

Celebrate • Remember • Fight Back



RELAY FOR LIFE OF ST. CHARLES PARISH, LA



OFFICIAL EVENT PROGRAM

APRIL 16, 2011

Relay For Life of St. Charles Parish 2011

West Bank Bridge Park
Luling, Louisiana
April 16, 2011

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About Luminaria

Luminaria are those glowing bags in the center of the track. To the naked eye they appear to be nothing more than paper bags filled with candles. They tell a story.

Many represent loved ones who are actively fighting cancer, while others are for those who have emerged victorious. Others are in memory of loved ones who are no longer with us and stand as a testimony of remembrance.

Luminaria are available at the info tent near the park entrance.



Chairwoman's Message

Months ago, I began wondering what I would write for this year's Relay welcome message.

The news was airing a story about a hero – A young man who dove into Lake Pontchartrain to save the life of someone who had driven off the Causeway Bridge.

Something about the word “hero” struck me that day. I wrote that simple word – HERO – on a yellow sticky note and placed it near my computer.

Every day I would look at that word, trying to figure out exactly what compelled me to post it where I would view it day after day.

God works in mysterious ways.

When you think of “heroes” you might think of all the men and women who serve in our armed forces, who risk their lives for us every day so we can have our freedom. You might think of those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for us. These men and women have my heartfelt respect and gratitude.

But heroes come in all shapes, sizes and walks of life. Just like the young man who dove into Lake Pontchartrain, they are all

heroes.

My hero is my brother, Frankie.

He fought a long, hard battle with cancer. Unfortunately, he lost his battle earlier this year. He fought cancer with every ounce of his being. He never gave up, always fought back and never complained. He was always thankful for another day because it represented another chance to win the battle.

This year I dedicate Relay For Life to Frankie and all the other heroes who are currently battling cancer. He may have lost his personal battle, but we will continue to fight to defeat cancer; to win the war.

I appreciate each and every one of you who have joined the fight. May God bless you. Thanks for joining us as we remember, rejoice and fight back!



Champagne

**Audrey
Champagne
Raziano**

Chairwoman, Relay For Life
of St. Charles Parish 2011

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REMEMBER.
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2011 Relay Event Sponsors

Relay For Life of St. Charles Parish would like to thank our major event sponsors. **Thank you** for helping us remember, celebrate and fight back against cancer!

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Wreath of Hope Sponsors: Cat Spec, Cooper/T Smith Mooring, SGS Petroleum Services Corp., Nalco Co., Gulf Inland Marine, Savage Services, SGS North American, GE Betz

Relay lists steering committee members

Audrey Raziano	Chairwoman	Tammie Landry	Online
Anedra Coleman	Co-Chair, Publicity	Jan Landry	Accounting
Renee Simpson	Relay Program		Cancer Survivors' Dinner
Kenny Guedry	Logistics	Ineta Loup	Mission Delivery
Fay Caire	Survivors' Celebration	Jimmy Miller	Sponsorship
Sandra Hawkins	Survivors' Celebration	Darby Berthelot	Entertainment
Kimberly Matherne	Luminary	Anne Bates	ACS Development Rep.
Ruby Tonglet	Activities	V.J. St. Pierre Jr.	Honorary Co-Chair
Bobby Lovergne	Activities		Parish President
Theresa Theriot	Team Captains	King & Queen	Robert Adam / Kathy Tassin
	Recruitment / Registration		Visit Relay online at relayforlife.org/stcharles!

2011 THEME: RELAY GOES AROUND THE WORLD

*In memory of
Betty Harmon.*



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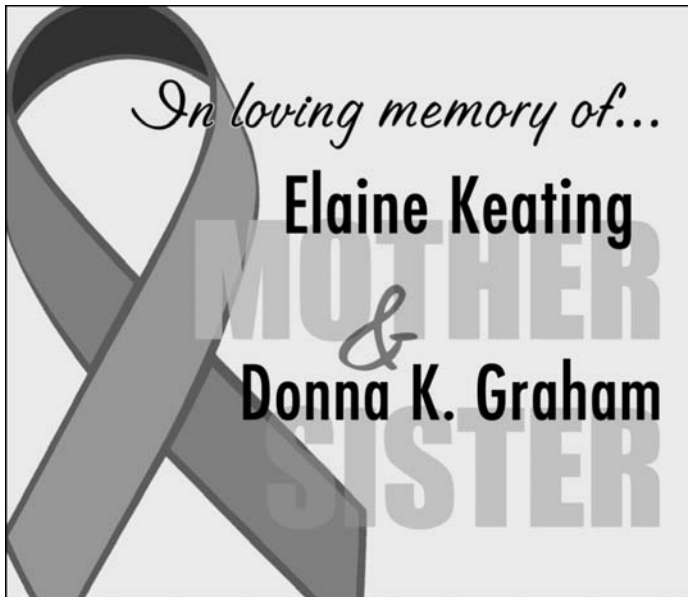
United Way of St. Charles is working to advance the common good by focusing on education, income and health. These are the building blocks for a good life- a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health.

We accomplish this in two ways:

- Funding over 30 agencies and programs providing direct services in St. Charles Parish.
- Developing and implementing programs addressing specific community needs.

Visit our Web site for more information.

WWW.UWAYSOC.ORG



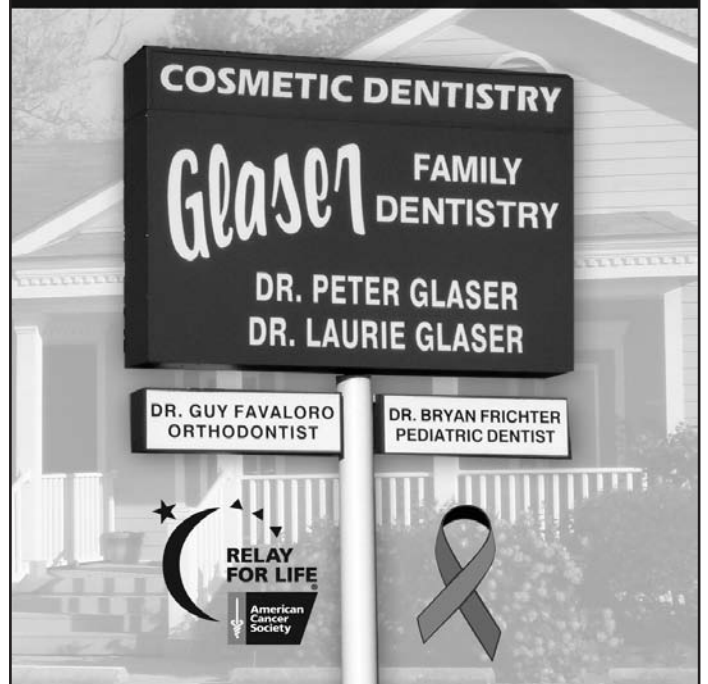
Councilwoman-at-Large Division A
Carolyn K. Schexnaydre



Phone: 985.307.0814
cshexnaydre@stcharlesgov.net
P.O. Box 302 Hahnville, LA 70057



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY



BY SUPPORTING RELAY

*In loving
memory of*
DEE MATHERNE.



Supporting Relay For Life 2011
TAB TROXLER

Schedule of Events

1 PM	Registration Begins	6:30 PM	Mummy Relay Flipnastics Zumba
2:30 PM	Zumba Warm-up		
3 PM	Opening Ceremony w/ HHS Choir and ROTC Team Lap (Don't forget your banner!)	7 PM	A Bit Dicey (Minute to Win It) HHS Cheerleaders
		7:15 PM	Guns n' Hoses
3:30 PM	Volleyball Tournament Begins** Cook-off Judging**	7:30 PM	Baby Blockin' (Minute to Win It)
4 PM	Spaghetti Game (Minute to Win It) Campsite Judging Louisiana Kids Perform	8 PM	DHS Cheerleaders Perform Dizzy Mummy Game (Minute to Win It) Dessert Bake-off**
4:30 PM	Cancer Survivors Registration Horseshoe Tournament Begins**	8:30 PM	Luminary Ceremony Performance by HHS Choir Fireworks Display
5 PM	Scavenger Hunt Begins	9 PM	Fight Back Ceremony Volleyball Tournament Resumes** Horseshoe Tournament Resumes**
5:15 PM	Karen Degenhart Sings 'God Bless America' and 'You'll Never Walk Alone'		
5:30 PM	Cancer Survivors Ceremony Derrick Gant's Survivor Tribute Survivors Lap Survivors w/ Family Lap Caregivers Lap	9:30 PM	Extreme Hanky Panky (Minute to Win It) Ugliest Bridesmaid
		10 PM	Sack Races The Village People
6 PM	Volleyball Tournament Resumes** Horseshoe Tournament Resumes** Performance by Elite Voodoo Cheerleaders	11 PM	MISSter Relay Contest
		11:30 PM	Limbo Line Dancing Scavenger Hunt Ends

**** Required pre-registration**

Events in bold take place near / on the stage.

TEAM AWARDS (Plaques given out at Closing Ceremony)

Most Money Raised as a Team
Most Money Raised as a Multiple Team (Corporate)
Most Money Raised as a School
Most Spirited Team
Best-Decorated Campsite
Best Team Name
Best Team T-Shirt
Best Team Costume
Best Team Banner

COOKOFF CATEGORIES

Appetizer
Main Dish
Dessert

12 PM Chop Stack (Minute to Win It)
Relay Idol Contest

12:30 AM Bucket Head (Minute to Win It)

1 AM **After Midnight Madness**

1:30 AM After Midnight Madness Prize Giveaway

2 AM Hoop de Loop Game

2:30 AM T-Shirt Relay (Bring a T-shirt from home for competition)

3 AM Awards Ceremony

4 AM Campsite Cleanup

5:30 AM Closing Ceremony

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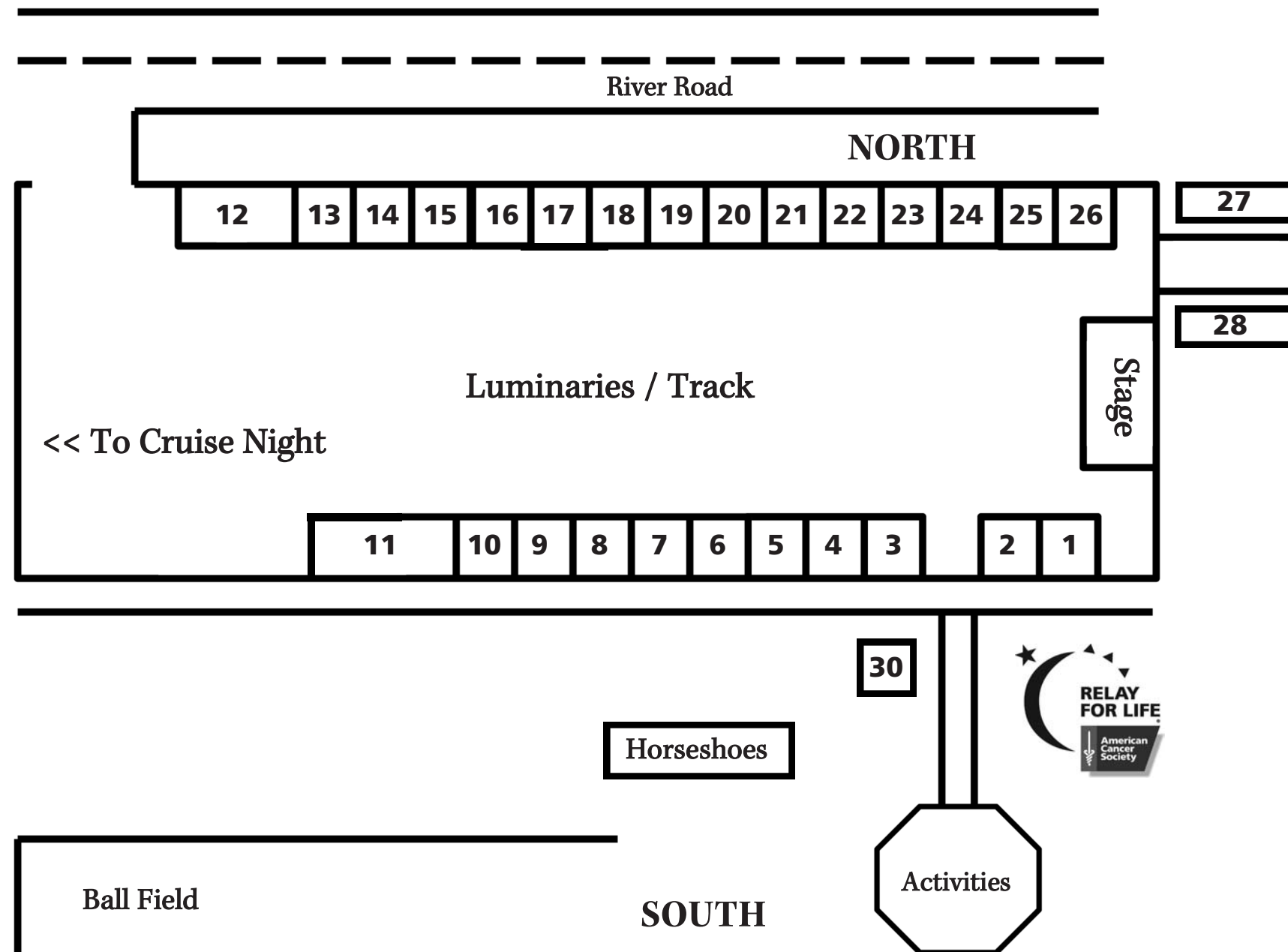
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Relay 2011 Campsites

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Throw Me a Cure
Jamaican Jerk Pork
Hot Dogs and Chili</p> <p>2 Summer Love
Coffee, Tea, Water, Kids Drinks,
Cookies, Soup, Cupcakes, Brownies,</p> | <p>3 Jose' Chemo Shots Will Celebrate a Cure
Tacos, Quesadillas, Non-Alcoholic Sangria, Pinadas</p> |
|---|---|

- | |
|--|
| <p>4 ROTC Wardens Jail</p> <p>5 Zachry
Spaghetti, Popcorn, Coke, Water, 50/50 Raffle</p> <p>6 Relay Warriors
Chicken Schwarma, Funnel Cakes, Basket Raffle</p> |
|--|

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>7 P&Z Dragons
Egg Rolls, Tattoos</p> <p>8 Dow Chemical St. Charles Operations
Animal Face Painting</p> <p>9 Camp Explore
Crawfish Egg Rolls, Trail Mix, Cupcakes, Kids' Crafts / Activities</p> <p>10 Curves of Destrehan
Coffee, Sweets, Jewelry, Raffle</p> <p>11 Valero
Edamame, Steamed Broccoli, Fried Oreos, Beat a Car, 50/50 Raffle</p> <p>12 Luling Volunteer Fire Dept.
Poutine, Fire Prevention Display, Smokehouse</p> <p>13 WalMart
Captain: Stacy Pritchett</p> <p>14 DHS Wildcat Divas
Cake Walk, Chickpea Soup</p> <p>15 OxyChem
Pastalaya, Raffles</p> <p>16 Monsanto
Waffle Cut Fries, Chocolate Covered Berries, Jambalaya</p> <p>17 J.B. Martin
Aussie Fish n' Chips</p> <p>18 The Real Survivors
Coffee, German Chocolate Cake, Chartered Fishing Trip Raffle</p> <p>19 St. Charles Parish Hospital
Captain: James Miller</p> | <p>20 DHS BETA Roars for the Race
Captain: Katie Pitts</p> <p>21 BFFs
Captain: Holly Hryniewich</p> <p>22 Team BFF
Brisket on Pistolette</p> <p>23 St. Charles Parish Courthouse Divas
Smoked Sausage on Bun
Bahama Mama Drinks, Flower Hair Accessories</p> <p>24 Legendre / Berthelot
Deuce Football, Themed Basket Raffles, 50/50 Raffle</p> <p>25 Rockin' For a Cure
French Fries, Nachos, Beignets</p> <p>26 Survivor Tent</p> <p>27 Survivor Registration</p> <p>28 Participant Registration</p> <p>30 Mission Delivery Tent</p> |
|---|--|

PLEASE NOTE:
All activities and campsites are subject to last-minute changes.

Louisiana Custom Cruisers Inc. Presents Cruise Nite With a Cause
6 p.m. until midnight in the lot adjacent to Relay For Life. Includes space walks, food and drinks, live music and entertainment. All proceeds will benefit the American Cancer Society. Sponsored by G. Smith Motorsports.

WANT TO BUY AN AD IN NEXT YEAR'S PROGRAM?
Visit www.relayprogram.com for more information.

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A black and white profile photograph of a young man wearing a suit and tie, with white earbuds in his ears. He is looking towards the right.

RJP Scaruffi
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A cartoon illustration of three children playing with large alphabet blocks. One child is holding a block with the letter 'B', another is holding 'A', and a third is holding 'C'.

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Dr. Marci Miranov

A square logo featuring a silhouette of a horse's head and a dog's head.

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A logo featuring a stylized sun and moon with a face, surrounded by stars.

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AM/PM
SERVICES

St. Charles Relay boasts both new, veteran teams

Courthouse Divas

The 'Divas' are actually a group made up of both women AND men whose work base happens to be the St. Charles Parish Courthouse.

Participants include members of Parish President V.J. St. Pierre's executive staff, St. Charles Parish Personnel Office and friends.

Members include Anedra Coleman, Donna Orgeron (survivor), Renee Agurcia, Veronica Alvarez, Gabriela Bourque, Bobby Donaldson, Linda Donaldson (survivor), Patricia Matherne (survivor), Kim Perret, Dwan Pitre, Renee Simpson, V.J. St. Pierre Jr., Rusty Walker and Sandra Zimmer.

Today as Relay Goes Around the World, the Divas will be celebrating life in the Bahamas as their chosen country. Visit their booth for Bahama Mama drinks, smoked sausage sandwiches and flower hair accessories.

Earlier in the Relay season, the team raised about \$900 through a bake sale and pastalaya lunch held at the Courthouse in Hahnville. The team also sponsored a dress down day for St. Charles Parish government office employees.

The Divas team also spearheads the yearly production of the Relay For

Life event program you are now reading. The team is proud to announce that program sponsorships have raised over \$800 for the American Cancer Society alone.

The Courthouse Divas team is the third incarnation of previous teams the Courthouse Creampuffs and V.J.'s Victorious Warriors.

Camp Explore

Our team was formed from camp staff and friends because many of us have had family members and friends affected by cancer.

Our country is South Africa, and our theme is, 'Going on a Safari.'

We are selling crawfish egg rolls as our dish and for

fundraising.

We will also set up a craft area for kids. The kids will receive a passport and will be able to go around the world to make crafts from different countries.

At each country they will get a stamp for their passport. The stations will be \$1 per craft, and they will be able to choose what crafts they would like to complete.

We will also have cupcake decorating for the kids for \$1.

The Real Survivors

The Real Survivors Relay team started out after the 1999 Relay For Life event in St Charles Parish as an idea



Coming together to support
CANCER RESEARCH

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To our angel,

DANIEL CAIRE

Love,
Mom, Dad,
Becky & Matt



Continued on page 15

among several cancer survivors.

The idea was to form a team made up of 100 percent survivors to help others dealing with the fight against cancer.

Starting with the Relay in 2000, team membership has included a wide variety of survivors. Usually some members are undergoing some stage of treatment.

This year's team members include Captains Bill Elrod and Mike Daigle, who are charter members

(Daigle was also the first Relay King); Anita Hymel, whose mother was a charter member; and Daigle's wife, Martha, a caretaker who later became eligible to join the team.

Jim Pierce and Margie Brannen were team members, and now they are Mr. and Mrs. They are also past King and Queen of Relay.

Billie Kinder is the matriarch of the team, and Ron Kruse is a former co-worker of Elrod, Daigle and Pierce.

Newer members are Roseanne Mire, Richard King, John Kinchen and Shirli Toups,

who was the 2010 Relay Queen. This year's rookie is B.J. Butler, who became eligible for team membership within the past year.

Former team members who have graduated to the Hall of Fame include charter members Louise Champagne and Harry Vickers, Carol Pierce, Art Robinson, Joe Danford, Vince Matherne, Neila Swann and Richard Lakatos.

The team's primary fundraiser for the American Cancer Society has been the raffle of a charter fishing trip

generously donated by team member and charter Captain Mike Daigle. Daigle runs Cast-It Charters out of Lafitte and is one of the most successful and popular charter captains in the area. Tickets are sold before and during the event with a drawing at the close of Relay.

Our team chose Germany as our theme country since several members have connections there. Elrod will be wearing leder hosen which were custom made for him in 1953. We will be selling German chocolate cake, other delicacies and kaffe.

The Real Survivors has a standing invitation to all cancer survivors to join our team and help the American Cancer Society find the cure.

Stop by our campsite and join our team for next year!

Throw Me a Cure

Throw Me a Cure is a friends and family team. This is our fourth year participating in Relay For Life of St. Charles Parish.

We formed a team when we found out a dear friend of ours was battling breast cancer. Our first year we only had about eight members. But as the years have gone, our team has grown as well.

Each and every team member has a special story of whom they are representing by being a part of the team or why it is important to them.

What a GREAT feeling it is to go out and raise thousands of dollars to help find a cure for cancer!

This year Throw Me a Cure goes to Jamaica. We will have Jamaican jerk pulled pork sandwiches, hot dogs and chili, taco soup and petit fours. We will also have a 50/50 raffle and a picture-taking and autograph signing by the New Orleans Voodoo Girls from 3 p.m. until 6 p.m.

See the campsite map on page 10 for more team info.

'The Real Survivors has a standing invitation to all cancer survivors to join our team and help the American Cancer Society find the cure.'

Your dollars in ACTION

Following are some examples of how the American Cancer Society made a difference in GNO/Southeast during 2009/10:

The American Cancer Society provided 3,620 families from the GNO/Southeast market with over 29,760 services.

The American Cancer Society provided 17,295 nights of free lodging to 565 families through the American Cancer Society's

Patrick F. Taylor Hope Lodge in New Orleans. The Hope Lodge provides free lodging and a nurturing environment for cancer patients and caregivers who must travel away from home to receive treatment.

In 2009/10, the American Cancer Society provided 226 college scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 to childhood cancer survivors in the Mid-South Division, including 22 scholarships to students in the GNO/Southeast market area.

The Look Good...Feel Better program provides women with beauty tools and tips to help minimize the appearance-related side effects of chemotherapy and radiation. A woman attending a session receives a free cosmetic kit valued at \$250. The Look Good...Feel Better program was

provided to 179 women in 2009/10.

A cancer diagnosis impacts the whole family; this is especially true when the patient is a child.

In 2009/10, through the S.M.I.L.E. program (Students Making It a Little Easier), the American Cancer Society was able to partner 21 LSU medical students with 30 pediatric cancer patients and siblings. This program allows

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.

the children to feel special by providing "Big Buddies" who communicate regularly with the children, sponsor clinic parties, field trips and a holiday gift program. It offers the parents much needed respite and provides the medical students an opportunity experience the

human side of their career choice.

Getting to and from treatment can be a challenge for many cancer patients. Some patients cannot afford the cost of driving, while others simply do not have the necessary means of transportation on their own. Others may be too ill to drive after receiving treatment. In 2009/10, the American Cancer Society Transportation Grants Program provided transportation assistance to more than 346 patients with 7,873 trips to

treatment in GNO/Southeast. Road to Recovery, a volunteer driver program, provided 17 patients with 228 rides to treatment.

Through the ACS' Reach to Recovery program, women diagnosed with breast cancer are able to receive support from a trained breast cancer survivor. Women receive an educational breast cancer kit which is tailored to their treatment plans, a visit by one of our Reach to Recovery volunteers, and temporary breast prosthesis. In 2009/10, 158 breast cancer patients in the GNO/Southeast community were served by the Reach to Recovery program.

The Patient Resource Room located in the American Cancer Society's local offices is available to provide wigs, hats, turbans, prostheses, nutritional supplements and cancer information to cancer patients and their caregivers free of charge. In 2009/10, the Patient Resource Room provided 366 patients and family members with various resources.

As the nation's largest private, non-profit source of cancer research funds, the American Cancer Society has contributed nearly \$ 4.7 billion to cancer research since its program began in 1946. In 2009/10, the American Cancer Society funded research grants totaling more than \$3.4 million in Louisiana at LSU Health Sciences and Tulane University.

Weathering the STORM

Local cancer survivors speak of strength, courage

For Elrod, shift in priorities signals 'survivor' status

When your dad is diagnosed with cancer and undergoes treatment, you become aware that this is something that can happen to you as well.

Even so, years later when you learn that your biopsy test is positive, it comes as a major, mind-numbing shock. Suddenly, your list of priorities undergoes a major revision.

This is the moment you become a cancer survivor, even though you are just starting the process of becoming cancer-free.

Three weeks after I was diagnosed with cancer, I was cancer-free and starting to recover. Sixteen days later, I walked a mile in 23 minutes. Two months later, I won \$50 for a second place finish in the race/walk competition at the United Way Bridge Run while averaging slightly over 10 minutes per mile. Two years later, I founded a Relay For Life

team here in St. Charles Parish.

Twelve years later, we are proud to say that we are still raising money for the American Society.

I may or may not remain cancer-free the rest of my life, but I know I will always be a cancer survivor.

Bill Elrod, Founder

The Real Survivors Relay Team

Toups is cancer-free after two-year battle

Two years ago at age 67, I was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. I spent four months seeing different doctors and taking many different tests. The last doctor I went to was a gynecological oncologist, Dr. Patricia Braly at

East Jefferson Hospital. She zeroed right in on my diagnosis.

I had two surgeries. One was laproscopic. The other was traditional, with an incision all the way down my stomach. My ovary was deemed inoperable, and two of my doctors concurred that I should be treated extensively by chemotherapy.

I took chemo for two years straight, and I have recently taken my last treatment. I am happy to say that I am now in remission. It is a wonderful feeling to be cancer-free!

It has been a long and arduous journey, but I thank the Lord every day for all of my many blessings.

I will be monitored closely for the next five years and will continue to walk in faith.

There were so many friends, acquaintances, even strangers, and of course, my loving husband, who were so caring, supportive and helpful. Having that kind of support is so important to the patient in the healing process.

To my caregivers and support system, I give many thanks. I will never forget their important role in my long but successful journey.

Shirli Toups, 69

Continued on next page

'I am happy to say that I am now in remission. It is a wonderful feeling to be cancer-free!'

– Shirli Toups

On tip from a stranger, Butler finds life-saving treatment

I fought against all odds to be here at Relay today.

The last week of February 2010, I was attending church one Sunday morning. A woman sitting next to me asked me something. I couldn't hear her, so I leaned forward. While doing so, I happened to slide my hands over the top of my thigh.

On my right leg, I felt a small bump, and it concerned me. It was about the size of a small marble and very hard. It didn't hurt but was surely strange.

That strange bump became the size of a small golf ball within a week and continued to grow until it became the size of a small baseball. The once-small bump continued to grow rapidly.

The Monday morning following my discovery, I went to the East Jefferson Medical Clinic in Kenner. I saw Dr. Michael Valdes. He ran many tests on me. First he thought it might be a blood clot but concluded I would need to see a bone specialist. He recommended Dr. George A. Murphy.

Dr. Murphy had been my boss for the last 14 years. He wasted no time in ordering an MRI with and without contrast. When the test results came back, Dr. Murphy wanted me to

see Dr. Luis Espinoza, another bone specialist in our office.

They told me they thought I had cancer. I was floored. I wondered how a person could develop cancer in their leg. I was told a person could have cancer anywhere.

Dr. Espinoza wanted me to see a cancer specialist at Ochsner Hospital, Dr. Mark Meyers. Things started moving quickly once they were sure it was cancer.

I was told right from the start that I had Pleomorphic Liposarcoma. It's a rare form of cancer that's only been seen in the last few years, and they didn't know how to treat it. It's a killer cancer that spreads very quickly. With it being so rare, doctors are still researching it. Treatments at this point are still experimental.

Doctors did a needle biopsy in June but were unable to detect information they needed. Three weeks later they did an open biopsy, which let air in. The sarcoma started growing faster. The test came back confirming that I did have Pleomorphic Liposarcoma, the most aggressive kind of sarcoma.

I had to take radiation treatments daily for five weeks, except weekends, in an attempt to shrink the cancer so it could be operated on. My first surgery took place in July and was very painful. We had to wait five to 10 days for the results.

Dr. Mark Meyers said the

pathologist thought he didn't get all the cancer. That was the first time I really lost it. Before that, my motto was, "God, I am not going to ask you why. I am just going to ask you to help me understand and get through it."

But when I got the call that day, I just lost it and broke down. I was told the only way to get rid of this fast-growing cancer was to amputate my leg. That was not an option for me.

Boyce, my wonderful husband, wanted me to get a second opinion before any other decision was made. I tried to get into M.D. Anderson and was refused many times because of insurance difficulties.

Then one Sunday afternoon we spotted an amazing couple walking on our street. I had never seen them before and have not seen them since. I call them my angels. They walked up to Boyce and started talking with him. He told them I had sarcoma and that M.D. Anderson had given us the run-around. The lady told him not to bother with M.D. Anderson and that there was a hospital at Emory University in Atlanta that was studying my type of cancer.

Emory was a wonderful hospital, and they told us the same thing Dr. Meyers said. They wanted me to redo the surgery. They said this time around they would go outside the margin and would take out more muscles.

In September we did just

that, and I had a four-day recovery in the hospital.

In a few days the doctor called with the good news that all the cancer was gone for good.

My procedure was very painful. I went home to nurses, a hospital bed, a handicapped potty, walkers, walking cane and whatever else it took for me to get through the day. I did physical therapy three days a week for months.

It was a painful journey of over a year, but today I can shout out loud to anyone who will listen – I AM CANCER FREE! I have to go three times a year for the next three years for MRIs and CAT scans. Then, if I am still cancer-free, I will go every six months; then once a year for the rest of my life.

Throughout this horrible journey my Methodist Church in St. Charles Parish was so supportive. For over six weeks, someone would bring a cooked meal each night. There would be someone to come and sit with me every day.

My church made a prayer chain out of construction paper with hundreds of names on it. They told me each person on that chain was praying for me nonstop through the morning and night. My husband took that prayer chain and hung it up in my hospital room. I now have it hanging in my home, and it will never be taken down.

This journey could not have been done without the good Grace of God walking with me the entire time. I am now walking with no assistance and only a slight limp. I even started

working again in January. I think going back to work has made me a much stronger person. It's given me the chance I needed to get stronger each day.

The amazing outreach of friends, family and even strangers has helped me through this. Without their prayers, support and love, I know I would not have been able to get through my ordeal.

*B.J. Butler, 63
Destrehan*

Hair loss doesn't faze 25-year-old survivor

My struggle with cancer began a year before I was diagnosed.

I began having thyroid trouble, weight loss and chest pains. I was treated for hyperthyroidism.

Three months before my wedding, I discovered a lump above my collarbone. I decided to get it checked out.

Thus began a journey I never thought I'd go through at 25 years old.

With the help of my father-in-law, a cancer survivor himself, I began to see the wonderful oncologist who had saved his life. I started chemotherapy two months after I was diagnosed. I began ABVD chemotherapy, which is the common regimen for Hodgkins.

My tumors were not responding anymore to the chemo drugs. My oncologist decided to try more aggressive

chemotherapy. The new chemotherapy, BEACOPP, required me to receive chemo 14 days per month instead of two days per month.

The new chemo also required me to be on a special diet, and eating became a chore. I lost all my body hair but learned to embrace my new look.

After seven months of extensive chemotherapy, I began radiation treatments. I thought radiation would be easier but discovered that to get the treatment, my head would have to be placed in a mask and bolted to a table.

After everything I had been through, this is the only thing that haunts me.

I have now overcome my needle phobia.

The hardest thing about this experience was not being able to do physical activities with my five-year-old daughter. My husband is a tower of strength with his love and support. He also pushed me when I needed it the most. He is also a cancer survivor.

With the loving support of my family and friends, I got through this difficult time and became a stronger person.

With all I've went through this past year, I have found a strength I never knew I had. I am now back at work and counseling children dealing with cancer.

I look at life with a new set of eyes.

Summer Raia, 25