



JHB PS JL DMc GF DH D. Meyer S. Cain

THE SUN

San Bernardino County's Newspaper

Compiled by the Public Relations Department Date: 10/8/12 Page: A1

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

12,000 walk in Redlands to raise money

By Kristina Hernandez Staff Writer

REDLANDS — Downtown streets were flooded with pink Sunday when more than 12,000 people participated in the fifth annual Believe Walk with the hope of finding a cure for cancer.

The walkers also made their way through city neighborhoods with photos on the back of their T-shirts to honor loved ones who survived cancer or to remember those who died from the dis-

ease.

They also carried signs with such slogans as "Beat Cancer," "I Walk For My Mom" and "Real Men Wear Pink."

Children and adults joined in by dressing in costumes and tutus and wearing fun accessories in their hair. Hundreds of dogs wore pink bows on their collars or had their fur dyed for the day.

The walk began at around 8:15 a.m.

after the event's founders and the women behind Inland Women Fighting Cancer — Annie Sellas, Cathy Stockton and Nancy Varner — made introductions and spoke about the turnout, which grows each year.

Last year's walk raised more than \$380,000 for cancer-related charities in the Inland Empire. This year's walk surpassed that with \$500,000, organizers

WALK A5

WALK

From A1
said.

"That has been a goal of mine since we started this walk to one day do that, and God bless all these people — they're the ones who did that," Varner said. "We did it!"

As "Gonna Fly Now," the theme from "Rocky," played, the three founders — all of whom are cancer survivors — hugged loved ones, wiped tears from their eyes and waved to walkers as they passed the Believe Walk's main stage.

"This is amazing," Varner said.

One of the event's biggest cheerleaders, Jack Brown, the chairman and CEO of San Bernardino-based Stater Bros. Markets, called the turnout "simply amazing" and shared a story about a woman named Carolyn he met days before the walk.

Brown said Carolyn, a Bank of America employee, told him she was wearing a T-shirt her mom had given her for the event.

Her mom died two months ago.

"It just breaks your heart," Brown said, holding back tears.

The supermarket chain's Stater Bros. Charities helps raise funds through the sale of water and other endeavors.

Brown has been a fixture at the walks.

On Sunday, Brown was seen cheering on walkers and giving high-fives to participants walking the event's 5K course.

Various organizations, school bands and cheer squads, and other performers were seen along the route handing out water, providing entertainment and offering other support.

Cheer squads from Inland Empire schools, including Arrowhead Christian Academy in Redlands and Cajon High School in San Bernardino, shook pink pompoms and performed stunts, earning loud applause.

The Folktunes and Lil' Joe Banuelos charged up the crowd



A family celebrates as they join the Believe Walk in downtown Redlands on Sunday. The event, which was hosted by nonprofit Inland Women Fighting Cancer, drew 12,000 runners and walkers in support of finding a cure for cancer.

Rachel Luna
Staff Photographer

with some upbeat tunes and chants along the way.

Banuelos, a student at Citrus Valley High School, brought a little bit of the Memphis sound, performing tunes associated with Elvis Presley.

Some walkers posed with a Justin Bieber cardboard cutout. Others posed under a decorative ark designed by students, parents and staff at Valley Preparatory School in Redlands.

Maria Ramirez of Hemet walked the course with friend Melissa Krueger in honor of her mom, Imelda, a double-cancer survivor.

Carrie Fuller of Corona walked in honor of daughter-in-law Jennifer Rose Niess, who died of lung cancer on June 17, days after her 35th birthday.

It was Fuller's first walk.

Jennifer worked for Stater Bros. for 20 years, starting as a box girl at age 15 and working her way up to management positions at the Winchester store.

Her co-workers formed a team and had T-shirts made in

her honor, Fuller said.

"(Jennifer) would do the walk every year, but last year she didn't because she was diagnosed with cancer," she said. "And of course, this year, she can't ... It is extra special to be able to do this for her."

Alice Lancaster of Riverside walked the course with six others in honor of two family members who had cancer-related illnesses.

"We're very excited because this is the first time I have ever done this, and this is just a wonderful thing," she said. "It's very touching and nice ... and I would do it again — absolutely."

A number of people living around the walk route decorated their homes in support, including Tina Stout, who sat on a pink yoga mat as she watched thousands pass by.

"It's a good cause," she said as she waved to friends participating. "I lost a sister to cancer about 28 years ago and it devastates people. It's a good thing to see all walks of life walk by and support something that's so important."

While confetti cleanup and table takedown started at 9 a.m., 45 minutes after the walk began, and streets started opening up to traffic, the fun was just beginning as organizers set up shop at the Redlands Bowl for an after-party.

Funds raised from the walk benefit organizations and hospitals in the Inland Empire focused on curing cancer-related diseases.

Organizations that benefitted from last year's walk included Michelle's Place in Temecula (\$25,000), St. Bernardine Medical Center in San Bernardino (\$50,000), Redlands Community Hospital (\$200,000) and Loma Linda University Medical Center (\$750,000).

To learn more about the event, or to register for next year's effort, visit www.believeie.org.

Staff writers Rachel Luna and Michel Noian contributed to this report.

kristina.hernandez@inlandnewspapers.com
909-793-3221, ext. 317; @TheFactKris