Date: February 23, 2011

Story: Relay for Life

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Sources:

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Chelsi Pruitt: President of the ConnXions group. chelsi@ou.edu 2/17/11

Gretchen Hauptman: Student at University of Oklahoma, participant in Relay for Life. Gretchen.l.Hauptman-1@ou.edu 2/20/11

The American Cancer Society [www.ou.edu/relay](http://www.ou.edu/relay)

Cancer victims and survivors will be honored and celebrated at the University of Oklahoma through the charitable event, Relay for Life.

Relay for Life is an event sponsored by the American Cancer Society to benefit individuals affected by cancer. According to the American Cancer Society website, over 3.5 million participants in 5,000 communities all throughout the United States gather each year at this event to raise money for cancer funds and awareness.

In 2011, Relay for Life will meet in over 40 Oklahoma colleges, parks, and schools. The University of Oklahoma will be hosting this event April 9, 2011 from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. in the South Oval, according to Casey Morgan, co-chair at the University of Oklahoma for Relay for Life. If bad weather occurs, the relay will be relocated in the Houston Huffman Physical Fitness Center, Morgan said.

The University of Oklahoma’s goal for this year’s Relay for Life is to get 100 teams to participate, and raise $100,000 for the American Cancer Society, said Morgan. Participants will form teams of 8 to 15 people. Fraternities, sororities, and clubs usually sponsor the majority of the teams, but anyone may participate. To meet the goal, each group is encouraged to raise $100 dollars, Morgan said.

During this event, bands will perform, games will be played, and food will be available for participants, Morgan said. Popular games played each year include root beer pong and miss relay. Miss relay is when boys dress as girls and ask for donations around Campus Corner, Morgan said.

This event is based on the fact that cancer never sleeps. Therefore, the event will go on throughout the entire night. Each member of the team will take his or her turn walking or running around the South Oval for the entire night, Morgan said.

According to Chelsi Pruitt, University of Oklahoma senior, Relay for Life has three main traditions: celebrate, remember, and fight back. The relay starts with an emotional survivor lap to celebrate the obstacles that have been overcome. At dark, candles are light inside a bag with a name of an individual affected by cancer to honor and remember them. Lastly, the fight back ceremony occurs. The fight back ceremony is a promise to oneself to never give up in the battle with cancer, Pruitt said.

The marketing and supply chain group ConnXions, has put together a group to participate in this event. President of the group, Chelsi Pruitt, will be participating for the first time this year. She said she chose to get involved because it is a great opportunity to celebrate, support, and to give a sense of hope to cancer patients, survivors, and families of those who have been affected by this disease. “This event provides emotional support to those who have lost loved ones to cancer and those who have won the battle against cancer,” Pruitt said.

University of Oklahoma senior, Gretchen Hauptman will be participating for the second time this year. She said she was motivated to participate because her grandmother is a breast cancer survivor.

Hauptman said that this is a great activity for college students because it raises hopes for families, and gives cancer patients the opportunity to meet others who are going through the same things. Individuals who have lost loved ones to cancer can meet others that can empathize with them, Hauptman said.

Not only does Relay for Life benefit the American Cancer Society, but it benefits OU students by showing them the importance of life and giving back to the community, Pruitt said.