



Relay for Life of  
McLean County

Special points of  
interest:

- Kick Off Party - DATE CHANGE! Get your tickets NOW!
- Team Rally Meetings —Start February 9th at 5:30pm at The Moose's Lodge.
- Team Workshops — Start March 9th at 5:30pm at The Moose's Lodge.

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# “WALK TALK”

Paint Your World Purple

January 2016

**HAPPY NEW YEAR to you all! It is 2016 and we are all ready to make this year the BEST Relay for Life yet.**



What does your team plan to do different this year to help raise more money....to help make more birthdays....to help paint Bloomington-Normal purple?

If you haven't already, get your team registered today — What are you waiting for?

**Get registered TODAY** so that you can start reaching your fundraising goals. To register your team, go to the website, [http://relay.acsevents.org/site/TR/RelayForLife/RFLCY16LS?fr\\_id=72422&pg=entry](http://relay.acsevents.org/site/TR/RelayForLife/RFLCY16LS?fr_id=72422&pg=entry)

The first 2016 Team Rally meeting will be held on February 9th at the Moose's Lodge starting at 5:30pm. Come meet other teams,

get new ideas, collect flyers and other information, and bank your teams money.

On March 8th at the Moose's Lodge there

will be a Team Workshop starting at 5:30pm (topic to be determined).

Then, join us to “Kick Off” the Relay season at our annual Relay for Life Kick Off Party on March 26th at the Chateau. Your team can even enter a silent auction basket to kick start your fundraising — If the item/basket you bring is valued under \$75it will be added to the Basket Raffle. If your item/basket is valued at \$75 or above you will have the choice to have it in the Basket Raffle or the Silent Auction. For more information about the Kick Off Party see “Relay Happenings” on page 2.

**As always, thanks for your support!**

## A Note from: Our Leadership

### **Why have I chosen to be on the Leadership Team?**

I have chosen to be on the Leadership Team for the Mclean County Relay for Life because I want to show my kids that we can make a difference. I have an Amazing Husband, Austin, and two children, Cheyenne and Bryson. My family has been hit extremely hard these past 6-years of my daughter's life and 5 years of my son's life. We have lost so many loved ones from Cancer.

We watched cancer take away my Dad and then two weeks later my Aunt. Two years after that we lost my Mother-in-Law, and then a year later my Sister-in-Law battled breast cancer. As if that isn't enough, just this year I lost my Step Dad.

If anyone would have told me that my daughter's first birthday would be the last day that we all came together and celebrated as a family I would have thought it could never be true. Unfortunately, Cancer happens too often and once a family member receives their diagnoses it affects the entire family for a life time.

So I chose to help make a difference and join the fight against Cancer. With a daily prayer, that my future grandchildren will never know the word CANCER or SEE CANCER. It takes people that Relay and help raise money to end this horrible nightmare disease.



*Alexis Anderson & Family  
~Experience Lead~*

# Why I Relay – A Caregiver Story



Gwen Althue with her mom, Martha Brown  
~Marties Butterflies~

*"Cancer steals away loved ones, it steals hope and dreams..."*

My Mom had been sick, but I only took her word for it that she was taking care of it - that it was just a kidney infection, another UTI, her doctor was handling it. Her best friend called me in October of 2014 and told me what my Mom wanted for her birthday, to go to Golden Corral, so I took her. She seemed off but she told me she was just tired. I nodded and said ok. In January her best friend said that I should try to get my Mom to visit her grandchildren in Tennessee and maybe her sister, my Aunt, in Pennsylvania. I asked, "why now, why the rush," and was told she thought maybe my Mom was sicker than she was letting on. I chalked it up to them being crazy, hypochondriac, old ladies! I saw my Mom every other week for either lunch or breakfast and she seemed fine. We talked, we laughed and everything was just as it always was, or so I thought.

I planned a trip to Tennessee to go visit my niece and her 2 children (my Mother's only great-grandchildren) and we went in March 2015. The trip was hard because my Mom wasn't herself and seemed upset and angry. We spoke about what her doctor was doing and I told her I thought she needed to maybe see another doctor since she didn't seem to be getting better. My daughters and I got a little short and frustrated with my Mom during the trip. I actually joked afterwards that my Mom would never want to go on another trip with us. Never understanding she wouldn't have that option.

I spent April and May trying to get my Mom to go to another doctor. I'd mention it when I saw her, but I guess not pushing the way I should have. On May 29<sup>th</sup> of this year I got a text from my Mom letting me know that she was at the

hospital and going in for emergency surgery. As soon as I got off work that Friday I went to the hospital and saw my Mom just moments before they took her for surgery. They were planning to find out what was going on with her kidneys and hoped to get them opened up and functioning.

A short time later the surgeon came out and told us that she had stage 4 cancer in her bladder and kidneys, and that it was so bad they wouldn't be able to do anything. That night was pure hell and it began a rollercoaster ride that ended with the death of my Mother on August 10, 2015. I cannot go into the details...I am not ready for that. As her caregiver I don't want others to have to go at it alone; I don't want anyone to have to face this without being able to talk to others who have gone through the same thing. I still don't know what options were available to me, but I want to learn and I want to get that information out to others.

Cancer steals away loved ones, it steals hope and dreams, it devastates families and seems to be a death sentence, but it goes so much deeper than that - I relay so that another family doesn't have to feel alone when they hear the words, "your family member has cancer" ...After losing my Uncle to brain cancer and my Mother to kidney, bladder, lung and bone cancer, I want to help. I want to do whatever is in my power to do so that people can find whatever help they can. No family should have to walk this path alone!



## Relay Happenings

**Relay 2016 Kick Off** – Kick-Off will be held on Saturday, March 26th starting at 7:00pm at The Chateau Hotel and Conference Center.

Admission is \$15/person in advance and will include appetizers, a short program and DJ services provided by Dynamic Sound. There will be a cash bar, Silent & Basket Raffle and TONS-O-FUN!

Deadline to purchase tickets is January 2nd. Purchase tickets at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-mclean-county-relay-for-life-kick-off-party-tickets-19956797318>

OR, send payment (payable to Relay For Life) via mail to:

McLean County Relay for Life  
Attn: Kimberly Wright  
4234 N Knoxville, Suite B  
Peoria, IL 61614

**Schwan's Fundraiser** – Happening NOW!  
Enter campaign # 25291 when placing your order and McLean County Relay will receive 20% of your order.

Teams can get credit as well...Go to: [www.schwanscares.com](http://www.schwanscares.com) and search for # 25291. You will be able to set up a Team Page and receive 20% of orders.

**Save the Date** – Survivor/Caregiver Night with the Bloomington Thunder on March 11th. Your team can earn \$7/ticket sold to this event. Order forms for tickets MUST be turned in by March 7th.

**Relay Mall** - will take place again this year during our Relay for Life event. If you are participating in Vendor Shows, mention Relay Mall to those around you....and don't forget, it will be here before you know it so start working on your crafts now.

★ Relay For Life Kickoff! ★

## Mission Moment – Cervical Cancer

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. In cervical cancer, normal cells of the cervix gradually develop pre-cancerous changes. These changes can be detected by visiting your gynecologist for a Pap test and can be treated before turning into an invasive form of cancer. There are 2 main types of Cervical cancer. The most common (90%) are squamous cell carcinoma and adenocarcinoma. It usually takes several years for these pre-cancerous changes to change to cancer but it can occur in less than a year so it is very important for yearly checkups with your doctor. For many women, pre-cancer cells may go away without treatment but in some women they will turn into true cancer so treating all cervical pre-cancer can prevent almost all from changing into a true cancer of the cervix.

Risk factors include: smoking, HPV (human papilloma virus infection), immunosuppression from HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) or taking medications to suppress the immune system (such as people being treated for auto-Immune disorders and who have

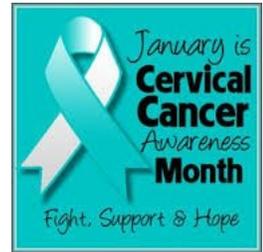
had organ transplants), chlamydia infections, being overweight, eating a diet low in fruits and vegetables, and long term use of oral contraceptives (>5 years). Women who are smokers, or who have had 3 or more full term pregnancies, women who had their first full term pregnancy before age 17, and poverty which can lead to lack of access to medical care and Pap tests are also factors that increase the risk of developing cervical cancer.

Other people at higher risk are those whose mothers were given the hormonal drug called DES (Diethylstilbestrol) during their pregnancies to prevent miscarriages, especially if it was used in the first 16 weeks of pregnancy (this drug was used between the years of 1940 to 1971). Those with a family history of cervical cancer are also at higher risk- it is said that a woman has a 2 to 3 times higher chance of developing cervical cancer if their mother or their sister had it.

Signs and symptoms include abnormal vaginal bleeding such as after vaginal intercourse,

after menopause, bleeding or spotting between menstrual periods, and having longer, heavier periods. Other signs include an unusual discharge from the vagina and pain during intercourse. The best way for early diagnosis is regular Pap tests (your Dr might also order HPV testing in addition to you Pap test). Treatments depend on the stage at which the cancer is diagnosed and can include surgery, radiation, chemotherapy, and targeted therapy (a medication therapy similar to chemotherapy).

So please take a minute to remind the women in your life to get regular checkups and report any unusual symptoms to her doctor. Lets start out the New Year right and keep cancer prevention and what we can do to make a difference in our daily thoughts. Spread the word and make everyone you know aware of what we are doing to keep up the fight against cancer. Thank you for all you do---from the Mission Committee.



## YOU can help the Mission Committee

**St. Louis Hope Lodge has a "wish list"** – Donations can be dropped off during any of the Team Rallies, Workshops, or other Relay for Life events. The Mission Committee will collect the donations and take them to the Hope Lodge. Items needed include: Office Supplies, Kitchen Supplies, Cleaning Supplies, Stamps, and Gift Cards. A complete "wish list" can be found on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/>

### Team Fundraisers

~**The Wright Fight Team~ Paint Party** on January 27th at 7:00pm at Swingers Grille in Normal. Cost is \$30 – to register visit: [www.paintlikemeparty.com/sign-up-now.html](http://www.paintlikemeparty.com/sign-up-now.html) or contact Kimberly at:

[Kimberly.stewart.wright@gmail.com](mailto:Kimberly.stewart.wright@gmail.com). Half price bottles of wine or \$5 glasses will be available.

~**TEAM OWEN~ 4th Annual Winter Ball** will be held March 6, 2016 at The Chateau in Bloomington. Like last year, if the team profits over \$2,000, each registered Relay

participant that attends the event will have \$25 banked to their account. Event includes: Social Hour, Sit-down Dinner, DJ, Photographers, Silent Auction, Cash Bar, and Door Prizes. To purchase tickets, or for more information, go to their Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/teamowengrowinghope](http://www.facebook.com/teamowengrowinghope) OR call Catina at 309-706-5367.

~**Team LaTeaDa~ 5th Annual Purse & Dessert Gala** will be held on March 19, 2016 starting at 5:00pm. Save The Date – More details to come soon.

**Have a fundraiser planned? We can advertise it for you here, on Facebook, and on our website. Send a message to:** [rflwalktalk@outlook.com](mailto:rflwalktalk@outlook.com)

## ACS – We Can Help

### Find Support & Treatment

Learn about making treatment decisions, coping with side effects, handling financial matters, caregiving, and living well after cancer. The American Cancer Society also has programs and services to help you manage cancer treatment and recovery and find the emotional support you need. And best of all, our help is free.

For additional information go to: [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)





Relay for Life  
American Cancer Society  
Relay for Life of McLean County

2016 Relay For Life Leadership Team

Event Lead - Chris Lay

Bring the People Lead - Catina Struble

Experience Leads - Alexis Anderson & Sandi McBurney

Build the Fun Lead - Mary Kerber

Fund the Mission Lead - TBD

Community Manager - Kimberly Wright

Questions? – Contact Catina Struble  
rflbringthepeople@outlook.com

The Official Sponsor of Birthdays

**Does your Relay team have a fundraiser planned?** Let us help spread the word – let us know the details and we will include the information in the monthly Walk Talk and on our Facebook page.

**We want to include YOU in our feature stories.** Send an email if you have a “Survivor Moment,” “Caregiver Highlight,” or “Why I Relay” story that you would like to see in a future issue of “WALK TALK.”

**Send us pictures** from your events or showing how your team has helped to paint our world purple.

Please send emails regarding “WALK TALK” to Rowana Robles at:  
RFLWalkTalk@outlook.com

**“Like” us on Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/rflmcleancountvil](http://www.facebook.com/rflmcleancountvil)

## Cancer Doesn't Care

**Cancer has no boundaries....**Cancer doesn't care who you are, what you look like, or how much money you have. Even those with access to the best possible medical care....



Already in 2016 we have lost the above pictured celebrities. David Bowie (69) died after fighting liver cancer; Alan Rickman (69) lost his fight with cancer; Rene Angelil (73) lost his lengthy battle with throat cancer; and Dan Haggerty (74) passed away after battling cancer of the spine.

What does this tell us? The fight isn't over – We all need to continue to come together and fight. Together we are an “Army of Purple.”

## Painting The Town Purple

**January 28th – Coaches vs. Cancer** – Heyworth vs El Paso/Gridley (girls basketball). Game begins at 7:00pm at Heyworth High school.

**February 12th – Coaches vs. Cancer** – Normal Community West (boys basketball). Game begins at 7:30pm.

**March 11th – Cancer Awareness Night** with Bloomington Thunder. \$15 advance tickets with \$7 going back to Relay for Life. Game begins at 7:00pm.

**April 1st – Illinois Wesleyan's Relay for Life/ Colleges Against Cancer** at the Shirk Center beginning at 6:00pm.

**April 22nd – Illinois State University's Relay for Life/ Colleges Against Cancer** at The Quad beginning at 6:00pm.

**April 23rd – Cancer Awareness Night** with Bloomington Edge. Game begins at 7:00pm.

**April 29-30th – McLean County High School Relay for Life** at Normal Community West beginning at 6:00pm.

**June 24th – McLean County Relay for Life** at Normal Com-

