

Schleswig-Holstein Cancer Society hosts first Relay for Life in Germany

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Geneva, 23 August 2005 - Eckernförde on the Baltic coast was the venue for Germany's first Relay For Life or "Lauf Ins Leben", which was held overnight on Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 August.

Four hundred team members and participants attended the cancer awareness and fundraising event at the Schulzentrum Süd [Southern School Centre], which raised ?12,000 for the Schleswig-Holsteinische Krebsgesellschaft, the cancer society in the Schleswig-Holstein region.

"This unique event is very important for Germany, and we are glad it was such a success," said Gabrielle Schumacher of the cancer society. "We have united cancer survivors, their family and friends, and the medical community to educate people about this disease while raising funds for cancer control research, programmes, and services."

Friends and families, hospitals, local government including the Mayor, schools, the army, businesses, running clubs, and Nordic walking groups formed 25 teams to participate in the event and raise money in support of the Schleswig-Holsteinische Krebsgesellschaft.

Family activities and onsite entertainment included live music, traditional German games, cheerleading performances, and complimentary massage. Youth activities included face painting, storytelling, and games. Educational seminars focused on cancer prevention and early detection. Heavy rains failed to dampen the spirits of the participants, nor did they douse the 200 luminaria or candlelight bags, many of which continued to burn bright through the night.

UICC is working with the American Cancer Society on a programme funded by the sanofi-aventis pharmaceutical group to introduce and expand Relay For Life in countries throughout western Europe. The next event will take place in Dawlish in the UK on 20 August, with others following in Belgium and Italy. Relay For Life is expanding internationally, with 19 countries around the world now holding events.

Relay For Life

Relay For Life, started by the American Cancer Society in 1985 and launched internationally in 2002 in partnership with UICC, is an overnight community celebration where individuals and teams camp out in tents, enjoy music and entertainment, and walk around a track relay-style to raise awareness and funds to fight cancer. The event usually begins with a cancer survivor lap around the track; later a candlelight ceremony is held to honour cancer survivors and remember loved ones lost to the disease.