

International Relay For Life®

The International Relay for Life program supports the world's largest volunteer fundraising program delivered by cancer organizations around the globe. The American Cancer Society's Relay For Life program is a unique overnight event that promotes cancer awareness and survivorship in communities while raising critical funds to fight cancer. Started in the United States in 1985, Relay is now licensed to organizations worldwide.

With more than 90 years of experience and as the largest and most experienced voluntary health agency in the world, the American Cancer Society is one of the few organizations capable of strengthening cancer control organizations through a program like Relay For Life. The program provides a platform to build true understanding and support for their invaluable programs and services, by involving a diverse pool of volunteers to promote the organizations' mission-based activities, and by mobilizing community members to take action in the fight against cancer.

Relay programs unite cancer survivors, caregivers, supporters, families, and communities to celebrate and honor those who have been touched by cancer, and those who want to give hope to future generations. "Relayers" gather in fields, stadiums, school grounds, and parks to raise money for cancer control programs through fun activities.

The Growth of Relay

In 1996, Cancer Research UK held a Relay For Life event in the United Kingdom with assistance from the American Cancer Society. The success

of the event, the first Relay held outside the United States, prompted requests to us from other cancer control organizations to provide assistance with Relay events in other countries. The result was the creation of a formal International Relay For Life program, providing training and technical assistance to cancer control organizations. Since that inaugural



Survivor balloons released at Relay For Life event in New Zealand.



event, we have partnered with more than 23 cancer control organizations in 19 countries outside the United States to license and train their staff and volunteers.

How It Works

We start the process of organizing a Relay program for a cancer control organization with an organization assessment and licensing, followed by intensive two-day classroom instruction in the United States. This training includes an on-site visit to a US Relay event. Then we conduct additional trainings in the home country or region for volunteers of the organization launching Relay For Life. As organizations build their Relay programs, they benefit from the opportunity of collaborating with each other to share best practices, building Relay communities, and developing sustainable events that can be replicated throughout the nation.

Strengthening Cancer Control Organizations

Relay For Life helps cancer control organizations around the world accomplish a common goal: to help save lives by supporting their cancer fighting missions. In some cases, the Relay program changes the approach organizations use to raise awareness about cancer. In many nations, cancer carries a stigma and people are afraid to admit that they have the disease. Relay has become a critical forum for survivors and caregivers to speak out and get support for coping with cancer.

The Relay program may also change the fundraising approach of organizations. Funds raised by each organization go back into their local communities to support cancer control programs, services, and research.

With more than 20 years of Relay experience, the American Cancer Society has discovered that the spirit and principles of the Relay program are universal and translate into communities throughout the world. While the local communities tailor events according to local customs and cultures, Relay For Life standards and practices ensure each event's success and sustainability.

As the global Relay movement grows, cancer control organizations will have a sustainable program to expand their outreach to survivors, volunteers, and others in their communities.

For more information on our global programs, please visit our Web site at www.cancer.org/international.



Participants at Relay For Life event in Oudtshoorn, South Africa



International

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