



Why Is Relay For Life an Overnight Event?

We Relay overnight so we can empathize with the cancer survivors we fight for. Throughout the night we experience different emotion: excitement, fear, fatigue, hope, just as Survivors do during their journey.

7:00 P.M. -The Survivor Lap opens Relay. As participants start Relay they are strong and ready for the challenge just as a newly diagnosed cancer survivor hopes they too are ready for the challenge – the challenge of their life.

8:00 P.M. - Daylight Fades. Just as a Survivor's energy starts to fade and they wonder if they are going to lose their life. As the evening gets colder and darker Relayers may start to wonder what they have gotten themselves into - just as the emotions of the cancer Survivor get colder and darker and they too wonder what is in store for them.

10:00 P.M. The Luminaria Ceremony begins. This is the time of greatest emotion. This represents the time the cancer patient need family, friends, doctors, and The American Cancer Society to help them through their journey. During the Luminaria lap we light candles and walk in silence. Every candle has a name just as every cancer patient and we will carry them during this time through their journey.

12:00 A.M. – Relayers begin to tire. They have been walking for hours and don't know if they can keep going. They think about giving up. For the cancer patient, this represents the time when they begin treatment. They become exhausted, some sick, not wanting to go on, possibly wanting to give up, but they can't.

2:00 A.M. – The darkest hour of the night. Relayers are truly exhausted, and may begin to question if they can make it. They may need their teammates to lean on. This represents the time the cancer patient must lean on loved ones, doctors, and The American Cancer Society again to help them through their journey. They are told that the end is in sight and they begin to find hope they will make it to the celebration.

4:00 A.M. - The final hours of Relay. The night has been long, but hope is strong and Relayers feel the sense of accomplishment as they realize that they are almost there. They have come so far, they can't quit now. This is much the same as the end of treatment for the cancer patient. Hope is in sight.

6:00 A.M. - The dawning of a new day. As the morning sun rises, Relayers know that they have accomplished a life changing, empowering journey as does the cancer patient at the end of their journey with cancer. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel. The morning sunrise brings a new day full of life and they know they will live to see another day. Their treatments are over and they made it!

6:30 A.M. Closing Ceremonies. We celebrate our accomplishment and although Relayers are exhausted and weak, as is that cancer patient after treatment, they know that there is hope in the new day. As a Survivor celebrates being cancer free, Relayers celebrate knowing that one day the world will be cancer free. We celebrate the money raised at Relay to support cancer patient services, lifesaving research, prevention education, and advocacy efforts.

So, the next time you are asked why we Relay all night you can answer: When we Relay, no one fights alone. Cancer doesn't sleep, so for one night, neither will we. **We Relay because we can.**