Oakville rallies support around Relay for Life

Weather forecasters are predicting clear skies for this evening as the 2004 Canadian Cancer Society Oakville Unit's Relay For Life, kicks off at 4:15 p.m. at Appleby College and continues until 7 a.m. Saturday.

It's doubtful that even another downpour could dampen the spirits or enthusiasm of the more than 1,600 participants and hundreds of volunteers coming together for this event.

From marathons, music and magic, to shopping, socializing and swapping stories, or just plain fun, food, and face painting, it can all be found on-site for Relay For Life participants.

While team members set up and gaily decorate the tents that will be their intermittent quarters for the next 12 hours, a DJ will provide lively music, and clowns and face-painters will be on hand for those who have brought their children to enjoy the early part of the program.

At 7 p.m. the Milton Piper Band will herald the start of the Survivors Lap leading over 112 cancer survivors around the first Victory Lap of the Appleby track.

Dusk signals the beginning of the Luminary Ceremony, which honours the memory of those who have lost their battle with cancer, and pays tribute to those who have survived.

Luminaries are candles placed in flame-retardant bags that line the track and walkways of Appleby College. This year more than 5,000 luminaries have already been allocated, and additional ones will be available for purchase prior to the lighting ceremony.

The Luminary Ceremony is followed by a one-hour performance of chamber music in the chapel for those seeking a period of quiet reflection.

Alice Lee, who has volunteered for Oakville's Relay For Life since its local inception three years ago, and is serving as this year's entertainment chairperson is delighted with the varied and eclectic line-up she has assembled.

"Everyone involved is generously donating their time and talent," says Lee. "Some acts are returning for the third time, while brand new ones are just excited to be part of the event, but all have been 100 per cent cooperative."

Lee has gone to great lengths to ensure that there is something to appeal to everyone's taste.

"We want people to take home with them a wide variety of different memories," she says. "Whether it's a fun-filled activity to occupy the kids, a musically fast-paced aerobic warm-up, or an opportunity for quiet contemplation, we're giving them the options to choose."

Anyone interested in participating in next year's Relay For Life, or wanting more information on the event can go to www.cancer.ca, or call the Oakville Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society at 905-845-5231.

— Submitted by Mary Collett

Canadian Cancer Society / Société canadienne du cancer

Relay For Life

Relais pour la vie

Look for EXTRA SAVINGS this week in the Treasure Sheet inserted in selected areas of today's THE OAKVILLE BEAVER

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