

Walk, run, ride for a cure

Spring brings opportunity to exercise, fundraise

by ELIZABETH TAUFA, Reporter

Muscular Dystrophy Association's Caffiero-Manns ALS Walk

The Western New York chapter of the Muscular Dystrophy Association is hosting the inaugural Caffiero-Manns ALS Walk to raise money and awareness for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, better known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

The event is being held at 11 a.m. Sunday, June 3 at the entrance to Island Park, 5583 Main St., Williamsville. Walkers will follow a 1.5-mile route around Williamsville.

Registration will begin at 10 a.m. and a post-walk party including food and drink will be held at Island Park.

The walk is being held in honor of Alfred Caffiero and Nancy Manns who both have ALS, a disease of the muscle controlling nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control voluntary muscle movement. ALS initially affects the legs, arms, throat and mouth muscles, eventually resulting in paralysis.

"These two individuals have been very active with the MDA and thought the walk would be a good idea to bring awareness and to raise funds to find a cure," said Nichole Becker, program coordinator.

Becker noted that most of the walk participants

are relatives or friends of Caffiero or Manns, or have had a family member or friend who has been stricken with ALS.

While raising money is an important part of the event, getting the word out about ALS and the MDA is on the top of the priority list for Becker and the organization.

"Awareness is the biggest part of the walk this year," she said.

The donations, which Becker noted will mostly come in the day of the walk, have been obtained by individuals and captains of teams.

"So far, we have 19 captains, and we're hoping to get 10 walkers per captain," she said.

The MDA serves more than 1,200 families in Western New York battling any one of 43 neurological diseases.

To receive aid from the MDA, a person who has been afflicted with one of the diseases must register and can then begin to receive benefits including money for a wheelchair or leg braces or inclusion in free clinics or camps, things not covered by insurance.

For more information, call the MDA at 626-0035 or e-mail buffalo@mdausa.org



Team in Training

While many events this time of year focus on one specific day with fundraising opportunities leading up to it, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society has embraced the idea of creating a team that trains for national marathons in order to raise money.

Team in Training is a personalized training program that is used to fight against leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma and blood cancers.

This year, the Western New York and Finger Lakes chapter's Team in Training program will be preparing walkers and runners to complete the Rock 'N Roll Marathon in San Diego, Calif., on June 3, the Lake Placid Half Marathon in Lake Placid, N.Y., on June 10. The Team in Training cycling team is currently preparing for America's Most Beautiful Bike Ride in Lake Tahoe, Nev., also on June 3.

All participants walk, run or ride in honor of a local blood cancer patient and do all the fundraising for themselves.

"We ask that they raise four times the cost of the trip to the marathon," said Luann Burgio, of the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. "That way we

ensure that 75 cents of every dollar that's raised goes to the society for research and quality-of-life programs for patients and their families."

Burgio noted that the participants, who have been training for the marathons for several months, have a variety of reasons for joining Team in Training.

"Some want to get in better shape. For some, this is their first time in a marathon, and they want to be trained correctly, and some have tried to train on their own, but want to have certified coaches and mentors helping them."

She also noted that the Team includes individuals who have completed marathons in the past, but want to improve their times.

"People who do this together create friendships of a lifetime," she added. "They bond over the fact that they are doing it not for themselves, but for someone else."

Team in Training is currently recruiting for its fall session.

For more information, call the society's Western New York chapter at 834-2578 or visit the Web site online at www.teamintraining.org/wny.



Ride for Roswell

One of the better-known fundraisers in Western New York, the Ride for Roswell is now in its 11th year and has, to date, raised \$4.5 million for research and patient programs at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

"Statistics show that one in three people will develop cancer in their lives," said Lynsey Zimdahl, Ride coordinator. "Most of the people who participate have been touched by cancer in some way and there is a lot of community support for Roswell."

This year's race will take place on Saturday, June 23

Zimdahl noted that the goal for this year's ride is \$1.5 million. As of the second week in May, pledge levels totaled about \$230,000 for individual donations and \$60,000 in sponsorships.

The Ride for Roswell starts and ends at Baird Point on the University at Buffalo North Campus in Amherst. There are nine-, 20-, 33- and 62.5-mile routes through Amherst, Clarence, the Tonawandas and Orleans County that are designed to accommodate riders of all ages and abilities.

"The Amherst and Tonawanda police, (Amherst Town Supervisor) Satish Mohan and UB have really helped to make sure we have a very safe ride," Zimdahl said.

After the ride is completed, a picnic party, with food by Mississippi Muds and Rich Products, is held for all participants.



Those interested

in participating in the Ride are encouraged to form teams of four or more members.

"We have a lot of family teams and co-workers of people with cancer," Zimdahl said. She noted that the money that is raised not only goes to research and equipment at Roswell Park, but also to quality-of-life programs to help patients and families understand the different diseases and treatments, as well as for pastoral care.

For those who wish to contribute but cannot or do not wish to actually ride a bike, there are more than 700 volunteer jobs for the event from route guides to food setup for the picnic party after the ride is completed.

Interested parties can also become virtual riders by raising funds in the same way as the actual riders. Virtual riders will receive the same benefits as riders including, a Ride T-shirt, fundraising assistance, admission to the post-Ride picnic and party, and the opportunity to compete for top fundraising honors and prizes.

New this year is the Ride Biggest Loser Club. Both riders and virtual riders seeking to shed pounds to improve their health can register to receive weight loss, nutrition and fitness advice, and the chance to win top prizes in three weight-loss categories. Weigh-ins occur upon registration and on the day of the Ride.

One returning amenity for top Ride fundraisers is the Extra Mile Club.

Anyone who raises at least \$1,000 by the day of the Ride will enjoy rider privileges including preferred parking on Ride day and admission to the Extra Mile Club tent, which offers bike check-ups and adjustments, exclusive fresh fruit and food selections, professional massages, a reserved Port-O-Potty and more.

Extra Mile Club members also have access to invitation-only events such as a fall reception in Kaminski Park at Roswell Park Cancer Institute.

For more information on the Ride or to register or find fundraising tools, visit the Web site www.RideforRoswell.org or call 845-8788.

