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Wednesday

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Community spirit thrives at Relay for Life's annual event

by Barbara C. Barrett

HUGHESVILLE - Such hard work certainly did not go unnoticed at this year's Relay for Life's two day Tri-Town event held over the weekend at Hughesville High School. Despite the downpour of rain Friday night, opening ceremonies were well attended as they were held inside the school's gymnasium.

Starting at 6 p.m. organizers, Ellen Bokeko from the American Cancer Society, Sue Tollackson and Patty Peterman from Muncy Bank & Trust, and Laura Sole, an RN with Susquehanna Health's Breast Health Center, announced the importance of the relay and why it isn't just a fundraiser. "We would like to thank everyone that gave not only financially, but hours of time to support our continuing effort to eradicate this dreaded disease," they said. "Our time dedicated to raise money to find a cure for cancer is much appreciated by those fighting the battle against cancer and their caregivers."

Last year Relay For Life raised over \$100,000 and it was their anticipation to beat this year's goal. This year's theme was "Decades" with a mix of music from Jim Lundy of the different decades to bring back memories over the years. Laura Sole from Susquehanna Health, a co-sponsor, said, "Since 2010 we have made a collaborative effort to promote the health status in our region to help fight cancer and maintain an overall health in our region." With 136 years of combined experience it is an important partnership and a natural link to work with the American Cancer Society. "Susquehanna Health's commitment reaches beyond us and the community," said Ellen Bokeko. "Their outreach and resources are indispensable."

Garth Everett, State Representative and also a cancer survivor spoke about his experience with bladder cancer in 2005 and urged everyone to get a six month check up as his is due in August. "I hope for the best for everybody here," he said before participating in the Survivor's Walk.

After several survivors and caregivers marched around the gym, a dinner was served in the cafeteria which was donated and served by volunteers and staff from Muncy Hospital.

A breakfast was also served Saturday morning and several vendors served food during the day as the weather remained pleasant for the many activities scheduled throughout the day.

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Relay for Life organizers (left to right) Sue Tollackson from Muncy Bank & Trust, Laura Sole, RN from Susquehanna Health's Breast Center, and Ellen Bokeko, Senior Representative with the American Cancer Society.