



Cancer survivors kick up their heels.

Relay for Life

AHS students walk on track to fight cancer

By FRANCES BIBLOCK
The New Tanner

Eight local cancer survivors – some still receiving treatment – linked arms and triumphantly set off around the track at Acton High School on Friday in a Survivor's Victory Lap to kickoff the school's third annual Relay for Life to benefit the Canadian Cancer Society.

There were tears from some and cheers from all as students joined the survivors – with 76.6 years of cancer survivorship between them – for a second lap at the start of a 12-hour marathon fundraiser that saw students, who had collected pledges for their laps, tag-team their way around the track all night.

At the opening ceremonies, student council co-president Marissa Kidd said the Relay for Life is a "celebration of survival, a tribute to the lives of loved ones and a night of fun, friendship and fundraising to help beat cancer."

Carl Leybourne, president of the Wellington Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society that covers Acton, noted Acton High was one of just a few schools to take part in the Relay for Life.

"I wish you a successful event, and while you are having a great time, remember you are helping out people who are less fortunate than you and I, so my special thanks," Leybourne said, presenting the school with a plaque for its on-going involvement in the program.

Acton's Max MacSween, the current Citizen of the Year, is undergoing weekly chemotherapy for a type of acute leukemia that 10 years ago would have killed him, but thanks to advancements in treatments, he was able to take part in the Survivor's Victory Lap.

"Even though I'm still getting treated yet, and will be for another year, I figure I'm a survivor. Most of the ones (patients) I was in the hospital

with have all passed away," MacSween said.

"I asked my doctor why I'm still here, especially after being told I had a cancer that comes quick, kills quick and has no cure, and they said I'm sensitive to chemo and was in good health, and now she calls me her poster boy," he said before setting off around the track.

Acton teacher Lynda Bowen has survived cancer twice – for 26 years and for 16 years, and when it was suggested that she is an inspiration for some survivors who have been cancer-free for just a year, she seemed surprised.

"I never thought of it that way, but yes, I guess that's true. And, it is important for us to be here because we are survivors. Look at all of the people here who are willing to do something like this for us survivors. They deserve a lot of credit. This is a big project to put together," Bowen said.

As it began to get dark, organizers held a Luminary ceremony to remember those who have succumbed to cancer or are still fighting.

People donated money

to buy paper bags weighted with sand with a candle inside and they wrote messages on the bag.

The bags were placed around the track and lighted to provide "light and inspiration" to those walking or running their laps.

Approximately 170 students took part in the all night outdoor event that also included performances by several bands, games, contests, food and entertainment.

Organizers don't have a final fundraising total yet.

Student shadows mayor finds it's very big job

The political world held some big surprises for Acton's Andrew Kentner last Thursday as he shadowed Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette for the day.

"I never thought he'd be at a hockey game," Kentner, 18, said after he and Bonnette dropped in at the Mold-Masters SportsPlex in Georgetown to catch five minutes of Dudley Cup action.

Kentner thought the mayor spent most days at his desk pushing papers, but found Thursday's calendar included a tour of a flooded area in rural Acton, judging a Science Fair at MacKenzie-Smith Bennett School, multiple meetings with staff and cutting a ribbon at a new Acton ice cream parlour.

Kentner said the mayor then dropped him at home and continued to another meeting.

The two met after Bonnette spoke to Kentner's civics class. When Kentner had to conduct an interview for a careers class project, he chose Bonnette as his subject.

The mayor was impressed with Kentner and invited him to do the interview in person and witness the workings of municipal government up close as mayor-for-the-day.

Later, Bonnette said he was impressed that Kentner showed up eager, with good questions and wearing a suit.

"It was busy, but it was fun
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Andrew Kentner with mayor in his office.



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