

## Cancer Survivor? Network At Jamaica's Relay For Life

You beat the odds against cancer, or have just been diagnosed and are trying to cope. Perhaps you know a survivor, or you lost a relative to the disease. Head to Jamaica for 'Relay For Life'.

Maybe you work in the field of pharmacology, or medicine, or perhaps you just want a great reason to come to Jamaica to support a really worthy cause and have tons of fun in the process. If you fit into any of the above categories, then the Jamaica Cancer Society's Relay for Life 2010 is calling you. The Relay for Life emphasizes the principle that, in the fight against cancer, one person can make a difference. Teams of ten or more persons take turns walking or running around a track, relay-style, in support of co-workers and loved ones who are fighting or have died from cancer. This includes a 'Survivor's Lap' in which persons who are fighting or have survived cancer run or walk around the track. Each team member has to pay a small registration fee and raise donations to support the Jamaica Cancer Society's education, counselling, outreach, screening and early detection programs. Participants get relay for life t-shirts and information on how to raise money for the cause. Teams or individuals that raise the most money win prizes. With participants from every walk of life - schools, churches, businesses and service clubs- the event features a host of activities, including karaoke, soca-aerobics, a 'Purple Party', and its famous Luminaria Ceremony. The Luminaria Ceremony, usually held at 10:00pm, is the Relay's most solemn event. All lights are turned off and glowing paper bags filled with sand and candles are marked in honour of those who have lost the fight to cancer, and those who are still fighting the disease. Survivors tell their stories and songs, poems, bible readings, etc. are shared with the audience. It is the most powerful and moving part of the Relay, usually leaving teary-eyed participants very sober and aware of the reality of cancer. The Relay Against Cancer began in America in the mid-1980s when Dr. Gordy Klatt, a colorectal surgeon from Tacoma, decided to run a marathon in order to raise money for the American Cancer Society and to show solidarity and support for his friends and family who suffered from the disease. In May, 1985, he ran for 24 hours, and over 83 miles around a track at the University of Puget Sound's Baker Stadium in Tacoma. Nearly 300 of his friends and family watched as he ran, and they paid US\$25 to walk or run with him for 30 minutes. He raised US\$27,000 for the American Cancer Society. After that, Dr. Klatt formed a committee that planned the first 24-hour team relay event: the City of Destiny Classic 24-Hour Run Against Cancer. In 1986, 19 teams participated in the event, which raised US\$33,000 to fight against cancer. The Jamaica Cancer Society had its first Relay For Life eight years ago. Since then, they host two laps of the event. The first lap kicks off in Kingston in June and the second lap takes place in September in St. Ann. The event not only raises funds to fight against cancer, but also raises awareness of cancer in communities. It pulls people and organisations together for a common cause. As the Jamaica Cancer Society website says, 'The strength of people coming together is greater than the strength of one'. For more information contact The Jamaica Cancer Society, Kingston Jamaica [www.jamaicacancersociety.org](http://www.jamaicacancersociety.org) (1-876-927-4265)