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# MOMENTUM

*A Relay For Life®  
Fundraising Resource*

Fundraising  
**Advice**  
from  
the **Pros**

Featuring  
Nationwide  
Teams  
of **Excellence**

**Ideas**  
for *Fundraising*  
**YearRound**



## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Three years ago when I was asked to be the volunteer chair of the brand new Great West Awards and Recognition Task Force, I had no idea what this group would become. This superb group of volunteers from the 12 states that make up our Division was solid in its desire to recognize individual Relayers and teams for their fundraising and carrying out of our mission at Relay. We developed the Pacesetter program, managed and judged awards, selected participant gifts and incentive prizes, judged youth scholarships, managed and judged Relay photography, and other projects. After my two years as chair, the Task Force has grown beyond our initial efforts and is continuing with new volunteers and new ideas.

One of the biggest projects the Task Force took on was identifying and recognizing our Relay For Life Top Fundraisers...those individuals raising more than \$10,000 and teams raising \$20,000 with a \$1,200 per team member average. For two years, we brought our Top Fundraisers to the Great West Leadership Summit in Reno, Nevada for focus groups on fundraising. This collection of fundraising advice is the result of those efforts from some of the best fundraisers in our Division. This magazine has been written by Relay fundraisers, for Relay fundraisers.

You will see articles and tidbits of advice from many Top Fundraisers within these pages. Four teams in particular are highlighted as Nationwide Teams of Excellence. These teams have reached this prestigious nationwide benchmark by raising more than \$50,000 with a \$3,333 per team member average, and in these pages you will get to read their stories. The other fundraisers who wrote articles self-identified themselves in our focus group and submitted articles for this issue of Momentum. It is our hope that we will be able to produce annual issues of this magazine featuring additional fundraising stories and advice each year. If you are a Top Fundraiser and are interested in submitting an article or serving on the Task Force, you can send an email to [GreatWestAwards@yahoo.com](mailto:GreatWestAwards@yahoo.com) to nominate yourself.

I have been a part of Relay For Life since its inception in 1985 and it's truly amazing to see how far this event has come in the last 25 years. As a Top Fundraiser myself (my family team raised more than \$23,000 last year for the Relay For Life of Tacoma, Washington), I'm awed to be in the company of the Top Fundraisers that you will read about. As I read and edited the articles, not only did I learn some new ideas, but it also brought home to me how fortunate we are in our Division to have the quality of caring people working together to find a cure.

Thank you for taking the time to read these stories from amazing cancer warriors. I have seen incredible advances in the fight against cancer in the 25 years that I have been fundraising for Relay. The dollars we are raising now will bring even more advances in the coming years, and one day we will find a cure and have a world free from cancer.

Thank you for your Relay fundraising efforts. I hope someday I have the honor of editing your story in a future issue of Momentum!

Pat Flynn  
Great West Top Fundraiser  
National Relay For Life Hall of Fame member

Momentum is a project of the Great West Awards and Recognition Task Force. The Task Force is a group of dedicated staff and volunteers from around the Great West Division of the American Cancer Society working to recognize the hard work and achievements of Relayers across our division. To contact the Task Force with questions or comments, email [GreatWestAwards@yahoo.com](mailto:GreatWestAwards@yahoo.com).

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Shelley Mauss Sprouffske

## THIS ISSUE

### Nationwide Teams of Excellence

These articles feature the four Great West teams who have risen to the level of becoming Nationwide Teams of Excellence, meaning they have raised over \$50,000 in one year with an average of \$3,333 or more per team member (a team member officially registers, fundraises at least \$100 and receives an official Relay For Life t-shirt). We hope to feature many more Nationwide Teams of Excellence in the future!

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### Fundraising Advice

These articles were written by Great West Top Fundraisers who identified themselves as interested in contributing an article during our Top Fundraiser Focus Group at the September 2008 Leadership Summit. If you are a Top Fundraiser and are interested in contributing a future article, please email the Great West Awards and Recognition Task Force at [GreatWestAwards@yahoo.com](mailto:GreatWestAwards@yahoo.com).

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# TEAM MERRILL LYNCH: BULLISH ON THE CURE



## Focusing on Feet and Finances: Engaging Your Company in Relay

By Shelley Mauss Sprouffske

Shelley Mauss Sprouffske was a Team Captain of Team Merrill Lynch from 2004 through 2007 when they became a Nationwide Team of Excellence. In their five years at the Relay For Life of Tacoma, Team Merrill Lynch has raised more than \$200,000 to fight cancer.

Our team's story began in the fall of 2003. When a good friend and colleague suddenly collapsed in his office, we never suspected cancer. John Moller had been in great health – until his diagnosis with glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer. After our initial call to the American Cancer Society's hotline, 800-ACS-2345, we were armed with information about his cancer and ideas on how to support him and his family.

When he passed away six short months later, our Merrill Lynch family rallied together and formed our first Relay For Life team in his memory. It gave each of us a way to fight back. We wanted to ensure that his children and future grandchildren could live in a world where

cancer was no longer a death sentence. You can do this with your team too – what's your reason to Relay? Is there someone whom you wish to rally around?

### THE FIRST YEAR

With just two short months until the Relay, my co-captain Debbie Duncan and I focused on personally inviting those who knew and loved John to support our team and the Society. His family asked that memorial donations be given to the Society through our team. With the support of the Merrill Lynch Foundation, each employee gift over \$50 was matched dollar-for-dollar.

Knowing that people often need to experience Relay For Life to "get it," our initial fundraising had a

two-pronged approach: asking for support in both feet and finances. We needed "feet" to walk the track for the 24 hours, and "finances" to fund the cure. It allowed people to experience Relay personally. Their financial support soon followed.

In our first year, we raised \$30,000 as a team. We were the highest fundraising rookie team in the history of Relay For Life of Tacoma. We could not have been more proud of our volunteer efforts to change the future of cancer. We dedicated our success to John.

### THE POWER OF MULTIPLICATION

As we moved into our second year as a team, one of our larger donors (a long-time employee of the company) decided to change his

donation to encourage others to give. He offered a "personal match" in addition to our corporate match. For each new or increased donation made to the American Cancer Society and matched by the Merrill Lynch Foundation, he would personally match that

*"We needed 'feet' to walk the track for the 24 hours, and 'finances' to fund the cure."*

gift as well. It allowed employees to give a donation and triple it through these matches. Leveraging matching gifts is an awesome way to multiply fundraising efforts for any team.

sharing how others benefit from our fundraising. My co-captain Debbie, along with her talented sisters Kathie and Cindy, launched an intense letter writing campaign to

employees inside and friends and family outside the firm. In all of our efforts we focused on the different programs that the American Cancer Society offers, from research to patient support to cancer education. We shared about the local impact made by our fundraising efforts.

We helped people realize that they were truly funding the cure.

We celebrated our best fundraising success yet: more than \$51,000 raised for the Society.

### A TOP NATIONWIDE TEAM

Merrill Lynch has always had a commitment to responsible citizenship. In the financial markets, we are an essential partner to the success of our clients and colleagues. It is no different in our community spirit. In 2007, the Tacoma Relay had a movie theme

### OUR LONG-TERM SUCCESS:

#### WE MADE IT PERSONAL

Pride grew in our efforts as people began to understand what it meant to "Relay." When we took to the track, we invited everyone we knew through the Merrill Lynch family to be a part of the event. Each year, our success grew as we continued to make it personal.

In our third year, we knew we needed to focus to keep the momentum going. The focus was to continue to make Relay personal by



### NOTES ON KEEPING IT PERSONAL

"It is so important to make it personal and include your own personal story and the reasons for why you relay."

— *Lisa Lohse*, her team raised over \$20,000 and she raised \$11,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of the Roaring Fork Valley, CO.

"The most critical point of my letter, I feel, is my personal experience with the diagnosis of my son. I share the story of him and that he is a survivor because of the money we have raised."

— *Matt Walsh*, his team raised over \$31,000 for the Relay For Life of Tacoma, WA.

"Definitely personalize your campaign. This year we had a nursing supervisor who was diagnosed and succumbed to cancer within four months. She was an integral part of our hospital and people donated in her memory. As a sole provider hospital, we felt the need to be the leader. We mobilized our hospital staff, our physicians and our volunteers. We had fundraising events every two weeks to keep the momentum."

— *Christy Monk*, her team raised over \$28,000 for the Relay For Life of Hobbs, NM.

*"Relay gave each of us a way to fight back. We wanted to ensure that his children and future grandchildren could live in a world where cancer was no longer a death sentence."*

and our team chose the movie “The Incredibles”. In our case, we were The Incredi-bulls.

With another challenge match from our beloved donor, coupled with the Merrill Lynch Foundation’s Matching Gift Program, strength in our letter writing campaigns, and a team legacy in the Relay For Life of Tacoma, we rallied together again. We held small fundraisers throughout the year: Hershey kiss bouquets at Valentine’s Day and hand painted ornaments at Christmas. Our focus culminated in an intense one-month Relay blitz just before the event. And one last key – we invited everyone we could possibly think of to join us at Relay.

That Friday night, I had a very special evening myself – I turned 30 years old in front of my Merrill family and friends at a surprise birthday celebration at center stage. Jonathan, my now-husband, knew how personal Relay was to me: he got down on one knee and asked me to marry him. It was an incredi-bull night all around!

When the flood of red “Incredi-bull” shirts filled the track that Friday night, we were overwhelmed by the

### WHAT IS ONE KEY TO YOUR SUCCESS?

“Matching gifts. Our company matches dollar for dollar up to \$2,500 per employee. Ask your HR if this program exists in your company.”

— **Shirley Genter**, her team raised over \$23,000 for the Relay For Life of Stutsman County, ND.

“We provide all donors the contact information needed to leverage our corporate gift-matching, which yielded over \$2,000.”

— **Tom Gurgui**, raised over \$11,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Reno/Sparks, NV.

results of our team. When all was said and done, we raised more than \$62,000 that year.

#### OUR BEST ADVICE

Set the bar high – we’re talking about curing cancer. Changing lives. The more we do now, the greater the impact in the future. Don’t be afraid to ask others to get involved – by not asking, you say “no” for them. You never know how cancer has impacted people around you, and what may inspire them to fight back. Don’t rob them of the chance to Relay with you.

Plan for the future. After I married and moved to a new town and Deb-

bie retired from the firm, we set up a succession plan for our team. We involved new captains and helped mentor them as they stepped into the role. We knew that our team’s legacy was greater than us, and needed to continue beyond our time as captains.

Most importantly, realize that what you do now will change the face of cancer in the future. Your decision to fight back will make all the difference in the world. ★



*“You never know how cancer has impacted people around you, and what may inspire them to fight back. Don’t rob them of the chance to Relay with you.”*



## TEAM ALOHA



### Heads or Tails: There’s No Wrong Way to Fundraise

Interview with Karen Conley and Brent Johnson, written by Michelle Patrick

Karen and David Conley are co-Captains of Team Aloha, which raised more than \$65,000 for the Relay For Life of Issaquah, Washington in 2008. Brent Johnson is a member of their team who raised over \$43,500 as an individual last year, and is one of the Top Ten individual fundraisers in the nation.

Who says you have to be a big, corporate team to raise big money? Not Team Aloha! Their small, family team is the only team in the Great West to be a two-time Nationwide Team of Excellence, and in the eight years that they have been Relaying they have raised more than \$235,000 to fight cancer, raising more and more each year. Karen Conley and her husband David are co-Captains, and their team consists of members of their extended family who each do their part to contribute to the team’s fundraising total.

#### DIFFERENT STYLES, SAME RESULTS

Cousins Karen Conley and Brent Johnson are like two sides of the same coin when it comes to amazing individual fundraising. They are both very passionate about fighting cancer through Relay, and they both use individual fundraising techniques to raise money for

their team. But they have differing fundraising styles, showing us all that there are many ways to be a successful Relay fundraiser.

*“One of the things I love about our team is that we are all so different...It’s cool that we all do it so differently and all have success.”*

Brent fundraises almost exclusively online, sending emails to friends, colleagues and business contacts. In fact, he has been the top online individual fundraiser in the nation for the past two years in a row, raising more than \$39,000 online in 2008. He is very analytical, setting big goals and figuring mathematical averages of how many people he needs to ask in order to reach his ambitious goals. For instance, he figures that in order to make his

\$50,000 goal this year, he will need to ask 750 people to donate based on the fundraising averages he has received in previous years.

Karen considers her style to be more old fashioned, but still very effective. She sends physical letters to her friends and community connections, complete with self-addressed, stamped envelopes to return donations. Rather than tracking averages with analytical precision, Karen concentrates on sharing her touching story with everyone she can think of. Karen and her husband Dave’s letter campaign brought in \$13,475 in 2008.

“One of the things I love about our team is that we are all so different,” Karen shares, “Brent has such a statistical mind, and it would never occur to me to think of it that way. It’s cool that we all do it so differently and all have success.”

## A PERSONAL PASSION

But in many ways, Karen and Brent are alike. Both individual fundraisers have been touched closely by losing parents and other loved ones to cancer. Every year their reasons to fight cancer increase, and they focus on stories of ways the Society is making a difference in the fight against can-

*"In a weird way, this has helped improve my relationship with clients...all it took was one client to share their story about cancer and it changed my perspective."*

cer. Both Karen and Brent have an intense passion for fighting cancer and they are not afraid to ask anyone and everyone they know to support their Relay efforts. Both fundraisers

prioritize maintaining relationships and going out of their way to thank donors who support their fundraising through the years. And both fundraisers have a healthy sense of competition and a drive to improve their fundraising year after year.

"What makes a difference to people is making it personal," shares Karen. "The people who donate to me continually every year are part of our team, our support system over the years. Just yesterday at church, someone asked about our team progress. People are so used to this being a part of my life that they ask me about my volunteering for ACS."

## CONQUERING THE FEAR OF FUNDRAISING

One of the things both fundraisers emphasize is the importance of conquering the fear of fundraising and learning that fundraising to fight cancer actually opens opportunities for deeper relationships. As a partner in KPMG LLP (a Relay For Life National Corporate Team Program company), Brent has experienced this in his professional relationships.

"Fear is something that inhibits a lot of people," Brent explains, "The first year I felt embarrassed to ask clients because I thought 'this is personal.' But all of a sudden you've developed a whole new level of connection with the client that you never had before.

The worst thing someone can say is 'No,' but most times even the 'No' responses come with a personal story or a 'Thank You' for being involved."

*"We will find a cure not because we wished for it, but because we worked for it. People respond because they know that I believe in that so strongly."*

In addition to not being afraid of hearing "No," Brent shares two additional keys to his fundraising success. First, he sends personalized emails, not mass emails. Each of his 750 emails to friends, clients and colleagues are individually emailed from his professional account with common text in the body and a personal-

ized message to open or close the email. He finds that many people respond because he took the time to personalize the ask. Secondly, he says that it is important to follow up two or three times with people who haven't responded yet. He calls it a matter of persistence without being a nag...people get busy and need a reminder.

## WORKING HARD AND DOING GOOD

Brent also stresses the power of doing good things for other people and creating a network of solid relationships. He finds that when he is generous with his time, others are generous in response to support Relay For Life.

Whether raising money online or through snail mail, Karen and Brent are really more alike than they are different. They are working hard to fight cancer and making a difference. Their passion fuels their success.

"We will find a cure not because we wished for it, but because we worked for it," Karen reminds us. "People respond because they know that I believe in that so strongly." ★



## MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR LETTER OR EMAIL CAMPAIGN

"I consider fundraising for the Relay to be a long term commitment, not a one time event. I keep track each year of my donors, the amount they donated, and the names they choose to put on luminarias. The following year I send a letter including the amount given the previous year (because people rarely give less) and their personal list of luminaria names to see if they want the same ones again. I include a self-addressed stamped envelope for their check."

— **Sandi Cok**, raised over \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Yakima, WA.

"I sent out a series of four letters to all on my mailing list. Each successive letter thanked those who donated, without being specific, and let them know how we were doing in regard to our goal. Up until the last letter, I advised that it was still not too late. My letter also included the donation form and a footnote and they could share/copy the form to give to others."

— **Mike Darrah**, raised over \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Lakewood, WA.

"Around the end of March we send out a letter letting our past donors know it's Relay time again and ask how much they would like to donate this year. We reassure them that all of their dollars are matched by Permian Auto. At the end of the Relay we send a letter telling them totals and a thank you and see them next year."

— **Vanessa Castro**, her team raised over \$28,000 for the Relay For Life of Hobbs, NM.

"Make a master list of who you sent letters to for 4 reasons:

1. So you know who received them.
2. So you can go back and keep track of how much they donate.
3. So you can send a letter if no response.
4. So you can send a personal thank you."

— **Brady Ramsfield**, his team raised over \$20,000 for the Relay For Life of Shelton, WA.

"The question shouldn't be who do you send your emails to, but instead who don't you send your emails to?! Any contact that you have with an email address should receive your fundraising email. However, to further multiply the success, follow up with handwritten letters if you don't get a response. Many people are still uncomfortable conducting business over the Internet."

— **Gina Romero**, her team raised over \$26,000 for the Relay For Life of Ellensburg, WA.

"I like to take one of the 'generic' provided e-mail formats, add personal information that relates to our local event or fundraising efforts and send out to friends and family with a note to 'feel free to pass on to your friends and family as well!' E-mail is a powerful tool to reach many, many people! We all pass on funny e-mails, why not pass along one where you can 'make a difference' in the lives of someone you know?"

— **Denise Westcott**, her team raised over \$33,000 for the Relay For Life of Chelan/Douglas County, WA.

"I think of the money I spend on letter supplies and stamps as 'seed money' that grows and multiplies into thousands of dollars to fight cancer!"

— **Debbie Duncan**, her team raised over \$60,000 for the Relay For Life of Tacoma, WA.



# ST. ANDREW'S TEAM



## Finding Faith at Relay: Fundraising as a Faith-Based Team

By Korri Miller

Korri Miller, along with Annette Pinckney and Bette Worth, is a Co-Captain of the St. Andrew's Episcopal Church team at the Relay For Life of Grays Harbor, Washington. The St. Andrew's team raised \$61,580 in 2008 and is a Nationwide Team of Excellence. The team, formed in 1999, has experienced growth in both fundraising dollars and parish participation each year.

As our Relay kicks off and the Survivors make their way around the track, I look around at all the people fighting cancer and am proud that our church participates in this amazing event. I see the faces of the people in my congregation who have been touched by cancer as they join together to raise money and awareness, and I see the impact our church has through Relay as a community outreach. And I wonder why there aren't more faith-based teams around the track.

**BECOMING AN ORGANIZATION OF "DOERS"**  
Relay For Life provides an amazing opportunity for faith-based teams. Starting a Relay team at your church or religious organization promotes fellowship within your congregation as well as provides an excellent means of community outreach. Through St. Andrew's involvement and success with Relay For Life, we have become known as a church of "doers" dedicated to the betterment of the Grays Harbor community.

This can be accomplished by giving a presentation to your priest, pastor or rabbi, as well as to the council that might oversee the church. Focus on the story of Relay, what the event is and what your vision is for the team. Also discuss what types of fundraisers you would like to initiate as this is a chief concern for a faith-based organization. By presenting both the advantages and the potential challenges, the leadership can make an informed decision on their participation.

### STARTING YOUR TEAM

Upon starting a faith-based team, it is a priority to get support from the leadership in your orga-

A faith-based team provides a wonderful means of fellowship. Your events and fundraisers will allow members to work together and build lasting relationships. It is also an

*"Through St. Andrew's involvement and success with Relay For Life, we have become known as a church of 'doers' dedicated to the betterment of the Grays Harbor community."*



excellent way to help support and honor those in the congregation who have been affected by cancer. Initially, our team was formed to honor a church member that had recently been diagnosed with cancer. It gave the congregation an active way to support him and feel like they were doing something to fight back.

*"Initially, our team was formed to honor a church member that had recently been diagnosed with cancer. It gave the congregation an active way to support him and feel like they were doing something to fight back."*

Recruiting members is seldom an issue for a faith-based team. In fact, we have always had the opposite problem and find it difficult to limit our team to 15 members! We will likely establish levels of involvement including "team members" and "boosters" for next year's Relay. "Team members" would participate in our online and offline fundraisers and be present at the Relay. "Boosters" may volunteer at certain fundraisers and/or offer support to the team by helping at the Relay. We have found that it is of utmost importance to be as inclusive as possible and foster a sense of team spirit within the entire congregation, whether they are officially "team members" or not.

### FINDING YOUR FUNDRAISING BALANCE

One unique challenge to the faith-based team is finding successful fundraisers that do not compete with the money donated to the church collection. The key to this is

to incorporate fundraisers that pull in money from outside the congregation. For example, every year we plan a successful Spaghetti Dinner and Auction. All food, silent and live auction items are donated from members of the congregation to reduce costs. We recruit volunteers to help run the event and sell tickets to the remainder of the congregation, as well as outside friends and family. Our event generates excellent revenue from sales to guests both inside and outside the organization and also promotes the church in the community...last year the Spaghetti Dinner raised \$18,500!

We have also had enormous success fundraising using a trip raffle. We ask members if they have airline miles, second homes and/or time-share weeks that they might be willing to donate. Once we get our trip donated, we set our price and limit the raffle tickets. Then we sign out books of tickets to the congregation and let them get selling. Last year our team sold raffle tickets for a trip to Mexico which included round trip airfare and accommodations for two. The tickets

were \$20 with a maximum of 500 tickets to be sold. We made more than \$9,000 and most of it came from outside our church. Raffles can work well but they are not legal in all states, so please check your local gaming laws and regulations before planning your own raffle.

One of our most rewarding fundraisers has been the sale of "Hope



Bracelets." The bracelets, which were introduced to us by Team Freedom in Gloucester, Massachusetts, are handmade by our team and consist of beautiful colored glass beads that represent the many different types of cancer. The bracelets have been wildly popular.

*"Without the uncompromising support of church leadership, it would be impossible to be a successful team year after year."*

Since we started selling them in late January 2008, we have sold well over 1,700. The profit generated by these sales is more than \$26,000 so far. Creating any kind of handmade item and selling it to raise awareness of cancer can be a great fundraiser since so many people are touched by cancer and are interested in purchasing awareness items.

#### WORKING TOGETHER AND SHARING THE LOAD

There are many factors that put our team on the path to becoming a Nationwide Team of Excellence. Our team is overseen by three co-captains, each with different strengths. It takes a phenomenal amount of time and energy to make a team successful, so sharing the responsibilities is a relief. Each of the co-captains shares a common vision for the team. We hope to increase parish involvement, educate the congregation about the Society, begin year round fundraising and we really wanted to win the award for Top Fundraising Team at our Relay. We all share a highly competitive spirit!

Another factor that helped us become a successful team is com-

munication. We feel it is essential to communicate on multiple levels that include between captains, the team and the entire congregation. Our captains meet regularly and email and phone frequently. We also have several Team Meetings during Relay season. We respect the time of

our members and stick to an agenda at the meetings. Door prizes also help to lure the team to the meetings – save all that Relay gear! The team has an email account that allows for easy communication to contacts regarding events and team updates. Communicating with the church as a whole is also vital. We have a dedicated Relay bulletin board in the church that contains all the latest information on the team. We have also featured team members and Survivors in special "Spotlight" postings. Articles and information on cancer treatment and prevention are also posted on the bulletin board as well as information on our local Cancer Resource Center.

#### OUR KEYS TO SUCCESS

Having the full support of our priest and vestry (or parish council) has been imperative to our success. Fr. Dale McQueen, our priest, firmly believes in giving back to our community and is instrumental in maintaining the church's spirit to do so. Without the uncompromising support of church leadership, it would be

impossible to be a successful team year after year.

However, even with all of these advantages, no team can truly be successful without good fundraisers and we hit the jackpot on those! We concentrate on team fundraisers, and are always looking for ways to improve (like increasing online fundraising next year). We have seen the largest gains in fundraising when we did two things. First, we started fundraising year round and second, we emphasized seeking fundraising sources that bring in outside revenue such as our bracelets, auction and trip raffle.

I would love to see more faith-based organizations participate in Relay For Life. You will be serving your community, fostering fellowship amongst your members and fighting cancer. It is sure to be a blessing! ★



## TEAM DAVIS



### Reeling in the Nets: A First Year Team with a Big Goal

By Kristen Davis

*Kristen Davis served as the Team Captain for Team Davis in 2008 for the Relay For Life of Anchorage, Alaska. In their first year as a Relay team, the team from Davis Constructors and Engineers Inc raised more than \$341,000, which is the most any Relay team has ever raised in one year.*

When the American Cancer Society asked that I tell our story, I thought, "Why us? Who would be interested in hearing what Team Davis from Alaska had to say!" We were in disbelief that we raised \$341,000 dollars in 3 weeks! I still don't believe it. This is truly an amazing story of a construction community coming together in the fight against cancer.

Relay For Life reminded us how effective our community can be when we join for a common goal. But our commitment to the Relay is inspired by much more than altruism or a sense of community spirit. The value of each dollar we put into the event was multiplied many times by the raising efforts put forth by other businesses and individuals.

In Alaska, Cancer is the #1 cause of death. We have watched helplessly as our loved ones and co-workers

have cared for a family member or business partner whose life has been wrenched apart after a cancer diagnosis. The diagnosis may be personal, but the impact is universal.

#### WHERE OUR STORY BEGINS

What started out as my request to then CEO, Kyle Randich, of Davis Constructors & Engineers Inc to sponsor a team for \$5,000 soon grew into something much, much larger. From there, our team motto was born...

*Lynn.....Jon.....Stan.....  
Who do you know?*

Lynn Steeves, Davis's marketing coordinator, won her battle with thyroid cancer. Jon Kumin, a talented architect, lost his fight against brain cancer in 2005. And Stan Smith, Vice President of Spenard Builders Supply, who at the time was fighting cancer sadly lost his courageous battle with cancer two days before the Relay For Life event.

**A "FISHY" FUNDRAISING STRATEGY**  
From here, the opportunity presented itself for Davis to reach out to our vendors, subcontractors, architects, engineers, and Davis jobsites. What started out as phone calls and letters soon mushroomed into something we could never have imagined. Davis came up with our 3-prong approach: we had the Big Fish, the Salmon, and the Minnows.

*"Relay For Life reminded us how effective our community can be when we join for a common goal."*

The Big Fish were other companies that Davis works with that Davis partners met with individually, asking them to join in the fight against cancer. These companies donated many thousands of dollars as a result of these personal challenges to make a difference. In return, we listed their company logo on our



Team Davis Donor Banners located at our office and various jobsites, as well as on the Team Davis T-shirts with our motto “Who Do You Know?”

The Salmon group was potential donors called upon by Davis employees. Many Davis employees contacted clients and people in their networks to join the fight against cancer too. In return, we listed their name or logo on our Team Davis Donor Banners and on the Team Davis T-shirts.

*“What started out as phone calls and letters soon mushroomed into something we could never have imagined.”*

For our Minnow group, we sold our own Team Davis T-shirts, raffle tickets for a 4-wheeler, and wristbands to employees, jobsites, and subcontractors. We also gave employees a chance to donate through their paycheck. Because of our efforts to get various employees involved, we now have what is known as Davis Jobsite Awareness week.

### A TRULY AMBITIOUS GOAL

I’ll never forget the look on our staff partner’s face when they came over to drop off our thermometer gauge for tracking how much money Davis raised thus far. At first our goal was \$100,000, and soon we expanded our goal to \$200,000. They were in disbelief and shock just as we were. At that moment, Team Davis had only three weeks to go!

The next week, Kyle peered around the corner with his knowing smile, and said “we can go bigger, much bigger!” He raised our goal to \$250,000 dollars! At that point, I thought, “He’s crazy.” I was only at Davis a year by now and could hardly believe that my full-time job of three weeks was to raise money for the Relay For Life event! I was truly amazed at Davis’ generosity – to not only donate money, but to have employees raise funds and work on the event itself for an entire month.

### IT WAS ALL WORTH IT AT THE RELAY

It was finally time to participate at the Relay event itself. We ended up with 35 team members at the event.

And we participated in every on-site activity! Some would say that Team Davis was a little competitive. Our favorite activity, the Miss Relay event, brought our jobsites together to pick with their donations which PM or PE would represent Davis during the Miss Relay event. Some good spirited guys, Craig, Jon, James, and Jed, volunteered to let us place coin jars among the Davis jobsites. By doing so, Davis employees and subcontractors put monies in the jars toward which guy they would like to see dress up as Miss Relay! Before we tallied the funds to announce the winner of who would represent Davis in the Miss Relay event, we gave Craig, Jon, James, and Jed one last effort to swing the vote toward each other. By doing so we raised an additional \$2,000 dollars!

Another big on-site activity for our team was the Tug-O-War Event. There was a rumor that the fire-fighters were undefeated in the event and our guys were never ones to turn down a challenge. The guys were pretty jazzed once they saw the rope cross our line for a victory.

Lastly, we were very proud of our “Who Do You Know” boards. We placed boards on the corner of the track for people to sign! Some wrote names or dates, and others wrote personal messages and words of encouragement for survivors.

The most moving part of the Relay was the Luminaria Ceremony. We were first timers at the event and the emotions that came over us were powerful ones! From the midnight ceremony of the bagpipes and walk-

ing the first lap with the survivors, to taking a moment of silence in front of your Luminaria... is a moment that none of us will forget!

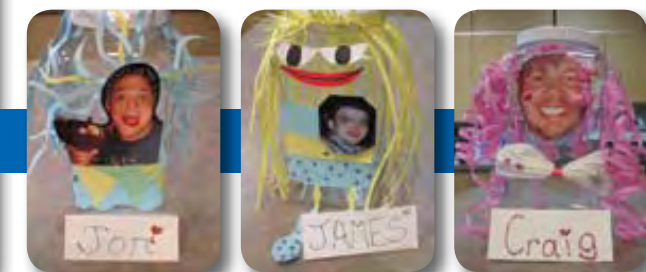
### OUR RESULTS

Five hundred forty-six people participated in our effort as donors, fundraisers or supporters, raising more than \$341,000 to fight cancer. That turned out to be the most money ever raised by any Relay team in one year! We found that we could make a difference in the

lives of cancer survivors, patients and the loved ones left behind. And Davis made the Pledge to fight back! We hope that those lost

to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported, and that one day cancer will be eliminated.

Looking back, I realize not only did we make a difference in the fight against cancer, but we really came together as a team. We laughed, cried, and after three weeks, we shared a feeling of empowerment. I would like to thank our clients, subcontractors, and employees for their support throughout the Relay. Looking back, our goal seemed impossible. But once we had one person, then another, and another on board, it just seemed to fall in place. I think I speak for all when I say we are humbled, honored and thankful for sharing your stories and inspirations with us. Thank You. ★



### REACHING OUT TO BUSINESS CONTACTS

“Our address list is usually a brainstorming session that consists of business related contacts, friends and family. We have deep ties in our industry so we contact these vendors as many have shared their personal stories with us so it is a very real cause that they look forward to donating every year.”

— **Marcie Martinez**, her team raised over \$32,000 for the Relay For Life of Chelan/Douglas County, WA.

“Take advantage of the business contacts that you have made in your career. Reach out to suppliers, vendors, colleagues that ‘need’ things from you throughout the year. ‘Scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours’ is a reality and you should take advantage of this opportunity. Also, recognize the relationships that you have that can produce large dollar donations and ‘sell’ your cause, ACS, so they realize its importance.”

— **Gina Romero**, raised over \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Gilbert, AZ.

*“The most moving part of the Relay was the Luminaria Ceremony. We were first timers at the event and the emotions that came over us were powerful ones!”*



# Eyes on the Prize: Goal Setting For Success

By Julia Spencer and Jo Ellyn Bradley

**Julia Spencer** raised more than \$17,000 to fight cancer as an individual fundraiser in 2008, and her team, “The Holy See a Cure,” raised more than \$27,000 for the Relay For Life of the Roaring Fork Valley, Colorado. Julia has been a Relay participant since 1992 throughout the country, most recently in Colorado where she has been a Team Captain, committee member, and Event Chair since 2006.

**Jo Ellyn Bradley** is the Team Captain of the Castle Valley Children’s Clinic team at the Relay For Life of the Rifle Area, Colorado. Her team raised \$20,641 in the 2008 Relay season. Jo Ellyn began Relay with Castle Valley Children’s Clinic 3 years ago after Phil, a 15-year old, passed away from cancer.

**H**ello Relayers! As a couple of Great West Division Top Fundraisers, we were asked to share our thoughts and ideas with all of you about fundraising and how we do what we do. We come to Relay from different walks of life: Julia has been involved in Relays across the country since 1992; Jo Ellyn has been involved in the local Relay For

Life of Rifle, Colorado for four years. Neither of us started out as a typical participant, “only” raising the minimum \$100. We have always set high goals and raised high numbers.

### GETTING STARTED WITH A GOAL

The first question is how do we do what we do and when do we start? It’s all about the goal! If you think

you can, you will. But coming up with a goal must happen as soon as possible. What does that mean? Our Relays are in

the summer. Once we know our fundraising total for the year, we’re already setting our goal for the next Relay, 12 months away. If this is your first Relay, set your goal as soon as you join a team! Don’t wait — fundraising can be a year-round effort. In fact, by starting early you can easily offer some of the same people more than one opportunity to give throughout the year, effectively increasing what they will donate. And, there are fundraisers you might do in December that wouldn’t be appropriate in March.

*“By starting early you can easily offer some of the same people more than one opportunity to give throughout the year, affectively increasing what they will donate.”*

### CHOOSE YOUR FUNDRAISING PATH

So, who comes up with the fundraiser? In our case, we both plan for team fundraisers and individual fundraisers. Let us give you an example. Julia belongs to a church team so it is easy to plan multiple team fundraisers in which all members of the Relay team help prepare and execute at a church event (baked goods, Luminaria, bracelets, etc). Jo on the other hand belongs to a diverse team of friends and co-workers who have to work hard to



*“The key to a great team event is careful planning and participation from your team.”*

stay organized. Her team chooses fundraising events and carefully plans and carries them out with the help of an appointed “chair” for each event (dances, spaghetti dinners, etc). Both of our teams have successful team fundraisers, regardless of our differences. The key to a great team event is careful planning and participation from your team. Most importantly, you need to have fun as a team and with those you’re asking to support you. A smile goes a long way.

Individual fundraisers can be as in depth as you choose. What it really comes down to is who to ask and what to ask for... sounds simple enough, but what we’ve found is that many

participants aren’t asking enough people because they “predetermine” who will and won’t give. In addition, they don’t know what to ask for. As Top Fundraisers in the Great West Division, we’ve found that everyone deserves and warrants being asked. When we send out an email letter request, we don’t pick and choose – we send it to every single email address in our contacts. Period. People you think would never sponsor you will surprise you with a response and generally a higher amount. What do we ask for? We ask for sponsorship. We ask for help to fund a cure. Mostly, we don’t ask for a specific dollar amount. We tell folks what our lofty goal is and ask how they are going to help us be successful. Our philosophy is if you ask for \$10, you will most likely get \$10. If you ask for

\$500, you might get a few chuckles, you might even get a yes, but you will definitely get more than \$10. Shooting low is the worst mistake a participant can make in fundraising. Don’t be afraid to ask for the moon – and again, a smile goes a long, long way.

### SHARE YOUR STORY

Next on our how-to list is to remember your motivation and your “why.” We all have a reason to Relay, whether it’s a personal survivor story, a family member or a friend, or because cancer affects so many. The key is to keep your reason on the tip of your tongue so that you don’t forget why you’re asking for money, and you’re always ready to share your story with whoever you might be talking to. Sharing your story can be hard, it can be emotional, and it can be overwhelming – but it can also be rewarding for you and for your listener. You never know when your story will touch someone in just the right place at the right time. Allowing others to associate with your motivation also provides them an additional reason to support you.

### FOLLOW UP FOR SUCCESS

In the end, execution and follow-up will finalize your success. We don’t send one email campaign and we don’t hold one fundraiser. We send several campaigns, we send follow-up emails to ask people why they haven’t responded, and we hold lots of fundraisers to hit lots of people in our communities. Example: After your first



round of asking for sponsorship and donations you may realize you're not quite at your goal. Send out an email telling people you're close and you are only so many dollars short of reaching your goal – can anyone help a little more? It works every time. The final “icing on the cake” for us is to say Thank You – to every single donor, small and large. If you want their continued support, they need to know their donation made a

difference not only for the American Cancer Society, but to you.

To provide you with all of our success points in one short article is tough duty. But if you can remember only one thing from our story, remember this: If you set a goal of \$1,000, you will reach it easily and will move on. If you set a goal of \$10,000, you will have to work a bit harder but when you reach it, you will

*“You never know when your story will touch someone in just the right place at the right time.”*

have a strong sense of accomplishment and realize that you have only scratched the surface of what you are capable of in fundraising to fight cancer. Who hasn't been touched by cancer? What better cause is there to ask people to support. ★

### ADVICE ON MAKING THE ASK

“I often get new donors during casual conversation. When they ask ‘How are you?’ instead of answering the expected ‘fine’, I say ‘I’m busy, and this is why...’ This leads easily to a donation request.”

— **Sandi Cok**, raised over \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Yakima, WA.

“Don’t take ‘no’ personally. Expect to hear no more often than yes and keep your eye on your ‘mission’.”

— **Shae Lambert**, raised over \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Lincoln City, OR.

“I let people I talk to see what others have donated. A lot of times they will match or donate more, and just by talking to them personally, I usually can get more out of them. It’s important to be cheerful, be able to talk to people and be ready to answer questions they might have. And learn to take rejection. When they say no, just say ‘OK, thank you. I understand and I’ll see you next year.’”

— **Bob Gallegos**, his team raised over \$23,000 and he raised over \$17,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Durango, CO.

“I never take ‘No’ personally. I thank them with a smile and go on to next potential donor.”

— **Cindy Sheehan**, raised over \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Redmond, WA.

“Don’t be afraid to ask. A closed mouth does not get fed.”

— **Mark Little**, raised over \$11,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Vancouver, WA.



# ADVICE FROM THE PROS FUNDRAISING IDEAS AND SUCCESSES

Our Top Fundraisers put their ideas on paper in our workshop at the Great West Leadership Summit in September 2008. Here are some of the advice and ideas on fundraising they had to share.



“My daughters send out random e-mails on certain days of the month letting their friends know how their parents are doing. Then they mention they are setting a daily goal of say \$300 and you’d be surprised how many people come through! Keep it personal and ask....”

— **Doreen Schmitt**, her team raised more than \$25,000 for the Relay For Life of Stanwood-Camano, WA.

“We have an employee raffle with nice items. They can buy a raffle ticket for a dollar. It’s a nice thank you for getting involved in other projects and we raise several thousand dollars.”

— **Pat Straube**, her team raised more than \$72,000 for the Relay For Life of Eugene/Springfield, OR.

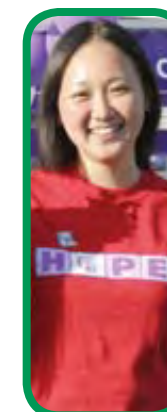
“Our team got together and drew on past successes as well as looking at new ideas. One of our best ideas was the ‘Run Walk and Roll.’ We partnered with a bicycle club to develop a 50 and 100K ride and walking track. We sold food, had crafts for kids, a petting zoo, a jumper and prizes, prizes, prizes. We were successful enough to make this an annual event. Next year we will be even bigger!”

— **Christy Monk**, her team raised more than \$28,000 for the Relay For Life of Hobbs, NM.

“What made our fundraiser

a success was to involve lots of people. We made a cookbook and asked 600 people to contribute recipes. We made sure it was completed by Dec 1 so it could be sold for Christmas gifts. We also advertised with how many days remained until our cook book would be available. We sold 1,500 books in 4 months.”

— **Shirley Genter**, her team raised more than \$23,000 for the Relay For Life of Stutsman County, ND.



“Find a source that you have in your area! As a youth team we had to look hard. I used my family. My sister and two brothers gave all of the money from the sale of an animal at our livestock sale. I had many people at our ranch from 8 different states for the sale. Everyone had been touched by cancer and they all wanted to help me make my Relay For Life team something magic. Everyone went way above anything I could have dreamed of. I am proud to show that even a 14-year-old can help, and I can’t wait for this next year.”

— **Mackenzie Forman**, raised more than \$10,500 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Kittitas County, WA.

“We hold one large event each October, while we spend the rest of the year planning and working out all the logistical issues involved in planning it. During the planning time we also solicit donations from local businesses to help fund the event as well as increase donations. Our event consists of planning and hosting a 12-hour scrapbooking event. We sell tickets for \$65 each, secure a location, solicit corporate sponsors to underwrite the event, and organize a silent auction through donations from local businesses and individuals.”

— **Nichole Victory**, her team raised more than \$23,000 for the Relay For Life of Anchorage, AK.

“We have movie nights at our elementary school – families are invited and the cost to enter is minimal, but then we sell donated soda pop, popcorn, and sell inexpensive pizza.”

— **Sheryl Claypool**, her team raised more than \$31,000 for the Relay For Life of East Mesa, AZ.



"We fundraise all year long. Our fundraising for the next year begins a week after our Relay. We park cars in our corporate parking lot during a town festival (scandinavian festival). We have ongoing fundraising with sales of cancer bears, etc. We have fundraisers that we look forward to all year with curbing cancer, golf tourneys. And we are beginning to brainstorm new ideas for next year!"

— **Mary Alexander**, her team raised over \$72,500 for the Relay For Life of Eugene/ Springfield, OR.

"We had meetings for ideas and all voted and agreed on each type of fundraiser. One example is that we do gift baskets for Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. During the meeting we decide what type of gift baskets: spa, coffee, wine, etc. Then people donate monies to purchase items for the baskets and then we raffle off each basket."

— **Denise Farley**, her team raised more than \$33,000 for the Relay For Life of Chelan/Douglas County, WA.

"Being a Breast Cancer survivor I wanted to put on an event that would be a yearly event. I talked to my breast cancer support group and we decided to put on a Ladies Tea. We contacted an historical mansion and they were excited to help. We sold out of 215 tickets by word of mouth. We had 71 raffle items that were donated by local businesses and the raffle brought in \$1,700 on day of. We also invited vendors to come and we sell their goods and they donate 10%. I get the whole event paid for by asking local businesses to donate \$100 to pay for an event that raises \$18,000. 2009 will be our 4th year."

— **Liz Berry**, she raised more than \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Spokane, WA.



"I am a Knight of Columbus. Every month, we hold a pancake breakfast at the church after masses. Last year I asked our council to donate the proceeds from one event to ACS. We don't charge for our breakfasts – we ask for donations. Each month, we raise between \$800-

\$1,100. I expect that with my personal appeal, we can raise \$2,000 or more."

— **Tom Gurgui**, raised more than \$11,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Reno/Sparks, NV.

"Because of health issues with our group, we try to choose events that are low maintenance and easy, as well as low upfront cost and will bring in the most bucks for our time."

— **Linda Brant**, her team raised more than \$55,000 for the Relay For Life of Reno/Sparks, NV.

"My biggest advice is to make it personal – make sure all team members have a very, very personal connection to Cancer. We do Cutting for a Cure – I'm a hairdresser. I personally take the week of my father's death of colon cancer and for the entire week I decorate the salon with luminarias, Relay ribbons and purple, purple! That week I cut, color, sell products and donate all proceeds to ACS. Clients become very, very generous and the price of a haircut or any service becomes a donation – usually 2-3 times the price. Five days of work raised \$2,300. Also, my clientele are a lot of other local business owners and my receptionist talks to them about Relay and the cause and is very persistent, which brought in a total of another \$6,000. In addition, a Relay team member died of breast cancer one week before Relay. Her friends and family donated her memorial money, which was about \$10,000.

- Total fundraising time – 4 months.
- Team members that give 110% – 5 team members.
- Relay For Life 1st Saturday in June – Priceless!"

— **Cindy Schatz**, her team raised more than \$22,000 for the Relay For Life of Bismarck, ND.



# Big Money and Big Fun:

## Planning Team Fundraising Events

By Jim and Pat Harnish



Jim and Pat Harnish are members of "Friends for Cancer Cure," a team of seven couples which participated in the 2008 Relay For Life in Tacoma, WA. Their team raised more than \$35,000 last year and have set a goal for \$50,000 for 2009. Some team members have been Relaying since 1985 when they supported their friend Dr. Gordon Klatt in his solo run that first year. Over the last 25 years they have raised more than \$400,000, and are one of the top teams in the Great West.

Our team "Friends For Cancer Cure," has been raising funds in the Relay For Life for the past 25 years, and the secret of our longevity is in our name. We are "Friends" who are dedicated to helping find a "Cancer Cure." Our friendship has developed over the years because we get together often to plan how to raise money, support one another, and also to have fun.

In the beginning we relied solely on individuals sending out letters to friends, relatives, and co-workers challenging them to match our own individual donation, which some set as high as \$300, and surprisingly

got several checks for the challenge amount. But in the past few years we have added team fundraising events to our individual fundraising efforts and gotten into the big money and big fun by working together to sponsor community events such as our annual St. Patrick's Day Crab Feed. With a little creativity, organization, and teamwork, your team can raise big money too!

### THE PLANNING STAGES

Our planning gets going in January for our annual Crab Feed, which sells out with 200 people and raises around \$12,000. Our formula is to keep the

menu simple with the main attraction being all-you-can-eat Dungeness crab, cole slaw, garlic bread, a dessert auction, and wine and beer for sale, with most of the food and entertainment donated by local companies.

*"We try to keep it simple, but also think of ways to raise additional money at the event."*

Since we have such a popular annual event, we thought you might like to see what it's like when we work as a team to sponsor a fun fundraising event, step by step.

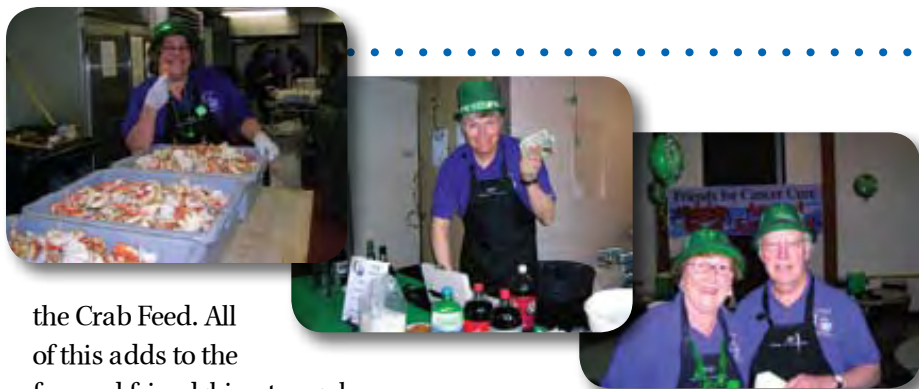
First our team gathers to set the date and identify who is responsible for coordinating all of the event details like the hall, the band, publicity, and most importantly the menu. We try to get all of these big items donated or funded by local companies. Then we can say that most of the money paid by patrons goes to the Relay. Then we set the ticket price, this year \$50 per person. By the way, all of our team members buy a ticket, even though we rarely get to sit during the Feed!

Next we decide on an invitation list of our friends, relatives, co-workers, and fellow church parishioners. This list of about 400 people gets an invitation notice before we open up ticket sales

*"Breakfast the next day is when we critique our operation and calculate what we brought in, including the extra special moment when we open luminaria bags and you can hear the cheering each time a large bill or check falls out – this is FUN and rewarding and makes us realize that we are good at FUNdraising!"*

to the public. Then we do other Crab Feed publicity, including producing flyers and posting them in churches and on community bulletin boards and producing articles for local newsletters and church bulletins. We also send our poster out electronically to everyone in our e-mail address book.

When mailing invitations, each member of our team uses individualized return address labels and jots a handwritten note on the invitation so people will recognize the sender. We are each responsible for filling tables, which results in attendees having personal connections to our team and knowing many others at



the Crab Feed. All of this adds to the fun and friendship atmosphere.

### INCORPORATING FUNDRAISING INTO THE FUN

At the Crab Feed we try to keep it simple, but also think of ways to raise additional money at the event. For instance, adding a dessert auction is easy and can bring in more than \$1,000 – and it adds to the evening's fun. A table auction including a few items like local professional sports tickets or team hats and shirts can be

a great fundraiser too, complete with printed directions for picking an auctioneer at each table. Everyone gets into the competitive spirit...one year, a plastic St. Patrick's

Day hat grabbed off a team member's head ended up in a spontaneous auction and brought in over \$100!

We book a live band at the Crab Feed as well, which adds to the festive atmosphere as participants join in the dancing. By the end of the evening our team members do find time to end up all on the dance floor – even if it is only for the last dance to say thanks to each other for the opportunity to do this work and have great fun in the process.

In all of this fun we keep the attention on what we are about, raising money for the cure. So we introduce

the luminaria experience at the Crab Feed as well, explaining what Relay For Life is all about and why we do this. We pass out paper bags and crayons for them to create their own luminarias to honor loved ones with cancer, which we take to the Relay. We ask them to put a donation in the bag while one of our team sings Amazing Grace or plays the bagpipes. This is a very meaningful experience and connects people to the cause, not to mention the \$1,200-\$1,500 it brings in.

We also add to our bottom line by selling leftover crab in 2-pound bags, which literally fly out the door! We do hold back a couple bags for team members, which we use the next day to make crab omelets – finally sitting down.

### EVALUATING THE EVENT

Breakfast the next day is when we critique our operation and calculate what we brought in, including the extra special moment when we open luminaria bags and you can hear the cheering each time a large bill or check falls out – this is FUN and rewarding and makes us realize that we are good at FUNdraising! Then we make a list of what worked well and collect new ideas, which actually begins the planning process for the next year.

### EXPANDING INTO NEW IDEAS

In addition to the Crab Feed, some years we have expanded our efforts to include other events. We have hosted a Brat Fest in the fall with a silent auction, or prepared ethnic dinners for eight hosted by team members. But not every event is worth all the effort...for instance, the Bratfest was fun but we dropped it because it was too much work with all the food preparation and brought in only a few thousand dollars. Our team of seven couples realized that this was something that we probably couldn't sustain year after year. We are in this for the long run, so we don't want our team to get burned out.

In recent years we have looked for other opportunities for simple and fun fundraisers...the key is creativity. We found a great idea when one of our crab feed participants presented an opportunity for our team to help host an open house for his high-end model home. This "Idea House"

*"We are in this for the long run, so we don't want our team to get burned out."*

featured different vendors, craftsmen, and electronics specialists there to show off their wares. Our team's role was to greet people, help with tours, and ask for a \$10 donation to the Relay For Life. It was a win-win

### ADVICE WHEN PLANNING YOUR TEAM EVENT

"Find something your team is excited about (i.e., bowling, golfing, bunco) and plan around that shared passion."  
— **Sandi Holdener**, her team raised over \$40,000 at the Relay For Life of Tacoma, WA.

"Start small. Don't get overwhelmed too fast. You can always go bigger but if you overwhelm your team they will not be willing to continue. Try to involve as many people as possible in team events. The more projects your team members help with, the more they will feel like part of the team and the more events they will volunteer to help with."  
— **Heidi Smart**, her team raised over \$32,000 for the Relay For Life of Sandy, OR.

"We got our whole team together and brainstormed ideas. From there we choose several ideas and got started and we built enthusiasm among ourselves. We got more employees involved and got the projects completed. Every year we have fun, get employees involved, and are excited to watch our dollars grow."  
— **Pat Straube**, her team raised over \$72,000 for the Relay For Life of Eugene, OR.

"Wrap up is essential – do it soon after the event. What works? What didn't? How can it be done more efficiently? Keep these notes and make a notebook to refer to next year."  
— **Annette Pinckney**, her team raised over \$60,000 for the Relay For Life of Grays Harbor, WA.

situation: the builder benefited by receiving free, enthusiastic tour guides and associating with a great cause. Our team benefited because with a few hours of "work" – actually it

was fun – we brought in over \$10,000 and helped raise awareness for local Relays. The builder and his wife had so much fun associating with our team, he wanted to join us for future Relays.

Looking for creative opportunities in your own area will surely turn

up some leads. But remember, keep it simple and fun and not too labor intensive so you can sustain the effort from year to year.

Much of our success and willingness to continue to participate in Relay For Life fundraising for "Cancer Cure" is because our process is fun and simple and also because through this we have developed the kind of deep relationships that are built on supporting each other when someone is in need, which is what "Friends" do. ★



# New Meaning to New Beginnings:

## One Story of Starting a Successful New Team

By Jonathan Sprouffske

*Jonathan Sprouffske is an attorney with Connolly Tacon & Meserve, a small law firm in Olympia, Washington, and the Team Captain of their first year Relay Team. 2008 was the first year at the Relay For Life of Thurston County for Team Connolly Tacon & Meserve and they raised more than \$22,000.*



Fighting cancer has been important to me ever since I lost my mom 5 years ago. It was two years ago that I fully caught the Relay spirit through the passion of an amazing woman who I fell in love with. Relay became a part of our story.

When I proposed to my wife Shelley at the Relay in 2007, it was a package deal. She would move from the city and out to the country. She would transfer from her successful

*"The key to recruiting and galvanizing new members to raise money was educating them about the incredible work of the Society."*

team at the Relay For Life of Tacoma to a smaller one in our home county. And we would Relay together – as co-captains on a new team – through my law firm, Connolly Tacon & Meserve. Thankfully, she accepted, and we began our new team together.

Starting something new and convincing others to participate can

be a challenge. My role in starting this new team at our firm was to help draw others into the Relay...to "sell" the idea. Since no one at the firm had any experience Relaying, I headed up educating my colleagues about the Relay and the mission of the American Cancer Society.

The key to recruiting and galvanizing new members to raise money was educating them about the incredible work of the Society. We used email, newsletters, and web resources from the Society to spread the word – and it worked. We ended up

with around a dozen dedicated fundraisers on our team, each with their own reasons to fight cancer.

With just 19 employees in the firm, we needed to expand our fundraising reach. The only way to accomplish that was to identify and use our individual strengths to involve our separate circles of influence. To

maximize our fundraising success, each of us focused on what we did best. We let people run with their passions and encouraged creativity and healthy competition.

### UTILIZING OUR INDIVIDUAL STRENGTHS

Once our team members understood what Relay was about and connected with their own reasons to fight cancer, they were ready to raise money in their own ways. Each team member had different skills to offer and contacts to reach...here are just a few examples of different individual fundraising techniques from our team members:

*One of our attorneys, Chris Meserve, started a letter writing campaign to her friends, colleagues and family. She invited them to support her and our team in our mission. Her letter campaign brought in about \$4,000.*

*Chris's legal assistant, Rachel, decided to do a challenge of her own,*

*"To maximize our fundraising success, each of us focused on what we did best. We let people run with their passions and encouraged creativity and healthy competition."*

*asking other local firms to donate to her in an effort to out-fundraise Chris – an example of healthy competition! Rachel raised more than \$1,000 for the team.*

*My wife, a talented photographer, used her creative talents and donated a photo shoot for a "Raffle For Relay." We helped sell tickets (\$25 each, with a limited number available) and raised more than \$1,700 through a single photo shoot chance drawing.*

A combination of these individual approaches adds up to great team fundraising! What individual strengths and passions do your team members have? Envision how each member of your team can use their individual strengths and spheres of influence to bring in big bucks for your team and encourage them to make it happen!

### COMING TOGETHER AS A TEAM

We also planned larger team fundraisers as a group. Two team members who excel at garage sales volunteered to coordinate a "Rummage For Relay." Within days, they

designed a weekly themed schedule to solicit donations: from furniture to kitchen items to books. Most of us were not avid garage sale enthusiasts, so we followed their lead. With two months of preparation gathering donations and publicizing the sale, together we raised more than \$8,000 with a massive two-day event.

Around the track at the Relay, we wanted to be a hub of activity to both raise money and exposure of our community involvement. Ensuring people stopped by our tent site each time they rounded the track was a great way to do so. We sold handmade lanyards, known as "lap beads," and gave away a free bead each time participants completed another lap past our tent site. Relayers could track their accumulated miles and we had a captive audience. We raised more than \$750 from lap beads...and we met hundreds of people in the process!

### TYING THE KNOT

Never did we imagine that our first year team would find such success. Not only did we successfully merge

our lives together when we married (in the Relay off-season, of course), but we loved the experience of Relaying together with a new team who caught the Relay spirit as I did a few years ago.

It's amazing how everything added up in the end with the strengths and passions of our team members combined into fundraising dollars. When we offered the chance for people to personalize their experience with Relay – to use their own gifts to benefit the team's fundraising quest and ultimately, the American Cancer Society – we built a first year team that excelled to become the top fundraising team in our event in Thurston County.

The collective strengths of our attorneys and staff brought our team together to begin a new annual tradition for our firm – funding the cure for cancer. And our new team, including our baby boy born in January 2009, newest Relayer Thomas Lawrence Sprouffske, is looking forward to many more years of Relaying together! ★

### TIPS FOR TEAM BUILDING

"I hold two pre-Relay meetings as the Captain at my home. We discuss fundraising ideas and I ask how they're doing. It's important to share ideas – encourage them and share new research with them. At Relay I will give each team member assorted colored bandanas or a similar gift to tie our team together. I also hold a post party after and thank everyone."

— **Cindy Sheehan**, raised over \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Redmond, WA.

"Make sure everyone knows what they are committing their time to, that raising the money is going toward fighting something that can touch everyone's life."

— **Ana Lopez**, her team raised over \$31,000 for the Relay For Life of Mesa, AZ.

"Fundraising at Relay is very fun, but it can also be stressful. Team member commitment is crucial. Don't try to do too much! Have each team member agree to be in charge of one fundraising effort."

— **April Grant**, her team raised over \$26,000 for the Relay For Life of Kittitas County, WA.



# Filling a Year with Fundraising



*"After struggling to fit fundraising into the last 6-8 weeks before the Relay, we realized that it made much more sense to spread our efforts out over an entire year. This simple step not only helped our team increase the amount of money we raised, but also eased a lot of our stress."*

By Annie Davis

Annie Davis is the Team Captain of Team Richardson's that participates in the Relay For Life of Columbia County, in St. Helens, Oregon. Together the team raised \$20,400 in the 2008 Relay season. Annie participates in Relay For Life in honor of her mom, Eileen Kirby, a 30-year cancer survivor.

I began Relaying like many others do...I was asked. In March of 2002, my mom, a 30-year cancer survivor, asked me to start a Relay For Life team. I had never heard of Relay For Life and had no idea what I was getting into. We put together a 12-person team and started fundraising. We only had time to do a few fundraisers that year, but

after participating in our first Relay For Life, we were all hooked. We couldn't wait to do it again.

### THE DRIVE TO IMPROVE

Through the years, our team has continued to participate in Relay. One of the things that makes our team so successful is that each year we set a goal to outdo our previous year. After

struggling to fit fundraising into the last 6-8 weeks before the Relay, we realized that it made much more sense to spread our efforts out over an entire year. For the past five years, our team has fundraised throughout the entire year. This simple step not only helped our team increase the amount of money we raised, but also eased a lot of our stress. We no longer

need to cram multiple events into one month. We are able to focus on one thing at a time and put all of our energy into making each fundraising event successful. This approach to fundraising year round has been very helpful to us. We have continued to raise more money each year and it actually seems to get easier as we go!

Our Relay For Life takes place in July. After Relay, we take August off to relax and recuperate, but right

away in September we start meeting and planning our fundraising for the next year. We try to have at least one team fundraiser each month. There are a few events that we do at the same time each year, and we have found that these "annual" events bring in the same people each year and people really look forward to participating in them. Doing similar events every year also helps us to not reinvent the wheel each year. Through trial and error,

we have found the events that really work for us and then have added to them to make them better. The key is to find things that your team enjoys and to have fun. ★

*"Throughout the year, we also add in other fundraising events as opportunities arise, such as car washes and bottle drives. I have found that year-round fundraising has helped our team to exceed our goals and become a Top Fundraising team. I would encourage all teams to try this approach...you'll have a lot more fun and a lot less stress!"*

## SPREADING OUT THE FUNDRAISING

This is an example of the fundraisers we do in a typical year for our team:

### OCTOBER

PartyLite Candle Show. Fall is the perfect time to sell candles and we advertise this as a great time to start Christmas shopping. Our team receives a portion of the party proceeds donated by a local consultant, usually around \$600.

### NOVEMBER

We participate in two local holiday bazaars and sell handmade craft items. This is a great time to show off all the talent on your team! These efforts typically raise around \$1000.

### DECEMBER

We partner with a local business, Richardson's Furniture. They host Santa Claus and we host a holiday bake sale and collect donations from customers. Last year this sale raised \$500.

### JANUARY

Bunko party where we collect donations from attendees. It can bring in as much as \$800.

### FEBRUARY

Private Texas Hold'em Tournament with the proceeds going to Relay, around \$2,200. This is a great fundraiser, but you need to be sure to follow local gaming laws. It is also a great opportunity to bring men into a Relay event.

### MARCH

Scrapbooking Crop where the participation fees go to the Relay. This crop typically brings in \$1,000.

### APRIL

Partnership with local restaurant. Each year we partner with Burgerville. We advertise our partnership, sell gift cards and then work at the restaurant for three hours. Burgerville donates 10% of the gift card sales and 15% of the profits from the three hours, which was about \$400 last year.

### MAY

Pampered Chef party. We always do this in May because Pampered Chef offers special products for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and our local consultant donates a portion of the proceeds, about \$500.

### JUNE

Our largest event is a 12-family garage sale. We collect item donations from all friends and family as well, and bring in over \$2,500.

### JULY

Individual letter writing campaign sent by each team member. This campaign typically raises about \$4,000.

# RAISING MONEY AT RELAY

HAVE YOU TRIED ON-SITE FUNDRAISING? IT IS A FUN WAY TO ADD "ICING ON THE CAKE" TO YOUR TEAM FUNDRAISING TOTALS, ALONG WITH HELPING TO CREATE THE CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE OF RELAY. HERE ARE JUST A COUPLE OF THE WAYS OUR TOP FUNDRAISERS FUNDRAISE AT RELAY!



"WE HOST a 'Café' every year! Staff from our elementary school team donates all of the food and time to cook, and we offer hot dogs, hamburgers, and burritos. We have a huge tent, set up tables and chairs and then cook. People come to sit, visit and relax during the Relay. It usually brings in about \$2,300"

— **Sheryl Claypool**, her team raised more than \$31,000 for the Relay For Life of East Mesa, AZ.

"MAKE SURE you choose an activity for your campsite that doesn't take a large amount of people to run. There are multiple events going on at any given time at Relay and team members will be spread out. Also, make sure that there are appropriate accommodations for your team on site at the event ahead of time. Electricity is one key factor that we always make sure is in place before we show up ready to sell"

— **Heidi Smart**, her team raised more than \$32,000 for the Relay For Life of Sandy, OR.

"OUR BIGGEST team effort is the night of Relay – cooking! Hamburgers, hot dogs, corn...all donated! Everyone is hungry and ready to eat, so our team gets together and starts cooking"

— **Vanessa Castro**, her team raised more than \$28,000 for the Relay For Life of Hobbs, NM.

"KEEPING OUR on-site fundraising geared toward the Relay theme keeps our Team focused. Thinking outside the box keeps our Relay site fresh!! Everybody wants to see what our team, the Aloha Spirits, has to offer"

— **Carol Hardie**, her team raised more than \$33,000 for the Relay For Life of Chelan/Douglas County, WA.

"USE WHAT you have and do what you already know how to do. We own a big popcorn machine, so we sold popcorn at the Relay. We also sold bubbles to everyone, not just to the little kids. Everyone loves to blow the bubbles!"

— **Mackenzie Forman**, raised more than \$10,500 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Kittitas County, WA.

"WE WANTED kids to have something to do at Relay so we approached the committee and got an okay. We set up 6 games that cost 25 cents. We raise \$600-\$1,000 each year and it gets the kids to Relay"

— **Liz Berry**, she raised more than \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Spokane, WA.

"FOR FUNDRAISING at the Relay we try and find accessories that follow the theme of our Relay. We have found that items that light up at night, blinky lights, neon lights, etc., are big sellers. Items that involve the kids help them feel included"

— **Denise Forney**, her team raised more than \$33,000 for the Relay For Life of Chelan/Douglas County, WA.



# A Critical Piece:

## The Power of Thanks

ONE KEY ELEMENT THAT TOP FUNDRAISERS EMPHASIZE IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THANKING THEIR DONORS. HERE IS WHAT SEVERAL TOP FUNDRAISERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT HOW THEY THANK THEIR DONORS:

"I FEEL it is so important to have a personal touch, so I hand wrote thank you notes to each of my donors. This allowed me to thank them for supporting the fight against cancer"

— **Lisa Lohse**, her team raised more than \$20,000 and she raised \$11,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of the Roaring Fork Valley, CO.

"WE MAKE sure team sponsors are properly thanked with a hand delivered thank you"

— **Shirley Genter**, her team raised more than \$23,000 for the Relay For Life of Stutzman County, ND.

"I SEND thank yous to everyone who donates. I follow up with everyone else at least twice. Some people have actually thanked me for reminding them!"

— **Ann Keeney**, her team raised more than \$27,000 for the Relay For Life of the Roaring Fork Valley, CO.

"I WRITE a personal thank you note to each individual and let them know how their donation has helped accomplish our goal. I usually include a small treat such as homemade cookies"

— **Rebecca Preston**, her team raised more than \$28,000 for the Relay For Life of Salem, OR.

"AFTER THE event, a letter is sent out to our donors thanking them for their time and donation. Included in the letter is a total

for our team and an event total. We make sure that we let them know about the following year to make sure they donate to us because it is matched by us"

— **Vanessa Castro**, her team raised more than \$28,000 for the Relay For Life of Hobbs, NM.

"SEND THANK you notes to key players. We also made a scrapbook of the event. We encouraged people that attended our fundraiser to continue to frequent the restaurant because of the support to our cause"

— **Nancy Von Rosenberg**, her team raised more than \$55,000 for the Relay For Life of Reno/Sparks, NV.

"WE CREATE a photo flyer with our team total and a final 'thank you!'"

— **Ted Hill**, his team raised more than \$27,000 for the Relay For Life of Tacoma, WA.



# Photo Contest Winners

Thank you to the many Relayers who regularly submit photos for our Great West Photo Contest each year. The winning photos from 2008 are featured below. We want to see your amazing photos too!



“WE SEND every donor a personal thank you letter. Use their name and thank them for their donation (name the amount). Also tell them how much the Team has raised. We also try to personalize the letters with a short story and if we know they have a family/friend ill with cancer we ask after that person. We work hard to make our thank you letter personal.”

— **Denise M. Orr**, her team raised more than \$33,000 for the Relay For Life of Chelan/Douglas County, WA.

“I THANK my donors by a hand shake and a big hug.”

— **Bob Gallegos**, his team raised more than \$23,000 and he raised over \$17,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Durango, CO.



“AFTER THE Relay, I sent a letter thanking my donors and reporting on the Relay in general and my personal experience at the Relay.”

— **Sandi Cok**, raised more than \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Yakima, WA.

“AFTER EACH fundraising event, we follow up with a thank you letter. Then, after Relay is over we send a thank you letter to all donors sharing our team’s success and thanking them for their support.”

— **Sandy Holdener**, her team raised more than \$40,000 at the Relay For Life of Tacoma, WA.

“I THANK my donors with a Thank You letter and action photos of relay. I include our fundraising success and also a cancer research statistic along with a personal note to individual donors on our preprinted letters. Also if a donor said they had a sister or someone close [facing cancer] I will personally light a luminaria in their name and take a photo to send with the Thank You letter.”

— **Cindy Sheehan**, raised more than \$10,000 as an individual for the Relay For Life of Redmond, WA.



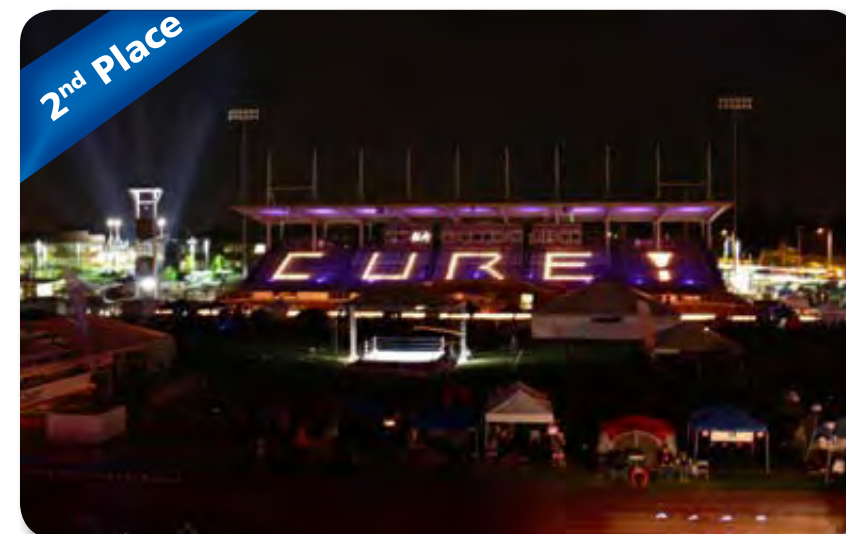
“WE SEND a follow-up letter letting them know what we raised and people that have passed and survived during the past year.”

— **Matt Walsh**, his team raised more than \$31,000 for the Relay For Life of Tacoma, WA.



Relay For Life of Mesa, AZ • Photo taken by Meg Kondrich

To request a submission form with the full contest rules or submit a photo, email the Great West Awards and Recognition Task Force at [greatwestawards@yahoo.com](mailto:greatwestawards@yahoo.com).



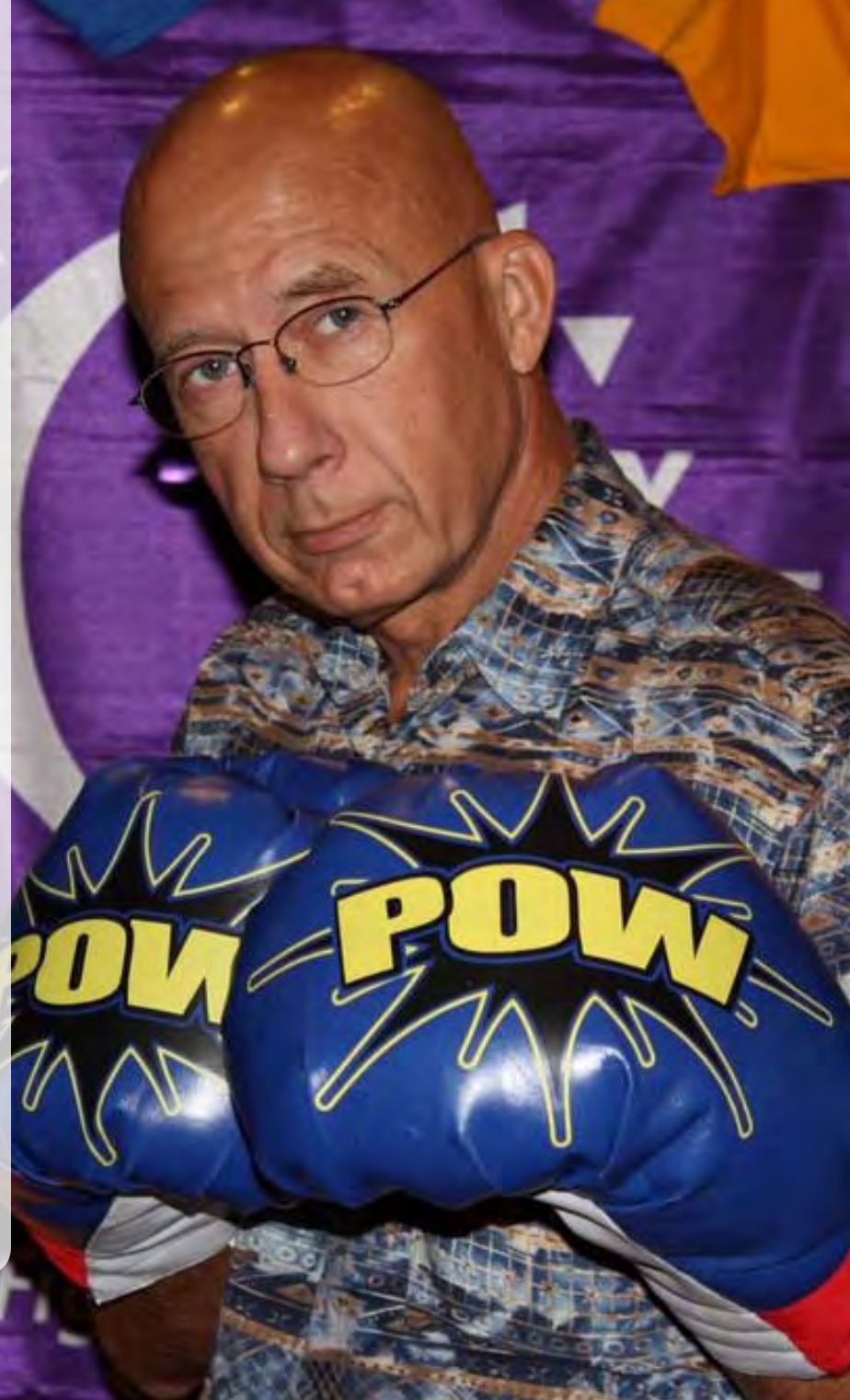
Relay For Life of Tacoma, WA • Photo taken by Cheryl Jones



Relay For Life of Highline, WA • Photo taken by Grace Reamer

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