



By Gayle VanVooren
Mascot Editor

Emotions ran high as the 17th annual Relay for Life, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, took place over the weekend.

“Whether you are the person fighting cancer or the caregiver of that person, you have to have a positive outlook on the whole situation. If you don’t the whole situation can consume you,” said Teri Hively, who spoke on behalf of her husband, Brad, who discovered he had cancer just a year ago.

We couldn’t have done it without family and friends to help us.

”She added, Bruce Saugstad also spoke for his 13-year-old daughter, Morgan, who contracted lymphoma in seventh grade. As he said, “Birthdays at our house are now a big celebration.” This was a time of remembering those who have lost the battle, of celebrating the lives of those who have survived , and supporting those who are still in their fight with this disease called cancer.

Staged at the Lyon County Fairgrounds and the Schwan’s Ice Hockey Arena, folks began streaming in the doors early. The bright purple shirts worn by survivors seemed to set them apart from the crowd — and gave them an elevated status.

For those of us who have not had to battle this disease, it’s hard to imagine what these folks have gone through. And yet, they are there, willing to talk and share their experiences.

Some 200 items had been donated for the silent auction that was taking place, some 2,500 luminaries had been bought and made up the trail for the walkers during the evening, and funds raised by the individual teams helped to raise handsome funds for the fight of cancer.

Survivors were named, with the years of cancer freedom noted. Ruth Anderson, 105, of Balaton, a 21-year survivor of cancer, was on hand as the oldest Minnesota citizen and the world’s oldest twin.

Minneota faces were dotted throughout the crowd; Sharon Muhl, Janet Blegen, Jane Hennen,

Jim Wohnoutka, Darlene LeGare, Jill (Kompelien) Boehne, Larry Doom, Betsy Jo Kack, Tracy Larson, Elaine Kack, and Gary and Sandy Nuytten of Ghent.

And many more faces and names were remembered for having lost their battle with cancer as luminaries lit the ground in remembrance.

As the survivors gathered and took their first laps around the ice arena, Kelsey Przymus sang a sweet song, and applause and cheering erupted from the family and friends who had gathered. They were then met by the Marshall marching band drumline and escorted on a lap outside the building. From there they visited with family and friends, and joined the teams that would be walking throughout the evening.