield Township, sports pink lion face paint at the event.



be improved for next year's relay.

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

For more information or to

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



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