



# Perris Press Release

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## Relay for Life Raises Money and Awareness for Cancer Research

Hundreds of people took to Foss Field Park Saturday to walk, run, skip and saunter to raise money for cancer research and treatment at Perris' annual Relay for Life.

The American Cancer Society's yearly fund-raiser featured cancer survivors, their caregivers and families and friends and acquaintances drawn together to make common cause against the dreaded disease.

The City of Perris was represented by a team captained by Michael Morales, the Capital Improvement Project Manager. The team also featured Public Works Employees Linda Guthery and Yavonne Simms. The Perris team participated in the relay under the theme "On Track for a Cure."

Morales said his mother, Dora, died from cancer in 2002, making the relay personal for him.

"Although we've lost important people in our lives the battle continues for those coping with this terrible disease," Morales said.



Cancer survivor Dorothy Alexander tells her story to the crowd.

He called the relay a "symbol of hope."

The City of Perris has fielded a Relay for Life team for more than a decade. In addition, the City provides the venue for the event, its stage and sends elected officials to each relay to walk and otherwise support the program.

City Councilwoman Joanne Evans received the plaque honoring Perris for its commitment to fighting cancer and supporting the Relay for Life. Evans, a retired firefighter, said she's lost beloved colleagues to the disease. In particular, she remembered Paul Villegas and Michael Viet, both firefighters in Perris who succumbed to cancer.

"This cause is about survivors, making sure we have more of them," Evans said. "I am extremely proud to be here and represent Perris. The deaths of these two men were a tremendous loss for me. We need to continue to battle, continue to fight and continue to pray for those going through this terrible disease."

Survivors completed the first lap at the start of the relay. Other participants jogged, trotted and strolled around the track. Several bands performed a variety of musical selections to keep the crowd in the proper frame of mind. Perris Auto Speedway promoter Don Kazarian joined Evans on the stage and received accolades for his commitment to supporting the American Cancer Society.

The speedway has collected nearly \$75,000 in six years, mostly in small donations from fans collected by drivers who walk through the grandstands during intermissions from racing programs. Kazarian said the track's commitment to fighting cancer will go on.

"We will continue to support this cause as long as you want us to," Kazarian told the cheering crowd.

Bob McGinty's relay team consisted of more than 100 members, including about 60 students from the Nuvview Bridge Early College High School, where he teaches. Each member of the team wore blue t-shirts that read "Team Bob." McGinty was easy to spot. His t-shirt read "I am Bob." McGinty, 50, is a three-time cancer survivor.

In 2006, McGinty, 50, was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Two years later, doctors removed a malignant growth from his neck. In 2011, he underwent surgery for skin cancer.

"Early detection is the key," he said. "You can survive this. I appreciate the City's support for this cause. It is a big deal for me."

Neyli Castillo, 17, a senior at the high school, said she has participated in the Relay for Life for three years to support McGinty.

"I came out to support the survivors," she said. "Bob is a really nice guy. I've known him for four years. He helps the students."

Lynn Durbin, 62, is a one-year survivor of breast cancer. Durbin said she came to the Relay for Life to let people know that people can survive cancer with a "positive attitude and faith in the lord."

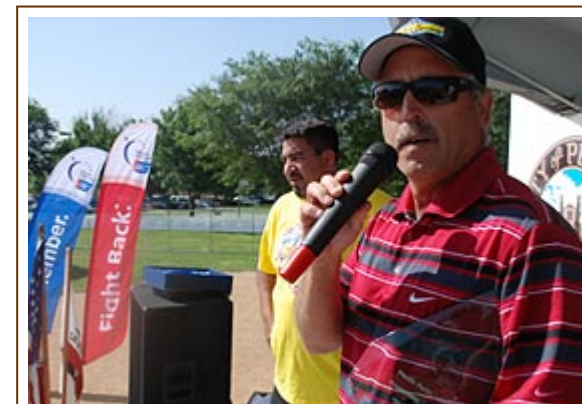
"It's an honor to be recognized as a survivor," Durbin said.

Perris High School graduate Sal Gomez, 35, is in remission from colon and prostate cancer. His team included several friends, including fellow Perris High School colleague Mike Bautista. Gomez said he has undergone three operations, three rounds of chemotherapy and radiation in his personal battle with cancer. He said he hasn't given up the fight.

"This is a horrible disease," he said. "I'm still alive. I'm still kicking."



Perris City Councilwoman Joanne Evans and breast cancer survivor Lynn Durbin were among those taking part in the annual Relay for Life at Foss Field Park.



Don Kazarian, promoter of the Perris Auto Speedway, said the track's commitment to raising money for the American Cancer Society will continue "for as long as you want us to."



Survivors take a first ceremonial lap at the start of Perris's annual Relay for Life.