

Relay for Life Marks 10 Years at UNH

Since UNH first started hosting Relay for Life teams in 2004, more than \$1 million has been raised.

Thursday, May 2, 2013

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Senior Sarah Maskwa (4th from the left) with some of the 1,250 UNH Relay for Life participants who together raised more than \$130,000 to fight cancer.

Sarah Maskwa has the same bad reason to participate in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life as many people do: Someone she loved very much died of cancer.

In Maskwa's case, it was her grandmother. As a young girl, Maskwa spent a lot of time with her yiayia (Greek for grandmother) and remembers "one of the most wonderful women that I have ever known" singing and dancing around her kitchen.

Those memories led Maskwa to sign up for Relay for Life her first year at UNH. And to return during her sophomore and junior years to chair the fundraiser's development committee. This year, Maskwa, a nutrition major minoring in Greek, was one of the event co-chairs, helping to organize nearly 100 teams and more than 1,200 participants for the cancer-fighting walkathon that took place April 27-28.

Relay for Life teams raise money by committing to take turns walking, jogging, or running around a track for 24 hours straight. Each team of eight to 15 people has to have a representative on the track at all times during the event.

Maskwa called her grandmother "the backbone that stands me up during those long hours on the track."

"Her spirit for life is something I have tried to emulate with all my heart and that is my driving source behind my connection with Relay for Life. I relay so that people can have the chance to live their life, to have more birthdays, and to never have to stop dancing," the Somersworth native said.

This is the 10th year of Relay at UNH. What started with a committee of six in 2004 has evolved into a team of 35 organizers, and is still growing. In 10 years, UNH's Relay for Life has raised more than \$1 million, and has repeatedly earned a National Top Five Per Capita Youth Award from the American Cancer Society. The award recognizes the fundraising efforts of colleges and universities with an enrollment of 10,000-15,999.

Originally published by:
UNH Today

- WRITTEN BY:
[Staff writer](#) | Communications and Public Affairs

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