



home > city hall > press releases

## April 26: Relay for Life at Perris High School

Perris officials and City employees are once again stepping up to do their part in the annual “Relay for Life” fundraiser to fight cancer.

The 2014 relay takes place April 26 at Perris High School and begins with opening ceremonies at 9 a.m. Cancer survivors complete the first lap at 9:30 a.m. and the event continues for 24 hours. Fourteen teams totaling 239 participants have signed up to walk in the Perris relay, raising about \$20,000 to date.

Perris Capital Improvements Manager Michael Morales is once again captaining the City team, which is participating in its 12th relay. Morales said his participation is personal—his mother, grandfather and uncle all died of cancer.

“People take part in the Relay for Life for all sorts of reasons,” he said. “Some people walk in honor of loved ones who have died. Some take part to honor survivors. Others want to come out and support their friends who are taking part. The reasons for taking part are as varied as the people who turn out. But this event can get emotional. Sometimes the emotions can be overwhelming.”

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and City Council members Al Landers and Mark Yarbrough will also attend.

“Relay for Life is important because of the cause they raise money to support,” Busch said. “Cancer will affect your life at one time or another. We appreciate the efforts of the Relay for Life folks and our City staff for taking part in this important event.”

Perris City Councilman Al Landers offered similar sentiments.

“If cancer hasn’t touched your life, it will,” he said.

Landers has been a mainstay for Perris’ Relay for Life for more than a decade, organizing his own team and spear-heading fundraising efforts. He was part of a Relay for Life program that raised \$127,000 during one 24-hour period—the most ever raised by a single community.

“We have always received great support from our community and I expect nothing different this time around,” Landers said.

“Great results don’t happen by themselves. They happen as a result of a lot of hard work.”

Yarbrough said he will run during the night, when the number of relay participants dwindles. Cancer has touched him personally too. His grandmother and 4-year-old granddaughter died from the disease.

“You either sit on the sidelines and hope things fix themselves or you get involved,” he said. “This disease does not discriminate.”

Perris Valley resident Bob McGinty is a three-time cancer survivor. He was diagnosed with prostate cancer almost nine years ago and has also battled two attacks of skin cancer. He said the City of Perris has been “incredibly supportive” of the American Cancer Society and the annual Relay for Life.

“Perris has been phenomenal in its support,” McGinty said.

He said his mission is to let people know that “you can survive and live a full life” after cancer.

“It is not a death sentence,” McGinty said.

The Perris Relay for Life receives a major boost every year from the Perris Auto Speedway. Track promoter Don Kazarian pledges at least \$10,000 a year to the relay, much of it that arrives from \$1, \$2 and \$5 donations from race fans. The track has contributed nearly \$100,000 to the American Cancer Society in the last several years.

“Cancer is a scourge,” Kazarian said. “We must do everything we can to defeat this terrible disease.”



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