

Cancer survivor giving back; helping organize fundraiser



Frances Anania will participate in the Great Ride N Stride fundraiser later this month in memory of two family members who died of cancer.
Eric Riehl / Canadian Champion
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By Julie Slack
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Frances Anania's life has been an emotional rollercoaster in 2013 after losing her sister and a nephew to cancer.

The Milton woman has long been an advocate of the Canadian Cancer Society, but this year's experiences have made her speak even louder.

She's the volunteer committee chair of the Great Ride N Stride event, which will be held Sunday, Oct. 20 at Country Heritage Park from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

In the past the event was named Taking Steps Against Breast Cancer and the format was a 3-km or 5-km walk or run around Country Heritage Park followed by hot soup, entertainment and prizes in the barn.

This year, organizers decided to change the event to the Great Ride N Stride to give people the opportunity to ride their bikes, walk, run or rollerblade routes ranging between 5 and 10 km.

Funds raised will now go toward all types of cancer research, not just breast cancer, as well as support local programs and services available to cancer patients and their families.

Anania said smaller events like this one really

provide a bonding opportunity with other cancer survivors and family members who are dealing with similar stories.

In Anania's case, she'll be walking — along with more than 50 family members and friends — in memory of her older sister Josie Castelli, who died of kidney cancer on July 16, and her nephew Frank Caputo, who died of stomach cancer on March 12.

She said despite knowing for many years that her sister's cancer wasn't treatable, it didn't help when she was faced with her death.

The same can be said of her nephew, who she described as young, handsome, loved by everyone and "in the prime of his life."

Anania, having been touched directly by cancer when she was 36 years old, said she's shocked by how indiscriminating cancer

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