

Redlands women to be honored at gala

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From left, Nancy Varner, Annie Sellas and Cathy Stockton, co-founders of the Believe Walk, will receive the Celebration of Life award Aug. 20 at the American Cancer Society's summer gala. (Courtesy Photo)

Nancy Varner, Annie Sellas and Cathy Stockton, all cancer survivors from Redlands, will receive the Celebration of Life award from the American Cancer Society's Inland Empire Office.

The presentation will take place Aug. 20 at the Cancer Society's annual summer gala, "Imagine More Birthdays," at the Riverside Convention Center.

"I am deeply honored to receive the 2011 Celebration of Life award," Nancy Varner said.

"The American Cancer Society is an outstanding organization that touches so many people's lives through research, education and support services. Annie, Cathy and I all had our lives changed because of this disease. But together we can make a difference."

Varner, Sellas and Stockton were united by their experience with cancer.

"We were thankful for the love and support from friends, family and community during our treatment, and were compelled to find a way to give that message of hope and caring to others," Sellas said.

After many meetings, they launched a walk in the Inland Empire to benefit cancer patients and their families.

With the support of Jack H. Brown, chairman and CEO of Stater Bros. Markets, the Inland Women Fighting Cancer organization was housed under the Stater Bros. Charities, and the Believe Walk was born.

"The American Cancer Society has been working to eliminate cancer as a major health problem for nearly 100 years," Cathy Stockton said.

More than 13,000 people in the Inland Empire will hear the words, "You have cancer," in 2011. But there is help, thanks to the free patient services programs of the American Cancer Society.

Chairwoman of the Cancer Society's gala event this year is Dolores Green, executive director of Riverside County Medical Association.

Funds raised during the gala support the American Cancer Society's programs that help cancer patients and their families with information and services that provide day-to-day help and emotional support.

Platinum sponsor for the event is Stater Bros. Charities, and the silver sponsors are Loma Linda University Cancer Center and Kaiser Permanente, Riverside.

Bronze sponsors include Riverside Medical Clinic; Riverside County Medical Association; Chicago Title; Kindred Hospital Riverside; Stronghold Engineering Inc.; Union Bank; Varner and Brandt LLP; and Riverside County Supervisor John Tavaglione.

Table hosts are Inter Valley Health Plan; Riverside Community Hospital; San Antonio Community Hospital; the Stockton family; Soboba Casino; the Sellas family; and Wall's Hauling Service.

Patron Sponsors are WellDyneRx; Top Priority Couriers Inc.; and Riverside Radiology Medical Group.

Table sponsorships begin at \$1,500 for tables of eight, with a variety of other sponsorships available, and individual tickets are \$100 each.

Information: Leslie Roman, director of community services at the American Cancer Society, 951-300-1216 or email Leslie.Roman@cancer.org; gala.acsevents.org/morebirthdays

SOURCE: American Cancer Society,

Inland Empire Office