



News Release

Contact:
Jason Parent
Development and
College Relations Office
33 Edgemont Drive
Presque Isle, ME 04769
Phone: (207) 768-2808
Fax: (207) 768-2813
jparent@nmcc.edu

May 25, 2007
NR07054

NMCC Hosts Aroostook County Relay for Life to Raise Funds for the American Cancer Society

Aroostook County - This year's annual Relay for Life will be hosted at Northern Maine Community College on Friday, June 1, through Saturday, June 2. Eleven area teams of 8-15 people will walk throughout the night to help raise funds for the American Cancer Society.

Relay for Life is a fun-filled overnight event designed to bring together those who have been touched by cancer in our community. More than 200 Relays will be held throughout New England in 2007, all celebrating survivorship and raising money to help the American Cancer Society in its mission to save lives, help those who have been touched by cancer, and empower individuals to fight back.

Locally, the Relay for Life will be kicked off with an opening ceremony at 6:00 p.m., followed by a parade of teams at 6:30 p.m. The Aroostook Medical Center has three teams taking part in the Relay this year, and teams are also taking part from Northern Maine Community College, Aroostook County Action Program, Cary Medical Center, the Department of Health & Human Services/MSEA, F.A. Peabody Company, Maurices, McCains, and WAGM-TV, as well as an individual team headed up by Dawn Charette.

Following the parade of teams, the Relay for Life will officially get underway with a special lap devoted to cancer survivors and caregivers. "This is our opportunity to show our support and provide some recognition both for those who are cancer survivors, as well as those who have worked so hard caring for loved ones in the battle against cancer," said Becky Maynard, NMCC bookstore manager and captain of the NMCC Relay for Life team. Maynard has walked in that lap for the past five years as a caregiver for her father, Harold Jones, Jr. of Easton. Sadly, Jones lost his battle to cancer in April, making this a particularly poignant year for Maynard as she continues her efforts to raise money and support for the American Cancer Society.

As part of this year's events, the public is invited to come and "Pack the Track" from 8:00-9:00 p.m. to show their support in this effort to step up the fight against cancer. Also featured during the hour will be entertainment by local performers, including Aroostook Idol 2007 winner Annie Charles.

“The Pack the Track event started in Southern Maine and has given the Relay a new support from the surrounding communities. The event is being done to give the various communities a chance to come to the Relay for Life and see what it is all about,” said Carla McKeen, an executive assistant at The Aroostook Medical Center and chair of Aroostook County’s Relay for Life organizing committee. “Everyone who comes to the event will hear some wonderful entertainment from local amateur celebrities.” As a two-time cancer survivor, McKeen knows the difference events like this can make in both spreading the message of hope as well as raising funds for the fight against cancer.

At 9:00 p.m., a Ceremony of Hope will be held, during which the luminarias purchased in honor of a cancer survivor or in memory of one who has lost that battle, will be lit and, following a moment of silence, the names of these individuals will be read. The luminaries will line the track as well as spell out the word *Hope*. This is one of the most moving events in the Relay for Life. Everyone gathers to remember those lost to cancer, support those fighting cancer, and rejoice with those who have fought the disease and won.

“Reading the names is the most touching and the most difficult part for me,” said Lori Keith, co-captain of the NMCC team. “It brings back everything they [those fighting cancer] went through, everything you [caregivers] went through, and everything the whole family went through. It creates a bond between people that you don’t know, because you are all going through variations of the same experience. This ceremony really brings the whole reason we are having the Relay to a head...why we are walking and why we are collecting money.” Keith was a caregiver for her father, Wayne Fuller of Presque Isle, during his ten-year struggle with cancer. Although he passed away in 1995, Keith continues to diligently work each year to support the American Cancer Society.

Luminarias are available for a contribution to the American Cancer Society. Luminary bags can be purchased from members of any of the participating teams, as well as at the NMCC bookstore. They will also be available for purchase during the June 1 Pack the Track event immediately preceding the ceremony.

While the public activities will be winding down at about 10:00 p.m., many team members will be on hand throughout the night, with a representative from each team mandated to be on the track at all times until the closing lap at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday morning. Several fun activities are scheduled throughout the night to keep the team energized, including a poker run, an ice cream hour, BINGO with mocktails, a newspaper costume contest, and much more.

Community members are encouraged to come to campus for the Pack the Track and the Ceremony of Hope events. For more information, you can contact Northern Maine Community College at 768-2809, or go to www.acsevents.org/relay/mearoostook.

#####