

News

Cancer center hosts 'Wellness Walk'

Sunday, September 27, 2009

By DAVID HARE

LANSDALE — A group of about 40 people braved a brisk Saturday morning to participate in the Wellness Walk fundraiser for the Wellness Community at The Anne McCouch Center, a resource center for cancer patients on the grounds of Trinity Lutheran Church.

In addition to its purpose as a celebration of cancer survivors, the walk also raised awareness of the center's free services, according to Wellness Community volunteers.

Sandy Bernstein, program coordinator, said Saturday marked the third year anniversary of The Wellness Place having merged into The Wellness Community of Philadelphia. The walk also marked the tenth year since Anne McCouch founded the center.

"This is the tenth year of our providing support and education services for cancer patients and their families," Bernstein said.

Saturday's walk was free but participants were asked to make a donation to The Wellness Community in honor or in memory of loved ones and walk participants. Proceeds directly support the center's free programs, according to business manager Kathy O'Mara.

O'Mara has been affiliated with the center since 2000, when her husband was diagnosed with lymphoma. She said about 100 people a month come to center, both patients and family members.

Like many of those walking down Main Street Saturday, O'Mara's husband is a cancer survivor.

As is Kira Poccia, a volunteer at the center.

Poccia said she is a brain cancer survivor for the past 13 years. She was first introduced to the center about five years ago by a co-worker who had been diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

"I came here and I liked what I saw and felt," Poccia said. "This place helped me get better by getting involved with something I knew about."

Bernstein said the center is completely dependent on grants and donations and so the staff stays busy putting on fundraisers, as well as providing free programs to cancer patients and their families.

Some upcoming include a "Sip and Spa" fundraiser Oct. 25. As well there's the 4th Annual Breast Cancer Luncheon Oct. 16, at the Abington Health Lansdale Hospital on Medical Campus Drive.

A four-week program called "Caring & Coping" is being held for people with breast cancer and their loved ones. The first session begins Oct. 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the Anne McCouch Center, 1000 W. Main St. The program is free but advance registration is required. To register, or for information about the center, call (215) 393-9105.

URL: <http://www.thereporteronline.com/articles/2009/09/27/news/srv0000006491015.prt>