

## South Shore to host its first Relay for Life

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Come July, the South Shore's Kahle Community Park will join the ranks of 4,100 U.S. sites including Gardnerville and Carson City in hosting Relay for Life.

Zephyr Cove resident Judi Sparrow, a breast cancer survivor, has taken the chair post for the 24-hour walking event - which is the American Cancer Society's signature outing to acknowledge those who have survived cancer and others who fought the battle to the end. Total contributions in 2003 raised a milestone of \$1 billion.

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Dan Thrift / Tahoe Daily Tribune / Judi Sparrow, a breast cancer survivor, has taken the chair post for the 24-hour walking event known as Relay for Life, which is tentatively scheduled for July 22 and 23.



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The relay stages teams from all walks of life on a pedestrian track. Each team is asked to raise money, and on the event day have one representative on the track at all times.

The event is about much more than money. There's much camaraderie as team members share experiences and keep each other awake.

"The thought is, cancer never sleeps," Sparrow said at the local group's first meeting at Kahle's conference room. "I really wanted to do something with all the cancer in South Lake Tahoe."

Sparrow's 38-year-old daughter is also a breast cancer survivor.

The gathering put on by the Reno chapter brought out 15 people interested in volunteering for a number of committees ranging from staging raffle prizes to lining up entertainment.

Karen Borges will take on the youth involvement committee.

"I wanted to look for something that would unify the schools. And, there are a lot of youth clubs in town," she said.

Over the last two years, Borges has participated in the Angel's Camp relay in Calaveras County for a friend's mother surviving cancer.

"It's an experience you can't describe," she said. "I like that it's a great community event - to honor those who have come before us," she said, pointing out the scope of the fight. "If you don't know someone with cancer, you know somebody who does."

Linda Kaczmar, who climbed Mt. Shasta for the Breast Cancer Fund a few years ago, offered to work on the logistics and a committee to recruit cancer survivors and caregivers to complete the event's first two laps.

People walk throughout the day for the relay. At night, one of the most emotional experiences is the luminary ceremony. Candles in paper bags with messages inscribed on them are lighted and placed along the track. They're written to honor both those who have died and survived.

The Relay for Life began in May 1985 when colorectal cancer surgeon, Dr. Gordon Klatt, spent 24 hours circling the track at Baker Stadium at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Wash. He logged 85 miles to raise awareness of the growing problem. Throughout the night, friends paid \$25 to run or walk 30 minutes with him. He raised \$27,000 for the Cancer Society.

American Cancer Society Relay for Life

(tentatively) July 22, 23

Kahle Community Park ballfield

Next volunteer meeting: Oct. 25, 6 p.m.

Kahle conference room

Information: Judi Sparrow, local chairwoman, at (775) 586-1066

Judy Jensen at (530) 577-4272 or Nisha Verma at (775) 329-0609

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[BACK](#) 