



Perris News

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Participants Make March for Babies a Success!

The sun was scorching and the temperatures were high but nothing could diminish the enthusiasm of the Perris residents who came to Foss Field Park Saturday to March for Babies.

The event was the first ever March For Babies Relay from the March of Dimes and took place to raise money to stamp out premature births and their related problems.

When it all done and the last coins had been counted, event organizers raised nearly \$17,000.

"It's a great day for the relay," said City Councilwoman Rita Rogers, a division director for the March of Dimes. "It's a great day for the March of Dimes. It's a great day for babies."

More than 100 walkers took to the course early Saturday afternoon, ignoring the temperatures that sweltered to nearly 100 degrees. Rogers was joined by Mayor Daryl Busch, Councilman Al Landers and Riverside County Supervisor

Marion Ashley for a ceremonial first lap. Participants kept marching past sunset to dark, nine hours in all—one for every month of a complete pregnancy.

Busch said the City Council "completely supports" efforts like the Relay For Babies.

"Sometimes we forget about their plights and their struggle to survive," Busch said. "We want all babies to grow up healthy and live a normal life. We support this effort because it affects our City and so many others around the country."

Landers said City Council members spend hours supporting various community and charitable causes.

"But nothing is more important than the work we are doing today—marching for babies," he said.

Ashley said he was not surprised that Perris residents would turn out on a scorching day in difficult economic times.

"This is wonderful," Ashley said. "Everyone is feeling the pinch but to be able to put aside our fears to think about somebody less fortunate is truly wonderful. Perris has always been on the front lines of helping others. Perris is a caring community. It is a diverse and caring place. It sets the pace for this valley."

A contingent of Perris municipal staff led by City Manager Richard Belmudez, Assistant City Manager Ron Carr and Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin showed their support for the cause by spending most of the day at the march. Capital Improvements Project Manager Michael Morales coordinated the logistics of the march.

Perris staff showed their spirit by walking in several specialty laps, including a hula lap, salsa lap, twist lap and country music lap.

The marchers also included many people affected by birth defects. Riverside County school superintendent Kenneth Young said both of his sons were born with deformed feet and that his daughter, who is pregnant, will give

birth to a child with a similar deformity.

"It's organizations like the March of Dimes that help parents cope with those sorts of defects," said Young, March of Dimes Inland Chairperson. "They help those children and their families lead happy, healthy lives."

Perris resident Regina Morales said she came out to march for her granddaughter, Sharlett Lenaway, who was born 10 weeks early in 2007. March of Dimes helped provide the neonatal care she needed to stay alive. Today,

Sharlett is a healthy 2-year-old who loves the movie "Toy Story."

"March of Dimes helps all babies, not just our baby but all babies," Morales said.

See a Video from the March

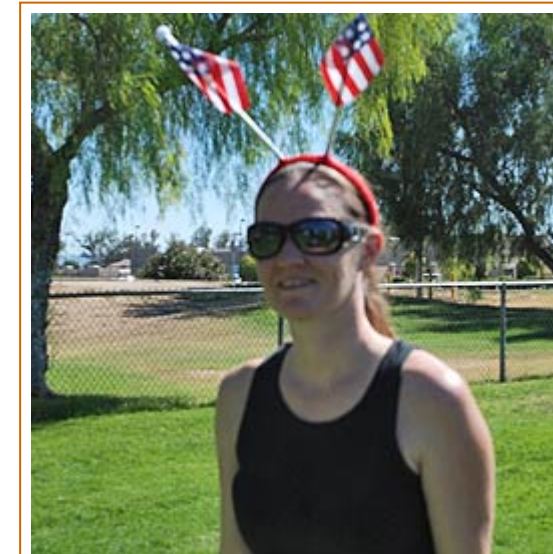
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City Councilwoman Rita Rogers conducts the opening ceremony at the first-annual Relay For Babies, a fundraiser for the March of Dimes. Standing next to her is Riverside County school superintendent Kenneth Young.



Landers and Busch lead the ceremonial first lap.



One marcher shows her patriotism.