2022 Renville County Walk in the Park

A dedicated and emotionally supportive crowd, armed with the theme "No tree stands alone," gathered in Olivia's Nester Park on Friday evening for the annual Renville County Walk in the Park ceremony. The event featured 90 cancer survivors along with nine fundraising teams, each with campsites offering a selection of raffle items, entertainment, prizes, snacks and beverages. A community dinner, raffle drawings, games, bounce houses and Walk in the Park Program also highlighted the occasion. Each of the 90 survivors' years were announced prior to the Survivor Lap, where family and friends joined in the walk to stomp out cancer. The Luminaria Ceremony at dusk featured 2,002 glow stick-lit luminaries that offered a cozy, peaceful ambience that was all In Honor and In Memory of loved ones that had been diagnosed with cancer. "The greatest gift for our survivors is our volunteers who give of their time and collaborate together: by delivering bags of blessings and fundraising throughout the year," acknowledged Sara Maher, Walk in the Park Executive Director. "Helping others through their cancer journey is the greatest gift we can give our friends and family right here in Renville County." So far this year, the 2022 Renville County Walk in the Park Committee has received funds well above last year's donation level for use towards the fight against cancer, and donations are still appreciated throughout the entire year. Visit Renville County Walk in the Park's facebook page to find out how you can support the cause, or if you know of a recent cancer diagnosis in the county that could benefit from the charity. Above (clockwise): The Athmann crew's "Marching for Mark" team posed for a group photo on Friday afternoon. The 2022 Angel of Hope award recipient, Berdelle Enestvedt, smiles from her team's campsite "Hope on the Move." Cancer survivors Kim Bailey (left) and Liz Elfering carried the ceremonial banner and led the Survivor's Lap. "The Stampsters" team captain Lisa McColley, along with her sons Braden and Cameron, briefly stepped away for a photo during their walk while admiring all of the luminaries. 2022 Walk in the Park guest speaker Dr. Silvia Balbo, U of MN Cancer Researcher (left), posed with keynote speaker Liz Elfering, who shared her cancer story during the 7:00 p.m. event program. Dr. Balbo's research crew (who were all excited to be in attendance and visit with Renville County residents) has received $40,000 over the past two years from Walk in the Park to support their colorectal and lung cancer pilot studies efforts. In 2021, a total of $61,437.51 was reimbursed to Renville County cancer survivors for medical expenses. So far this year, a total of 39 Bags of Blessings have been delivered to individuals diagnosed with cancer, compared to 45 bags for all of 2021. Renville County Walk in the Park is extremely proud to declare that the money raised directly impacts cancer survivors right here in Renville County. With a portion of the funds raised over the past two years, the committee will purchase and deliver $30,000 of retail goods from Renville County businesses and will donate the items to the Ronald McDonald House and Hope Lodge in both Rochester and Minneapolis.