



# Luminaria Handbook



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# Relay For Life Introduction



## What is Relay For Life?

### It's 24 Hours You'll Never Forget!

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life is a high-spirited event where everyone in the community can join in the fight against cancer. It is a day filled with fun, fellowship, and festivities. It is a time when people you know and people don't know team up to raise public awareness about cancer in the community and to raise funds to find the cure.

### Sparked by One Man's Hope

Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's signature activity. It began in 1985 in Tacoma, Washington when Dr. Gordon Klatt walked for 24 hours to raise money for the American Cancer Society. He raised \$27,000 that first year. Since then, Relay For Life events around the world have raised a billion dollars to support programs aimed at eliminating cancer.

### Building a Team and More

To participate in Relay For Life, you recruit friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors to join you in a Relay team. In the weeks leading up to the event, each team member raises money by collecting pledges. On Relay Day, team members take turns walking around the track for more than 24 hours making sure that someone is on the track at all times. We don't sleep that night because cancer never sleeps.

In addition to the team members who are walking the track, hundreds of other participants camp out, and together, create a community party atmosphere. Relay For Life is a great team builder for businesses, religious congregations, and other organizations.

### Celebration and Inspiration

Each Relay For Life starts with the Survivors' Lap, a testimony to the fact that so many people today are surviving cancer. Cancer survivors from the community walk the first lap around the track to celebrate their victories while everyone else cheers them on.

The most inspirational time of Relay is the Luminaria Ceremony happens at dusk when we honor cancer survivors, and remember those who have lost their battle with the disease. A luminaria is a small bag filled with sand holding a small candle. When the candle is lit, the luminaria casts a warm, golden glow.

Each luminaria bears the name of a person who has battled cancer. All the luminarias are placed side-by-side to form a path. After sunset, all the luminarias are lit and remain lit throughout the night to light the way for the walkers and to create a path of hope.

### Walking Our Talk

Every Relay For Life is a tobacco-free, alcohol-free event. Relay For Life also gives us the opportunity 'walk our talk' and show the community how easy it is to follow our cancer prevention guidelines.



## **Relay For Life Facts**

### **History**

The Relay For Life began in 1985 in Tacoma, Washington when Dr. Gordon Klatt walked around a track for 24 hours raising \$27,000 for the American Cancer Society. Relay For Life was born.

### **It's Special**

The Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's nationwide signature event. It is more than a fundraiser – Relay *is* the American Cancer Society. Relay For Life allows us to honor cancer survivors, remember those who have lost the battle, educate the community on early detection and prevention of cancer, and recruit new volunteers for the American Cancer Society's programs and services.

### **Why 24 hours?**

We are asking you to give a day out of your life for those who may not have another. There are similarities between the Relay For Life and a cancer patient's experience: It may get really hot during the day, and you may feel like quitting, but you keep on walking. It may get windy and cold at night – it might even rain. But you press on through the darkest hours knowing that the sun will come up and it will be a new day.

### **It's Big and It's Growing!**

You are part of something BIG. The American Cancer Society Relay For Life is the largest annual not-for-profit fundraising event in the world. In 2005, more than 3 million Relay participants will hear the messages of the American Cancer Society in the United States, and more than 500,000 survivors in attendance will inspire us. Relay also takes place in eight other countries around the world.

In 2004-05, Relays will be held in more than 4,100 communities across the U.S. and the world, and will raise more than \$306 million.

### **Just Getting Started in California**

Although starting out a few years behind the national curve, California Division has tremendous potential with Relay For Life. In 2004, the California Division had 219 Relays and raised \$23.7 million for the fight against cancer. In 2004-05, Relay For Life will happen in 250 communities and will raise \$27 million in California.



## About the American Cancer Society

### What is the American Cancer Society's mission?

The American Cancer Society mission has been the same since it was founded in 1913—to eliminate cancer. By 2015, our goal is to double the number of lives saved, reduce cancer incidence by 25 percent, and make measurable improvements in the quality of life for cancer patients and their families.

The American Cancer Society receives the highest ratings from philanthropy watchdog groups. We meet or exceed all the rigorous and accepted standards of the two major charity watchdog organizations: the National Charities Information Bureau (NCIB) and the Philanthropic Advisory Service of the Better Business Bureaus, Inc.(CBBB).

Funds raised through American Cancer Society Relay For Life support the following American Cancer Society programs and services:

### Research

The American Cancer Society has been involved in many of the major cancer research breakthroughs of the last 90 years, such as:

- Cure for childhood leukemia with combination chemotherapy
- Identification of smoking as cause of lung cancer
- Pap smear to detect cervical cancer
- Mammography to screen for breast cancer
- Lumpectomy and radiation for treatment of breast cancer
- PSA test for prostate cancer screening

Since 1946, the American Cancer Society has invested over \$2.5 billion in cancer research. By investing about \$130 million to research each year, the American Cancer Society dedicates more money to cancer research than any other private, not-for-profit, non-government organization funding cancer research in the United States. We have funded 38 researchers who later went on to be awarded the Nobel Prize.

The California Division of the American Cancer Society funds its own research program for more than \$1 million a year. The national American Cancer Society invests another \$9.7 million in research conducted in California.

### Education

Following American Cancer Society's wellness and cancer-detection guidelines can save your life or the lives of people you love. We provide materials and educational programs on early detection and prevention of cancer to the community, our schools, and cancer patients. Examples



of these programs include: anti-tobacco programs in the schools, Teens Kick Ash!, our nutrition and physical activity campaign, Spring into Health! Day, and various breast cancer awareness programs that encourage women to do breast self-exam and get a mammogram.

### **Advocacy**

We fight for life-saving laws to increase federal research funding, reduce tobacco use, promote early detection of cancers, improve access to care, and support cancer patients. The American Cancer Society has advocated the passage of legislation that has had a positive impact on controlling cancer. For example, lung cancer rates in the California have declined over the past several years.

### **Service**

Patient and family support services help people with cancer during and after treatment. Anyone, anywhere can access cancer information and support 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1.800.ACS.2345 or at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).



## **Vision 2015: A Sense of Urgency**

### **The Time Is Now!**

The fight against cancer can't wait or slow down even for one moment. We are making tremendous progress in our fight against cancer, and we still have a long way to go. Your involvement with the American Cancer Society is helping to save lives, and improve the quality of life for cancer patients and their families.

### **Vision 2015**

The American Cancer Society has ambitious goals for the next ten years, and we need your help.

By the year 2015, we will:

- Double the number of lives saved
- Reduce the incidence of cancer by 25 percent
- Improve the quality of life of cancer patients and their families

### **Facts About Cancer**

- One out of two men and one out of three women will receive a cancer diagnosis in their lifetimes.
- In 2005, more than 1.3 million people nationwide will be diagnosed with cancer.
- There are almost 10 million cancer survivors living in the United States.
- Not using tobacco products, practicing good nutrition habits and being physically active can prevent two thirds of cancer deaths.

### **The Lifesaving Impact of Relay For Life**

Relay For Life is making a significant impact on the American Cancer Society's ability to meet our goal of eliminating cancer. Last year in California:

- Thousands of volunteers took part in 219 Relay For Life events across the state.
- Those volunteers recruited the 85,000 participants who heard the life saving messages of the American Cancer Society.
- Several thousand cancer survivors participated in Relay For Life and testified to the work of the American Cancer Society.
- Through Relay For Life, more than \$23.7 million dollars was raised for the fight against cancer.

American Cancer Society funded research, prevention and early detection programs are helping more people survive cancer than ever before in history.

- In 1946, one out of four cancer patients survived more than five years.



- Today, two out of three patients are alive five years after diagnosis.

Last year, with funds raised through Relay For Life and other income development programs, the American Cancer Society:

- Reached more than 4.7 million Californians of all ages with prevention and early detection education.
- Provided 54,418 California healthcare professionals with life saving information to share with their patients.
- And, most important, was there for more than 62,000 new cancer patients with programs and services that supported them throughout their journey.



## Relay For Life National Event Standards

### Mandatory

- Overnight event (24 hours in California)
- Opening and closing ceremonies
- Luminaria ceremony
- Survivorship activities
- Cancer control activities (education)
- Team registration/ commitment fee
- Graphics standards on logo
- Tobacco and alcohol-free environment

### Recommended

- Sponsorships
- Team and individual incentives
- Expense ratio of 10 to 15 percent
- Communication/newsletters
- Team captain meetings
- Bank night(s)



## **Relay For Life Committee Expectations**

When you become a member of the Relay For Life committee, you take on a great responsibility. Together with fellow committee members and your American Cancer Society Staff Partner, you are producing an event that can have a positive impact on the lives of thousands of people in your community and throughout the country. By helping to raise cancer awareness and money, you and everyone involved in Relay For Life are escalating the fight against cancer.

Thank you for your dedication, hard work, and enthusiasm.

### **As a Relay For Life Committee Member:**

- Remember this is a community-owned, volunteer driven event. Your staff partner is your coach and your resource person.
- Plan on attending all committee meetings.
- Recruit others to help you. When your event begins to grow, you will need sub-committees. Don't try to do everything yourself.
- Assist other committee members when asked.
- Recruit teams – this is the key to a successful Relay.
- Have a team of your own or be on someone's team. Remember, this is a fundraiser. Get involved here, too.
- Plan to be at the event to help set-up.
- Plan to camp out and be at the event the entire 24 hours.
- Plan to stay until the end and help clean up.
- Get all the work done prior to the event so you can enjoy the event.
- Attend the wrap-up meeting to brainstorm on how to make next year's event bigger and better.
- Last, but not least. Get ready for a rewarding experience. You will meet many special people during the Relay For Life.

### **Tools you should have in your RELAY TRUNK:**

- A Relay For Life video
- Relay For Life posters
- Relay For Life brochures
- Relay For Life annual report booklet
- Your Relay For Life notebook



# Luminaria Chair



## Luminaria Chair

The Luminaria Ceremony, often called the Ceremony of Hope, brings feeling and emotion into the Relay. As Luminaria Chair, you and your committee have the power to move people to tears. These tears are both of sadness and of joy. The Luminaria Ceremony may be brief, lasting about 30 minutes, but the emotional impact it has on participants lasts throughout the Relay and beyond.

### Duties and Responsibilities

- Recruit Luminaria Sub-committee volunteers and meet with them regularly.
- Attend event committee meetings.
- Attend Team Captain meetings.
- Develop a plan to increase luminaria income.
- Develop a data entry plan.
- Plan the placement of luminaria.
- Plan the Luminaria Ceremony.
- Obtain luminaria supplies.
- Staff luminaria area until ceremony ends.
- Pick up luminaria after event ends.
- Recognize and thank luminaria volunteers and in-kind donors.

Being organized will maximize the impact of the ceremony and simplify the set-up process. As you recruit a Luminaria Sub-committee to assist you, consider dividing tasks into the areas of supplies, on-site coordinator, and the ceremony.



# Event Management



# Organizing the Luminaria Ceremony

## Ceremony Checklists

Below are checklists to help guide you and your committee in planning and conducting the Luminaria Ceremony:

### Luminaria Donations

- ❑ Encourage committee members and teams to promote luminaria donations.
- ❑ Remind Team Captains to have participants invite people to the Luminaria Ceremony.
- ❑ Distribute luminaria brochures to medical offices, oncology offices, hospitals, hospice, and funeral homes.
- ❑ Get as many people as possible to experience the power of the Luminaria Ceremony. They will be inspired to form teams next year. Some events ask for a minimum donation while others leave the amount up to the donor. The Luminaria Committee decides what is best for your local community.

### Supplies

- ❑ **Sand**—Work with Logistics Chair to arrange for pick-up or delivery. Transport in pick-up truck or buckets.
- ❑ **Lighters**—Log lighters work best. You'll need plenty to quickly light all the candles.
- ❑ **Candles**—Get these donated, if you can. Long-burning candles are better than tea lights or regular votives, which do not last long.
- ❑ **Glow Sticks**—An option for events experiencing high winds during Relay. Glow sticks cost a bit more than candles; try to have them donated.
- ❑ **Luminaria Bags**—You can get these donated from a restaurant supply company or local bakery.
- ❑ **“In Memory” and “In Honor” Cards**—Attach to the luminaria bags. These are available through Ariba and can be run through a computer printer.
- ❑ **Lanterns or Flashlights**—When you turn out the lights during the ceremony, you'll need something to help you see the program and for singers to see their music.



## On-site Coordinator

- Arrange for several work crews for day of event to:
  - ❑ **Fill bags with sand**—May need several crews. Start early. Youth clubs and organizations are terrific luminaria volunteers.
  - ❑ **Distribute bags around track**—Red wagons work very well.
  - ❑ **Light the Luminaria**—Or have people light their own luminaria bags for a special touch. This can be challenging and may require an extra measure of organization.
  - ❑ **Crew to spell “HOPE” with bags in the bleachers**—Change to “CURE” during ceremony, then back to “HOPE” at the end. See diagram in Luminaria Tools Section.
  - ❑ **Clean up**—At the end of the event. Don’t dump bags and sand in track trashcans because they will be too heavy to move.



## The Ceremony

- ❑ **Sunset**—Ceremony of Hope should take place once the sun has set.
- ❑ **Meaning**—Create a meaningful ceremony to appropriately honor or remember those for whom luminaria have been lit.
  - **Photo Slide Show**—Some events ask for photos scanned into a PowerPoint Photo slideshow that is presented during the ceremony. This requires someone to scan in the photos and put together the PowerPoint – but this element makes an incredibly personal ceremony.
  - **Scrolling Names**—Others use PowerPoint to scroll the names on a screen during the Luminaria Ceremony.
  - **Giant Luminaria**—A college event created a giant luminaria and lit it from within. During their ceremony that luminaria bag doubled as a screen for the names to be scrolling on.
  - **“Why I Relay” Card**—Have participants fill out cards during the event and share them during the Luminaria Ceremony.
- ❑ **“The Empty Table”**— An element of the ceremony that is particularly moving. See “The Empty Table” in the Luminaria Tools section of this handbook.
- ❑ **Message Board**—Having a message board nearby invites participants to write their sentiments on it throughout the event.
- ❑ **A Bagpiper**— Who walks around the track helps set the mood.
- ❑ **Invocation**—Starts off the ceremony.
- ❑ **Singer**—Choose someone to sing a moving song or two during the ceremony.
- ❑ **Poem**—Ask a child to read a poem. Make sure they practice first.
- ❑ **Option**—Observe a moment of silence in remembrance of those touched by cancer.



## Luminaria Task Checklist

TASK	COMPANY / CONTACT	NOTES	ARRANGED BY	CONFIRMED
On-site Luminaria HQ (table, chairs, signage)				
Candles / Glowsticks				
Bags				
Black Markers				
Candle Lighters				
Sand				
Stuff to Decorate Bags (markers, stickers, etc.)				
Honor / Memory Cards				
Bag Decorating Crew				
Bag Filling Crew				
Bag Distributing Crew				
Bag Placing Crew (spelling out HOPE)				
Bag Clean-up Crew				
Bagpipe Player				
Invocation				
Poem Reader				
Song & Singer				
Empty Table Supplies				
Photos for PowerPoint				
Names of PowerPoint				



## Luminaria Tips

### Bags and Candles

- Consider ordering bags in two colors. One color for “in honor of...” and another for “in memory of...”
- White and yellow work well.
- Dark bags don’t let the light shine through.
- Get bags and candles/glowsticks at restaurant supply companies, bakeries.
- Size #6 bags are just the right size.
- Bags are inexpensive, but try to get them donated.
- Regular votives and tea lights don’t burn long; order long burning candles.
- Order more than you think you’ll need. You don’t want to run out of bags and candles. You can always use leftovers next year.
- Bags, candles (or glowsticks), and in honor/in memory cards can be ordered through the National Relay Products catalog on Ariba (work with your Staff Partner on this).

### Luminaria Headquarters

- You can accept donations for luminarias here and write names on bags. Let the Logistics Committee know if you need signage.
- You’ll need a few black markers to write names on bags and someone with good handwriting.
- Allow participants to decorate luminaria bags on-site. They could decorate luminaria bags during the day prior to ceremony. Have colored markers and stickers available for personalizing. This activity also keeps kids busy during the day.

### Weather

- If you have windy weather, try rolling down the top of the bags for more stability. If you’re going to do this, plan ahead and make sure names are written or honor/memory cards are affixed low enough on the bags.

### Sand

- Put enough sand in the bags, but not too much. Two inches seems to work well. Too little sand and candles will burn out; too much sand and you’ll have a lot of heavy sand to get rid of in the end.

### Clean Up

- Make sure people don’t dump sand in garbage cans or on field. Trashcans will be too heavy to lift. Use buckets to haul sand or load bags into the back of a truck at end of event.



### **Liability**

- Have Release and Waiver Of Liability forms been signed by volunteers?

### **Lifting**

- Do volunteers/staff understand the lifting procedures, and/or have they seen the lifting video?





# The Luminaria Ceremony



# Conducting the Luminaria Ceremony

## Tips for an Inspiring Ceremony

- Stop all activity on the field during this time of reflection. Remind participants of the significance of the ceremony.
- Ensure that the ceremony is long enough to appropriately honor and remember those for whom luminarias have been lit.
- Keep the ceremony brief enough to hold the interest of the participants. Usually, 30 minutes or so is sufficient.
- If you have a speaker, meet with them beforehand and encourage them to stay within the timeframe they are given that is usually 5 minutes or so.
- Live singers make the ceremony special. Gospel choirs are a popular choice if available.
- Designate a volunteer to take a quick walk around the track to make sure the path is clear as the Luminaria Ceremony begins. When it is dark and as participants are walking and looking at luminaria bags, they are not necessarily aware of obstacles that are sometimes near the inner edge of the track.
- At the end of the Luminaria Ceremony, bring the mood (and the lights) back up with some fun, upbeat music. Get the party started again.



## Sample Program

- Bagpiper plays while walking around the track
- About the Luminaria Ceremony (Luminaria Chair)
- Invocation
- Poem or Empty Table
- Song
- Survivor speaks
- Poem
- Song
- Moment of silence

At conclusion of Luminaria Ceremony, play some fun, upbeat music as you bring the lights (and the mood) back up to get the party going again.



## Song Ideas

Rubin Studdard – “Flying Without Wings”  
Billy Gilman – “There’s A Hero”  
Josh Groban – “You Raise Me Up”  
Train – “When I Look To The Sky”  
Alabama – “Angels Among Us”  
Diamond Rio – “One More Day”  
Eric Clapton – “Tears In Heaven”  
James Taylor – “You’ve Got A Friend”  
Josh Groban – “To Where You Are”  
Phil Collins – “True Color”  
Pretenders – “I’ll Stand By You”  
Andrea Bocelli and Celine Dion – “The Prayer”  
Eva Cassidy or Sting – “Fields Of Gold”  
Leann Womack – “I Hope You Dance”  
Bette Midler – “The Wind Beneath My Wings”  
Joe Diffie – “A Night To Remember”  
Elton John – “Circle Of Life”  
Fisher – “I Will Love You”  
Elton John – “Candle In The Wind”  
Sarah McLaughlin – “Angel”  
Beatles – “In My Life”  
Mariah Carey – “Hero”  
Whitney Houston – “One Moment In Time”  
Celine Dion – “Because You Loved Me”  
Celine Dion – “I Am Your Angel”  
Evanescence – “My Immortal”  
Warren Zevon – “Keep Me In Your Heart”  
Phil Collins – “You’ll Be In My Heart”  
And of course... “Amazing Grace”

### Note:

In order to comply with ASCAP regulations, if you are paying for any bands, DJ’s, musicians or the other, and if they play any songs which are not entirely their own (composition etc.) then please submit the following information to the person in your region who is compiling ASCAP information: Number of people attending your Relay. Name of band or DJ or performer. Whether or not there was any associated cost of entry for the event or performance.



## Inspirational Poems

### **Cancer Is So Limited**

It cannot cripple love.  
It cannot shatter hope.  
It cannot corrode faith.  
It cannot destroy peace.  
It cannot kill friendship.  
It cannot suppress memories.  
It cannot silence courage.  
It cannot invade the soul.  
It cannot steal eternal life.  
It cannot conquer the spirit.  
[Excerpt from Ann Lander=s column]

### **Every Candle Has A Name**

by John Storey

We're like sailors in the night... being guided by a light.  
Just a beacon on the shore, giving hope and strength and more.

Walking through this sea of lights... I sense unity and might.  
The power of passion in this place, every memory has a face.

These are loved ones we have known... some still here, but some are gone.  
In this time, in our own way... As the footsteps melt away.

We see love in every flame... like a never-ending chain.  
And we know... that every candle has a name.

There's a name of the ones who still are here...  
There's a name of those gone - we still hold dear.  
There's a name, each one shining in the flames,  
And I know... that every candle has a name.

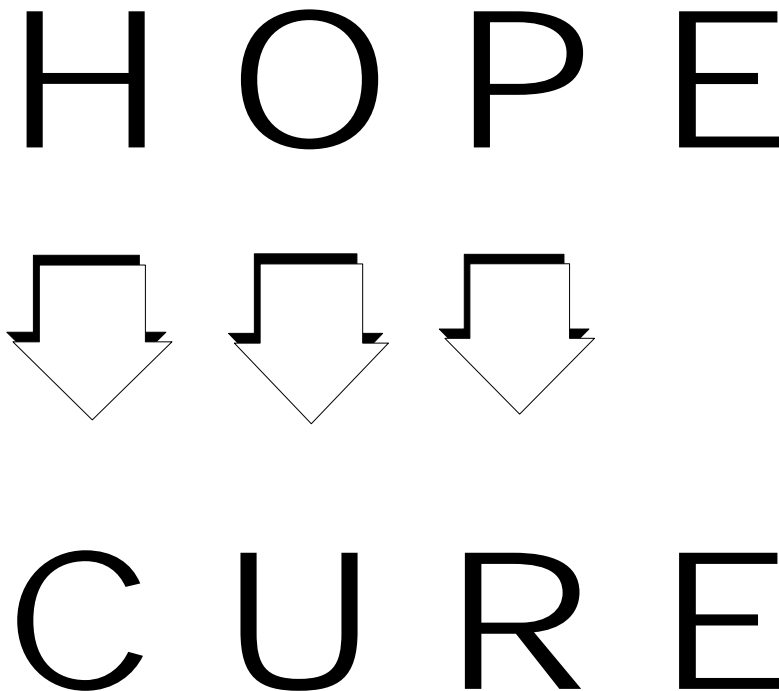


## HOPE in the Bleachers

To enhance your Luminaria Ceremony, consider this: Spell “HOPE” in the bleachers with luminaria bags. You can put these out during the day. If it’s hot, don’t put the candles in until the sun sets... they’ll melt! Use plain bags... since all the ones with names on them should go around the track so people can find the bags they dedicated. When the Luminaria Ceremony begins, have a crew light the HOPE.

Another idea... is to change HOPE to CURE during the ceremony. People will be awe-struck! Simply move some of the bags around to transform HOPE to CURE. Have a crew of at least 4 people to do this. Try to keep it a secret so people will be surprised. Example below.

You may want to consider changing CURE back to HOPE at the end of the Luminaria Ceremony... since we have not yet found a cure. Let these candles burn through the night.





## More Resources

### Luminaria Ceremony – “Light out of the Darkened Room”

In a darkened room. (PAUSE) With drapes drawn (PAUSE) door shut (PAUSE) and lights off (pause). Head in hands. (PAUSE) How did this happen to me? (PAUSE) How could I have gotten this disease? (PAUSE) Can I be strong enough to survive? (PAUSE) Who will take care of my family? (PAUSE) (PAUSE) Where is the light out of this darkened room? (PAUSE)

The question most frequently asked of American Cancer Society volunteers, of Relayers, is why do you do this event year after year? And you look at the person and you realize that they don't “get it” and you wonder is there any way to explain how Relay changes people's lives. (PAUSE)

How do you explain the story of the newly diagnosed cancer patient who attends a Relay and meets another cancer survivor who has had the same exact disease and is still alive? (PAUSE)

How do you explain the story of a caregiver who has traveled down a path of compassion, love, joy, sorrow, guilt, loss, and depression. Explain how at Relay a caregiver can talk to the only other person who could possibly understand this difficult journey – another caregiver. (PAUSE)

How do you explain the story of a friend or coworker who has seen someone battle this deadly disease and could do so little to help. Yes they could take the person to treatments, or mow their yard, or bring them dinner, but it isn't enough. Yet at Relay you can form a team, raise money, educate people on cancer, and fight back against a disease that takes so much. (PAUSE)

All these people have found at Relay what you have found – Hope. You can feel it in the air at 3:00 am when you walk into a Relay. Wandering across a damp football field, mist in the air, you can almost touch the energy in the air. That energy is Hope, the combined power of hundreds, thousands of people come together in common cause to eradicate a disease. (PAUSE)

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life is held to remember those we have lost to cancer, to support all those who are battling the disease, and to work towards the day that know one has to hear the words – “you have cancer.” (PAUSE)

And when the final book is written on how cancer was eliminated – the American Cancer Society Relay For Life will have the last chapter – explaining how a grassroots event, with millions of people, in thousands of communities, in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Singapore, Jamaica, Honduras, Guatemala, came together united in common cause to eradicate a disease - forming the largest not-for-profit fundraising event in the world – the largest in humankind's history. (PAUSE)

On behalf of millions of Relayers everywhere - thank you (neighborhood / town / city / county) for providing the gift of Relay. Thank you for providing the gift of Hope to so many people. Thank you for providing the “Light out of the Darkened Room”.



## H.O.P.E.

As we light the **"H" in hope** let us take a few moments to delve further into the true meaning of the word. Emily Dickinson refers to hope as "The thing with feathers that perches on our souls" while Webster's defines it as "A desire for some good, accompanied with at least a slight expectation of obtaining it, or a belief that it is obtainable." Everyone with Cancer and those who surround them must have hope, we must embrace it as we awaken to a new day, and we must tuck it in with us as we dream in the night, we must place it deep within our hearts, and know it is the very thing that gives us strength when all seems lost, for it is the core of our being. It is with hope that the illness is at all even bearable, for hope is at times the light at the end of the tunnel. It is with hope that our souls are nurtured, our dreams are fulfilled, and our lives are lived. When hope is all you have, know that you hold the key to serenity, for it is obtainable, it is believable but, most of all, it's what truly feeds our souls.

We light the letter **"O"** to symbolize what people who are afflicted with Cancer are taught, but how everyone should live their lives, **"One day at a time."** Everyone should be blessed with this knowledge of awakening to one day filled with lives blessings, so that it is not shadowed by weeks of lives necessities. To know that today was given to you to enjoy, whether it be the sun glistening on the trees, or the rain falling on your doorstep, it's a gift that's yours, live it as if it will never come your way again, for it belongs to you only once. As the sun begins to set, take a few moments to reflect the days' treasures, and know that you were truly given a gift that today is yours to keep. Know that One Day at a time is more than any of us could ask for, because tomorrow is never guaranteed, it's only promised. So when the promise of a new day is fulfilled, don't merely exist in it, live in it, and by all means love in it. For it is the hope of a new day, that gives us all a reason to dream about tomorrow.

Let the **"P" in hope stand for progress.** It is with progress that a cure is obtainable; each year research has progressed in a way unachievable without the help of people such as you who are dedicated to the cause & ultimately the cure. People who are searching to find a way out of the pain, struggle, and ultimately the fight, it's through people like you and all who are dedicated to finding a cure that it is truly obtainable. It is with progress that the very thing with feathers that perches on our souls, will one day take flight, and soar through all of our hearts who have been touched by this disease and put an end to the hope of a cure but give us an answer to the illness.

As we light **the letter "E"** in hope. Know that it is what ends the word, but by all means is not the end of the word, it is just the beginning of what all of us hold in our heart of hearts. It also brings the word together, as we all stand here tonight, together in the fight, together for the cause together defining hope, together learning from one another, searching each others faces for the meaning to all this, knowing that one day we will discover that hope is each of us together, and those who are no longer with us that fought so valiantly, united in the fight to find a cure for Cancer. We light up the night together with our hearts in our hands, our spirits on our shoulders and with hope in our souls at the very depth of our being. We stand confident that one day the hope we have will put an end to the search for a cure. It is with this belief, and it is with this yearning in our hearts that we will see the day Cancer ends for us all. So that our Mothers & Fathers, our Sisters & Brothers, our children & grandchildren, our friends & loved ones can live in a world Cancer free, forever. As we light up this night, together, let's stand in hope that one day we will see that bright, beautiful light at the end of the tunnel, and that all we had ever hoped for will one day be achieved simply by believing, that it is always better to light a candle than it is to curse the darkness.



## **“THE EMPTY TABLE”**

We call your attention to the small table that occupies a place of dignity and honor. It is set for one, symbolizing the fact that some of our loved ones are missing from this gathering. They have been diagnosed with cancer, and they are some of the names and faces behind the luminaries.

The chair is empty. Many of those who fought the battle with cancer are no longer with us, but rather than mourning their loss, we choose to celebrate their life.

These people are unable to be with their loved ones and families now, so let us join together to recognize and honor them, and to bear witness to their struggle and their memory.

The table is small, symbolizing the frailty of a single patient, sometimes alone in the fight against his or her disease.

The tablecloth is white, symbolic of the medical profession: doctors, nurses, and researchers who helped fight the battle for life.

The single rose in the vase signifies the enduring love of their families and friends and the strength of patients’ will to fight the disease that ultimately claimed many of them.

The pink ribbon on the vase represents the ribbons worn on the lapels of millions who support a continued search for a cure not only for breast cancer, but for other cancers as well – cancers that are expected to kill over half a million people in the United States this year.

A slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of the bitter battle against a deadly disease, a battle fought by more than 1.2 million new patients each year. The salt sprinkled on the plate reminds us of the countless tears of personal anguish shed by the patient and those shed by family members and friends who have lost a loved one.

The glass is inverted in memory of those people who are not here to join our celebration of successes.

But, the candle represents the light of hope that lives in the hearts of all of us – hope represented by cancer survivors and the hope for a cure discovered as a result of the work of the medical profession made able through funds generated through events such as the Relay For Life.

One the table you will find markers that will be used to write on the cloth the name of the person you want to honor, or to write a message of love to them. You may visit the table anytime during the remainder of the night.

There will be a song offered now in honor of cancer patients everywhere. As the song begins you are invited to make your way to the table and reflect on what it means, and to leave a special message to your loved one.