



2010 Relay For Life

Photos by Heidi Henson



While eating at the Community Meal, Ken Varilek of Springfield found a Frito chip in the shape of a ribbon. Varilek and his wife found this to be fitting since he is a survivor, and joked he should send a letter to the company saying thanks for their support.



Survivors, their families, and supporters spent the night walking the path at Riverside Park. Many stayed the night enjoying the games and fellowship that comes with attending Relay For Life. It doesn't matter if you are young or old, a survivor, a caregiver or someone who has been touched by cancer — Relay For Life has proven to be a great event that brings people together for a common cause.



Bloch Honors Grandparents, Raises Money For ASC

BY HEIDI HENSON
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For most of this 18 years, Tyler Bloch has been involved in Relay For Life in one aspect or another.

And he's had good reason. For most of his 18-year-old life, Tyler has watched as his maternal grandparents battled cancer.

His grandfather was diagnosed about 18 years ago with lung cancer. He was able to fight it into remission. Then about five or six years ago, Tyler's grandmother was diagnosed with lung cancer. Unfortunately she was not able to win the fight. It was a couple years later when the family was faced with more news.

"My grandma had died, and then my grandpa wasn't feeling well so that was when we took him to the hospital."

Tyler's grandfather, after facing lung cancer head on, was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. His grandparents past away just a couple years ago.

This past school year, Tyler took his passion for Relay to a new level — in honor of his grandparents.

"As one of our senior requirements we have to do something called a senior experience," Tyler said.

This meant each senior at Menno High School was responsible for picking a topic, writing a paper and doing a project. Tyler happened to pick cancer and his paper was on Lung Cancer Staging. Besides basing a project on that of Relay for Life, Tyler also did volunteer work with the Susan G. Komen Foundation and their annual event in Vermillion.

Tyler's Relay-inspired event was called "Walk for the Cure." He raised just over \$1500 thanks to donations from family, friends, the church community and businesses in Lesterville and Menno.

"Since I went to school in Menno it was easy for me — I could go and ask them (the businesses) after school," Tyler said.

Tyler also got help from the students at school. They decorated luminaries, he said, but because they couldn't light them in school he had them on display in the gym.



HEIDI HENSON/P&D

As a way of saying thanks for his commitment and support of Relay For Life, Tyler Bloch was presented with a special shirt by American Cancer Society representative, Lindsey Holmquest.

"I only did it for a couple of hours on a Saturday and raised \$750 in just one day," he said.

"I am incredibly impressed," said Lindsey Holmquest with the American Cancer Society in Sioux Falls. "I know that the people of this area are just so giving and so supportive of each other."

"And to see a young person take something like this on by himself is great. It speaks a lot to the people of this area and what you do to support each other — and support things like Relay For Life and the American Cancer Society."

Lindsey said you can ask anyone on the committee and they will tell you that it's not easy to put on a Relay.

"And Tyler put on a mini-Relay in school by himself — it's amazing. He's an incredible young man."

Tyler looks back on his project with great pride and hopes that someone will keep the effort going. Not only because it's for a good cause, but it brings people together.

"No matter who I talk too someone has been affected by cancer," he adds.

This fall Tyler will begin his studies at the University of South Dakota — with plans to study pre-med.

But Relay For Life will always be close to his heart.

"I definitely want to keep active in Relay For Life," adding that it doesn't matter where he is at in life.

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