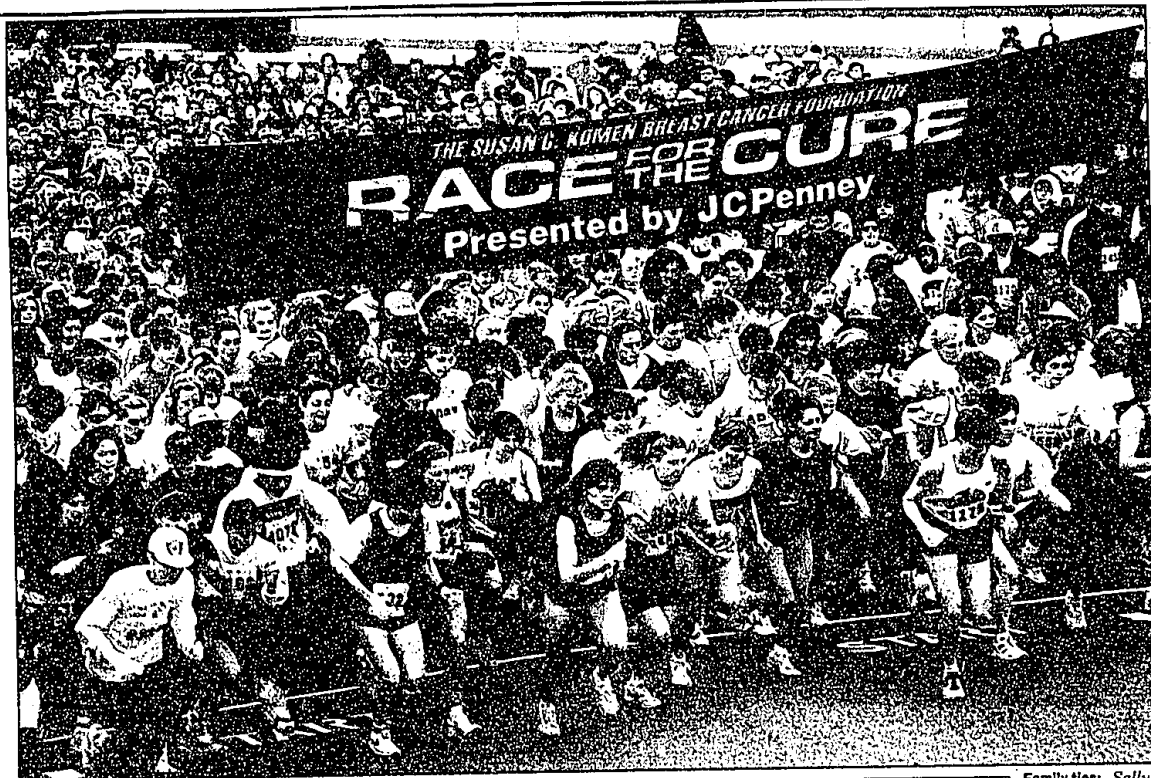


They're off! The purpose of the race is to promote positive awareness, education and early detection of the scourge known as breast cancer.



Battle front

Thousands take aim at breast cancer

BY JUDITH DONER BEINE
SPECIAL WRITER

Nancy Wind could be seen crossing Southfield Road at Beverly with a placard on her back of her sister in support of Susan Slinkin, the sister of a friend who is fighting breast cancer.

It was 10:40 a.m. Saturday and flapping along in the breeze across the front of her shirt was her Race for the Cure runner number.

She had run all the way home to Beverly Hills after her 9 a.m. three-mile race around the Detroit Zoo at 10 Mile and Woodward in Royal Oak. "I always run eight or nine miles on weekends," she said matter-of-factly. Wind (good name for a runner!) has raced in all but one of the Michigan Cancer Foundation's Race for the Cure, the largest race in Michigan. "It's a nice race. It is wonderful the way it has just mushroomed."

Actually, Wind may have arrived home on foot before some who chose to park at William Beaumont Hospital at 13 Mile and Woodward and take the race shuttle back and forth to the zoo.

"It was slow and we apologize to those people," said Wendy Rose, race spokeswoman. "We underestimated the number of people who would take the shuttle from Beaumont." They had thought more people would drive to the Michigan State Fairgrounds two miles south of the zoo take the shorter shuttle ride from there.

Race directors had encouraged participants to park and shuttle because

of limited parking at the zoo and environs.

Two who took advantage of the Beaumont shuttle were Lisa Hanson and Dena Wolf Rasmick from Events Marketing in Bingham Farms. They were there in support of co-workers who had been touched by breast cancer.

Next year, Rose promised shuttle riders, we'll get it right.

Smooth sailing

Most everything else went smoothly as an estimated 12,500 women, men and children showed up for the race, well over the 11,000 expected and up from 8,000 who raced last year.

Only one injury was noted, when a participant turned her ankle and fell. Race proceeds should hit \$200,000, according to Rose. Of that, 75 percent stays in Michigan to use for early detection, breast cancer awareness programs and to finance further treatment for low-income women whose mammograms are abnormal. The rest goes to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundations, which funds research.

It was cold for standing around waiting for the race — windy and in the low 40s — but well-suited for running. The women's 5-K race was won by Laurel Park, 32, Ann Arbor in 17:04 and the men's by Rich Stark, 29, of Ann Arbor in 15:16.

Top female and male racers were Debbie Benton, 37, Dearborn, 26:47 and Bill Read (no age or hometown given), 28:29.

Top finishers among breast cancer survivors were Janis Puskari, 36, Trenton and Trudy Marchetti, 47, Grosse Pointe Woods.

People such as Matthew Abell were surprised at all the free goodies given out following the race. Participants could eat bagels and bananas, drink an assortment of bottled drinks and juices and take home everything from purse-sized bandage dispensers and visors to sample boxes of Success Rice and fiber-heavy cereals. All were courtesy of race sponsors.

"I got about \$5 worth of stuff for a \$15 entry, plus a T-shirt," Abell marveled.

Heartfelt experience

But the real winners are breast cancer survivors, such as Nancy Avery, who walked the zoo course with her husband Jerry.

Nancy, a cosmetics account executive for Neiman-Marcus in Troy, has survived five major surgeries and 51 chemotherapy treatments over an eight-year battle with breast cancer.

"This old broad is hanging in there," she said, greeting her breast cancer surgeon, Dr. Jane Pettigrew of Troy, and Beaumont breast cancer counselor Veronica Decker during the race warm-up.

"I wouldn't miss this," Nancy said. Neither would her husband. "He's a great supporter."

Next year, she would like to turn it into a family affair, and have daughter Debbie Kantor, mother of Amanda, 7, and Steven, 6, share the experience.



Family ties: Sally Janeczek (left) of Waterford and Sue Berlinghoff who works in Troy walk on behalf of their sister, Mary Lou of Farmington, who died of breast cancer.



On course: Rosalyn Slater (left), Melissa Vainik and Phyllis Levin, all of West Bloomfield, join in the sporting event whose mission is to control and cure breast cancer.



Lighter moment: With son Michael in tow, Tamara Ulincy of Rochester shares a laugh with fellow participant Duane Jerowky of Waterford.



In stride: Wendy Schaffer (left) of Highland, with son Madison in tow, Patricia Washburn of Bloomfield Hills and Kimberlee Horn of Bloomfield Hills, with son Dillon in tow, strut their stuff to help outsmart a killer disease. Patricia is the mother of Wendy and Kimberlee and grandmother to the boys.

Staff photos
by
John Stormzand