

Heartland Women

March 8, 2010
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Briefs

Racing to end colon cancer

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Jackson County in Murphysboro is racing to end colon cancer. Teams from the Relay For Life event are hosting the first Undy 5K Walk & Run, a one-of-a-kind event, in Murphysboro on March 27.

Registration will begin at 8 a.m. at the Dairy Queen and the race will begin at 9 a.m. Event participants who register by March 10 are guaranteed a commemorative pair of event boxer shorts. Participants are encouraged to wear the boxer shorts over their pants to increase awareness of this preventable disease.

The registration fee is \$15 and an application can be obtained at SIU Credit Union branches in Carbondale or Marion, City of Murphysboro Administration Office, or at <http://tinyurl.com/Undy5K>. For more information on the event, call 967-9248.

Colon cancer is the third leading cause of cancer death among men and women in the US – yet it can sometimes be prevented or detected when it is small and treatment is highly effective. March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, so learn the facts and get tested. It could save your life.

For more information about colon cancer, call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org. To become involved with your

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Walk for Life

... and support the work of Pregnancy Matters

By Jan Staab
For Heartland Women

Many women – perhaps even most women – want to have children. But like all other choices in life, women want to start their families on their own terms when they are ready for the challenge.

When a pregnancy is unplanned, the choices women face often become more complicated. It's the mission of Pregnancy Matters to help women know all their options and make informed choices about their pregnancies.

This non-profit organization opened in Carbondale in 1980. Their offices now serve more than 3,000 individuals and families every year from 12 Southern Illinois counties. Pregnancy Matters offers free prenatal care (including pregnancy testing and ultrasounds), counseling, maternity clothing, baby supplies and referrals to other community resources when necessary.

The group also offers an extensive pregnancy prevention program to area schools and youth groups. The program is designed to help teens focus on self-esteem, goal setting, safe dating and the benefits of abstinence.

"It's been a tough year for everybody," said Executive Director Marsha Perfetti. "Social services have really been hit hard. We have had a difficult time trying to offer the same services with less money available to us. We have not yet had to cut our ultrasounds, pregnancy testing or donations to families in need. But we have been forced to cut our educational programs down to only 10 schools."

Pregnancy Matters lost approximately \$80,000 of its funding in 2009 after two



Children of all ages participate in the Walk-a-Thon and compete for prizes.



grant programs from which they received support were cut. At the same time, the cost of supplies has increased dramatically over the past year. So, their net loss is actually even greater. This makes their community support more important than ever before.

"We are applying for new sources of funding," she said. "But it's getting more competitive. State and federal funding is no longer a reliable source of money. So, granting organizations are getting more and more requests."

On Sat., Mar. 20, Pregnancy Matters will hold its annual Walk for Life fundraiser. The walk will take place inside the Illinois Centre mall in Marion, beginning at the food court. Registration will begin at 8 a.m.

A free breakfast, donated by area restaurants and stores, will be served to all participants. Members of the Pregnancy Matters board of

directors will be there to offer information and answer questions about the group and the services they offer. Live music by Brian Smith will also be provided.

"This is the largest fundraiser we have every year," Marsha said. "Last year, we raised \$30,000, and this year we are hoping for \$45,000. I'm being optimistic! We encourage past walkers to join in again this year. We appreciate the support we've received in past years from youth groups, churches, SIU groups, and individual community members."

The walk will begin at 8:30 a.m. and take approximately 45 minutes. Gift certificates and other prizes from local merchants will be given to those people who raise the most money in the adult, child and group categories. Everyone raising \$100 or more will receive a free T-shirt.

"Last year, more than 200 folks from six counties

walked with us," Marsha said. "Funds raised from this event allow us to keep our doors open. When a client comes in and needs baby items, prenatal vitamins or just practical and emotional support, we want to be there to help them."

Even as we were speaking, Marsha answered a phone call from a young woman who was about to tell her mother she was pregnant.

"She said, 'I am going to tell my mom I am pregnant, and I know she's probably going to kick me out. What do I do now?'" Marsha said. "These are the kind of people we are here for. By people getting involved and supporting us, they make it possible for us to offer a place where women can go when they feel stuck or abandoned by family or a boyfriend ... or if they just need some help to make ends meet."

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Get your man to sign up for the men's health conference



Photo by Russell D. Bailey

Fitness buff Tony Calabrese shows how it's done in a kinesiology lab at SIUC. Tony, who teaches in the kinesiology department, will be honored March 20 during the Southern Illinois Men's Health Conference for his contributions to regional residents' health and wellness.

Ladies, do you have trouble getting your significant other to pay attention to his health? Most of us do. Well, just do what you have to do to get him to attend the second annual Men's Health Conference on March 20 at John A. Logan College.

Registration is \$35 and includes hundreds of dollars worth of potentially life-saving screenings for everything from colon cancer, to heart disease, cholesterol, and PSA testing. Other tests such as hearing, dental, and skin cancer screenings will also be available.

The keynote speech will include four doctors who have more than 100 years of combined experience. "The Doctor is In" will feature Dr. Brian McEhleny, Dr. Larry Jones, Dr. Sam Stokes, III, and Dr. Gemilo Resaba.

There are 17 breakout sessions on topics ranging from health issues to nutrition to getting fit for golf.

More than 270 men attended the first conference. Make sure you man goes to this one. For a registration form, call 985-9210 or log on to SIMensHealth.org.

Tony Calabrese to be honored

Longtime health and fitness advocate Tony Calabrese, a kinesiology instructor at SIUC, will receive the second Champions Award from the steering committee organizing the region's annual Southern Illinois Men's Health Conference.

The Champions Award, consisting of a plaque and a donation to the charity of the winner's choice, recognizes men who demonstrate a commitment to health and wellness, mentor and inspire others, and display positive attitudes despite experience

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