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Guerin Prep Joins the Fight Against Cancer with Kick-Off for Relay For Life

Using Glo Sticks, music and dance, inspirational speakers and informational sessions on cancer prevention and healthy lifestyles, the Guerin Prep High School Community Feb. 11 kicked off its participation in this year's Relay For Life, an event created by the American Cancer Society.

The Guerin Prep team, to be comprised of students from the Nolan Scholars Program, will participate in the Relay that is being sponsored by the Elmwood Park and River Grove communities June 25.

The Guerin Prep student team with other teams created from the community will camp out at Elmwood Park High School and take turns walking or running around a track or path. Each team must have a representative on the track at all times during the event, and because cancer never sleeps, Relays are overnight events up to 24 hours in length.

According to the American Cancer Society, the Relay For Life is a life-changing event that gives everyone in communities across the globe a chance to celebrate the lives of people who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost and fight back against the disease.

Karin Calandriello, director of the Nolan Scholars Program at Guerin Prep, chose the Relay as a focus for this year's Nolan Scholars Program both for its educational and service components.

“One of the themes for the second year of our Nolan Scholars Program is medicine. Working with the local American Cancer society, we were able to put together information sessions on health issues, especially as they relate to cancer, from which all our students benefitted,” explained Calandriello.

These sessions included gender specific presentations provided by local experts on healthy living, men and women's cancer concerns, sports' safety and sun safety. A general session offered anti-tobacco and anti-alcohol information. Carmen Carrizales, the Health Initiatives Representative

Relay For Life—add one

for the American Cancer Society's West Cook Area Office, has been working with Calandriello and others to plan the program.

Following the information sessions, the Nolan Scholars provided an upbeat assembly for the student body with the theme, "Defeat It!" to raise awareness and introduce some creative ways to raise money to fund Guerin Prep's participation in the Relay.

Guerin Prep principal Tony Tinerella has challenged the school community to raise \$1,500 by March 1. If they do, he will have Jack Eichstaedt, the dean of students, shave his hair off in front of a school assembly as a sign of solidarity with all the cancer patients who lose their hair as a result of their cancer treatment.

Each member of the Relay team must raise at least \$100 in order to participate. Typically a team is made up of 15 members.

"There is probably no family in our school, or in society as a whole for that matter, who has not been affected by cancer. We couldn't find a more worthy cause to which to dedicate our energy and our money," said Calandriello.

A special guest at the kick-off assembly was Guerin Prep graduate Michael Scrivens '08, who was diagnosed with Leukemia during his senior year. Scrivens, whose cancer is in remission, is currently studying to be a paramedic.

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Relay For Life—add one

Celebrate - The Survivors Lap

Relay starts with a Survivors Lap an inspirational time when survivors are invited to circle the track together and help everyone celebrate the victories we've achieved over cancer. The Survivors Lap is an emotional example of how Relay participants are creating a world with more birthdays like those of each individual on the track.

Remember - The Luminaria Ceremony

After dark, we honor people who have been touched by cancer and remember loved ones lost to the disease during the Luminaria Ceremony. Candles are lit inside bags filled with sand, each one bearing the name of a person touched by cancer, and participants often walk a lap in silence.

Fight Back - The Fight Back Ceremony

Last, there is a Fight Back Ceremony, where we make a personal commitment to save lives by taking up the fight against cancer.

No matter where you are, there's a place for you at Relay and you can make a difference today by signing up online to start your own team or by simply making a donation.

Thanks to Relay participants, we are creating a world with more birthdays a world where cancer can't claim another year of anyone's life.