

"Sole Sisters" welcome their "Misters" for this week's Relay for Life



By Brock Weir

2015's Relay for Life, which takes place this Friday, will present a year of firsts for veteran participant Lynn Pearson.

The Aurora resident was long-time chair of the local Relay for Life, but as the Aurora Relay formally merges with Newmarket at Pickering College this week, she is looking forward to a more relaxed, but no less meaningful, Relay experience.

Ms. Pearson co-founded the team Sole Sisters with her mother nine years ago after her father lost his battle with cancer. Soon after his death, Aurora's Relay for Life, typically held on the Magna Campus, was founded.

"I just knew that is what I wanted to do to honour his memory," says Ms. Pearson. "I got together with a lot of friends and family, and we have stayed with it."

This year, however, will be extra special as three generations of her family take to the field honouring not just their patriarch, but everyone impacted by cancer.

"My daughter has helped out with our fundraising yard sales in the past, but this is the first year she has registered and has fundraised herself," says Ms. Pearson with pride. "She has been selling Freezies in the park after school, which has gone really well, but I want her to realise whatever she is passionate about whether it is the Cancer Society, or any other charity that she has the ability at her age."

"It is going to be really special. My mom is still part of the team at 85 and is one of the top fundraisers, so Relay has always been about family for me. It has been a bonding experience for the family to come together and honour my father's memory this way. It just brings us that much closer."

In addition to her daughter, the Sole Sisters are also welcoming the "Sole Misters" into the fold, bringing in the participation of Ms. Pearson's husband, brother and nephew.

"Cancer has affected both my husband's family and mine, and we just really wanted to make it a family event," says Ms. Pearson, noting that while her husband always stayed at home with their daughter during the Relay, now that she is old enough to participate there was no holding either of them back. "Another one of the Misters, my brother, was diagnosed two years ago."

"Because it was caught so early, which is one of the focuses of the Cancer Society, they were able to remove it and declare him clear without him needing any radiation or chemotherapy. That is so huge because the mission statement of the Society is prevention as well as finding a cure. While it didn't work out for my dad, I still have my brother and he is healthy and that certainly makes us want to continue on with it."

Newmarket and Aurora's combined Relay for Life takes place this Friday, June 19 from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. at Newmarket's Pickering College. With a fundraising goal of \$280,000, registration and pledges are still being accepted. To register and participate, visit www.relayforlife.ca/newmarket or contact Karen Beaulieu at the Canadian Cancer Society at 905-830-0447 x3833.