



# News Release

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

**Aroostook County** - This year's annual Relay for Life for Aroostook County will be hosted at Northern Maine Community College on Friday, June 6, through Saturday, June 7. Sixteen area teams 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 are being held throughout New England in 2008, 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.

"The funds raised enable us to continue our investment in the fight against cancer through research, education, advocacy, and patient services," said Mike Hart, community executive for development for the American Cancer Society's New England Division. "The money raised by participants locally at this event goes directly to the American Cancer Society's lifesaving programs which happen right here in Aroostook County as well as throughout Maine."

The Relay for Life will be kicked off with an opening ceremony at 6:00 p.m., followed by a survivor/caregiver lap at 6:15 p.m., in which area cancer survivors and those who have cared for loved ones battling cancer are invited to participate.

"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 six years as a caregiver for her father, Harold Jones, Jr. of Easton. Although Jones lost his battle to cancer last year, Maynard continues her efforts to raise money and support for the American Cancer Society.

Cancer survivors and caregivers are also invited to the Survivors Reception being held at 7:00 p.m. on campus.

Walkers for the Relay for Life will officially get underway at 6:30 p.m. with a parade of teams. Northern Maine Community College and The Aroostook Medical Center both have two teams taking part this year. In addition to an overall team from each organization, the Student Nurses Association at NMCC and the Oncology Unit at TAMC will also have teams. Other businesses and organizations with teams in this year's Relay include: ACAP, Ashland School Department, Caribou & Presque Isle Inn & Convention Center, Cary Medical Center, Maine State Employees Association, Maurice's, McCain Foods, MicMac Health Department, Doctor Silber's office, Teague Park, University of Maine at Presque Isle, and WAGM-TV.

The public is invited to come and "Pack the Track" at 8:00 p.m. to show their support in this effort to step up the fight against cancer. There are numerous special activities planned that will keep the whole family entertained. Live entertainment from 8:00 – 9:00 p.m. will feature local performers, including Aroostook Idol winners Erin Buck (2008) and Annie Charles (2007).

There will also be many children's activities throughout the evening. Kids will be decorating t-shirts, making and playing with sock puppets, decorating cookies, making kites and flying them if weather permits, making Fruit Loop necklaces, coloring and making cards, practicing their golf putting, playing board games, and more.

At 9:00 p.m., a Ceremony of Hope will be held, during which all of the luminaries purchased in honor of cancer survivors or in memory of those who have lost that battle, will be lit and, following a moment of silence, the names of these individuals will be read aloud. The luminaries will line the track as well as spell out the word *Hope*. Everyone gathers around 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.

Luminary bags are available for a contribution to the American Cancer Society. They 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 6 event 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.

For more information on the Relay for Life, you can contact Northern Maine Community College at 768-2809, or go to [www.relayforlife.org](http://www.relayforlife.org).

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