

Program Direction: Improve the Quality of Life for our residents and educate businesses and residents on cancer awareness and prevention.

Problem/Challenge: Educating our citizens on the importance of healthy living and using cancer screenings for early detection. Our challenge was from a neighboring community, Palatine, IL, to Achieve recognition as a "Community of Excellence" by the American Cancer Society.

Partner Participation: Rolling Meadows Park District, Northrop Grumman, American Cancer Society, Northwest Community Hospital, Rolling Meadows Library, Rolling Meadows Chamber of Commerce, Rolling Meadows High School, Wellness Place and numerous volunteers.

Program Implementation: The "City of Excellence" program was initiated to promote awareness of healthy lifestyles and reduce cancer risks among residents through a series of educational programs and events held in 2008-2009. To do this, the Cancer Awareness Committee was formed under the direction of Ward #2 Alderwoman Barbara Lusk in August 2008. The Committee developed different initiatives that challenged residents and businesses to promote healthy lifestyles, cancer education, prevention measures and early detection. The ultimate goal was to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens. Based upon the American Cancer Society's Monthly Awareness Campaigns, events/programs were offered to residents free of charge. Additionally, the Committee used established community events to distribute information regarding Cancer Awareness and Prevention.

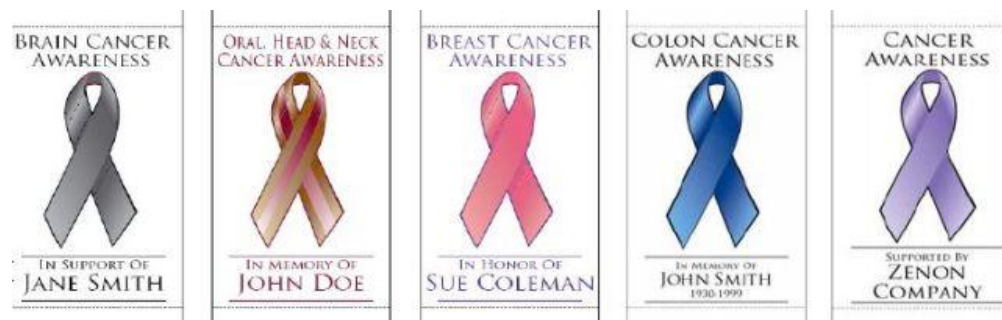
Programs offered throughout the year included a free men's health/cancer awareness forum including PSA tests; city-wide smoking cessation initiatives including targeted programs at the local High School; breast cancer "survivor" events; oral cancer screenings by local dentists; initiated the "Get Active Challenge", followed by the "Stay Active Challenge"; participated in the "Pink Heals Tour" of a pink firetruck traveling across the US while coordinating the event with a "Real Men Wear Pink" Campaign and fitness events. The vast majority of these events were done through volunteers and donated items with the City direct cost of \$2,000.

Results: Increased awareness of cancer and prevention measures in the community; offered healthy lifestyle alternatives; offered free screenings to residents for prostate cancer and oral cancer which might not otherwise have been tested; enhanced the appearance of the city through tulip plantings and decorative banners.

Lessons Learned: Partnering with local healthcare providers allowed health screenings for individuals which might not otherwise have been tested; challenging residents through the "Get Active" and "Stay Active" Campaign created a healthy competition; Dedicating a monthly program to Cancer Awareness allowed us to address various forms of Cancer; Monthly events kept it on the minds of residents and businesses throughout the year; offering a variety of activities allowed all citizens to be involved no matter their age, physical activity level, income or gender.

Notable Items: Our most unique idea to show our community support for Cancer Awareness was the banner campaign initiated by the City for residents and businesses. Banners (30"x 60") will be displayed from lightpoles in two major commercial corridors within the City. These banners were purchased by local residents to memorialize or honor a loved one effected by Cancer and businesses that want to show support for an employee or general cancer awareness. We believe we are the first community in Illinois to display such banners and maybe one of few in the United States. A portion of the sales go to the American Cancer Society.

Banner examples:



One of our biggest events was the "Get Active Challenge." This first-time event launched a ten week program that was designated to help employees and residents embrace a physically active lifestyle. The community-wide fitness program used an online exercise management process for tracking minutes of exercise. The objective was for participants/teams to set personal fitness goals and monitor the progress. Along the way, healthy tips and tools were provided. Regular physical activity can reduce one's risk of cancer. Overall, the participants exceeded fitness goals

by 20%. This has led to the creation of the City's "Stay Active Challenge" which is currently running through May 8th as a means to continue the program and reduce our citizens and employees risk of cancer.

Four businesses and Rolling Meadows High School participated in the "Plant it Pink" Campaign where pink tulips were planted in the shape of an awareness ribbons for breast cancer. These six tulip plantings were placed along major thoroughfares and expressways to remind passerbys of the importance of breast cancer prevention.

Another First-time event was the "Family Walk" following the City's 4th of July parade. The Committee invited everyone of all ages to enjoy a 3.2K "Family Walk/Bike in the Park." Along the path were health tips and cancer prevention information. Two raffle winners received front row seats to the City's fireworks event on an inflatable couch while enjoying healthy snacks.

Members of the Committee also attended several community events and manned information tables at Jewel-Osco and Meijers to distribute packets of information on cancer awareness, preventative measures, healthy eating and cancer screening to residents. In cooperation with the Rolling Meadows Library, a Cancer Awareness Forum was held. This program featured a panel of speakers that were either a cancer survivor, a medical practitioner, a representative from the American Cancer Society and Wellness place (an organization offering support and education to those living with cancer and their loved ones).

As the second leading cause of death among men, Prostrate Cancer along with men's health screenings were a major focus during September. Committee members attended various religious services throughout the community urging men ages 50 and up to get screened for prostate cancer. In cooperation with Northwest Community Hospital, the City offered free prostrate screenings to men at St. Collette's Church.

Additional activities included: encouraging employees and residents to participate in the American Cancer Society's "Real Men Wear Pink" Campaign; City employees joined in a national campaign known as the "Pink Heals Tour" involving a pink fire truck driving cross-country to raise awareness of the disease which was launched by police officers and firefighters who call themselves Guardians of the Ribbons.

Committee members invited residents to join the 34th Great American Smokeout Challenge on November 19th. The City partnered with the American Cancer Society and Wellness Place to provide information on smoking cessation programs, tips for quitting, and local support groups for those who want to "kick the habit." Oral Cancer screenings were offered by local dentists. Additionally, members of the Tobacco Intervention and Prevention Program at the local high school spoke with middle school students about the dangers of smoking and the health effects. This peer on peer interaction proves to be one of the strongest tools in the prevention of teen smoking.