



DOUG SUBALLA

Just walking in the rain: Walkers, more than 1,000 of them, braved the elements Sunday to participate in the March of Dimes' WalkAmerica at the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College.

# Walkers raise thousands for the March of Dimes

They walked under cloudy skies in the brisk spring air. The rains came, but they still walked.

Some 1,045 dodged the raindrops Sunday to participate in the annual March of Dimes WalkAmerica benefit at the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills.

"I was amazed that so many turned out," said Patti Radzik, special events coordinator for the March of Dimes.

Farmington Hills was one of 11 Detroit-area sites for WalkAmerica Sunday. Overall, about 15,000 walked 20 kilometers (just over 12 miles) and \$1.2 million was raised for March of Dimes programs, Radzik said.

Some \$109,000 was pledged to the walkers in Farmington Hills, she added. "A lot of people pre-registered to walk, but were kept away because of the rain. We're asking those people to collect those pledges and turn the money in to the March of Dimes."

Radzik praised Jim Merchant, who coordinated the Farmington



Signed up and ready: Alana Starr (seated), a volunteer worker, prepares Patti Champagne and her daughter Laura, Livonia residents, to walk for the March of Dimes.

Hills event, and Hills police officer Don Fradette, who helped with traffic control. "We owe a lot to all the Hills officers," she said.

Some celebrities who walked in the local event were Roger McCoy of WKBD-TV (Channel 50), Don-

na Mills of radio station WJR-AM, and Sondra Berlin of the Farmington Hills-based Weight Watchers.

Last year, when the weather was better, about 1,200 walked at Orchard Ridge, raising more than \$130,000, Radzik said.

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