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21st Annual Relay For Life Draws Record-Setting Number of Teams, Blows Past Goal With Over \$236,000 Raised

Community Center / **Published On October 16, 2022 07:22 AM /**

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Relay for Life 2022 participants form circle during event on Saturday, Oct. 15, 2022. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM

The 21st annual Relay for Life event on St. Croix, held at the St. Croix Educational Complex's track and field facility Saturday, drew a record-setting number of teams and swiftly collected much more than the goal of \$150,000.

Even before the opening ceremony Saturday, \$113,000 was raised, according to organizers, who revealed the collection [during a motorcade held last month](#).

Among the top contributors this year was Ocean Point Terminals, formerly Limetree Bay Terminals, which donated \$25,000.

Funds raised remain in the U.S. Virgin Islands and help in a number of areas, including free mammograms and off-island travel for care, research, advocacy and family services. Donations can be made [here](#), and funds for 2022 can be collected through December.

There was entertainment throughout Saturday's Relay for Life, including a variety of performances from local acts, among them Stanley and the Ten Sleepless nights.

"I am so happy tonight. I am very pleased with all that has happened. It has been very successful. We went over our goal!" said an elated Yvonne W. Pryce, Relay For Life chairperson.

With a theme of "Working Together to Find a Cure", this year 49 teams participated, compared to last year's 33 — growth demonstrating the disease's impact on the community and the shared interest of diminishing its impact.

Cancer Survivor Sandra Bastian-Carty, spoke to the Consortium about the importance of the annual event. "I think Relay for Life is one of the greatest events on island," she declared. "It is about remembering what the cancer society has done and I know that it was a lifesaver for me because they helped me to travel from here to St. Thomas for treatment. They paid for my airfare and hotel. It was a big help. People need it. I think it's wonderful that we can come out and I love how they appreciate and honor the survivors. They see the struggle that we went but we survived. This year is much bigger than last year because I see so many tents. I can't wait for next year."

Another survivor, Anna Hernandez, said when she was diagnosed with breast cancer, she sought medical help from a private doctor with little assistance from cancer organizations. However, she learned of the American Cancer Society, which hosts Relay for Life, and has received some support.

Ms. Hernandez's reason for participating serves a more personal purpose, however. She said Relay for Life gives her an opportunity to be around survivors, which she says serves as a great morale boost in her own struggle with the disease.

Key events at the annual affair include the Parade of Teams, Family and Friends, the Survivor's Dinner, and the Candlelight (Luminary) Ceremony.

Private and public institutions also participated, and teams from this year's gubernatorial race, including Governor Albert Bryan and Senator Kurt Vialet were present. Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett also had a team at the event.

Three years ago, the Legislature passed a Vialet-sponsored measure to annually appropriate \$50,000 toward the local American Cancer Society chapter — funds that must be spent to assist Virgin Islanders.

Relay For Life began in the United States in May 1985 when colorectal surgeon, Dr. Gordy Klatt, wanted to raise awareness of cancer and boost the income of his local cancer charity. After 24 hours of circulating a track in Tacoma, Washington, he raised over \$27,000, a feat demonstrating that one person can make a big difference. Following his success, Relay for Life has become the largest fundraising event for cancer in the world.