

# Relay For Life Guidebook



## Survivorship Chair



# Relay For Life Guidebook

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## American Cancer Society Relay For Life Volunteer Position Description

### **Volunteer Position Title**

Relay For Life Survivorship Chair

### **Position Summary**

The survivorship chair oversees all aspects of the survivorship celebration, including pre- and post- Relay survivor activities and hospitality.

### **Responsibilities**

- ✓ Serve on the Relay For Life event committee, attend all committee meetings and report back to subcommittee
- ✓ Recruit and lead survivorship subcommittee, which plans and conducts survivorship activities before, during and after the RFL event
- ✓ Work with survivorship subcommittee to develop and implement strategies for:
  - Survivor Recruitment & Retention
    - Set goal for new survivor recruitment and a goal for survivors retained
    - Recruit cancer survivors to participate in the RFL event and survivorship celebration
  - Data Collection
    - Collect survivor contact information
    - Plan and implement registration of survivors before and during the survivorship celebration
  - Survivorship Celebration
    - Plan and organize a survivors' tent and hospitality area for the survivorship celebration
    - Coordinate survivor honor/recognition activities and survivors' and caregivers' lap
  - Involvement in Relay and ACS
    - Plan and implement activities for survivors to be conducted before, during and after event to further
    - engage survivors in Relay and ACS
- ✓ Coordinate with other committee chairs on ceremony, entertainment, food, and publicity needs
- ✓ Write thank you notes to survivorship subcommittee members and sponsors.

### **Qualifications/Attributes:**

Knowledge of and commitment to the American Cancer Society Mission

Knowledge of community

Organized, able to manage and delegate

Communication, listening, and organizational skills

Usually has a very close connection to cancer, is a survivor, or has been been a caregiver for someone with cancer.

Enthusiastic and results-oriented

Good interpersonal skills

## Survivorship Quick Facts: Your Lifeline to being a Survivorship Chair



In this Guidebook, you have been provided timelines, best practices, job descriptions, etc. along with resources and tools. It is highly recommended that you thoroughly read this document for it will provide you with the “know how” to successfully execute your duties.

It is a best practice to have 8 to 10 months to plan the Survivor Celebration of your Relay, however, having 8 to 10 months for planning is not always the case. The million dollar Relay question is “*What are the MUST HAVE’S to accomplishing my job*”. In the event that significant time has passed for planning and your Relay event is right around the corner, here is a Quick Fact Sheet to your role as a Survivorship Chair.

- 1. Work with Publicity Chair to recruit survivors to attend Survivor Celebration at RFL event.**
- 2. Work with Activities / Entertainment Chair to create a schedule of activities for survivors throughout the RFL event.**
- 3. Work with Sponsorship Chair and Logistics Chair to secure resources for survivorship activities at the RFL event, as follows:**
  - tent
  - tables / chairs
  - food / beverage
  - survivor registration forms
  - survivor shirts
  - medallions / pins / sashes
  - giveaways
  - wheelchairs / golf carts
- 4. Attend all Relay planning committee meetings.**

To help keep you “in the know” about the event and the committee “in the know” about the Survivor Celebration, you need to attend the meetings.
- 5. Secure hosts (volunteers) to assist with survivor registration and celebration activities at the Relay For Life event.**
- 6. Collect contact information using Survivor Registration Forms and give completed forms to ACS staff partner for data entry.**
- 7. Send thank you notes to subcommittee and Survivor Sponsors.**





## National Survivorship Model... What is Survivorship Development

Relay For Life is about empowering survivors to fight back against cancer. It is necessary to ensure that survivors know that there is much more to Relay and the American Cancer Society than a survivor reception and lap. Therefore, the Pennsylvania Division has adopted the National Survivorship Model recommending that a year-round survivor committee employ the following:

### **Survivor Recruitment**

- Throughout the year actively recruit survivors to participate in Relay For Life and other American Cancer Society programs.

### **Collect Survivor Data**

- Collect name, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses for all survivors who attend Relay. Use this information to mail American Cancer Society newsletters, invite them to survivorship functions and invite them back to Relay.

### **Honor Survivors and Caregivers**

- Recognize all survivors at Relay through pins, sashes, and/or shirts. These costs can be covered by underwriting or sponsorship.
- Recognize all caregivers at Relay in a similar manner.
- Hold a survivors lap.
- Hold a caregivers' or survivors'/caregivers' lap.

### **Involve Survivors in Relay**

- Ask survivors to be involved in running the event.
- Make sure survivors understand that they are invited to take part throughout the event, not just the survivor lap.
- Ensure survivors understand what Relay For Life is and encourage them to have teams.

### **Educate on American Cancer Society Programs and Services**

- Make sure survivors are aware of local programs and services.
- Ensure survivors are aware of the 1-800 number and Web site.

### **Provide Volunteer Opportunities**

- Research shows survivors want volunteer roles, especially after completing treatment.
- Recruit survivors to be office volunteers and to facilitate ACS programs such as Road to Recovery and Reach to Recovery.

### **Involve Throughout the Year**

- Invite survivors and their caregivers to functions in order to provide cancer education, to explain volunteer opportunities and to recruit Relay teams. This can include a dinner, seminar, etc.
- Meeting throughout the year will bond the group together and build relationships with Relay staff and volunteers.

# Survivorship Timeline



## 8-10 Months Out

- Work with your ACS staff partner to develop survivor goals for your Relay.
  - ✓ One new concept related to goal setting around survivors is the setting of new survivor goals and past survivor goals (retention). In the past, events would set one overall survivor goal. The focus of this new approach is to look at retention of past survivors engaged in the event and setting a new goal for retention - recognizing not all will return to be engaged in the event and a new goal for new survivor engagement.
  - ✓ **Example:** Event ABC - Last year 100 survivors participated in the event, 75 were registered in TES. A goal for retention may be set at 60 for past survivors and a goal for new survivors may be 80, for a total event goal of 140 survivors.
  - ✓ Please remember nationwide it is estimated that 3% of your community population are survivors according to the RFL Formula.
- Work with event committee to plan kick-off
- Work to recruit survivor speaker for kick-off
- Invite last year's survivor participants to kick-off
- Ask hospitals to mail kick-off invitations to cancer survivors

## 6-8 Months Out

- Recruit and confirm subcommittee members
- Work with publicity chair to develop promotion plan for survivorship recruitment
- Contact last year's survivor participants
  - ✓ Ask them to form a team / join a team
  - ✓ Ask them to join the planning committee / survivor subcommittee
  - ✓ Ask them to attend the Relay with their caregivers, family, & friends
- Recruit cancer survivors.
  - ✓ Share recruiting information at kick-off
  - ✓ Follow up with sponsorship chair to ensure that survivors are invited from sponsor organizations.

## 4-6 Months Out

- Continue to contact last year's survivor participants
  - ✓ Ask them to form a team / join a team
  - ✓ Ask them to join the planning committee / survivor subcommittee
  - ✓ Ask them to attend the Relay with their caregivers, family, & friends
- Continue to recruit cancer survivors
  - ✓ Speak at support groups in the community to encourage survivor teams/participation.
- Begin to create a schedule of activities for cancer survivors during the event.
- Include survivorship information at team captains meetings
- Attend planning committee meetings
- Plan details of the survivor ceremony

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### 3 Months Out

- Continue to attend committee meetings.
- Work with the sponsorship chair for underwriting cost of shirts, medallions, pins, sashes, food, giveaways, etc.
- Confirm last year's survivor participants who will be attending this year
- Accelerate recruitment of survivors.
- Work to schedule a survivor to speak at the survivor ceremony
- Continue to create a schedule for survivorship activities.
- Collect survivor names and contact information from team captains
- Coordinate with logistics committee for a tent, chairs, etc.
- Coordinate time, music, etc., for survivors' lap and caregivers' lap
- Coordinate with ACS staff partner the ordering of shirts, medallions and other materials
- Send out survivor invitations to event (ask ACS staff partner for templates)

### 1 Month Out

- Accelerate survivor recruitment efforts.
- Follow up with contacts about food, giveaways, survivorship activities, etc.
- Get wheelchairs and/or golf carts donated for cancer survivors who need assistance walking.
- Recruit extra volunteers to serve during survivor celebration.
  - ✓ Hosts
  - ✓ Assist in survivor activities
  - ✓ Hand out gift bags, shirts, etc.

### 2 Weeks Out

- Continue recruiting efforts
- Finalize the above

### Day of Event

- Set up and decorate hospitality area / tent
- Provide seated area
- Finalize registration / give out shirts
- Go over checklist - wheelchairs available, music ready, etc.
- Have food, drinks, ice, flowers picked up
- Ensure that all supplies for survivor activities are present
- Recruit survivor volunteers for ACS programs / Relay for next year
- Verify guest speaker on site
- Have survivors complete Survivor Registration Forms to collect contact information
- Lead family, community visitors, etc. in rousing celebration of these individuals

### After the Event

- Work with event committee, subcommittee and ACS staff partner to analyze the event and make recommendations for next year
- Follow-up and engage new volunteers
- Write thank-you notes
- Ensure that survivors receive any follow up newsletters
- Give all data information to ACS staff partner

## The Survivorship Chair... Recruiting the Survivorship Subcommittee



- **Recruit 4-6 individuals to assist with the planning and implementation of all aspects of the survivors' activities.**
- **Recruit individuals who work in or have access to oncology physicians' offices, cancer centers, cancer support groups, churches, community clubs and organizations.**
- **Be sure that all members are equipped with accurate American Cancer Society and Relay For Life information.**
- **Meet and communicate frequently with subcommittee to plan strategies for survivor recruitment and to plan survivorship celebration.**
- **Make assignments of duties to each member of subcommittee with clear deadlines for reporting back.**

### Working with your Survivorship Subcommittee

Having a subcommittee will allow you to divide the workload into manageable tasks. You and your subcommittee should focus your efforts on these areas:

- **Survivor Recruitment**  
Have the group work towards opening up the number of venues from which survivors are recruited. This will help to ensure Relay growth.
- **Survivor Retention**  
For those events past their first year, have someone take responsibility for establishing and maintaining contact with previous year's survivors. Make contact with these survivors early in the year and give them the opportunity to be more involved with this year's event.
- **Survivor Recognition**  
Plan for all the survivor components at Relay For Life, and be sure to include caregiver recognition as well!
- **Survivor Involvement**  
Offer opportunities to involve survivors at a higher level, such as asking them to serve on a Relay committee, be a team captain, or join another ACS program. Plan activities and functions throughout the year for survivors to get together.





## Recruitment... Where and How to Invite Survivors to Relay

Understand that a cancer survivor is anyone who has heard the words “you have cancer”. Cancer survivors are everywhere in your community – newly diagnosed, undergoing treatment, or years beyond treatment, old or young, people with special needs or independent active people. Recruitment efforts should reflect all of these possibilities.

Your community’s Relay For Life is a place to honor and celebrate cancer survivors. They are what Relay is all about. Here are some tips on how to get as many cancer survivors as possible to be guests at your event.

- Send an invitation to survivors who participated last year. Ask your ACS staff partner to help coordinate this mailing.
- Speak to Team Captains about encouraging their team members to invite cancer survivors to attend the Survivor Reception and to take part in the survivor ceremony. All Relay participants should be aware of this component of the Relay event!
- Compile list of survivors in the community and call them to encourage participation
- Work with the publicity chair to place ads gratis in the local newspaper or other types of ads inviting survivors.
- Work with publicity chair to recruit a survivor to be featured as a spokesperson in media promotions pre-Relay. “Why I Relay” feature stories from survivors are great recruitment tools for survivors as well as sponsors and teams.
- Send invitations/flyers to survivors who participate in American Cancer Society support groups and patients who have received services from the American Cancer Society.
- Make presentations to support groups, community organizations, social clubs, senior centers and church groups.
- Distribute invitations/flyers inviting survivors to participate to cancer centers, hospitals, doctors’ offices, etc., and ask them to mail the information to their patients and survivors.
- Make a personal request to appropriate physicians, asking that they invite and encourage their patients to participate. These physicians may be medical, surgical or radiation oncologists, radiologists, gynecologists, urologists or other specialists who treat a significant number of cancer patients.
- Provide physicians, hospitals and treatment centers with invitational flyers to post in waiting rooms or other prominent locations.
- Work with HR personnel at corporations to ensure recruiting materials are sent to survivors

### **Data Collection... Survivor Registration at Relay For Life**

- Each survivor participating is asked to provide their contact information when they arrive. Several conscientious volunteers are needed to staff this process to be sure data capture is accurate and complete.
- A sign-in sheet or Survivor Registration Form to be used the night of the event will be provided by your American Cancer Society staff partner.
- Provide a comfortable (preferably quiet) area for survivor registration within the survivor tent/hospitality area
- Supplies/resources needed: table, chairs, pencils/pens, sign-in / registration forms, and volunteers to assist.
- After the event, please return all sign in sheets or completed Survivor Registration forms to your American Cancer Society staff partner for data entry.

## Survivorship Celebration... Planning the Survivors' Lap



### Suggested Activities

- Have a community leader (consider asking those who are sponsors) announce each survivor's name, years survived, and cancer site (breast, lung, prostate, colon, etc.). Ensure that this information is being captured at the registration area and prepare a list from the Survivor Registration Forms with all information to be announced. **(CAUTION: You MUST ask permission to announce.)** Long-time survivors will give hope to those recently diagnosed.
- As names are announced, present the survivor with a medallion, pin, or other recognition item. (Soft music playing in the background such as “*Wind Beneath My Wings*” helps to make this portion of the ceremony even more moving.)
- Choose an appropriate upbeat/uplifting song for the survivor lap. Some choices include “*Celebrate*” by Kool & The Gang, “*What A Wonderful Day*” by Tricia Walker, & “*I’m a Survivor*” by Destiny’s Child. Other song choices are listed in the Resources & Tools in this Handbook.
- Ask team participants to circle the track and cheer on the survivors as they make their “Victory Lap.”
- Have cancer survivors carry a banner as they walk the lap at the Relay For Life. It could read: “We’re Survivors,” “We Are Living Proof” or other inspirational statements.
- Take a survivors group photo before the lap and mail the photo to all participating survivors with a thank you note/letter from the survivorship committee.
- High school football players in uniform (or any organization of importance to your community) can be recruited to escort survivors on the track as their names are called.

## Planning the Caregivers' Lap

This is the time when survivors walk with the person(s) who helped them after their diagnosis. A caregiver can be a family member, friend, doctor, nurse, social worker. Anyone who stands by those they love as they face cancer.

### Suggested Activities

- Designate a special lap of the Relay For Life as the caregivers' lap. Usually this follows the survivors' lap.
- Provide survivors with a gift such as a pin or flower to present in some special way to their caregiver(s).
- Recruit a few people on your Relay or Survivor Committee to walk with survivors who did not come with a caregiver.
- Choose an appropriate song for the caregivers lap. “*Because You Loved Me*” by Celine Dion and “*Hero*” by Mariah Carey are a couple of examples. Other song choices are listed in the Resources & Tools in this Handbook.



## Survivorship Celebration... Planning the Survivors' Hospitality Area

**The Survivor's Tent is a very important focal point for our community's cancer survivors, their caregivers and loved ones...so roll out the red carpet! Here are some ideas:**

### **Suggested Activities**

- Coordinate with the sponsorship chair to get the survivors' celebration of Relay underwritten.
- Recruit hosts to greet survivors. Remember they are our Relay VIPs.
- The survivors' hospitality area is a very important focal point for your community's cancer survivors and their loved ones. Work with the logistics chair to place this area convenient as a "drop off" so survivors do not have far to walk to the hospitality area.
- Provide large industrial fans for keeping survivors cool in very hot weather.
- Some important items for the tent site are:
  - ✓ Prominent signage so survivors can easily locate the tent
  - ✓ A large (20' x 20) tent/canopy that you can fit tables, chairs and refreshments under
  - ✓ Tables/chairs for all the survivors and their families
  - ✓ Food/drinks for the survivors and their family members. (Provide light snacks such as finger sandwiches, veggie trays, fruit trays, etc., and don't forget the "Celebrate Survivorship" cake)
- Find sponsors to underwrite special items and activities for survivors:
  - ✓ Get a "Survivor Dinner Sponsor"....have a local restaurant come to the Relay For Life and provide a nice dinner for the survivors and their families. T-shirts: Get a sponsor to underwrite the Survivor T-shirts with the Relay Logo on the front and a survivorship message on the back. Ask your ACS staff partner for details.
  - ✓ Pine tree seedlings can be donated and distributed to each survivor with a note reading: "Please plant me either in honor of a cancer survivor or in memory of someone who has lost their battle to cancer. As you watch me grow, remember Relay For Life and what this event means to so very many. Let me serve as a reminder that we can find a cure for cancer. I hope that by the time I've reached my peak growth... the cure for cancer is a reality."
- Designate a parking area that is roped off and manned by volunteers for survivors only
- Provide golf cart rides and/or wheelchairs for survivors who need assistance walking
- Decorate the tent with donated/loaned table linens and floral arrangements on each table. Make the site inviting with lots of pretty balloons.
- Have a cancer survivor reception survey and have them fill it out after the celebration.
- Take lots of pictures

## Involvement in Relay and ACS... How to Involve Survivors



**The number-one reason why survivors do not further their participation is because we did not ask! Don't forget to ask for and utilize their expertise!**

### **Suggested Activities**

#### **Before the Event**

- Develop a speakers bureau of survivors and recruit survivors to deliver PSA's to radio stations, speak at club or industry meetings, team captains meetings and anywhere possible.
- Ask survivors to accompany the team recruitment chair on recruitment visits.
- Ask survivors to accompany the sponsorship chair on sponsorship visits.
- Encourage survivors to become team captains and members of teams developed from family, work, social organizations and church.
- Encourage survivors to become team buddies to motivate a team in all aspects of Relay: fund raising, team building, tent decoration, and team participation.
- Include survivors in kick-offs and team captains meetings on the program or as honored guests.
- Ask cancer survivors to serve on the subcommittee for the survivorship celebration.
- Keep local survivors updated on other ACS activities, such as advocacy activities or events
- Make certain that all Relay materials highlight the survivors' celebration.

#### **During the Event**

- Promote participation by all survivors in the Relay opening ceremony and the "Victory Lap."
- Invite local dignitaries who have been touched by cancer to speak and lead the lap.
- Work with the RFL committee to place survivors in speaking roles during the Relay.
- Plan interactive activities for survivors (Polaroid pictures, hands of hope, wall of memories).
- Make certain that Relay materials promote opportunities for survivors to be on a team or to volunteer at the event.
- Include brochures about American Cancer Society services, 1-800-ACS-2345, our Web site ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)) and the pre-determined programs you wish to highlight on that day.
- Recruit survivors for speakers bureau and other ACS programs.
- Ask survivors to visit teams at their Relay campsite to say thank you.

#### **After the Event & throughout the year:**

- Ask survivors to write thank you letters to previous years' teams and sponsors to further cultivate
- Write thank you notes after the event to ensure that all survivors receive follow-up communication (e.g., phone calls, newsletter, "glad you were here letter", etc...)
- Meet with speakers bureau to train about the ACS
- Sponsor a Survivor's Reunion mid-way through the year
- Mail Valentine's Cards to survivors since they are the "heart" of Relay!
- At events throughout the year, give interested survivors a special sash, badge, or some other item to wear showing the number of years as a survivor.



## Resources & Tools... Ideas and Best Practices for Survivorship

The following are two sample newspaper/newsletter Relay For Life Survivor Reception invitations.

### Sample Survivor Reception Newspaper Invitations

Contact: Name/phone number of Survivor Chair

Contact: Name/phone number of Staff Partner

Date:

#### **American Cancer Society Relay For Life Honors Cancer Survivors**

The American Cancer Society national signature activity, Relay For Life, takes place Friday-Saturday, May 4-5, 200X at (name) high school in (community). The 24-hour team event to fight cancer kicks off at 6:00 p.m. Friday night with cancer survivors walking the first “Victory Lap.”

Cancer survivors and their families who are interested in participating in Relay For Life are encouraged to call (local ACS number) for more information about the event and special activities for cancer survivors.

The American Cancer Society uses funds raised at Relay For Life to further local efforts in cancer research, education, advocacy and services.

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#### **An Invitation to Cancer Survivors**

Preparations are underway for the American Cancer Society Relay For Life team event to raise funds for cancer research, education, advocacy and service.

In honor of your battle against cancer, we would like to extend a special invitation to you. Please join us in our celebration of cancer survivorship by walking the first “Victory Lap” of the Relay For Life.

Friday, May 4, 200X

6:00 p.m.

ABC High School Track

Please plan to arrive at 5:30 p.m. to enjoy refreshments and pick up your gift. Opening ceremonies for the Relay For Life will begin at 6:00 p.m.

# Sample Cancer Survivor Invitation



## CANCER SURVIVORS HAVE SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE.

We invite you to show your courage and spirit! Join cancer survivors of all ages, their caregivers, and friends for one lap around the track during the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life Survivors' ceremony.

The American Cancer Society's Relay For Life is a 24-hour team event that brings people from local businesses, schools, churches and families together for a night under the stars while team members take turns walking or running around the track. You do not have to be a member of a Relay team or pay a fee to be involved in any of the survivors' celebrations.

### Relay For Life of XXX

June 12, noon, through June 13, noon

ABC Stadium

Survivor Reception begins at 5:30 pm, Saturday, June 12

Please complete the following information: (please print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Announce: Yes No

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

T-shirt Size: S M L XL XXL XXXL

I've been a Cancer Survivor for: \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_ Months

Type of cancer (optional) \_\_\_\_\_



I would like to receive more information on: (check all that apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering for Relay for Life     | <input type="checkbox"/> Survivorship Programs         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering for other ACS programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events/Planned Giving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy Issues                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Seminars          |

Please return this form two weeks prior to the RFL event to:

American Cancer Society, Attn. XXX RFL, 123 ABC Drive, Anytown, PA 11111  
For more information, call (staff partner name) at: 1-888-227-5445 ext. 1111



## Sample Physician to Patient Letter

Dear Friend,

I am writing about an exciting American Cancer Society event coming up (RELAY DATES), at the (RELAY SITE). The event, Relay For Life, celebrates the lives of those who have been touched by cancer. I invite you to be a part of the Relay For Life.

Cancer survivors will be recognized during the ceremonial first lap. A caregiver's lap of all those individuals who helped you through your cancer diagnosis will follow the survivors lap so please invite your family and friends to be part of Relay For Life. A hospitality area will also be available for you and your family.

There are many other ways for survivors to participate in Relay For Life.

- \* Become a Team Captain
- \* Become a member of a team
- \* Volunteer at the Relay For Life
- \* Participate in the Luminaria Service

I hope that you, your family and friends will consider being a part of this unique event. Your family, company, church or civic organization may wish to form a team in your honor. Team captains packets, additional information on cancer, or where and how to access local services for you and your family may also be requested through the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345, at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or by calling any local committee member listed below.

Committee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I look forward to your joining us on (DATE) as we celebrate the lives of those touched by cancer.

Sincerely,

Physician Volunteer

## Sample Letter to the Head of a Cancer Support Group



Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As a leader of a cancer support group, you know first-hand how powerful strong support can be when cancer patients are going through treatment. It is an awesome sense of relief to know you are not alone when dealing with cancer. With that in mind, the American Cancer Society is bringing the third annual Relay For Life event to Purple County.

Relay For Life is an overnight team event to fight cancer that raises money for American Cancer Society research, education, advocacy and patient services...but the main focus of Relay For Life is to honor cancer survivors. That is where you come in. We have a wonderful “victory” lap” for cancer survivors which kicks-off the event. Cancer survivors lead the first lap of the Relay For Life. It is very powerful, and emotional. It is followed by a reception with food and prizes. We invite your support group to be our guests at this upcoming event scheduled for:

Date

Time

Location

Your group could also get involved by putting together a team and participate in the event. It is a great opportunity for members to get to know other people in the group! Or...perhaps they would like to come to the luminaria ceremony that takes place at 9:00 p.m. when we light a candle in honor of each survivor, and in memory of those we have lost. It is a moving experience.

If your support group would like to know more, please let me know and I will arrange to make a short presentation at one of your meetings. I can be reached at 123.4567. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Survivorship Chairperson Relay For Life





## Sample Survivor Reception Agenda

**Welcome to Relay For Life! As a cancer survivor, we thank you for coming and we welcome and honor you as our special guests.**

Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's signature event. The teams you see here tonight have come together to help in the fight against cancer by raising money for research, education, advocacy and patient services. Team members will be taking turns walking through the night representing the idea that cancer never sleeps and for one night, they won't either. Relay For Life is also an important opportunity to share cancer information with the community. Most of all, cancer survivorship is what Relay For Life is all about. We are here to celebrate life. We are here to celebrate you.

**5:00 p.m. Registration (sign in at the Survivor Reception tent)**

- Get name tag, Relay program and Reception Agenda
- Receive dinner ticket for you and your guest
- Receive gift
- Receive raffle ticket

**5:15 p.m. Survivor Tent activities (optional)**

- "Hands of Hope" - Add your handprint and message to our "Hope" banner
- "Survivor Quilt" - Have fun decorating a square that will be used to create a quilt honoring those who have battled cancer.
- "Picture a Cure" - Advocacy volunteers will explain how you can send your photo and cancer-related message to our lawmakers.

**5:30 p.m. Music by Mr. Guitar**

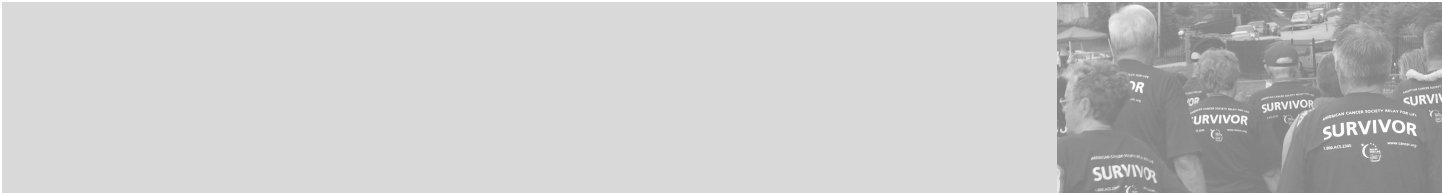
**5:45 p.m. Speaker** (Have a cancer survivor either tell an inspirational story or just welcome the guests to Relay For Life. Also, at this time, have someone explain how the Survivors' lap will work.)

**6:00 p.m. Participate in Survivors Lap of Relay For Life.** (All cancer survivors are invited to join together to start the "victory lap" as we start off the evening's event. Please let us know if you would like to ride in a golf cart during this lap.) Please return to the Survivor Reception Tent after the lap to enjoy dinner and prizes.

**7:00 p.m. Dinner** (located at.....)

**7:30 p.m. Raffle**

**9:00 p.m. Luminaria Ceremony** - We invite you to partake in this moving ceremony, where in a candle light ceremony we honor those who have survived cancer and remember those we have lost.



### Suggested Music for Survivors' Lap - The "Victory Lap"

Choose appropriate and respectful celebratory songs for the survivor lap, some choices include:

- "Celebrate" – Kool & The Gang
- "I'm a Survivor" – Reba McEntire
- "Step by Step" – Whitney Houston
- "Go Light Your World" – Amy Grant
- "Hero" – Mariah Carey
- "Hope you Dance" – LeeAnn Womack
- "Imagine" – John Lennon
- "I'll be your Hero Baby" – Enrique Iglesias
- "I'll Stand By You" – Reba McEntire
- "I'm Alive" – Celine Dion
- "I'm Still Standing" – Billy Joel
- "On my Way" – Phil Collins, from the Brother Bear Soundtrack
- "Survivor" – Destiny's Child
- The Theme From Rocky
- "Walk On" – U2
- "You Lift Me Up" – Josh Groban
- "What A Wonderful Day" – Tricia Walker
- "Walking on Sunshine" – Katrina and the Waves
- "Lean on Me" – Bill Withers
- "I Can See Clearly Now" – Johnny Nash

### Suggested Music for Caregivers' Lap - The "Celebration Lap"

Choose an appropriate song for the caregiver's lap, A few examples:

- "Because You Loved Me" – Celine Dion
- "Hero" – Mariah Carey
- "Wind Beneath My Wings" – Bette Midler
- "Standing in the Gap for You" – Babbi Mason





## Survivor Celebration Activities

### A Cancer Survivor's Thoughts

Consider having a scrapbook or journal for cancer survivors to sign and share inspiring thoughts at the Relay. This board or book could be brought back to each event for display. Comments can also be used as quotes in the local paper and thank you cards following the event.

### Hands of Hope

As the survivors arrive and visit the hospitality tent, invite each survivor to leave a colorful hand print on a large canvas banner. Near their hand prints, survivors sign their name and the number of years of survivorship. Caregivers could put their thumbprint next to their survivor's handprint. Several survivors can carry the banner in the "Victory Lap," and after the event the banner can be rotated among the offices of the major Relay sponsors until it is displayed at the next year's Relay. The banner can also be displayed at the local hospital or library.

#### Materials needed:

- Tempera paint in several primary colors
- Shallow pans, one or two for each color
- Permanent markers
- Canvas banner
- Clean up facilities (or lots of wet wipes!)

### Survivors Say Thank You!

Create a "wall of hope" by having survivors sign and, if they wish, leave a personal message on a large banner or billboard that carries the Relay logo. Some outdoor advertising companies will provide a "moving billboard" for this. This can also be rotated among sponsors or, as some communities have done, placed as a billboard in thanks to the entire community for their support.

#### Materials needed:

- Billboard or banner
- Permanent Marker

### Personalized Tiles

Work with a local art school, hobby store or college arts department to secure tiles and finishing services. Survivors are invited to decorate one or more tiles with a picture or personal message. The tiles are then allowed to dry and are taken for finishing to a local arts school. Finally, they become part of a permanent display at a local library, hospital or community center where many community members can enjoy viewing the tiles.

#### Materials needed:

- Tiles
- Tubes of paint and/or small brushes
- Volunteers to explain/help with tiles
- Cooperation of community with finishing and placement

## Survivor Recognition Ideas



**Items to be purchased as gifts for survivors need to be approved by the staff person. When the expense budget may be low, you can always try to have items donated, or you can find creative people willing to make some inexpensive yet special gifts.**

- Make purple sashes from spools of 2-3" wide purple ribbon (donated if possible) from a local craft or fabric store. Have a volunteer cut them into long strips before the event. If it is in your event budget (check with the staff person), Relay buttons or pins can be purchased and used to pin the ends of the sash together. Purple sashes can also be purchased from the National office. Check with your staff contact.
- Another idea is to use ribbon that is cut into 6-8" lengths. Survivor pins or buttons can be used with these also (or the word "survivor" can be imprinted on these).
- Give each survivor a Relay For Life T-shirt (these are usually a different color than the participant T-shirt).
- Have each survivor carry purple balloons during the first lap.
- Ask a local florist to donate fresh flowers (carnations seem to hold up the best), and give these to survivors as they check in prior to the "Victory Lap."
- Make handmade laminated bookmarks with a survivor or inspirational poem are lovely. By punching a hole in the top, you can also add ribbon by pulling it through the hole to further decorate the bookmark.
- Create angels made from spray painted bow-tie macaroni with a pearlized bead for a head and ring or sparkly string glued to the top as a halo are very special. Glue a pin to the back for pinning or run a ribbon through it for hanging.
- Purchase annual flowering plants in 6- or 24-packs, separate them and plant each one in a clean, empty food can that can be decorated with a survivor poem or quotation on printed paper that is cut to fit and then glued around the cans. These can be given to every survivor or can be used to decorate the tables.
- Have children from a local elementary school create cards with a theme such as "Wishing you sunshine." Each survivor and their family members could be given a card. If there are leftovers, they can be used to decorate the tent.
- During the first lap or opening ceremonies, announce the names of the survivors and how long they have been survivors.
- Working with the event chair find out if doves or butterflies can be released as the survivors start the first lap.
- Check with the entertainment chair about having a bagpipe or inspirational music play during the victory lap.
- Have a token gift to give to the survivors as they walk around the last leg of the track (e.g., hand them a balloon or carnation).
- For an uplifting feeling, have participants blow bubbles when the survivors come around the last turn.

*continued on next page*



## Survivor Recognition Ideas (continued)

- “Hope” stones are given to cancer survivors along with a note requesting them to pass their stone on to the next person they meet who is a survivor. Along with the stone is a card with the date of the next Relay For Life event, which gives one survivor the opportunity to invite another survivor to walk with them at the event.
- Have a “pinning ceremony” among survivors at the reception site. After some inspirational words or a touching story from a survivor have that speaker give a pin to the nearest survivor, then have that survivor give a pin to the person next to him/her, etc.
- Get small tree seedlings donated from a local Home Depot or garden center (the Forest Service has seedlings available at no cost) to be planted as a living gift - the Tree of Life! Give these to survivors at the end of the victory lap.
- Give a small bag of angel pins to the survivors that they can use as a thank you gesture to the cheering participants that line the track as the survivors walk the first “victory” lap at the Relay.
- Have teams “adopt” survivors on site (after the victory lap, or survivor dinner, teams can invite survivors to visit their team’s tent site).
- Have rocking chairs placed on the edge of the track for survivors who want to participate in “laps.”
- Offer varied items and activities at a reception, such as “survivor goody bags” (with a survivor poem, candy, American Cancer Society information, etc.), survivor photos taken to put on a banner, paper survivor chains, etc.
- Invite survivors to become a “Survivor Ambassador” to visit individual teams offering a thank you and encouragement to keep up the fight. This usually occurs after the Survivors’ Lap.
- Have cancer survivors carry a banner as they walk the first lap of Relay For Life. Your staff partner can order an appropriate banner. If developed locally, it could read: “We’re Survivors,” “We Are Living Proof” or other inspirational statements.
- Have a survivor’s photo before the first lap and mail the photo to all participating survivors with a thank you note/letter from the Survivor Chairman and/or committee.



# Sample Relay For Life Survivor Celebration Evaluation Form



**Thank you for joining our celebration of life! Your thoughts help us to ensure an even more successful celebration for our survivors in the future.**

1. Are you a: (please circle)      Cancer Survivor              Caregiver
2. If Survivor, type of Cancer \_\_\_\_\_ Years of Survivorship \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is this your first Relay For Life as a survivor or caregiver? (please circle)      Yes      No  
If not, how many years have you attended Relay as a survivor or caregiver? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What was your favorite part of the survivor ceremony/lap/luncheon? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What would you like to see improved/changed for the upcoming year? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Did you receive information about some of the great resources the American Cancer Society has to educate and serve our community (e.g. 1.800.ACS.2345, www.cancer.org, and the Cancer Survivor's Network)?  
(please circle)      Yes      No
7. Would you like to learn more about some of the volunteer opportunities the American Cancer Society has to offer? (please check all that apply)  
 Yes, I'd love to learn more about bringing a team to Relay For Life.  
 Yes, I'd love to learn more about being a part of the planning committee to help plan our Relay For Life in 2007.  
 Yes, please contact me about how I can help educate others in my community about some of the resources ACS has available.  
 Yes, I'd love to help gather and update community resources to benefit others touched by cancer.

### Please fill in the information below:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State : \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

*Please share your story or a quote on the reverse side of this form.*



# Sample Relay For Life Survivor Celebration Evaluation Form

Relay For Life of \_\_\_\_\_

The American Cancer Society is grateful for your participation in our Relay For Life. Your feedback helps us make our event more successful. Please take a few moments to complete this evaluation and tell us about your experience at our RELAY FOR LIFE.

1. What was your overall level of satisfaction with the Relay event?

Very Satisfied                  Somewhat Satisfied                  Somewhat Dissatisfied                  Very Dissatisfied

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. What did you like most about this event? (Please check your top 2 choices)

- |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| a. Community Involvement   | e. Social Atmosphere   |
| b. Supporting a Good Cause | f. Music/Entertainment |
| c. Survivor Activities     | g. Fun/Enjoyment       |
| d. Luminaria Ceremony      | h. Outdoor Activities  |

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, please rank your opinion on the following.

	(Poor)			(Excellent)		
Pre-Event Communication	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Registration Process	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Survivors Lap	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Survivor Reception	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Publicity	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Event Program	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Cancer Education	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Entertainment	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Facilities	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Luminaria Service	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Location of Site	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Overall Quality	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

4. How did you hear about the Survivor activities at Relay For Life?

- |                        |                     |                 |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Newspaper              | Place of employment | Friend/Relative |
| TV                     | Radio               | Internet        |
| Other (Please Specify) | _____               |                 |

5. How many years have you participated in Relay For Life? \_\_\_\_\_



6. Did the survivor activities meet your expectations?                      Yes      No

If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Were you part of a team at the event?                                      Yes      No

Team name: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Would you be willing to bring other survivors next year?              Yes      No

9. What are your suggestions for improving the Relay For Life next year? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Would you participate in the Relay For Life again next year?      Yes      No

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Additional Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If you answer yes to any of the following questions, please fill out the contact information below.

1. Would you like to serve on the Survivor Committee for next year's Relay For Life?

Yes      No

2. Would you be interested in establishing a team for next year's Relay For Life?

Yes      No

3. Would you be interested in helping coordinate cancer awareness, education, or patient support programs in your community during the year?                      Yes      No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_





## Best Practice Idea - HOPE Rock

We use a HOPE Rock to help pass along the message of HOPE and Relay to area survivors. During the Survivor Reception at Relay For Life the committee passes out rocks with the word HOPE written on them. Rocks are the size that fit in your hand. A sharpie can be used to write the word “HOPE” on the surface of the rock. A letter is attached (see below for script). The postcard shown below is also given out with the address of the survivor chair so survivors may send in a postcard and ask for another HOPE Rock to pass on.

*Dear Survivor,*

*As a survivor, you represent “HOPE” for someone newly diagnosed with cancer.*

*There is an old saying that a rock cast upon the water will send ripples our further and further into the water. As a survivor, we want you to use this rock to send out “HOPE” to others on their cancer journey. Please keep this rock until you know someone who has just received a diagnosis of cancer. Pass this rock on to them as a symbol of “HOPE” and invite them to walk with you next year in the Survivor’s Lap at the Relay For Life in your county. You will be casting a ripple upon the water that will reach out and let someone know they are not alone and we care about them.*

### Postcard:

**I have passed on my rock of Hope to:**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send me a new rock so I can continue to pass Hope on to other patients.**

**Sincerely,**

The Survivor HOPE Rock is a unique idea that Survivors can walk away with and pass along the Hope that Relay brings to those that attend.

## Best Practice Ideas



### Best Practice Idea - Best Bribe

We ask the survivors and teams to be involved in a “Best Bribe” contest. Teams are informed at team captain meetings that survivors will be going around to each campsite as a group voting on the most spirited team and the best campsite. Along with this judging is a contest for the best “survivor bribe”. An award will be given to the team that provides the best bribe. This bribe may be a gift, food, etc. This activity helps keep the survivors involved after the opening lap and gives them the special attention that they deserve.

The Best Bribe contest was a planned by the Activities chair partnering with the Survivor Chair. “Best Survivor Bribe” is successful because it creates fun for the teams and for the survivors.

### Best Practice Idea - Survivor Team

A way to involve your survivors year round is to encourage them to raise money on the RFL Survivor Team. See letter below. Many survivors are never asked to raise money, join a team, or for that matter start their own team. This is an example letter from a Relay that does just that.

### Example Letter

*Lincoln will be hosting the American Cancer Society Relay For Life July 9-10. We want to invite you to join the Relay For Life Survivor Team. There is no registration fee just a commitment from you to take the packet provided and raise money for the Relay For Life. You can collect general donations or sell luminaria in honor or in memory of a loved one that has been touched by cancer.*

*Help us raise money so we can increase the number of survivors and work towards finding a cure for cancer. Every person involved helps bring us one step closer to eliminating cancer. By you helping us raise money less people will have to hear ‘you have cancer’.*

*We are sending you a packet to keep track of your donations and a luminaria collection form. We will collect the money you raised at the Survivor Reception July 9th at the Relay For Life.*

*If you would like to start your own team, call us and we can send you information. The next team captain meeting is April 5. We will also have a ‘new’ team captains meeting on April 12, this meeting will focus on making your new team successful and answer all the questions you might have. Both meeting will be held at Eastmont Towers, 6315 O Street, in the Season’s dining room. Meetings begin at 5:30 and last an hour. We want to pack the track with survivors on July 9. Would you help us out by passing the word about the Relay For Life? Spread the word about the Relay For Life at your support groups, churches and your friends. Please let us know if we can send you materials to pass out.*

*Survivors, we need your help! We can’t do this without you. We need everybody raising funds for the American Cancer Society Relay For Life.*

*If you need any information or have any questions please contact us. We hope to hear from you.*

Your Survivor Chair can write the letter and serve as the Team Captain for the “survivor team”. Individual packets are sent out to each survivor. This effort can help to raise awareness about the Relay For Life and educate the survivors on the importance of fundraising.



## Best Practice Ideas

### Best Practice Idea - Adopt A Survivor

The best practice we utilized this year was the “adopt a survivor”. The chairman contacted the local support group facilitator to encourage their survivors to be more involved with the local Relay, by allowing the Relay teams to adopt at least 1 survivor from their support group. The teams individually contacted these survivors and asked them if they would be willing to serve as the honorary team member for the year.

By utilizing the “adopt a survivor” program there was substantially more Survivor involvement in the Relay. By asking the survivors early in the year to be a part of a Relay team this allowed the survivors to participate in the Relay from kick-off to event night. It also kept the Relay teams focused on the mission of the American Cancer Society throughout the year. For the first time the survivors at this event got the true meaning of what Relay is about by participating at a team level. This has also helped with recruiting more Survivors as team captains.

### Best Practice Idea - Mad Hatter Party

Ever been to a Mad Hatter tea party? This is a special tea party for Survivors.

#### Pre party planning:

- 2 large automatic coffee pots filled with water (one for serving, the other for refills)
- Hot and cold cups with matching napkins for the tea.
- Basket on the head table for sugar cubes and lemon wedges
- Centerpieces made from small watering cans filled with pussywillows with a teacup and saucer

#### Food & Drink

- 5 different types of tea (served in teapots). In front of each teapot sat a tea motif picture frame listing the type of tea
- Pastries
- Cheese and crackers

#### Entertainment & Fun

- A cello duet played for 30 minutes
- A CD playing chamber music for the remaining time
- Provided a door prize drawing of a donated Horizon of Hope Longaberger Basket. Survivors entered the drawing by writing their names on paper doilies.
- For the Mad Hatter theme, the committee wore a Mad Hatter hat and rabbit ears. *An Alice in Wonderland* book was displayed on the main table.
- The invitation asked the survivors to wear a special hat

This was a new and different way to honor our Survivors. Many enjoyed the time to meet with other survivors and members of the Relay committee to socialize. This helped to make many faces more familiar the day of the Relay at the Survivor area.

# Notes





## Notes

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.



1.800.ACS.2345  
[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

Hope.Progress.Answers.®