

14-Relay Poems

LUMINARIA CEREMONY POEMS

- The standard Luminaria script, which includes a luminaria poem ("If you lost a brother or sister, please light a candle now..." etc.) that you can use can be found at

http://www.acsrelay.org/Darn_Good_Ideas/19-Luminaria_Ceremony_Script_By_Group_Example.doc

http://www.acsrelay.org/Darn_Good_Ideas/19-Luminaria_Ceremony_Script_Read_All_Names_Example.doc

- Here is the candle lighting poem where you acknowledge survivors and those who have lost their battle by how they are related to the participants. This can be used at a team captains meeting. It is the SAME poem that is found above in the

http://www.acsrelay.org/Darn_Good_Ideas/19-Luminaria_Ceremony_Script_By_Group_Example.doc

The volunteer leading the session asks individuals in the audience to light the candles as they are called:

- * If you are a cancer survivor, please stand & light your candle from the votive.
- * If you have a relative who is a survivor, stand & light your candle for the votive candle.
- * If you have lost a spouse to cancer, stand & light your candle from the glow of one of the candles.
- * If you have lost a child to cancer, stand & light your candle from the glow of another.
- * If you have lost a parent to cancer, stand & light your candle from the glow of one of the candles.
- * If you have lost a grandparent to cancer, please stand & light your candle from the glow of one of the candles.
- * If you have lost another family member to cancer, stand & light your candle from the glow of another.
- * If you have lost a friend to cancer, stand and light your candle from the glow of another.
- * If your candle is not lit, please stand and light it now.

All of your candles are lit because we have all been affected by cancer!
Every person in this room!
And we are doing something about it.

We are turning our sorrows into celebration and converting our loss into action. We have put faces and voices on this disease. WE know we have made a difference, and we will continue to make a difference. Our goal is a Cancer Free World.

Now, as we extinguish our candles, remember to always keep the flame of hope burning in your heart.

OTHER CANCER POEMS FOR VARIOUS USES - These can be used in Survivors Laps and other occasions:

- **Gordy's Vision** - Dr. Gordy Klatt (the father/founder of Relay) had a vision for what Relay symbolized.. This tries to capture it... You can find this at:

<http://www.pipestonestar.com/relayforlife/about.htm>

Gordy's Vision

Dr. Klatt had a purpose when he began the 24-hour Relay in 1985. The significance of daytime and nighttime coincides with the journey that all cancer patients go through.

Clear your mind and picture...

It's daylight. Life is wonderful. You're healthy, happy and looking forward to the future. You're looking forward to your child's dance recital or taking your child to Disney World for a vacation. You're looking forward to the new house you just bought. you have a new dream job that you're thrilled about.

But then, ...darkness falls.

You hear those words "You've got cancer", or worse, your child had cancer. Your life has suddenly become very dark. You don't know what the outcome will be. You feel there is no hope in sight. You start your treatments. You're nauseous and you have no hair. You're exhausted from caring for your child and from the agony knowing there's nothing you can do to make him healthy again. You couldn't possible feel any worse.

Until...

The sun starts to rise. The tumor is shrinking. Your treatments are working. You're getting your appetite back. Your child feels well enough to go out and play for just a few minutes. There is hope.

It is now daylight and you're in remission. You have your life back. You've made it through the night and the darkness. you celebrate life in the daylight knowing that the darkness of nighttime is behind you.

That is why we Relay, This is why Relay is an overnight event.

- **POWER OF PURPLE** - Here is a poem found by Julie (tjlknox) and shared with us - Bonnie Kelley who is a volunteer in Ogle West wrote this poem. At the ACS RFL of Ogle West kick-off held on January 27th they held a luminaria ceremony. They had every that attended sitting around round tables. In the middle of the round tables they had white tee light candles and one purple candle that was in the middle and covered by a purple can. They dimmed the lights and some one read the following poem:

Tonight we are all here to celebrate the **POWER OF PURPLE**, the power to help the American Cancer Society achieve its mission to eliminate cancer.

The **POWER OF CANCER** is a dread force causing pain and suffering everywhere. All of us here tonight have been touched by cancer, giving us the **POWER OF DETERMINATION** to do something to ease the burden of this terrible disease. We empower ourselves by participating in the Relay For Life to raise funds for research to find a cure, and by raising awareness of cancer prevention, early detection, treatment and patient services provided by the American Cancer Society.

Equally important tonight is the **POWER OF REMEMBRANCE**, for we must never forget those whose lives have been lost to cancer and those courageous survivors who inspire us all.

We will now conduct a candle-lighting ceremony to symbolize the **POWER OF HOPE** as we honor those who have had or now have cancer. May all of us here, who represent the **POWER OF PURPLE**, continue in our common goal to fight against cancer.

If someone you know has been diagnosed with cancer in the past year, light a candle.

If someone you know has died of cancer many years ago, light a candle.

If someone you know is undergoing treatment for cancer now, light a candle.

If someone you know has been a longtime survivor, light a candle.

If there is a very special person you would like to honor, light a candle.

Now would someone at each table lift the purple can that is located in the center of each table? This purple candle represents **HOPE**. Please light this candle and watch, as **HOPE** burns brightly.

- **HOPE POEM** - Here is a version of the HOPE POEM:

"We all come to Relay For Life because we are looking for HOPE.

"H" is for Hope, which is everlasting.

"O" is for Oneness, because we all stand united in the fight against this dreaded disease.

"P" is for Power, because that is what we have, as part of the more than 4000 events across our beautiful nation!

"E" is for Eradication, because we will ERADICATE cancer and make it a distant memory!

One day soon, I will read a different story, one that does not talk of HOPE, but of a CURE:

"C" is for Cancer, the disease that has joined Polio, Smallpox and Cholera as largely a thing of the past.

"U" is for Us, the people who were a big part of making this possible.

"R" is for Remember, because though we have eradicated this disease, we still remember those who have battled this demon.

AND

"E" is for "Eradicate - NO ONE GETS CANCER ANYMORE! We have WON this battle!

THANK YOU FOR MAKING CANCER A MEMORY.

THANK YOU FOR RAISING OVER \$1 BILLION DOLLARS AT RELAY FOR LIFE TO MAKE THIS A REALITY.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US REACH THE FINISH LINE. WE HAVE FOUND A CURE!

But Until that day, we all battle on. We all unite against cancer. We all walk thru the night, because "THERE IS NO FINISH LINE UNTIL WE FIND A CURE"!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

"There are other versions of the HOPE poem. This is an amalgamation of some different ones" (Ramesh Moorthy, Baltimore, MD)

- **What Cancer Cannot Do** - Thanks to Nita McKay for sharing this!

What Cancer Cannot Do

Cancer is so limited.
 It cannot cripple love.
 It cannot shatter hope.
 It cannot erode faith.
 It cannot destroy peace.
 It cannot silence courage.
 It cannot suppress memories
 It cannot kill friendship
 It cannot erode the spirit.
 It cannot conquer the soul.

- **I Relay For A World Without Cancer** - "I put this together because a volunteer had asked me for an example of a poem about 'a world without cancer'... I sent her a list of samples I had (found on <http://www.acsrelay.org>, and the one below that I put together. Feel free to use it, modify it, etc. If you don't mind though, please say it came from <http://www.acsrelay.org> - Ramesh Moorthy, Baltimore, MD"

I relay for a world in which no parent will ever again hear the dreaded words "**your child has cancer**"
 I relay for a world in which no husband will ever again hear the frightening words "**your wife has cancer**"
 I relay for a world in which no wife will ever again hear the desolate words "**I'm sorry but your husband has cancer**"

I relay for a world in which no child will ever hear - "**I so sorry that you lost your mom to cancer**"

I relay for a world in which no child will ever hear - "**Your father fought hard to beat cancer...**"

A day will come where **we will finally cure cancer.**

Soon after that - **cancer will be like a cold.**

And on another day - **A GREAT DAY!** - **cancer will be eradicated** - wiped from the face of this earth.

That day - **there will be NO MORE CANCER!**

- **I Walked For You, I Walked For Me** - Here is a poem written by breast cancer survivor Jackie Rutkovich found at the following site:
<http://www.ibcmemorial.org/565.html>

I Walked For You, I Walked For Me

I walked around a track today:
 I walked to help a disease go away.
 I walked because there is a need.
 I walked that bodies could be freed.

I walked to give a small child hope:
 I walked to help someone cope.
 I walked for a husband or a wife;
 I walked to help prolong a life.

I walked with my head held high;
 I walked for that one about to die.
 I walked excitedly not demure;
 I walked to help find a cure.

I walked for everyone to see;
 I walked for you, I walked for me.

It was quoted in an article by Andrew Hirsch, who is a Staff Writer for the Coshocton Tribune in Coshocton, Ohio (date of article: Saturday, May 15, 2004)

- Relay For Life - Bring Hope - This came from the following page:

<http://www.bporch.net/relayforlife.htm>

"Relay For Life - Bring Hope"

1998 - Written at 3am at an Illinois Relay For Life Event. -j.smith

Is there someone that you know?
Whose life is on the line?
They've been going through
the fight of their lives...
Come Together, Come Together for them
For Relay for Life

There are people,
Too many people... crying
For a loved one that they know...
Come Together, Come Together... for them
For Relay For Life

Walk together,
and have faith together...
We can bring hope
into their lives
Please come together, for them
For Relay for life

We can bring hope, all around
we have faith in the people in your town
So Come Together
For Relay for life.

We can bring hope, all around
we have faith in the people in this town...
So Come Together, for them
For Relay for Life.

- **Great Poem for A Butterfly Related Theme! - Butterfly Indian Legend** - This poem comes from Kerri M and the Greater Auglaize Relay For Life! - <http://www.auglaizerelay.com/> - Thanks! - *"Our theme for this year is Butterflies, Beaches, & Buffett (as in Jimmy Buffett) Cancer Take Flight On Butterfly Wings Tonight. We are having a live butterfly release at opening & closing (weather permitting). I am sending you a sample of our tickets. I bought butterfly pins off a couple of ebay stores so that the person gets a pin to wear & keep & if they come to Relay they receive a live butterfly to "release cancer" "in honor of" "in memory of" or just for fun. We are planning on having Jimmy Buffett music, butterfly bracelets, sand for the kids to play in, coconut bra contest, plus anything that anyone can think of! We had a committee member who's son had a luau wedding reception, she got all the decorations from that for us to use. We will sell lei's also. Our survivor dinner will be a luau (held in March or April) to hopefully excite our survivors about Relay. Feel free to use any of our ideas for your web site. My husband, best friend & I came up with the theme."*

They will read this poem at our opening.

Butterfly Indian Legend

If anyone desires a wish to come true they must first
Capture a butterfly and whisper that wish to it.

Since a butterfly can make no sound, the butterfly can not reveal
The wish to anyone but the Great Spirit who sees and hears all.

In gratitude for giving the beautiful butterfly its freedom,
The Great Spirit will always grant the wish.

So, according to legend, by making a wish and giving the butterfly its freedom,
The wish will be taken to the heavens to be granted

- **Ruben Perez's Poem written to be read by his girlfriend when he passed away** - Ruben Perez battled cancer for some time, and from what others say - handled it with aplomb... His girlfriend Terri had the following to say in his eulogy: *"Ruben and I dated for two years. We met in July 2003 but didn't start dating till December of that year. I had taken him to get my car worked on. He was recommended by a friend. The first day I met him we hit it off. We were cracking jokes while he worked on my car. It felt like I'd known him for years. There hasn't ever been anyone like that for me. We started exchanging emails, email jokes and this went on for months as just friends. Then on Dec. 28, 2003 all that changed. Humor was a huge part of our relationship. I remember his 50th birthday was a great memory for both of us. And on Valentine's Day 2004 it snowed and stuck as he left my house in the morning for his. He immediately took to my dog and loved him. He taught him tricks, bathed him weekly, and would give him treats. They bonded as if Ruben was his dad. Ruben remembered dates like you wouldn't believe and could spin a tale with so much detail. He was so considerate, sensitive, funny, generous, and protective of me, fun, and would help anyone. He helped a lot of people through the years.*

He had been with his company 19 years, the latter years as a supervisor having been promoted twice. When he got sick some of his co-workers took up a collection for him. He made his employees' shifts easier with his joking attitude, always cracking jokes yet he was a great supervisor. He was a teacher and taught people many things. He rarely missed a day of work and even when he got sick and I would

beg him not to go to work because he was in pain he would try to work anyway. He was always bringing me things from the company that he'd find, little treasures that people would throw out that he knew I would like. We made a lot of plans. Going to Hawaii, getting married, maybe having a child. He always wanted to have kids of his own. We had a lot of plans. He always wanted a Harley and after he was diagnosed he was going to get one but never did. He loved to cook, loved animals, and kids. There was so much to him and I know I'll forget to tell you many things. He would call me "Silly Bunny," "Babycakes," and "Mamasita." I would call him "My Gingerbread Man." He was a romantic, always surprising me with something. He was a good listener. One of the last things he told me before he died was that I had his heart. He wrote me tons of love notes and love letters. When his ex-stepdaughter had her first child in October it was his pride and joy. He told me often that when he held the baby his pain went away.

-
- Shortly before he died he told me that he had found his purpose in life - To spread the word about God who he had found to kids, teenagers, his best friend and that maybe I could help him do that. He told me that when he recovered from cancer that he would be a different person and he always said, "I'm going to beat this thing."

He always gave me compliments. He taught me a lot of things. He used to ask me, "Will you still love me when I'm old and gray?" He enjoyed going to Possum Kingdom Lake and Benbrook Lake to fish, swim, and boat. His favorite songs were the Hawaiian version of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" and "What A Wonderful World" from the "Good Morning Vietnam" movie soundtrack. When he got sick I used to visit him at work as usual, only this time we would put some of his favorite songs in his CD player in his car and hold hands while talking about the future as the music played. After he was diagnosed he had a spiritual experience and spiritual awakenings along and along and he would share them with me. It was incredible to witness. I feel so lucky to have known him. So many didn't know how great he was."

And here is the poem he wrote to her:

"When You Lose Me Forever, Read This"

If tomorrow starts without me Terri,
And I'm not there to see,
If the sun should rise and find your eyes all filled with tears for me;
I wish so much you wouldn't cry the way you did today,
While thinking of the many things we didn't get to say.
I know how much you love me
As much as I love you,
And each time that you think of me,
I know you'll miss me too.
But when tomorrow starts without me,
Please try to understand,
That an angel came and called my name,
And took me by the hand,
And said my place was ready,
In heaven far above,
And that I'd have to leave behind;
All those I dearly love.
But as I turned to walk away,
A tear fell from my eye
For all my life I'd always thought,

I didn't want to die.
I had so much to live for, so much left to do,
It seemed almost impossible
That I was leaving you.
I thought of all the yesterdays,
The good ones and the bad,
I thought of all the love we shared,
And all the fun we had.
If I could relive yesterday,
Just even for awhile,
I'd say goodbye and kiss you
And maybe see you smile.
But then I fully realized
That this could never be,
For emptiness and memories
Would take the place of me.
And when I thought of worldly things
I might miss come tomorrow,
I thought of you and when I did,
My heart was filled with sorrow.
But when I walked through heaven's gates,
I felt so much at home.
When God looked down and smiled at me
From his great golden throne,
He said, "This is eternity. And all I've promised you."
"Today your life on earth is past,
But here life starts anew.
I promise no tomorrow. But today will always last,
And since each day's the same way,
There's no longing for the past.
You have been so faithful, So trusting and so true.
Though there were times you did some things,
You knew you shouldn't do.
But you have been forgiven, And now at last you're free.
So won't you come and take my hand, And share my life with me?"
So when tomorrow starts without me, Don't think we're far apart,
For every time you think of me, I'm right here, in your
heart.

Ruben Perez

NOT QUITE POEMS BUT ELEGANT AND ELOQUENT STORIES!

- "Cancer does not stop for nighttime" - Thanks to LoriMac!

"Cancer does not stop for nighttime"

Relay For Life starts at dusk and ends at the next day's morning. The light and darkness of the day and night parallel the physical effects, emotions and mental state of a cancer patient while undergoing treatment.

The Relay begins when the sun is setting. This symbolizes the time that the person has been diagnosed of having cancer. The days are getting darker and this represents the cancer patient's state of mind as they feel that their life is coming to an end.

A slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of the bitter battle against a deadly disease, a battle fought by more than 1.3 million new patients each year.

The salt sprinkled on the plate reminds us of the countless tears of personal anguish shed by the patient and those shed by family members and friends who have lost a loved one.

The glass is inverted in memory of those people who are not here to join our celebration of successes.

But, the candle represents the light of hope that lives in the hearts of all of us -- hope represented by cancer survivors and the hope for a cure discovered as a result of the detailed work of the medical profession made able through funds generated through events such as Relay For Life.

As the evening goes on, it gets colder and darker, just as the emotions of the cancer patient does. Between 1:00a.m. and 2:00a.m. represents the time when the cancer patient starts treatment. They become exhausted, some sick, not wanting to go on, possibly wanting to give up. As a participant in the Relay, you have been walking and feel much the same way. You cannot stop or give up, just as the cancer patient cannot stop or give up.

Around 4:00a.m. to 5:00a.m., symbolizes the coming of the end of treatment for the cancer patient. Once again they are tired, but they know they will make it.

The sun rising represents the end of treatment for the cancer patient. They see the light at the end of the tunnel and know that life will go on. The morning light brings on a new day, full of life and excitement for new beginnings for the cancer patient. As a participant, you will feel the brightness of the morning and know that the end of the Relay is close at hand.

When you leave the Relay, think of the cancer patient leaving their last treatment. Just as you are exhausted and weak, so is that person after treatment.

REMEMBER: THERE IS NO FINISH LINE UNTIL WE FIND A CURE!!!

- **"Cancer never sleeps" - Thanks to family**

Relay For Life is an overnight event because "cancer never sleeps." Relay For Life starts at dusk and ends in the early morning hours of the following day. The light and darkness of the day and night parallel the physical efforts, emotions, and mental state of a cancer patient while undergoing treatment. The Relay begins when the sun is setting as this symbolizes the time that the person has been diagnosed with cancer. As the evening gets darker, this represents the cancer patient's state of mind as they feel that life is coming to an end. The evening gets cooler and darker, just as emotions of the cancer patient do. Around 1 am to 2 am somewhat represents the time when a cancer patient starts treatments. They become exhausted, sometimes sick, not wanting to go on and often times wanting to give up. During these hours in a Relay, participants feel much the same way while walking, but they cannot stop or give up, just as the cancer patient does not stop or give up. By 4 am to 5 am this is symbolizing the time that the treatment comes to an end. Once again they are tired and weak, but they hope they will make it. The sun rising represents the end of treatment for the cancer patient. The morning light brings the new day full of hope of being cured. So do the participants of the Relay, feel the brightness of the morning and know that the end of the Relay is close at hand. When the participants leave the Relay, they can think of the cancer patients leaving their last treatment, and just as the participants are exhausted and weak, so is the cancer patient. But remember; never give up on the hope that one day, with everyone's help, there will be a cure

- **The Empty Table** - courtesy of the Bladen Relay For Life



"THE EMPTY TABLE"

We call your attention to the small table that occupies a place of dignity and honor. It is set for one, symbolizing the fact that some of our loved ones are missing from this gathering. They have been diagnosed with cancer, and they are some of the names and faces behind luminaries.

The chair is empty. Many of those who fought the battle with cancer are no longer with us, but rather than mourning their loss, we choose to celebrate their life.

These people are unable to be with their loved ones and families now, so let us join together to recognize and honor them, and to bear witness to their struggle and their memory.

The table is small, symbolizing the frailty of a single patient, sometimes alone in the fight against his or her disease.

The tablecloth is white, symbolic of the medical profession: doctors, nurses, and researchers who help fight the battle for life.

The single rose in the vase signifies the enduring love of their families and friends and the strength of a patients' will to fight the disease that ultimately claimed many of them.

The pink ribbon on the vase represents the ribbons worn on the lapels of millions who support a continued search for a cure not only for breast cancer, but for other cancers as well -- cancers that are expected to kill over half a million people in the United States this year.

A slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of the bitter battle against a deadly disease, a battle fought by more than 1.3 million new patients each year.

The salt sprinkled on the plate reminds us of the countless tears of personal anguish shed by the patient and those shed by family members and friends who have lost a loved one.

The glass is inverted in memory of those people who are not here to join our celebration of successes.

But, the candle represents the light of hope that lives in the hearts of all of us -- hope represented by cancer survivors and the hope for a cure discovered as a result of the detailed work of the medical profession made able through funds generated through events such as Relay For Life.

- **"Caring For Cancer" - Plant A Seedling For A Cure - Seedling Poem #1 (see below for #2) -**
"This is an "idea" that was "seeded" no pun intended by a note from a volunteer, Dori. It is by no means an original idea, as many events have given seedlings to their survivors during the survivors lap, or used seedling trees to honor survivors in other ways... It is inspired by reading such wonderful writings such as "Cancer Never Sleeps" and the others that are out there, and honors in particular children fighting cancer... I think it would be a particularly nice idea to give seedlings for kids with cancer to plant and grow up with... There are various poems related to this, apparently, though I have not seen any others, but not for looking! If you know one (I am sure better written than mine!) please send it to rflvolunteer@gmail.com." (written by Ramesh M., Volunteer, Baltimore, MD)

Caring For Cancer

Today, we honor our survivors and remember those who we have lost.
 But every day, every year, there is progress.
 Yesterday's death sentence is today's prognosis for a full recovery.
 Yesterday's HOPE is today's CURE!

And so to honor those battling cancer with us today, we present each survivor with a seedling that they can
 "grow" with.

Each day, remember how far this tree has come, and how far you have come.
 Each day, remember that this tree was once a seedling, and remember how you were once at the beginning of
 your treatments.

Each day, remember that curing cancer has become an eventuality, not impossibility

And today we plant that tree that, as you grow, will grow with you!

- **Seeds of Hope - Seedling Poem #2** - This is a poem that comes from Dori at the Summerville SC Relay For Life - what a great example! They had this poem attached to seedlings that the survivors could plant. Dori says *"The librarian at Gregg Middle took my email and put an awesome border around the poem. The Girl Scout Troop 188 bagged up the trees and tied the poem on to each "small" seedling! We had 200 seedlings and 90 survivors - so the teams were able to take some back to "home base" and give out."*

I am just a small symbol of HOPE.

Please take me home and plant my roots

.....a miracle to see.....

I am standing there to show the world what

Can be done

If we dig our heels into the ground and

Never quit until we've won!

Thank you for participating in the

Celebration of YOU!

THANK YOU'S

- See the file

http://acsrelay.org/Darn_Good_Ideas/21-Thank_You_Poem_To_Read_To_Committee_Chesire_Relay.doc

LINKS TO OTHER CANCER POEMS

- <http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/poetrypage/cpage.html>

have some great poems!

- <http://www.thenewhealthfind.com/Health/ConditionsandDiseases/Cancer/PersonalPages/>

have some great stories and links about cancer

OTHER MOTIVATIONAL INFORMATION

"Cancer never sleeps, so neither do we!

Relay For Life was originally conceived as a 24 hour event because cancer patients battle the disease around the clock. When we relay, we go on whether it is day or night, rain or shine... NO MATTER WHAT! Cancer patients don't get a day off from the disease, so why should we?

There Is No Finish Line Until We Find A Cure!"

- developed for a Baltimore, MD Relay For Life Flyer