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WELCOME TO THE CEREMONIES TOOLKIT

For the millions of people touched by cancer each year, Relay For Life events are experiences that they will remember and cherish forever. Your event’s ceremonies play an important role in contributing to their experience.

To help, this toolkit will help you create amazing ceremonies. You get to pick and choose what you like and can select each component of the ceremony. Our hope is that these suggestions will help your Relay For Life event have memorable ceremonies that everyone will leave the event wanting more.

There are options for the Opening Ceremony, Luminaria Ceremony, and Closing Ceremony as well as resources for the Spirit of Relay ceremony and caregiver scripting.

How to Use this Toolkit

At the beginning of each ceremony section within this toolkit, you will see two tables that look like the example below. These will help you track all of the available options and then easily choose which you would like to use.

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*In each of these tables, all of the options are links that will allow you to quickly and easily jump through the document if you are viewing it on a computer.

My Ceremony Element Selections:

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That said, please feel free to use this kit as you need. Perhaps you already have your introduction written. If so, use it! Maybe you only need ideas for a mission message and Heart of Relay moment. Please use these ideas, and then add your community’s flavor to the other parts of the ceremonies.

**Note:** A Heart of Relay moment is an element of the ceremony that evokes emotion in the members of the crowd. This can be accomplished through use of a poem, song, video, photo slideshow, etc.

**What is the Spirit of Relay?**
For events that go overnight, it is a recommendation to include the Spirit of Relay ceremony (between 11 p.m. and midnight) to recognize teams, survivors, sponsors, etc. The Spirit of Relay ceremony can be implemented either after the Luminaria Ceremony or during another appropriate slot in your event program. This ceremony brings the energy back up and should be used at a time to get participants fired up and excited about being a part of the event.

**When to Start Planning My Ceremonies**
Now! It’s never too early to start creating your ceremonies. In fact, your ceremony agenda will need to be completed about a month before the event in order for the information to be included in the program.

**The WOW Factor!**
What is going to make your participants have that “a-ha” moment? You want them to say to themselves, “Wow, those ceremonies were phenomenal, exciting, and moving. I completely understand why my participation in the Relay event is making a difference.”

You may have heard of the “purple cow phenomena” based on the book *Purple Cow* by Seth Godin. The author urges readers to put a purple cow (not just a regular brown cow that everyone has seen a thousand times) into everything they build and everything they do in an effort to create something truly unforgettable.

As you and your Event Leadership Team plan your Relay ceremonies, ask yourself this: “What is my purple cow phenomena… what will provide that “wow” factor?”

- *How will we stand out from every other cancer walk in our community?*
- *How will we stand out from every other charitable event in our community?*
- *How will each ceremony differ from the one participants saw the year before?*
- *How will we keep our event unique with a fresh twist?*
BEST PRACTICES AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR CEREMONIES

In order for all of your ceremonies to be as impactful as possible, consider the following questions as you engage in the planning process:

- Are all Relay participants aware a ceremony is happening and when each ceremony is happening?
- Can the ceremonies be heard by participants? Is the sound system large enough for your venue?
- Are the participants comfortable during the ceremonies?
- Are the ceremonies interactive and engaging?
- Have you made certain your ceremonies start and end on time?
- Have speakers and performers rehearsed and become acquainted with the A/V equipment?
- Have you selected appropriate songs and given them, or a list of them, to the DJ?

Opening Ceremony

Objective:

- Unite the community to save lives from cancer.
- Honor survivors and caregivers by celebrating their cancer experiences.
- Inspire hope by sharing recent accomplishments and progress.
- Share the message that cancer is a year-round priority.

Best Practices:

- The ceremony should be 20-30 minutes in length and finish with everyone lining the track cheering while the survivors and caregivers take the first lap together.
- Explain the logistics of the Survivors and Caregivers Lap to ensure that those attending for the first time understand what they need to do – as well as what the audience needs to do.
- Don’t call the survivors and caregivers to the starting line until it’s time to start the lap.
- If you’re using medals, unwrap them beforehand and ensure you have enough people handing medals to survivors at the finish line so as not to congest the area.
- Make sure your survivors at the front of the starting line are holding a banner. The Survivors Lap is one of the most photographed moments of a Relay event – and many times is the picture that is shown in a local newspaper.
- Less is more. You have the next several hours to allow for sponsor and VIP recognition. The opening ceremony should include only a few speakers.
- Consider having youth and student survivors hold balloons.
Considerations:

- Consider adding one of the caregiver scripting options for additional caregiver recognition.
- Consider an alternative to announcing each survivor’s name, cancer type, and years of survival. Some alternatives are listed in the opening ceremony section.
- Consider creating a covered location in which the survivors can sit while the opening ceremony begins.
- Consider placing the medal around the survivor’s neck with a warm “Congratulations on surviving your battle” versus handing the medal to them.

Jump to Opening Ceremony Element Options

Luminaria Ceremony

Objective:

- Provides participants an emotional journey to grieve for those lost to cancer, reflect on their own personal cancer experience, and see the hope for the future.

Best Practices:

- The ceremony should be 20-30 minutes in length and finish with everyone taking a silent lap together.
- Finish the ceremony with a silent lap. This part of the ceremony provides participants the opportunity to grieve.
- There should be no music or speaker for about 5-10 minutes.
- The silence can be broken if an event desires to use a bagpiper.
- Once the silent lap is completed, play a semi-energetic song that will keep people wanting to stay. Suggestions include the following: For Once in My Life (Stevie Wonder), Dancing Queen (ABBA), Don’t Worry Be Happy (Bobby McFerrin), or Happy (Pharrell Williams).
- Oftentimes, people will want to leave after the Luminaria Ceremony, but the right music combined with the right entertainment/activities immediately following can keep attendees there longer.
- If using glow sticks in your ceremony, ensure you weigh the bags down with something white. An inexpensive recommendation is rock salt, rocks, or canned food. Any color inside the bag will absorb the glowing color of the glow stick.
- Please ensure that no one under age 18 has lighters or participates in the lighting of candles.

Considerations:

- Consider adding the caregiver scripting options for additional caregiver
recognition.

- Instead of reading all the names on the luminaria bags, consider creating a slideshow of pictures during your ceremony. These images should be of survivors who triumphed over their disease as well as cancer patients who were lost to cancer. When names are read aloud, someone’s name is usually missing or mispronounced which can offend participants and their families.
- Ask your Team Captains and team members to submit photos of their loved ones for you to scan and show during the ceremony. In fact, the slideshow can even “loop” while people are walking around the track during the duration of the event.
- Consider lighting all of the luminaria bags as part of the ceremony itself instead of before. It could be offer a dramatic and emotional effect.

Jump to Luminaria Ceremony Element Options

Closing Ceremony
Objective:
- Provides an emotional close to the Relay event.
- Acknowledges teams, participants, and all attendees.
- Inspires attendees to make an actionable pledge to fight cancer throughout the year and share information about the American Cancer Society with those who are in need.

Best Practices:
- After an introduction, start with the awards. The teams have gathered, and it’s a perfect time to announce the top fundraising team, top fundraising individual, best decorated campsite, etc. Plus, if you promote that you’ll be announcing awards, more people will stick around (or even come back)!
- The ceremony should be 20-30 minutes in length and finish with everyone taking a final lap together.

Considerations:
- Consider adding one of the caregiver scripting options for additional caregiver recognition.
- Ensure 2018 team commitment forms or information about the wrap-up party is available to share during your closing ceremonies.

Jump to Closing Ceremony Element Options
OPENING CEREMONY

Jump to Opening Ceremony Best Practices and Considerations
(click on options to be taken directly to that place in the document)

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*Consider adding the [caregiver scripting options](#) into this ceremony as well for additional recognition of this important group of Relay participants.

**TIP:** Be sure to either coordinate an emcee to introduce the next person in the ceremony or have the current person introduce the next person.
OPENING CEREMONY – INTRODUCTION OPTIONS

OPTION A
Welcome! Thank you for coming out to the Relay For Life of [COMMUNITY NAME] and joining the American Cancer Society to create a world free from the pain and suffering caused by cancer. My name is [NAME], and I am the [POSTION] Lead for our Relay For Life event.

At this time, please welcome [NATIONAL ANTHEM SINGER NAME], who will sing our national anthem.

(After national anthem is complete)

We have all gathered this [MORNING/ AFTERNOON/ EVENING] because cancer – this terrible, destructive disease – continues to affect the lives of those we love. It is something we simply cannot ignore.

By the end of this year, 1.6 million people are expected to be newly diagnosed with cancer and 595,690 people will die from the disease. Cancer is the second most common cause of death in the US, exceeded only by heart disease, and accounts for nearly 1 of every 4 deaths.

It is a worthy opponent, to say the least. It has a formidable nature, a resourceful manner and a destructive appetite. But it will never have what we have. We have an advantage over cancer because of the generosity of people like you. You have courage, hope, empathy, determination. And together, we can make the greatest impact to save lives. And that's why we are here today.

When we raise money through the Relay For Life of [COMMUNITY NAME], we help the American Cancer Society touch the lives of so many – those who are currently battling cancer, those who may face a diagnosis in the future, and those who may avoid a diagnosis altogether.

Today, we are here to celebrate all those who have battled cancer – our survivors in the purple T-shirts – remember loved ones lost, and take action to save lives. Over the next [NUMBER] hours, our event will recognize the battle waged around the clock by those facing cancer. The light and darkness of the day and night parallel the physical effects, emotions, and mental state of a cancer patient while undergoing treatment.

It’s going to be an action packed experience, so let’s get started! At this time, I would like to introduce you to a very special person, [MISSION SPEAKER NAME], who is going to share
more about the mission of the American Cancer Society.

**OPTION B**
Welcome. I’m [NAME] and on behalf of the American Cancer Society, I would like to welcome all of you to the [NUMBER] annual Relay For Life of [COMMUNITY NAME].

Relay For Life is the signature event of the American Cancer Society and is not only a fundraiser to help create a world free from the pain and suffering caused by cancer, but is also about a community uniting together to take action for lifesaving change.

Our community, [COMMUNITY NAME], and thousands more across the nation gather together each year because we have hope for a future where cancer never steals another life – and we know that the potential to make that possible can only happen when we take action.

The Relay movement started with the vision of one single volunteer, Dr. Gordy Klatt, a colorectal surgeon who ran a track by himself for 24 hours to raise money for the American Cancer Society. The following year, he recruited his friends and the Relay movement was born.

We are here today to celebrate! This celebration of life brings the community together in a unified effort to save lives from cancer and symbolizes the fight that cancer patients must face after they are diagnosed with cancer. The light of the day and the darkness of the night parallel the physical effects, emotions, and mental state of a cancer patient while undergoing treatment.

To get us started, please welcome [NAME] (select a child age 6-9 to lead the pledge) to lead us in the pledge of allegiance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**OPTION C**
Good morning everyone! Welcome to the [NUMBER] annual American Cancer Society Relay For Life of [COMMUNITY NAME]! My name is [NAME], and I am the event lead for the Relay event.

On behalf of the Event Leadership Team, we are very excited to bring the community together to help create a world free from the pain and suffering caused by cancer. Everyone wearing a [COLOR] shirt has put in many hours of planning to make this event a success;
please take a few minutes sometime today to thank them for the time and talent they have put into planning this event. I also encourage you to share your thoughts about the Relay event with them.

How many of you are participating in the Relay For Life event for the first time? Can I see a show of hands? How about those who have participated for five or more years? And, those who have been come to our event for 10 or more years? Wow, we have a lot of seasoned Relay participants here today! Give yourselves a round of applause for being here again this year.

Today we will honor our cancer survivors. In a few moments, you will hear the inspiring story of [SURVIVOR NAME], a cancer survivor in our community. Throughout the day, you will be given chances to celebrate life with your family, friends, and neighbors. We promise to provide the music and activities to help you do just that… and your job is to celebrate with us. This year marks the 32\textsuperscript{nd} year since the first Relay For Life event was founded in 1985. We would not be this strong without each and every one of you being involved in today’s event and with the American Cancer Society the other 364 days of the year. Every dollar that is raised and every hour of volunteering moves us one step closer to a world free from the pain and suffering of cancer. Thank you again for being here.

Later tonight, we will remember those we have lost to cancer and honor those who are battling cancer. In a few hours, you’ll start to see the luminaria bags circle the track, and as the day goes on, they will multiply. Take the time to get a good look at those paper bags… each one is special and unique, and each one is a tribute to someone who has faced or is facing cancer. Please join us at [TIME] tonight for a special Luminaria Ceremony.

We hope that each of you will join us at this stage again when the events come to a close in [NUMBER] hours. During our closing ceremony, we will be recognizing the accomplishments of individuals, teams, and of course, the entire event.

Now will you please welcome [NAME] to present our colors and [NAME] who will lead us in the national anthem?

PRESENTATION OF COLORS/NATIONAL ANTHEM

Please welcome [NAME] who will share an American Cancer Society mission message.

Jump back to Opening Ceremony Elements Table
OPENING CEREMONY – MISSION MESSAGE OPTIONS

OPTION A

Today, I hope you all feel excited about what you’re helping to accomplish. Because of your generosity and dedication, the American Cancer Society is able to invest in efforts that are making the greatest impact to help eliminate the pain and suffering caused by cancer.

From research to education, prevention to diagnosis, and treatment to recovery, the American Cancer Society provides support to everyone impacted by all types of cancer, at all stages, every day. Your dollars make an impact, and I’d like to share three successes with you today worth celebrating.

The first is focused on innovation. When it comes to cancer, the American Cancer Society thinks outside of the box, funding all types of cancer research so that we can continue to make advances in prevention and treatments. In fact, most recent major cancer research breakthroughs can be traced back to the American Cancer Society. That’s not surprising. Since 1946, the Society has invested over $4.5 billion in research. Currently the American Cancer Society is investing more than $450 million in over 50 types of cancer research and has committed to doubling its investment in research by 2021. This means more money for all types of cancer research. So that’s why it’s important for you to continue to stay involved. Our understanding of the causes of cancer are increasing significantly, and it’s a very exciting time in cancer research.

Next, let’s celebrate the power of progress. The US cancer death rate has decreased yet again – by 23 percent since 1991, contributing to the avoidance of more than 1.7 million deaths from cancer. The American Cancer Society has staff who partner with health systems and care centers across the country on efforts to help increase screening for colon cancer and mammography and provide education for people to learn about cancer and how to reduce their risk. These efforts are only enhanced by the reach of our website, filled with tons of information about cancer, which had more than 110 million visits last year alone, and our National Cancer Information Center, which received more than 1 million requests for information and support in 2015. We’re empowering people with information and support, and it’s helping to save lives. Let’s celebrate!

And last, let’s celebrate all the help we’ve provided here in [STATE] to people facing all cancers! It takes a lot of resources to fight cancer - often more than any one person has. So the American Cancer Society makes sure no one person has to do it alone, partnering with volunteers, organizations, and health systems across the country to help with patients’ most pressing needs including transportation, lodging, and emotional support, beginning with our always-open cancer information hotline and website. Did you know that last year the
American Cancer Society provided cancer patients with [NUMBER] rides to and from treatment, [NUMBER] of nights of free lodging, and helped [NUMBER] people with the appearance-related effects of treatment? And this is only a few of the things the American Cancer Society does.

You see, we have so much to celebrate today – and it’s all because of you. Your support allows the American Cancer Society to provide information and support to people facing treatment today, help people learn how to reduce their risk, and invest in groundbreaking cancer research.

**OPTION B**

Today many of us are gathered here because we know someone who has been touched by cancer or are facing it personally. Or maybe we just want to create a world where the pain and suffering from the disease do not exist. What if we were able to just treat it like a chronic disease, and we didn’t have to worry about someone losing their life.

Well, thanks in part to your efforts. There is hope for this future, and today, I wanted to share three stories with you about people in our community who have been helped thanks in part to the work of the American Cancer Society:

*Identify three people who have been helped by the American Cancer Society’s work and summarize their story. Feature one story related to research, one on patient programs, and one related to ACS CAN advocacy efforts.*

*If you have the technology capabilities, an option may be to play some of the video testimonials on the American Cancer Society YouTube channel.*

You see, real people are being helped every day, and it’s important to keep that in mind. For every story, there are countless other stories of people who have been helped – some many not even know it. So thank you for being a part of the Relay For Life movement. You are truly making a difference.

**OPTION C**

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide, community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer through research, education, advocacy, and service.
Will those who have been helped by the American Cancer Society please raise their hands? (Be prepared for only a small number of hands.)

Okay. Let’s try this: raise your hand if something I say applies to you. Please keep your hands raised while I go through the list.

- Raise your hand if you or a family member has received a ride to and from their cancer treatment appointments through the Road To Recovery® program.
- How about if you or someone you know has participated in the Look Good Feel Better® program.
- Or stayed at a Hope Lodge® facility or used our hotel program while receiving treatment away from home.
- Raise your hand if you or a family member has ever taken the drugs Tamoxifen or Gleevec?
- Raise your hand if you have had a colonoscopy.
- What about a mammogram or Pap test?
- Raise your hand if you or a family member has ever called the Society’s toll-free hotline, 1-800-227-2345, for support or have gone to our website, cancer.org, to get information.
- How many of you enjoy smoke-free restaurants and indoor spaces?

Well, the American Cancer Society had a hand in helping make all those efforts possible.

Look around. Check out how many hands are raised. So, if your hand is raised, YOU have benefited from the lifesaving work of the American Cancer Society.

So let me ask again: Will those who have been helped by the American Cancer Society please raise their hands? (Lots of hands should be raised). Wonderful!

The mission of the American Cancer Society is alive and working right here in [COMMUNITY NAME]! YOU are the American Cancer Society. This progress and the lifesaving services we offer everyday are thanks to your commitment, passion, and fundraising efforts. Thank you for what you do.

Jump back to Opening Ceremony Elements Table
OPENING CEREMONY – RECOGNITION OPTIONS

Notes on recognizing sponsors:

1. If you have a presenting level sponsor, they must be given the option to speak in one of your ceremonies, but it doesn’t have to be the opening ceremony.
2. If you have presenting and/or platinum level sponsors, they need to be verbally mentioned in the opening ceremony. Be sure to indicate which sponsors are presenting level sponsors.
3. The opening ceremony is not the right time to read the list of sponsors for your event. They will be given a sponsor lap during the event, may be mentioned by the emcee or DJ several times during the event, and will be listed on several printed pieces. Mentioning during the opening ceremony is a unique benefit promised only to the top level sponsors.

OPTION A
(Must use this option if you have a presenting level sponsor who would like to speak.)

At this time, I’d like to introduce you to (one of) our community’s biggest Relay supporters and 2017 presenting level sponsor(s): [NAME] of [COMPANY] [and insert more if you have multiple presenting sponsors]. [COMPANY] has been a huge partner for this year’s Relay For Life of [COMMUNITY NAME], and we thank them for their tremendous support. Please welcome [NAME] to the stage.

[Give presenting level sponsor up to two minutes to thank participants and tie in the mission of the American Cancer Society to the Relay For Life event.]

Thank you so much [NAME]. We’re so glad to have your support and the support of everyone at [COMPANY].

OPTION B

As we enjoy each other’s company here today, let’s never forget why we are here. Our survivors and those no longer with us are the reason we need to keep coming together through the Relay For Life movement. Each and every one of you is here because you feel compelled to make a difference. And together, we can.

Normally we conclude ceremonies and events by saying thank you, but why wait? We have so much to celebrate today.
So thank you to our generous sponsors [must mention any presenting and platinum level sponsors by name and wait for applause]. Thank you to our fabulous Event Leadership Team wearing [COLOR] T-shirts who have given countless hours to make this a great experience for all. Thank you to our fantastic Team Captains wearing [COLOR] T-shirts without whom we would not be here. Thank you to our Relay participants, long-time or first-time, who collect thousands of dollars in donations each year. Thank you to all our giving donors. And especially a big thank you to the inspirational survivors and caregivers who are the reason we have hope for a world free from the pain and suffering of cancer.

OPTION C

The event is successful because of all of you who have made the commitment to walk and raise funds to help move forward the American Cancer Society's lifesaving mission. Give yourselves a round of applause! No matter why you take part in the Relay event, one thing is clear – with every step you take, you help the American Cancer Society save lives. Each person who shares the Relay experience can take pride in knowing that you are helping the American Cancer Society fund research and provide care for all types of cancer, at every stage, every day.

All of you here are truly going above and beyond the call of duty, and at this time, I’d like to give special recognition to those who have worked tirelessly to make this a great experience for all. The people you see among you in the [COLOR] T-shirts are members of your community who worked on the Event Leadership Team to make this year’s event happen. Feel free to flag them down and say hello, tell them what we can do to make your experience even better, and ask them about all of the opportunities available for you to be a leader in the Relay event. Let’s thank them now for their hard work planning this awesome celebration.

APPLAUSE

Jump back to Opening Ceremony Elements Table
OPENING CEREMONY – SPEAKER OPTIONS

For all options, please be sure to read and use the following documents: Tips For Selecting Your Ceremony Speaker and So You’ve Been Asked to Speak at a Relay For Life Event.

The speaker should have three to five minutes to share their story. Be sure that you coordinate a special introduction (30 seconds) typically by someone who knows them well and includes some personal information that Relay participants can connect with.

OPTION A
Find a newly diagnosed cancer patient and ask them to share how he or she finds inspiration during treatment. What does it mean to them be at their first Relay event? Ask them to include mentions about any American Cancer Society programs, services, or events they are involved with.

OPTION B
Find a cancer survivor who has been helped by one of the drugs that the American Cancer Society has helped fund. Suggestions include a breast cancer survivor who used Tamoxifen or a chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML) survivor who was treated with Gleevec.

OPTION C
Find a cancer survivor whose cancer was detected early because of a test funded by the American Cancer Society. Suggestions include:
- Cervical cancer survivor who found the cancer at an early stage because of a Pap test.
- Prostate cancer survivor who found the cancer at an early stage because of the prostate specific antigen (PSA) test.
- Breast cancer survivor who found the cancer at an early stage because of a mammogram.
- Colon cancer survivor who found the cancer at an early stage because of a colonoscopy.

Jump back to Opening Ceremony Elements Table
OPENING CEREMONY – HEART OF RELAY MOMENT OPTIONS

OPTION A
Poem, read by a newly diagnosed cancer survivor

I have cancer, but cancer does not have me.
It is not who I am. It is just a bend in the road of life. An unexpected detour on my path.
A lesson in the classroom that is human existence. So I will pause to rest. And heal.
And study the lesson, before I move on to my life beyond cancer.
I will not give in to fear.
I will not be discouraged by setbacks.
Setbacks are opportunities to review the lesson.
I will not be ashamed of my scars.
Scars are the brushstrokes of the masterpiece that is my life.
I will remember that I can still have fun and that it’s OK - even healthy!
I will remember that to get the joy of the rainbow, I must endure the rain.
And I will always remember that while I may have cancer, cancer does not have me.

OPTION B
For use in 18-24-hour Heritage events. Inspirational Journey, read by a special person to the Relay event.

The Relay event begins now, as the sun has recently risen. This symbolizes the time that the person has been diagnosed, shining the light on their cancer. As the evening goes on, it gets colder and darker, just as the emotions of the cancer patient do. Around midnight represents the time when the cancer patient starts treatments. They become exhausted, some sick, not wanting to go on and possibly wanting to give up. Participants in Relay feel much the same way while walking during these hours. But we cannot stop or give up, just as the cancer patient cannot stop or give up.

The period around 4 to 5 a.m. symbolizes the end of treatment for the cancer patient. Once again they are tired, but they know they will make it. The sun rising tomorrow morning 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. Participants feel the brightness of the morning and know that the end of the Relay event is close at hand. When participants leave the Relay event, we can think of cancer patients leaving their last treatment. Just as participants are exhausted and weak, so is that person after treatment.
Cancer survivors are living proof that we are making a difference in the fight against this disease. They have endured days of illness, of medical appointments and tears… yet they are here with us today as we honor their crusade against this disease.

As we walk these next [NUMBER] hours, let the hope provided by these cancer survivors guide us. Let us celebrate their lives and the lives of so many others that have been saved from cancer. Let us celebrate that we are doing something to provide hope to those facing this disease.

Hope is a word that every hurting heart understands. Hope shines brighter than the brightest star on the darkest night.

If you can look at the sunset and smile; if you can find beauty in the colors of a small flower, then you still have hope.

If you give people the benefit of a doubt; if you still offer your hand in friendship to others who have touched your life, then you still have hope.

If the suffering of others still fills you with pain and frustration; if you look forward to a time or place of quiet and reflection; if you can look to the past and smile, then you still have hope.

Hope is such a marvelous thing. It bends, it twists, it sometimes hides, but rarely does it break. It sustains us when nothing else can. It gives us reason to continue and courage to move ahead, when we tell ourselves we’d rather give in.

Hope puts a smile on our face when the heart cannot manage. It puts our feet on the path when our eyes cannot see it. Hope moves us to act when our souls are confused of the direction.

Hope is a wonderful thing, something to be cherished and nurtured, and something that will refresh us in return.
And it can be found in each of us, and it can bring light into the darkest of places. NEVER LOSE HOPE!

Jump back to Opening Ceremony Elements Table
OPENING CEREMONY – CLOSING WORDS OPTIONS

OPTION A
And now, let’s get this celebration started!

Let me explain what’s about to happen. We’re going to CELEBRATE the survivors and caregivers here with us today by asking them to walk the first lap of the Relay event. Everyone else will fan out around the track to cheer as they go past.

After they have finished the first lap, we’ll ask all of our teams to pack the track and walk a lap together before we settle in to our regular walking schedule and kick off our entertainment and activities.

So let’s clear the way to allow our survivors and caregivers – our heroes of hope – to gather on the track behind the start line. Survivors, if you are not feeling up to walking around the track, we have wheelchairs available for use. Everyone else, please line the track to cheer them on!

OPTION B
This option may require special permission from the city and/or venue where your event is being held. Please be sure to follow any rule or regulations related to balloon releases. For the balloon strings, cotton string is preferable versus regular curling ribbon as it is earth friendly.

Survivors and caregivers are a critically important part of the Relay For Life event, and we want to celebrate all survivors and caregivers here with us today! If you are a survivor or caregiver, please make your way to the start line of the track where you will receive a balloon to carry with you during the first official lap of our 2017 Relay For Life of [COMMUNITY NAME]!

Survivors and caregivers will carry their balloons with them around the track while all other Relay participants fan out around the track and cheer them on. Once all of the survivors and caregivers have made it around the track, we will give direction to have a balloon release all together and signify the official start of team walking.

[Survivors and caregivers take their lap with their balloons. All survivors and caregivers should wait on the track back at the start line until all other survivors and caregivers have completed the lap.]

Thank you to our survivors and caregivers who are here with us and to ALL Relay participants for helping us get things kicked off today! On the count of three, we ask that all survivors and
caregivers release their balloons as the official signal that team walking is going to begin. We would love to have your help with this count, so please join in! Ready? 1, 2, 3!

OPTION C
This option will require some simple signs to be made ahead of time and volunteers willing to hold these signs to direct survivors and caregivers to the appropriate place.

We’re going to honor our survivors who are with us today by asking them to take their victory lap. If all our survivors will make their way to the track now and please stand by the sign that matches your years of survival. So if you heard the words “you have cancer” one year ago or less, line up by that sign; one to five years by that sign and so on down the track. Caregivers, if you are here with your survivor, you are welcome to line up with them.

If you are a caregiver and your survivor is not here with you for any reason, whether it be because they were lost to cancer or because they simply could not physically be here, please line up next to the caregiver sign on the track.

[Pause and give time for survivors and caregivers to line up on the track. While survivors and caregivers are moving to the track you could use this time to for recognition or small reminders.]

Please turn your attention now to the survivors and caregivers on the track. Survivors in the first group – those of you who heard the words “you have cancer” one year ago or less – this is likely your first lap here at the Relay event as a survivor. It might not be an easy thing to do, but that’s OK. We have hope. Hope in all of the participants who are gathered here to support you.

Survivors and caregivers in that first group please turn around and face the survivors lined up behind you. [Pause]

If ever there were a symbol of hope that cancer will be defeated, you are looking at the faces of that hope right now. Just take a moment and let that sink in. Cancer is not an easy journey, but when the road is long, think about this – this moment and these faces looking back at you right now. This is what HOPE looks like. These faces and these people are proof that cancer CAN be defeated. [Pause]

Survivors in the second group – those of you who heard the words “you have cancer” one to five years ago – the feelings of the first group that is now facing you represent not-so distant memories of your own – you might have even been a part of that group just last year. But you made it. And even though your journey as a survivor is still young, there is plenty of hope that
it will continue. Survivors and caregivers in the second group please turn around and face the survivors lined up behind you. [Pause]

Survivors in the third group – those of you who heard the words “you have cancer” five to ten years ago – you may recognize pieces of the journey that brought you here on the faces of those survivors looking at you now. You’ve been in their shoes and you conquered cancer. And although being here at the Relay event and seeing the faces of those before you now may bring old memories of your journey back to the surface, you know the future is bright. You know that although it is a long road, you made it – you’re proof that HOPE lives. Survivors and caregivers in the third group please turn around and face the survivors lined up behind you. [Pause]

Survivors in the fourth group – those of you who heard the words “you have cancer” ten or more years ago – here this morning/this afternoon/this evening, you are the ultimate source of hope for all of the fellow survivors facing you now and all of us here today. Be proud of that! You show us ALL, that yes, it is possible – cancer CAN be overcome. We appreciate you being here at this point in your survivorship journey as such an important symbol to so many – because I’m sure any of those survivors and caregivers facing you right now would tell you that seeing you standing before them is valuable beyond words. It is proof before their eyes that what you have achieved really is possible for them. You have an army of supporters here and around the world.

Survivors and caregivers, in the fourth group, please turn around and face the caregivers lined up behind you. [Pause]

Survivors, you know that caregivers are often an unsung group of heroes and an intimate part of the cancer journey. They keep track of appointments, prepare meals, administer care, and provide support in numerous other ways. Caregivers, some of you are standing beside your survivor right now and some of you are not. Whether your survivor is physically here with us or not doesn’t change the fact that you are a caregiver and you never stop being a caregiver. I’m sure every survivor here can attest to the immeasurable value of a caregiver and that is definitely something worthy of celebration.

Survivors, for the caregiver who may be standing with you now and for the caregivers facing you who do not have their survivor to walk with, and all of us here at the Relay event, let’s take a moment to say “thank you” with a round of applause for the countless hours of support and for the genuine care and love that these individuals put into their role as caregivers. [Pause]
All survivors and caregivers on the track please turn back around and face forward. Thank you again so much for being here with us today and we’re so excited to celebrate with you. At this time, we’re going to kick off our morning/afternoon/evening by asking our survivors and caregivers here with us today to take a victory lap. I ask that everyone else still in the stands come down and fan out around the track to cheer them on as they go by.

So, without further ado, please join me in cheering on our honored guests, our cancer survivors and caregivers, who are our reason to celebrate, as they walk their celebration lap of our 2017 American Cancer Society Relay for Life of [COMMUNITY NAME]. You inspire us with your strength and courage, and we celebrate you!

Jump back to Opening Ceremony Elements Table
LUMINARIA CEREMONY

Jump to Luminaria Ceremony best practices and considerations

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My Luminaria Ceremony Element Selections:

<table>
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<th>Ceremony Element</th>
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*Consider adding the caregiver scripting options into this ceremony as well for additional recognition of this important group of Relay participants.

Special Logistics Note:
Be sure to work with your activities, entertainment, and ceremonies teams and/or DJ to work on a proper transition back to normal Relay For Life activities after your Luminaria Ceremony. It is important to re-engage participants with fun nighttime activities, just be sure to make it a gradual transition by slowly increasing the tempo of the music, etc.
LUMINARIA CEREMONY – INTRODUCTION OPTIONS

OPTION A
Good evening, my name is [NAME].

The Luminaria Ceremony is an opportunity for us to come together and remember why we’re here at the American Cancer Society’s Relay For Life of [COMMUNITY NAME]. I’d like to ask that you all please respect the meaning this ceremony embodies by remaining silent.

This is a time for us to grieve for those we’ve lost and to hopefully find some closure. It’s a time for us to reflect on how the disease has touched us personally and it’s a time for us to look inside ourselves with quiet reflection to find hope. No matter what our experience with cancer has been, we all share the hope that we will one day live in a world where our children, and their children, will never know the suffering of cancer or endure the staggering feelings of sadness and loss that cancer brings.

More than thirty years ago, a man had a vision. His vision was of a world free from this very pain and suffering we speak of. Little did this man know that the track he ran in darkness would soon transform to a field of brilliant luminaria, each one representing a name, a face, a smile, and a treasured memory. And as each year passed, more people took to the track. The flickering light beckoned this man and those who joined his journey, and in time, that one man’s vision became a reality.

OPTION B
Good evening, my name is [NAME]. The Luminaria Ceremony is an opportunity for us to come together and remember why we’re here at our Relay event. I’d like to ask that you all please respect the meaning this ceremony carries by remaining silent.

This is a time for us to grieve for those we’ve lost. It’s a time for us to reflect on how the disease has touched each of us personally. And it’s a time for us to look inside ourselves with quiet reflection and find hope. Because no matter what our experience with cancer has been, we all share the hope that we will one day live in a world where our children, and their children, will not have to know about the pain and suffering caused by cancer.

Our track is illuminated by luminaria. Each one represents a treasured relationship. They represent people, and each has a name and a story to tell. They are our mothers, our fathers, our sisters, our brothers, our sons, our daughters, our friends, and our loved ones. As they glow throughout the night, they represent our shared vision for a cancer-free future. We love the people the luminaria represents. Each luminaria will touch us in a special way.
**OPTION C**

Good evening and welcome to the Luminaria Ceremony, which is an opportunity to remember the journey our survivors have taken and also serves as a memorial for loved ones lost. It is a special time for all of us.

As we marvel in the light of luminaria as a community, we remember lives and memories, carrying together the light of life. The light from a single flame went forth to bring the light of life to this beautiful display of candles.

Candles burn with a beauty and a brilliance that captivates all who look upon them. Their flame is strong and warm, yet peaceful and delicate as it can be put out with one breath.

Our candles tonight burn in honor or in memory of friends and loved ones. The courage of their fight challenged the darkness and dazzled all of us who watched. Whether they are with us here tonight in body or in spirit, the effect of their flame remains in our hearts. The memory of their light, their strength, their determination, their hope, and their optimism sustains us.

*Jump back to Luminaria Ceremony Elements Table*
LUMINARIA CEREMONY – MISSION MESSAGE OPTIONS

OPTION A
Hope is defined as a person or thing on which one may base some feeling. Hope is a belief in a positive outcome related to events and circumstances. Hope is the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best. Hope is a community gathered together in unity with a common cause, to help create a world free from the pain and suffering caused by cancer.

You all join me here tonight with a story of remembrance, with memories of a personal battle or that of a loved one against a disease that takes too much from too many. These memories are powerful weapons as they have brought you here to this field tonight not just with the desire to remember, but with the desire to find hope.

Hope is found when a newly diagnosed cancer patient calls for support and information, and finds a friendly voice determined to help.

Hope is found when a volunteer pulls into the driveway of a treatment facility to help a cancer patient receive their lifesaving treatment.

Hope is found in the eyes of a caregiver who logs on to their computer to connect with others who understand how they are feeling as they care for their loved one facing this disease.

Hope is found in the heart of a cancer survivor who stepped foot on this track earlier today and was cheered on by hundreds of strangers in their community.

Your support of the Relay For Life movement and the American Cancer Society is creating hope and saving lives faster. Whether your luminaria tonight glows in honor or in memory of someone, please take pride in the fact that it also glows with the light of hope. Thank you.

OPTION B
The question most frequently asked of American Cancer Society volunteers and Relay participants is, “Why do you do this event year after year?” You may look at the person and realize that they don’t “get it,” and wonder if there is any way to explain how Relay events change people’s lives. (PAUSE)

How do you explain the story of the newly diagnosed cancer patient who attends a Relay event and meets another cancer survivor who overcame the exact disease? (PAUSE)
How do you explain the story of a caregiver who has traveled down a path of compassion, love, joy, sorrow, guilt, loss, and depression? You explain how, at the Relay event, a caregiver can talk to the only other person who could possibly understand this difficult journey – another caregiver. (PAUSE)

How do you explain the story of a friend who has seen someone they know battle this deadly disease and has felt they could do little to help? Yes, they could take the person to treatments, or mow their yard, or bring them dinner, but it isn’t always enough. Yet at the Relay event, you can form a team, raise money, educate people about cancer, and fight back against a disease that takes too much. (PAUSE)

All these people have found at the Relay event what you have found – hope. You can feel it in the air at 3 a.m. when you walk into the event. Wandering across a damp football field, you can almost touch the energy. That energy is hope – the combined power of hundreds or thousands of people who have come together with a common cause: to eradicate a disease. (PAUSE)

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life program is held to remember those we have lost to cancer, to support all those who are battling the disease, and to work toward the day where no one has to hear the words “you have cancer.”

**OPTION C**

We all come to the Relay event for the same basic reasons: we may have fought cancer ourselves or watched someone we love battle the disease.

We participate in Relay events so that we can celebrate cancer survivors. We find a place of common understanding when we come here as survivors and join others who have faced the same disease. We participate to celebrate the lives of those who have battled cancer in our lives. Perhaps it’s a loved one who has overcome the disease. The Relay event gives us a place to rejoice and celebrate together.

At the same time, we also celebrate the lives of people we’ve lost. We remember the journey we walked with our loved ones, and we participate in Relay events to keep their memory alive. The luminaria bags that line the track give us a way to honor their memory. We walk, too, to find comfort and healing from others who have experienced the same loss and understand our grief.

In both celebrating the lives of those we love and remembering those we’ve lost, we are motivated to do something – anything – to make sure no one else we care about, or no one
else we know, has to face this disease. We are here, together, surrounded by the light of our loved ones, to fight back.

Jump back to Luminaria Ceremony Elements Table
LUMINARIA CEREMONY – RECOGNITION OPTIONS

OPTION A
Motivational speaker Andy Andrews loves to say, “Every single thing you do matters. You have the power to change the world.” Some of you may see this ceremony as one night... one more memory in a collection of special moments. But remember, “Every single thing you do matters. You have the power to change the world.” Your presence here tonight, in support of the American Cancer Society, is changing the world. Your presence here tonight represents the creation of hope for millions.

This year, nearly 14.5 million cancer survivors in the US are alive today, and you are making that happen. This year, progress was made through research for treatments to find cancer, and you are making that happen. This year, millions of patients and their families received information and support from the American Cancer Society, and you are making that happen.

Thank you for being here tonight and your belief that WE have the power to change the world.

OPTION B
When the final book is written on how cancer was eliminated, the American Cancer Society Relay For Life movement will have the last chapter. It will explain how millions of people in thousands of communities in our country and across the globe came together to eradicate a disease, forming the largest fundraising event in the world – the largest in humankind’s history.

On behalf of millions of Relay participants everywhere, thank you [COMMUNITY NAME] for providing the gift of the Relay movement. Thank you for providing the gift of hope to so many people.

Jump back to Luminaria Ceremony Elements Table
LUMINARIA CEREMONY – SPEAKER OPTIONS

For all options, please be sure to read and use the following documents: Tips For Selecting Your Ceremony Speaker and So You’ve Been Asked to Speak at a Relay For Life Event. The speaker should have three to five minutes to share their story. Be sure that you coordinate a special introduction (30 seconds), typically by someone who knows them well and includes some personal information that Relay participants can connect with.

OPTION A
Caregiver – The American Cancer Society defines a caregiver as someone who has provided medical, physical, or emotional care for an individual facing cancer. A passionate caregiver is an excellent choice for a speaker at your Luminaria Ceremony, just be sure to utilize the tips provided later in this toolkit in order to prepare your speaker.

Introduction/Closing for Caregiver Speaker:
With your help, our field/track/path has become illuminated tonight by luminaria. Each one represents the story of a cherished loved one. Joined with me now is a caregiver with one of those stories. Please welcome [NAME].

[Caregiver Story]

Thank you for listening to my story. We all have a story to tell. Our stories are our connection to one another and to this powerful event. I’d like to ask you to join me in a lap of remembrance in just a few minutes. I hope that as you make your steps, you recall fond memories of the loved ones you fight for… whether they are with you in body or in spirit. Please honor the symbolism of the ceremony as we make our lap by being silent and then join us back at the stage for the close of our ceremony. Before we start out lap, let’s ask [NAME] to say a few more words.

OPTION B
Survivor – A cancer survivor is a wonderful choice for a speaker at any Relay For Life ceremony or event. When speaking at a Luminaria Ceremony, a survivor should be directed to include caregiver recognition. Be sure to also utilize the tips provided later in this toolkit in order to prepare your speaker.

Introduction/Closing for a Survivor Speaker:
The Luminaria Ceremony is a time for us to reflect on the stories of our or our loved ones’ journeys with cancer. Some candles are lit tonight in honor of those who are still with us, and some are lit in memory of those who have passed from the disease. Every candle has a story
of courage and hope. I’d like to ask you to now please join me in honoring a hero of one of these stories, a cancer survivor, [NAME]:

[Survivor Story]

Thank you for listening to my story. We all have a story to tell. Our stories are our connection to one another and to this powerful event. I’d like to ask you to join me in a lap of remembrance in just a few minutes. I hope that as you make your steps, you recall found memories of the loved ones you fight for… whether they are with you in body or in spirit. Please honor the symbolism of the ceremony as we make our lap by being silent and then join us back as the stage for the close of our ceremony. Before we start our lap, let’s ask ____________ to say a few more words.

Jump back to Luminaria Ceremony Elements Table
LUMINARIA CEREMONY – HEART OF RELAY MOMENT

OPTIONS

OPTION A
One Little Candle
It’s just one little candle
One tiny flickering light
A challenge to the darkness
A small beacon in the night
It could be just a gentle touch
A reminder that you’re there
Or a warm, compassionate hug
That shows you understand and care
Sometimes it only takes your smile
To encourage and uplift
And should that smile lead to laughter
You’ve shared a special gift
There’s comfort in shared silence
Or in a softly spoken word
Or in taking time to listen
To feelings that must be heard
Yes, it’s just one little candle
Softly glowing in the night
But it can overcome the darkness
If it will only share its light
Just one candle at a time
Each one giving from its heart
Reaching out to those nearby
Asking them to do their part
To make sure the light keeps growing
Reaching out to those in sorrow
Offering comfort, warmth, and hope
Strength and courage for tomorrow

OPTION B
Although we all have our own unique reasons to participate in the Relay event, we share so much in common. At this time, we would like you to [stand/light a glow stick] when you [see/hear] your reason to participate and reflect upon the hard fought journey that all those who have heard the words “you have cancer” have faced.
[This list can be read or displayed one at a time on a screen while appropriate music plays]

Spouse
Parent
Child
Grandparent
Grandchild
Aunt
Uncle
Niece
Nephew
Cousin
Friend
Myself
HOPE

We all stand here tonight, determined to honor the journey of those we love and remember those who aren’t here to stand next to us and to change the future of cancer.

**OPTION C**

*Supplies required:*

- A small table
- A chair
- White tablecloth
- Vase with a ribbon tied around it
- Rose
- Plate
- Slice of lemon
- Salt
- Drinking glass
- Candle

Those of us here are ever mindful of the triumphs and tragedies represented by these people whose names you have just heard. We should never forget that while we enjoy our daily pleasures and the company of family and friends, there are others who have endured and are presently enduring the misery, deprivation, and discomfort of the diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

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 the luminaria.

The chair is empty. Many of those who were diagnosed 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 helped fight the battle for life.

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

The ribbon on the vase represents the ribbons worn on the lapels of millions who support a continued search for cures for all forms of cancer – cancers that are claim the lives of more than 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 an estimated 1.6 million newly diagnosed people in the US in 2016.

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 the Relay For Life.

Jump back to Luminaria Ceremony Elements Table
LUMINARIA CEREMONY – CLOSING WORDS OPTIONS

OPTION A
Why do we participate in the Relay movement? Because we find hope. Our “HOPE” is displayed in all capital letters for good reason. Our HOPE is not just for us here tonight, it is for everyone across the planet. We HOPE for a world free from the pain and suffering of cancer. We may not know how long this will take, but we see the advances the American Cancer Society helps bring in research that will help prevent and detect the disease early, every day. We see the lives that are being saved. And we join together in knowing that there is no finish line until cures are found.

Tonight, we illuminate HOPE for all. Let our individual luminaria call out to the sky with the precious memories and thoughts that ignited with their glow. And as the words HOPE glow in the stands, remember that cancer cannot defeat us. Remember that we will stand strong, against darkness and shatter it with the power of our own light of life. This night is our night.

Tonight we are the shooting stars; the fingers of lightning; the fireworks that make the darkness insignificant; the light that illuminates the HOPE that one day suffering from cancer will end.

Thank you for the hope you provide by joining us in the fight against cancer. Please join me in a lap of silence around the track.

OPTION B
The American Cancer Society Relay For Life event is held to remember those we have lost to cancer, to support all those who are facing the disease, and to work toward the day that no one has to hear the words “you have cancer.”

And when the final book is written on how cancer was eliminated, the American Cancer Society Relay For Life movement will have the last chapter. It will explain how millions of people in thousands of communities in our country and across the globe came together to eradicate a disease, forming the largest nonprofit fundraising event in the world – the largest in humankind’s history.

On behalf of millions of Relay participants everywhere, thank you [COMMUNITY NAME] for providing the gift of the Relay movement. Thank you for providing the gift of hope to so many people. Please join me in a lap of silence around the track.
OPTION C
As the light of the candle burns bright in the darkness, we are mindful of the people who have been touched by cancer. We remember loved ones lost to cancer. We honor and are thankful for those who are here with us tonight who have suffered from this disease, but are now survivors.

By being here tonight, we are all doing our part so that the flame will continue to burn and cures will be found. Let us all keep the flame alive and help to make it burn bright until the day comes when we have conquered cancer. Thank you. Please join me in a lap of silence around the track.

Jump back to Luminaria Ceremony Elements Table
SPIRIT OF RELAY

Spirit of Relay
For events that go overnight, it is a recommendation to include the Spirit of Relay ceremony to recognize teams, survivors, sponsors, etc. It can be held after the Luminaria Ceremony to bring the collective energy level back up and should be used as a time to get participants fired up and excited about being a part of the Relay event.

Spirit of Relay Scripting Options
OPTION A
Emcee:
Our Spirit of Relay ceremony is going to begin in just five minutes, so if you are ready to get pumped up and continue fighting back against cancer tonight, please make your way to the stage!

(Play something upbeat and energetic.)

Emcee:
Everyone, how do you feel!? (Wait for audience response.)

Tired? Excited? Can you believe it’s nearly midnight?! Tonight we are here fighting cancer together. Whether you are a cancer survivor joining us for your first time, or a Team Captain who has been a dedicated Relay For Life volunteer for years, a representative from one of our corporate sponsors, or an attendee here to join in the celebration, we cannot defeat cancer without YOU! Thank you for spending your evening with us tonight in support of the American Cancer Society. At this time, I’d like to welcome our people lead [NAME] to the stage!

People Lead:
Our teams have achieved so many incredible accomplishments throughout the year and here tonight. Along with all of you, these teams have played a key role in bringing cancer to its knees. I’d like to take this time to rally around our teams and show the appreciation we have for all of their efforts to save lives from cancer. When I call your team name, give us a yell, shout, scream; tell us how much you LOVE Relay events and how much you HATE cancer!

(Announce each team)

I have a very special award to give out to a team here tonight, the Spirit of Relay award. This award is given to one team in each community each year to recognize them for playing a huge role in supporting the American Cancer Society’s mission to eliminate cancer as a major
public health problem. This team I’d like to present the award to tonight has gone above and beyond. They have focused on the American Cancer Society’s mission, held successful fundraisers, brought a ton of energy to the event here tonight, and showed their commitment to saving lives. So everyone, join in with me as we welcome [NAME] to the stage to accept their award and say a few words!

Team Captain(s) speak (Two minutes)
Share their Spirit of Relay story, why they got involved, what fuels them to be excited, etc.

Emcee:
Thank you so much ___________________. Can you believe all the wonderful things this team accomplished this year? Let’s hear another round of applause for our 2017 Spirit of Relay team and all of the teams who participated tonight!

[APPLAUSE, excitement]

I know you are all here tonight because you want to take a stand against cancer, so one day no one will have to hear a cancer diagnosis again. It takes each and every one of you to help make that a reality. For your support, your energy, and your Relay spirit, you all deserve a round of applause for helping raise more than [DOLLAR AMOUNT] for the American Cancer Society!

[APPLAUSE, excitement]

And of course, a big thank you to our corporate sponsors once again, for their thoughtful contributions; we are deeply grateful for their generosity!
(Announce corporate sponsors)

As we continue into the night with more activities, games, food, and fun, please know your support is appreciated beyond words. Let’s all take a lap together; all of you still here fighting cancer with us tonight to show cancer that together, we a stronger and will bring cancer to its knees!
(Play upbeat music for a lap)

Items needed:
Spirit of Relay Award (Cost: Approx. $30)
Upbeat, energetic music

People Involved:
Energetic emcee
People lead/community champion/team ambassador
Teams
Team Captain award winner (tell them ahead of time so they are prepared with a memorable, well thought out two-minute speech)

OPTION B
(Would recommend high-energy music playing before the rally and quiet music with a good beat after the rally.)

Emcee (lots of energy):
Good evening and welcome to the halfway point of our Relay For Life event! We asked you to come to the stage to celebrate some of the amazing things we have accomplished together and to celebrate the amazing spirit here tonight.

The word “spirit” has many definitions, and there are many ways to define what the “Spirit of Relay” is. Tonight we gather together as a community... a community with a shared belief that we come together to help achieve a world where cancer no longer destroys lives and wreaks havoc.

SURVIVOR RECOGNITION:
Emcee:
“Spirit” is defined as "the force within a person that is believed to give the body life, energy, and power."

Cancer survivors - thank you for joining us tonight and for sharing your spirit with all of us! Because of you, we have hope – hope for a cancer-free future. Hope that those struggling with the disease will overcome it. Because of you, newly diagnosed patients are inspired to be hopeful that they, too, will survive.

RALLY OPTION
Survivor 1: When I found out I had cancer it was devastating, but it did not stop me from living my life!

Survivor 2: I lost my hair during treatment and was in a lot of pain, but I never once thought of giving up!

Survivor 3: Throughout everything, I had the love and support of my family, my coworkers, and my friends at Relay events!

You have endured the physical effects of cancer. You have endured the psychological effects of cancer. You have been to all the appointments, treatments, and scans. Through it all, you
You represent that force and determination to never give up, and you are a beacon of hope for all of us that one day we will "no longer fear the word “cancer.”"

SURVIVOR SPEAKER OPTION
(Select a high energy survivor speaker to say a few words about never giving up and being a helping hand to those who are newly diagnosed.)

Emcee:
Thank you for your sharing your inspiring story with us.

Now, if you are a cancer survivor, let me hear you cheer!

As a Relay For Life community, we stand together with you and are here to support you.

Now, everyone, let's cheer for our cancer survivors!

CAREGIVER RECOGNITION:

Emcee:
“Spirit” is defined as the essential principle influencing a person.

Caregivers - thank you for joining us tonight and for sharing your spirit with all of us!

Caregivers are often unsung heroes in the journey of a cancer patient. They are a constant source of strength, encouragement, and most of all, support. There are many different types of support that caregivers can provide. We often think of a spouse, a parent, a sibling, or another close relative as being caregivers for cancer patients, and these individuals definitely fit that description. They are with the cancer patient day in and day out, keeping doctor’s appointments and treatment schedules organized, and holding all of the pieces of the puzzle together on the difficult journey.

Sometimes there are other unrecognized caregivers in a patient’s life. A caregiver can be anyone who provides any kind of support to a patient during their cancer journey. It could be a friend preparing a meal, a nurse who provides care to the patient while they are receiving treatment, a child sharing a picture they’ve drawn, or a coworker who just takes time to call and ask how things are going. Anyone who does something to make a difference and support a patient on their journey is a caregiver.

ALTERNATE IN PLACE OF PARAGRAPH ABOVE USING INDIVIDUALS FROM THE EVENT:

COWORKER - any personal story of support can be used.

EX: “A group of us at work shaved our heads in support of our coworker.”
NURSE – any medical story can be used.
EX: “Supporting my patients and bringing a smile to their face when they are at treatment is the greatest part of my job, and I will always support those coming into my office.”

CHILD – could hold up a picture drawn for a cancer survivor.
EX: “I drew this picture to show my grandmother (or other family member) I was thinking about her. I love you grandma.”

Emcee:
In honoring our caregivers here with us today, we also keep in mind that a caregiver never stops being a caregiver. Even if the patient they supported is not with us here today, the support they provided is no less important. The role that all caregivers fulfill in the lives of cancer patients is pivotal, undeniable, and above all, unforgettable. The spirit you show, the essential principles you demonstrate, that selfless service you embody makes a difference in the lives of others and leaves their lives changed for the better!

Emcee:
If you are a caregiver, let me hear you cheer!

As a Relay community, we stand with you to say thank you for your caring and for never forgetting those in need!

Let's cheer for our caregivers!

TEAM CAPTAIN RECOGNITION:
Emcee:
“Spirit” is defined as the intention with which someone undertakes something.

Team Captains - you are the primary reason that we have so many people here tonight. You have given of your time and energy to organize your family, friends, and coworkers into teams dedicated to one common cause. You have set aside your personal time and juggled work and personal obligations to rally your team. You have worn many hats and served as a recruiter in organizing your teammates, a fundraiser in putting together team fundraising events, an IT professional in working with the website, and an engineer and builder in figuring out how to put your tent up today!

RALLY OPTION (time permitting)
“I would like the following Team Captains to join me on stage!” (Highlight teams that have made large jumps in fundraising, are large teams, high fundraising teams, or new teams. Give them a moment to introduce themselves and mention their team names.)

**RALLY OPTION**
*Pass out fundraising club stickers to the Team Captains who have jumped levels.*
*Highlight high fundraising teams and teams that have exceeded their fundraising goal.*

Because of you, we have [NUMBER] teams here tonight! Because of your leadership and the energy you have provided, we have already raised [DOLLAR NUMBER]. The funds are invested in research and programs that allow the American Cancer Society to help save lives from all cancers, at all stages, every day. Team Captains and team members, you are saving lives!

**Emcee:**
If you are a Team Captain, let me hear you cheer!

As a Relay community we stand with you to say thank for your time, energy, and dedication to your team!

Let's cheer for our Team Captains!

**Emcee:**
As a community united against cancer, we stand here to show the spirit of Relay.

The spirit of Relay extends beyond the field/track/path in which we stand, beyond our community, beyond our state, and beyond our nation. That spirit is throughout the world. Worldwide, four million people will show their spirit at a Relay For Life event. That spirit makes us an **unstoppable force** to eliminate the threat of cancer.

The Relay For Life movement unites us to put aside our differences, our disagreements, and our rivalries so that we may shout with one voice that we will win the fight against a disease that takes too much from too many. We will give hope to those in despair. We will never let go of those who need a hand to hold. We will never, ever, forget those lost to cancer – and we will never give up, never stop, never quit until cancer is no longer a threat to the lives of those we love and care for deeply.

If you feel the spirit of Relay, let me hear you cheer!

(Play “Give a Little Love” by Ziggy Marley at the end.)
OPTION C

Luminaria ends. The lights stay dim and the music somber for 30 minutes. During the following 30 minutes, another group of songs begin to pick up the tempo, after which time the emcee comes to the stage and starts to pick people’s energy up a bit more.

The sound of a cadence can be heard. It is a school drum line, perhaps. The group enters from one of the corners of the track. One leader and six people in a cadence follow, marching with big purple flashlights (the event lead, a Team Captain, a survivor, a caregiver, a corporate sponsor, and another Event Leadership Team member might be included in the group; or perhaps a police officer, doctor, business owner, stay-home-parent, student, or member of the military). Each of these people are either in fatigues or wearing something that signifies who they are (i.e. a survivor shirt, a uniform, a “Relay Mom” shirt, etc.). They could also each wear purple boots or boot covers or be dressed in purple, as well.

A third alternative option could involve using cheerleaders or volunteer circus performers such as stilt walkers, jugglers, or clowns to increase energy, combined with lively music that grabs participants’ attention and attracts them to the stage.

They enter the track and march around before ending at the stage.

Led by the speaker, the group chants:

Version I
I don’t know if you’ve been told… I don’t know if you’ve been told…
There’s a rally that’s about to unfold… There’s a rally that’s about to unfold!
All will come and be engaged… All will come and be engaged…
So get on your feet and come to the stage… So get on your feet and come to the stage…

Version II
I don’t know if you’ve been told… I don’t know if you’ve been told…
There’s a rally that’s about to unfold… There’s a rally that’s about to unfold…
We won’t get any sleep tonight… We won’t get any sleep tonight…
So get on your feet or we’ll shine the light… So get on your feet or we’ll shine the light…
(shine light in tents with purple flashlights)

Relay 1, 2, Relay, 3, 4, Relay 1, 2, 3, 4 Relay!

Speaker/Leader
“Razzle dazzle!” (in a loud and fun voice).
When the group hears “razzle dazzle” it will prompt them to “fall out” and get people from their tents to follow them to the stage, or invite them to join them at the stage and hand out pompoms, noise makers, etc.

Group continues to make way to the stage chanting, and should have a crowd by now.

Rally begins...
Emcee:
Relay participants, make some noise! How you doing?!

Can you believe it? We are halfway there – WOW! Time flies when you are having fun, and a little FUN is what we are about to have. So, if you are sleeping out there in your cozy little tent, get on your feet and get up here! Can everyone say, “Let’s go!”

Crowd:
”Let’s Go!”

Emcee:
It’s amazing to be standing up here tonight. We began this morning with our opening lap, and just a short time ago took a moment to remember, reflect, and pay tribute to our friends and loved ones who are no longer with us or are still battling cancer.

But right now, tonight, we are going to rally! Are you ready to have some fun? We know that we still have ___ hours to go, but right now, we want to take this time and revel a bit in what all of YOU have done throughout the year and today thus far!

Standing with me up here are fearless leaders, some of whom have put their lives on the line for our country, others who serve in our communities, and some you may recognize in our households making sure that every day we are safe, warm, and healthy. Each and every one of these individuals knows how powerful it is when people band together, whether on the front lines, in the field, as a team, or at home when something like cancer strikes us and attacks our families. There’s a certain spirit within that ignites a light within us, which leads us to others who share our passion. This leads us to band together, and when we do, we rally and move mountains. Here at the Relay event, ladies and gentleman, this flicker within is HOPE, and we call this “The Spirit of Relay!”

[Add brief personal story from emcee highlighting the energy and emotion felt at their first Relay event.]
See, Relay participants are not just ordinary people, they have a certain spirit that lights up when they talk about why they participate in the events. There’s a certain spirit that keeps bringing them back each year and bringing more people with them, a certain spirit about them that just ropes you in and somehow gets you to do the craziest things that you could ever imagine. It’s this spirit that starts off with one person who brings hundreds of people in communities just like this one together. What fuels that spirit of Relay – what keeps it alive – is the people like you who are rocking this event, right here, right now!

Each and every one of you has it in you or you would not be here tonight, and we thank you! Please turn to the person to your left and give them a high-five and say, “Thank you!”

Now there are some Relay participants every year who truly stand out... some have just started their Relay journey, and some have been around since the beginning. Tonight, we want to thank you and recognize a few of you for your endless Relay spirit! So when I call your name, please come to the stage and receive your 2017 Spirit of Relay stick for this year.

Volunteers should help hand out recognition items and give high-fives. People who are recognized will receive spirit sticks or purple/silver flashy plastic string wigs.

**Speaker could invite event lead or other volunteer to help recognize:**
- Top fundraisers (and team recognition)
- Top Team Captain - currently
- Top onsite fundraiser
- Top onsite increase

**Also want to recognize:**
- Our most tenured Team Captains (announce years and recognize those who have served three to five years and up)
- First-year Team Captains (all)
- Sponsors
- All of our pre-registered participants

**Speaker:**
Please make some noise for these folks up here!

Do you want to know how much money you have raised, right now? Wait, let me see if I can get approval to share *(make a show of asking the event lead or someone)* Yep, let’s do it. *(Speaker builds up excitement… plays with the crowd a bit)*. Drumroll please! *(Drum roll from the drum line, if possible.)* Purple people, I’m so excited to share the Relay For Life of *[COMMUNITY NAME]* has raised ______. Absolutely outstanding!
If you don’t know already, the work we do benefits everyone regardless of where the funds are raised. Although all the answers to cancer may not be found in our specific community, our community will help fund education and prevention outreach efforts and research that will help us better understand cancer’s causes and cures – benefiting people everywhere.

[Select two to three mission highlights in the additional resources section to share how the work and fundraising we do supports our mission.]

The American Cancer Society’s vision is a world free from the pain and suffering of cancer. From research to education, prevention to diagnosis, and treatment to recovery, we provide support to everyone impacted by cancer. And it’s only because of your efforts that this is possible.

**Speaker:**
Again, we want to take this time to thank all of our Team Captains, team members, and participants. We want to thank our sponsors for continuously supporting us and also our survivors and caregivers – we honor you. And to our amazing Event Leadership Team that worked endlessly to bring the Spirit of Relay alive in [COMMUNITY NAME]. This year’s event would not have been possible without you.

As we take this Spirit of Relay lap tonight, we know you will continue rallying in Relay fashion, keep the energy going, and reach out to get to know someone who is new here. Cancer never sleeps and neither should we. Get out there and walk!

Together we will save lives.

Thank you.

*Immediately play special song, such as “I’ve got the Spirit in Me,” by Karli Bonne. Everyone will dance off in a parade-like fashion, with leaders in front. Feel free to dance, skip, whatever you like – and encourage others to join! The DJ should continue to play upbeat music, perhaps “Celebration” or “We are Family” after.*
# Closing Ceremony

**Jump to Closing Ceremony best practices and considerations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceremony Element</th>
<th>Option A</th>
<th>Option B</th>
<th>Option C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Option A</td>
<td>Option B</td>
<td>Option C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Message</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heart of Relay Moment</td>
<td>Option A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing Words</td>
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**My Closing Ceremony Element Selections:**

<table>
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*Consider adding the [caregiver scripting options](#) into this ceremony as well for additional recognition of this important group of Relay participants.*

**TIP:** Be sure to coordinate an emcee to introduce the next person in the ceremony. Another option is to have the current person introduce the next person.
CLOSING CEREMONY – INTRODUCTION OPTIONS

OPTION A
Play “Eye of the Tiger” as people are coming over to the stage.

Emcee: We are innovative. We are courageous. We are caring – and empathetic. And most importantly. We are passionate and determined That’s what’s why we’re all here, gathered at this Relay For Life event.

Music fades.

It’s been almost [NUMBER] hours since we’ve kicked off this event. We’ve had tremendous highs and emotional lows, but all in all, we’ve had a good time, right?

My name is [NAME] and I have been proud to serve as your 2017 event lead. Now, let’s hear our final mission message.

OPTION B
Use local cheerleaders to help you fire up the crowd right before you begin the closing ceremony. Have them hold signs with the traits – innovative, passionate, courageous, determined – and to lead the crowd in chanting “We are innovative. We are courageous. We are caring. We are passionate. We are determined. And we are ready to bring cancer to its knees!”

Good morning/evening Relay For Life of ________!

When we started __ hours ago, we said that we were here, together, to fight a disease that never sleeps. How many of you got any sleep last night/rest today?

We’ve worked hard to get to this point. Not only have we walked for the past __ hours, but we’ve worked year-round to make this event happen. We do it because we have been touched by cancer.

On behalf of everyone here today, I’d like to thank the teams, sponsors, survivors, caregivers, and participants who came together to make this Relay event such a success. Without you, cancer wins. With you, we are creating a world free from the pain and suffering caused by cancer.

Let’s now hear our final mission message.
OPTION C

Play energetic music and ask some of your youth volunteers/participants to rouse up the crowd by dancing and chanting, “Relay For Life – We are innovative. We are caring. We are courageous. We are determined. We are passionate.”

Emcee:
So… community of [COMMUNITY NAME], you’ve made it through the [NUMBER] hours of the Relay For Life event, now are you ready to hear some exciting news?

As your event lead(s), we/I stood on this stage a short time ago and spoke of the important role that all of us play in the fight against cancer. As you walked the track today/this weekend, we hope you’ve had fun, spent time with family and friends, and enjoyed yourselves – but my greatest hope for the day/weekend is that you’ve been educated about the lifesaving efforts of the American Cancer Society.

My hope is that after leaving this field/track/path today/this weekend, you will know that the American Cancer Society is here for your friends and family should they ever face cancer and that you’ll find a way to keep this thought in your lives every day until we meet again next year.

I have a feeling you are all pretty anxious to hear just how much we’ve raised and maybe see you’d like to see a few awards presented?

First, let’s hear our final mission message.

Jump back to Closing Ceremony Elements Table
CLOSING CEREMONY – MISSION MESSAGE OPTIONS

OPTION A
Some of you chose to become members of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network℠, or ACS CAN, today. By doing so, you have joined an army of grassroots volunteers dedicated to letting our lawmakers know that cancer needs to be a priority. And we are making progress.

ACS CAN led the fight to have the Food and Drug Administration regulate tobacco as a drug.

ACS CAN is working to pass federal legislation to improve the lives of cancer patients by making treatment of their pain and other symptoms, as well as coordination of their care, standard protocols during their treatment.

ACS CAN advocates for smoke-free air, and currently more than 49 percent of the United States population is covered by a 100 percent smoke-free workplace, restaurant, and bar law.

Thank you to all of you who became members of ACS CAN today in an effort to make your voices heard.

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide, community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy and service. With volunteers like all of you, the American Cancer Society is making a difference in the fight against cancer.

(Include local information from your area here such as information found on the A Year in the Life document for your state.)

It was the American Cancer Society that has funded over $4 billion in research grants, the largest private, non-profit funder of cancer research, second only to the US government.

And guess what? YOU are the American Cancer Society. YOU have done all those things. The progress and the lifesaving programs and services we offer everyday are thanks to your fundraising, commitment, and passion. Thank you for all you do. Together, we will finish this fight!
**OPTION B**

Our grand total raised was just announced. But what will the funds be used for?

The programs and services of the American Cancer Society have depth and breadth. I want to share how many programs and services that $ can now provide to not only the American Cancer Society’s patients, survivors, caregivers, and their families, but even to you and to me.

(See Additional Resources “What your Relay dollar does” and use estimates. Please note: you may need to round to the nearest amount.)

Highlight even preliminary total, top teams, etc.

**OPTION C**

RECOGNITION AND MISSION COMBINED

We would like to thank all of our sponsors. Our success would not have been possible without your financial support. [READ LIST] Thank you sponsors!

Thank you again to the entire Event Leadership Team who helped organize, coordinate, and plan the activities, receptions, and ceremonies. Please give them a hand! You are all amazing!

Now, thank you to all of the participants on the teams who sacrificed sleep, a nice warm bed, and all of the comfort of home to celebrate life, inspire others, support, and encourage one another to fight back against a disease that has taken too much! Great job everyone!

There are some teams and people we would like to acknowledge who have demonstrated extraordinary Relay spirit this year:

[Insert awards for fundraising (individuals and teams), campsite décor, most year of survivorship, best rookie team, most improved team, etc.]

Thank you all for what you have done this year in the fight against cancer. Even if you didn’t win one of the awards here today, no amount of money or time given to this fight is too little!

Teams that raised less than $1,000 at this year’s Relay event totaled [add them up] which will provide number rides to and from treatment for cancer patients. [Use the appendix X to calculate and feel free to substitute another program/service.]

Jump back to Closing Ceremony Elements Table
CLOSING CEREMONY – RECOGNITION OPTIONS

OPTION A

On behalf of the Relay event in __________, I’d like to thank all of the teams, sponsors, survivors, caregivers, and participants who came together to make this event such a success. Without you, cancer wins… but with you, we save lives!

A special thanks goes to our Event Leadership Team. The success of this event is in so many ways a reflection of your dedication, spirit, passion, and commitment to your fight against cancer. Thank you!

There are some teams and people we would like to acknowledge who have demonstrated extraordinary Relay spirit this year:
[Insert awards for fundraising (individuals and teams), campsite décor, most years of survivorship, best rookie team, most improved team, etc.]

Thank you all for what you have done this year in the fight against cancer.

OPTION B

We would like to thank all of our sponsors. Our success would not have been possible without your financial support. [Read list.] Thank you sponsors!

Thank you again to the entire Event Leadership Team who helped organize, coordinate, and plan the activities, receptions, and ceremonies. Please give them a hand! You are all amazing!

Now, thank you to all of the participants on the [insert number] teams who sacrificed sleep, a nice warm bed, and all the comfort of home to celebrate life, inspire others, support, and encourage one another to fight back against a disease that has taken too much! Great job everyone!

There are some teams and people we would like to acknowledge who have demonstrated extraordinary Relay spirit this year:
[Insert awards for fundraising (individuals and teams), campsite décor, most years of survivorship, best rookie team, most improved team, etc.]

Thank you all for what you have done this year in the fight against cancer. Even if you didn’t win one of the awards here today, no amount of money or time given to this fight is too little!
OPTION C
For Youth Events

Thank you for helping to save lives from cancer. In the future, you will be able to tell your kids and grandkids that you played a critical role in the international movement to eliminate cancer as a major public health problem.

Thank you for being a part of the American Cancer Society Relay For Life movement and fighting back against cancer. We hope to see you again next year, whether that be here on campus or at a Relay in the new community you join.

Let’s all join together for one last time as the Relay For Life of <community name> as we walk our final lap until next year!

YOU are the American Cancer Society. The progress and the lifesaving services we offer everyday are thanks to your commitment and passion. Thank you for what you do.

Jump back to Closing Ceremony Elements Table
CLOSING CEREMONY – SPEAKER OPTIONS

For all options, please be sure to read and use the following documents: Tips For Selecting Your Ceremony Speaker and So You’ve Been Asked to Speak at a Relay For Life Event.

The speaker should have three to five minutes to share their story. Be sure that you coordinate a special introduction (30 seconds), typically by someone who knows them well and includes some personal information that Relay participants can connect with.

About a month before the Relay event, make an appointment and help the speaker outline what they are going to say. Be clear about your expectations and objectives, and help them integrate their personal story as well.

Where do you find speakers who know how to motivate? Here are some options:

OPTION A
Local teachers, college, or university professors do this daily. Consider asking a teacher.

OPTION B
The leaders of local service organizations are typically both good public speakers and well-respected by their community. Maybe a local service club president is an option.

OPTION C
The coach of a local sports team (high school or college) typically must give motivational speeches before and during the game. Could a local coach be the right speaker?

Jump back to Closing Ceremony Elements Table
CLOSING CEREMONY – HEART OF RELAY OPTIONS

OPTION A
Poem: I Walked Around a Track Today

I walked around a track today.
I walked to help a disease go away.
I walked because there is a need.
I walked so 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 even when the stars filled the sky.
I walked excitedly not demure.
I walked to help find cures.
I walked for everyone to see.
I walked for you, I walked for me.

OPTION B
We have had a fantastic event, and we’d like to take a moment to highlight a few people who have stepped up to the plate and become ACS CAN members today to share why they chose to make this important commitment to advocacy.

[Two or three ACS CAN members share in a couple sentences why they joined]

Thank you so much for sharing, and thank you to everyone who chose to become an ACS CAN member today. If you didn’t get a chance to stop by and become a member yet and you’re interested, please talk to an Event Leadership Team member and we can help you!

OPTION C
For an event that ends in the evening (a six or 12 hour event)

There is a little light,
A little light in your heart,
A little light that has tremendous power.
If we allow, it can obliterate all darkness.
That little light in your heart,
Let it shine.
There is a little light,
A little light in your soul.
If we allow, it carries tremendous wisdom,
It flashes sparks and thoughts of goodness.
That little light in your soul,
Let it shine.

No matter how dark is the night,
Within, you can always find that little light.
The light in your heart, the light in your soul,
They’re always there to brighten your world.
These little lights of your heart and soul,
Let them shine.

Jump back to Closing Ceremony Elements Table
CLOSING CEREMONY – CLOSING WORDS OPTIONS

OPTION A
The Relay For Life program gives us the opportunity to celebrate. We celebrate the cancer survivors in our lives and support them in their fight against this disease. We celebrate caregivers and thank them for everything they do. We celebrate all the accomplishments of the American Cancer Society over the past 32 years. And we celebrate being together at this great Relay For Life event.

The Relay For Life program also gives us time to remember those we have lost. They are never far from our hearts, and it’s at Relay events that we can come together and remember their lives. We remember them with every step as we walk around the track, and they motivate us to keep going. We gaze at their luminaria and remember the father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter, husband, wife, or friend and what they meant to us. Remembering them helps us remember what brings us here.

It is for all the people we’ve lost, all the people who continue to survive cancer, and all those who will still hear those dreaded words “you have cancer.” The Relay movement is how we choose to make a difference against this disease. In the future, you will be able tell your kids and your grandkids that you played a critical role in the international movement that ended cancer.

It’s now time to take one final lap all together to close out this year’s event. Thank you again for being a part of the American Cancer Society Relay For Life event and fighting back against cancer. We hope to see you again next year!
(Final lap begins; music plays)

OPTION B
Just as the community of Tacoma, Washington decided to fight cancer together in 1985, the past [XX] hours have been about our community of [COMMUNITY NAME] taking up the fight.

Think of all the walkers we’ve had on the track over the past [XX] hours and the impact the community of [COMMUNITY NAME] can make in the fight against cancer. We are changing the future.

It’s now time to take our final lap and celebrate another amazing year of our Relay program!

Thank you for being a part of the 2017 Relay For Life of [COMMUNITY NAME]. Relay participants, let’s line up!
 OPTION C
Thirty years ago, Dr. Gordy Klatt ran around a track in Tacoma, Washington to raise money for the American Cancer Society, and to do something more to show his support for the cancer patients he cared for. We are gathered here in the same spirit and have done the same – walked a track to support and remember those that we care about who have been touched by cancer. The power of the Relay movement is an amazing thing, and we are so thankful that all of you could be here to join us in taking up this fight and truly changing the future for the better.

What better way to wrap things up, than to finish how we began – with a walk around the track! Thank you so much for all of your hard work and dedication, and we hope that you will join us again next year!

[Final lap begins as music is played]
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Caregiver Scripting Options

OPTION A
For use during opening ceremony

At this time, we would like to recognize a very special and important group of people here at the Relay event today.

Caregivers are often unsung heroes in the journey of a cancer patient. They are a constant source of strength, encouragement, and most of all, support. There are many different types of support that caregivers can provide. We often think of a spouse, a parent, a sibling, or another close relative as being caregivers for cancer patients, and these individuals definitely fit that description. They are with the cancer patient day in and day out, keeping doctor’s appointments and treatment schedules organized, and holding all of the pieces of the puzzle together on the difficult journey.

Sometimes unrecognized however, are other caregivers in a patient’s life. A caregiver can be anyone who provides any kind of support for a patient during their cancer journey. It could be a friend preparing a meal, a nurse who provides care to the patient while they are receiving treatment, a child sharing a picture they’ve drawn, or a coworker who just takes time to call and ask how things are going. Anyone who does something to fight back against cancer and support a patient on their journey is a caregiver.

In honoring our caregivers here with us today, we also keep in mind that a caregiver never stops being a caregiver. Even if the patient they supported is not with us here today, the support that they provided is no less important. The role that all caregivers fulfill in the lives of cancer patients is pivotal, undeniable, and above all, unforgettable.

At this time, we would like to recognize any caregivers who are here at our Relay event with us today. If you’ve ever provided support to a cancer patient at any time, please stand and be recognized.

Jump back to Opening Ceremony Elements

OPTION B
For use during Luminaria Ceremony
The American Cancer Society recognizes anyone that has ever provided help in either a physical or emotional way to a cancer patient as caregiver. Today our Relay event is filled with many caregivers. Caregivers, can you please raise your hand and let us acknowledge you for being unsung heroes? We want to thank you for the selfless acts of kindness, love, and compassion you have extended to a cancer patient and for the countless hours you've provided quality care to ensure a loved one was comfortable and cared for. We salute you.

Audience, please look around and take notice of those with their hand up (caregivers raise your hand again). I urge each of you to take a moment now and shake the hand of a caregiver who may be standing next to you. Extend a hug or a handshake!

As our event continues on, there will be other opportunities for us to recognize our caregivers. Additionally, our Event Leadership Team has built in new ways to engage our caregivers throughout the day here at the Relay event. Please check in at the survivor and caregiver tent to see a listing of remaining activities geared just for caregivers today, if you haven’t had a chance to yet. Thank you again for joining us at the Relay For Life of [COMMUNITY NAME] we are so glad to have each and every one of you with us here today!

Jump back to Luminaria Ceremony Elements

OPTION C
For use during closing ceremony

Throughout our event, you have seen new and fun ways to recognize our caregivers, those unsung heroes that have provided loving care for cancer patients during their journey. Our Event Leadership Team worked hard to create a sense of belonging for our caregivers while providing a quality experience for every Relay participant.

Without our caregivers, some cancer patients would not have the ability to keep appointments, enjoy a quality meal, or have a gentle hand to hold during treatment. Again, thank you caregivers for all that you do or have done to make the cancer journey a little more comfortable for cancer patients.

We hope that you have felt our concentrated effort to build a Relay event that honors survivors, remembers those we’ve lost to cancer, focuses on the efforts of our caregivers, and lays a stronger foundation to build awareness in the community of [COMMUNITY NAME].

Jump back to Closing Ceremony Elements
WHAT YOUR RELAY DOLLARS CAN DO

*Figures based on 2015 data.

Use this document when choosing the Closing Ceremony Mission Moment Option B.

$10 could help provide a personalized information kit to a newly diagnosed cancer patient.

$35 could help provide breast cancer patients with one-on-one peer support from breast cancer survivors.

$150 could help provide a newly diagnosed cancer patient with a trained navigator to remove barriers and guide them through cancer treatment.

$25 could help provide a wig to a patient in treatment.

$50 could help a cancer patient and their caregiver free lodging at an American Cancer Society Hope Lodge® when having to travel away from home for treatment.

$15 could help provide a ride during treatment or a follow-up appointment

$100 could help provide a workshop to help women feel more empowered and confident in dealing with appearance-related side effects from treatment.

$20 could help provide 24-hour access to free information and support via the phone and online chats.
SPIRIT OF RELAY MISSION HIGHLIGHT OPTIONS

Select two to three mission highlights below to share how the work and fundraising we do supports our mission during the Spirit of Relay rally (for use in scripting option C).

We think outside the box. We foster innovation by conducting groundbreaking research and funding pioneering scientists early in their careers.

- The American Cancer Society has played a role in most major cancer research breakthroughs in recent history. Since 1946, the American Cancer Society has invested more than $4.5 billion in research. We have the generosity of individual and corporate supporters to thank for it all.
- We’re currently investing more than $405 million in over 25 types of cancer research.
- We’ve become experts at identifying visionary scientists early in their careers and our track record speaks for itself, as 47 of our funded researchers have gone on to win the Nobel Prize.

We’re doing everything in our power to prevent cancer. We encourage prevention by advocating for lifesaving changes, promoting early screening, and empowering others to make healthy lifestyle choices.

- It takes a lot of resources to fight cancer, so American Cancer Society staff are actively working with hospitals, state health systems, insurers, primary care physicians, federally qualified health centers, and other health care providers across the country to increase access to screenings and quality cancer care through collaborative projects and initiatives.
- The American Cancer Society also partners with a number of companies to provide grants that help people in at-risk communities receive education about cancer and access to screenings. With more than 1.7 million outreach interventions since 2011, our CHANGE Grant program is helping to reduce the unequal burden of cancer.
- We’re working with other national health organizations to increase colorectal cancer screening for people age 50 or older. Our goal is to have 80 percent of eligible people screened for colorectal cancer by 2018.

If you are diagnosed, we’re there for you. Every step of the way. We provide special attention and care for those touched by cancer, each and every day.

- We help people get answers. Every year, we help more than one million people via phone, email or online chat. By calling 1-800-227-2345, our trained cancer information specialists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to answer questions and connect cancer patients and caregivers with the resources they need.
- We provide a place to stay when treatment is far from home. Our 32 Hope Lodge® locations across the US provide free lodging for cancer patients and caregivers who have to travel far away from home for treatment. Our other lodging programs provide free or reduced cost-lodging as well. In 2015, we provided more than 361,400 nights of free lodging at American
Cancer Society Hope Lodge® facilities, and 62,600 nights of free or reduced lodging through our hotel partners.

- We help cancer patients access treatment. The American Cancer Society Road to Recovery® and transport programs help cancer patients get to their medical appointments and treatments. Last year, the Road To Recovery® program provided more than 316,200 rides to and from treatment and follow-up appointments.

- We help patients navigate the cancer journey. We understand that a cancer diagnosis is terrifying and overwhelming, especially for those with barriers to treatment. That’s why our Patient Navigators are trained to listen to patients, guide them along their journey, and connect them to the resources they need – whether it’s help with financial challenges, rides to medical appointments, or even being at their side as they get treatment. In 2015, Patient Navigators helped to guide 50,265 patients through the health care system.

- We provide comfort and emotional support. Through our Reach To Recovery® program, the American Cancer Society connects women facing a breast cancer diagnosis by connecting them with a trained breast cancer survivor volunteer. In 2015, we provided more than 10,990 peer support services to breast cancer patients.

- Utilizing specially trained licensed beauty professionals, the Look Good Feel Better® program helps cancer patients become empowered and regain confidence when dealing with appearance-related side effects that often accompany cancer treatment. A collaboration of the American Cancer Society, the Personal Care Products Council Foundation, and the Professional Beauty Association, the program has served nearly 1 million patients since 1987.
TIPS FOR CEREMONY SPEAKER SELECTION

At least two months prior to your event, start your search wide and far. Consider including your teams in your search for a speaker. Ask Team Captains to write out nomination forms for team members or associates who have a story to share. Have your Event Leadership Team review these nominations and vote to select the speakers. You can also ask the potential speakers to come give their speech at an Event Leadership Team meeting before you decide. Having a speaker at each meeting will help inspire your committee and it’s a great way to see which, if any, ceremony the speaker would be best for.

Ceremonies should reflect your community. In some diverse communities, you may need to consider having a translator. If your community has had a cancer patient or survivor in the news recently, consider using them as a speaker or inviting them to your ceremonies to promote the American Cancer Society services available to them.

Consider your message. So many times, we simply find someone willing to speak. Instead, plan ahead and consider what message you would like to convey in each of your ceremonies:

- **Kickoff**: Find a speaker who will convey a call to action that encourages the audience to get involved. Consider having them stress the sense of urgency in the fight against cancer and how the Relay For Life program saves lives.
- **Opening ceremony**: This speaker should provide an uplifting, energetic message to begin the event. Stress the difference the American Cancer Society makes in the fight against cancer.
- **Luminaria Ceremony**: Consider finding a speaker who has lost someone to cancer and will offer a hopeful message of remembrance. Possibly ask the speaker to mention how that loss led them to the Relay For Life event and the fight against cancer. Or, if the speaker is a cancer survivor, they could convey a message of hope and thanks, with recognition of those lost.
- **Closing ceremony**: A speaker should have a connection to cancer, but don’t limit yourself to a survivor or caregiver. A perfect speaker is someone who has been empowered to fight cancer and has a story to empower others to do the same.

Remember to include volunteer action everywhere! No matter the message or the ceremony, there is a way to include the message that volunteers need to take action against cancer. If the speaker contacted the American Cancer Society during their experience with cancer, be sure they mention it. If they did not, talk to them about some of the programs the American Cancer Society offers and ask them to consider the difference it could have made in their own experience.
Use ceremonies to recruit volunteers. Consider specific “calls to action” in your ceremonies. If there is a need for Road To Recovery® drivers or Reach To Recovery® mentors in your community, find a way to incorporate those programs into your ceremonies and make the ask to recruit more volunteers.

Plan for individual speakers to have no more than five minutes. A powerful story is personal but concise. The longer they speak, the more likely they will lose their audience, with a corresponding drop in energy.

Keep in touch with your speaker. Make you ask early in order to give them plenty of time to plan. Check in often and mentor them to make sure they have all the information they need to create a powerful speech. Consider asking speakers to practice the speech at an Event Leadership Team meeting. Ask speakers to arrive early and complete a sound check to become familiar with your sound system and stage.

Prep all speakers. We often focus on our keynote guest and neglect other speakers. Coach all your speakers or provide scripts to follow. Consider a conference call for all speakers at your event – or better yet, meet for a dress rehearsal!

**Inspirational Videos for your Speakers**

These short clips might help your speakers with some inspiration

- Tony Robbins - Focus (Inspirational Speech)  
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ys4_eo9Jtk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ys4_eo9Jtk)
- A Pep Talk from Kid President to You  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o)
- ACS - WHY WE FIGHT  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOi976QXnJY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOi976QXnJY)
- The American Cancer Society Creating HOPE in the lab  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnCsbaM2gOQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnCsbaM2gOQ)
- Relay For Life Impact: Where the Money Goes  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGpS2TkWdCA&list=PL667CC2573824EA33](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGpS2TkWdCA&list=PL667CC2573824EA33)
- Zia Saylor - Bracelets for a cure  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxMZX4eBs0Y&list=UUxmmyyWrLMpbQidP1d7943w](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxMZX4eBs0Y&list=UUxmmyyWrLMpbQidP1d7943w)

Jump back to Opening Ceremony Speaker Options  
Jump back to Luminaria Ceremony Speaker Options  
Jump back to Closing Ceremony Speaker Options
CEREMONY SPEAKER NOMINATION FORM

We are looking to create the “a-ha” moment at the Relay event. We want our participants to say, “Wow – the ceremonies were phenomenal, exciting, and I understand how the American Cancer Society is helping people right here.” We need your help to identify the speakers who will help us create the most memorable ceremonies for our participants during our Relay For Life event.

Do you know someone who has a story to tell? A survivor, caregiver, or maybe a Team Captain that captured your heart the first time you heard the story of his or her journey. Please consider nominating someone you think might make a phenomenal speaker at the event.

Person Nominating:
My Name _____________________________ My Team Name__________________________
My Email ________________________________ My Phone __________________________

Nominee Contact Information:
Nominee Name __________________________ Nominee Team Name________________
Nominee Email __________________________ Nominee Phone _______________________

Please select the ceremony you wish to have your nominee considered for:
_____Opening _____Luminaria _____Spirit of Relay
_____Closing _____Other _______________________________________________________

Share why this person would make a great speaker at the Relay event:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Please share how this person has participated in the Relay event:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Do you feel this person can make the commitment to write a speech, practice the speech, and participate in a rehearsal prior to the event?
Yes____ No_____ Not Sure____

Signature:________________________________________ Date:______________________
TIPS TO PROVIDE YOUR CEREMONY SPEAKERS
So you’ve been asked to speak at a Relay For Life event…

Preparing your speech

- **Know your audience:** While this is your story and we want you to tell it in your own words, you’ll want to keep your audience in mind and be mindful of your message. Every Relay For Life ceremony should leave the audience with hope.
- **Avoid in-depth medical jargon:** You may lose your audience if you give too many details. Every detail of your fight is important, but your personal struggle is more powerful than medical details.
- **Personal stories are powerful:** Speak to your life while experiencing cancer – the shock of diagnosis, effect on your life, and on your family, etc.
- **Weave the American Cancer Society into your story:** If you contacted the American Cancer Society during your experience with cancer, mention that. If you did not contact the Society, take a look at the programs and services and consider how they might have made a difference… or how they are making a difference for those currently battling the disease. Check out the advancements that have been made through Society-funded researchers. The treatment you received/are receiving could be linked to money raised at past Relay events! [http://www.cancer.org/research/acsresearchupdates/index](http://www.cancer.org/research/acsresearchupdates/index)
- **Be prepared:** Plan your speech for 75 percent of the allotted time because it is likely that you’ll go over. Consider different versions of your story – you never know if you’ll be asked to lengthen or shorten your speech due to ceremony timing.

“Connect with your audience’s gut and they’ll follow, without asking for details. Don’t connect, and you’ll never give them enough details to follow.” -Anonymous

Delivering your speech

- Start your speech with a sentence that grabs your audience’s attention.
- You become what you think. Think scared, you’ll be scared. Think passionate, you’ll be passionate. Don’t apologize if you make a mistake; keep going. Chances are they didn’t even notice! Go with the flow and don’t worry about being technically perfect.
- Wear your Relay gear proudly. If you don’t have any gear, don’t hesitate to ask your Event Leadership Team to provide some. The only way you can be under-dressed for a Relay For Life event is to not be wearing the Relay logo!
- Most importantly, speak from the heart. Relay participants share a passion for saving lives from cancer. Speak from your heart, and you’ll connect with theirs.

“Nothing will ever replace an individual with a bold message, the passion to share it and an audience wanting to change.” -Anonymous
SAMPLE CEREMONY PARTICIPANT LIST

Track the participants who are involved in your ceremonies to ensure you will have the information when you need it, as well as when it is time to provide the names of ceremony participants to your Event Leadership Team for the event program.

**Opening Ceremony**
Name:______________________________
Role:______________________________
Phone:______________________________
Thank–you sent?_______________

**Luminaria Ceremony**
Name:______________________________
Role:______________________________
Phone:______________________________
Thank–you sent?_______________

**Closing Ceremony**
Name:______________________________
Role:______________________________
Phone:______________________________
Thank–you sent?_______________