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Relay for Life Surpasses Goal

Relay for Life organizers in Perris set a goal of \$22,000 for this year's 24-hour marathon to raise money for cancer research and treatments. They far surpassed the goal, pulling in nearly \$45,000.

For Perris City Councilman Al Landers, a major force in the annual Relay for Life, the result was pleasing—but not surprising.

"Cancer is a dreadful disease that if it has not touched your life yet, it will," he said from Perris High School, where he served as captain of the Ticups team that took to the campus track to raise money and awareness.

"The City of Perris has always supported this most worthwhile effort and it comes as no surprise that we have done so again. It is past time for a cure."



Perris City Councilman Al Landers and Capital Improvement Projects Manager Michael Morales at the April 26 Relay for Life at Perris High School. Morales is holding his daughter, Dora.

Well done!" Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, a prostate cancer survivor, and City Councilman Mark Yarbrough, whose granddaughter Halle died from the disease two years ago, also walked in the relay. "Cancer does not discriminate," Busch said. "It affects all ages, all races, all income levels.

This event is so important because of the cause it supports." Busch read the City of Perris proclamation supporting the relay. Yarbrough carried a picture of his granddaughter. "We can never do enough until we control and eradicate cancer in all its shapes and forms," he said. "This is where it starts. This is what it takes."

Relay participants formed teams to raise money and walk for those afflicted with cancer and to remember those whose have died from the disease. They lighted candles and wrote words of support and inspiration on luminarias. At least one person must be walking at all times during the 24-hour relay.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough holds a photograph of his granddaughter, Halle, who died from cancer at the age of 4.

Survivors led an enthusiastic crowd opening lap around the high-school track. Perris Capital Improvements Manager Michael Morales once again organized a team-On Track for a Cure—to take part in the relay. He spent hours before the walk making "spirit sticks" and "spirit jars."

As it is for so many relayers, Morales said his participation is personal. His mother, Dora, grandfather and uncle all died from cancer. He came to the relay with his nearly 3-year-old daughter, Dora, who was named after her grandmother. "I'm here so grandmothers can see their granddaughters grow up," Morales said.

Alexis Morgan, 22, a stage four skin cancer survivor, addressed the crowd who gathered on the Perris High School track. She was diagnosed at 17 and described feelings of anger and sadness. She shaved her head after doctors removed a cancerous growth from behind her left ear.

She received a health scare last year when tests indicated the cancer had returned—results that proved to be false. "I am now cancer free," Morgan said. "I will be anything I can to live life to the fullest. I fight for more birthdays every day of my life. I am fighting so one will have to hear the words: 'You have cancer again.'"



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch reads a proclamation in support of the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.

Perris Auto Speedway promoter Don Kazarian also spoke at the relay. During his 19 years at the speedway, he has seen many drivers ascend to the top levels of motorsports. But nothing in his tenure brings the satisfaction of raising money for cancer research and treatment.

The track has collected almost \$90,000 in recent years and 2014 has been declared "the drive to \$100,000." "I am most proud of our relationship to the Relay for Life," Kazarian said.

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