American Cancer Society Marks 100th Year with One Goal - To Finish the Fight against Cancer

A Century Later: Progress and Next Steps

ATLANTA, May 22, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- One hundred years ago today, the American Cancer Society was founded by 15 prominent physicians and business leaders in New York City. First known as the American Society for the Control of Cancer, the organization launched the fight against a disease that was feared as a death sentence at the time. A century later, the American Cancer Society, now the nation's largest voluntary health organization, observes 100 years of progress – this year alone saw a 20 percent decline in cancer death rates since the 1990s according to the Society's latest Cancer Facts & Figures, that translates to more than one million cancer deaths avoided during that span – more birthdays celebrated. The Society is marking the occasion by pledging to finish the fight against cancer in the next century.

"In 1970, it was projected that cancer incidence and mortality would continue to rise beyond the year 2000," said Vincent T. DeVita, Jr., M.D., national volunteer president of the American Cancer Society. "Today, not only have mortality rates declined since the early 1990s, but we're averting more than 400 cancer deaths every day. Due in part to the work of the American Cancer Society, what seemed nearly impossible is now reality."

"We began our fight against cancer at a time when the word 'cancer' was rarely mentioned in public," said John R. Seffrin, chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society. "In our 100 years of existence, we have contributed to many groundbreaking discoveries that have brought us closer to understanding, preventing and treating the disease, and this century, we are looking to put ourselves out of business by making it cancer's last century."

Since it began the fight against cancer in 1913, the American Cancer Society has funded researchers that have contributed to nearly every major cancer research breakthrough; helped establish the link between cancer and smoking; and contributed to a 50 percent decline in smoking rates. The Society has, and continues to help cancer patients everywhere get the help they need through services like the 1-800-227-2345 help line, free lodging for patients and their families traveling for treatment, and free rides to and from treatment.

"It's exciting to see the progress we have made against cancer, but we can't relax our efforts in the fight against this disease," said Gary M. Reedy, volunteer chair of the American Cancer Society Board of Directors. "Now more than ever, we need everyone's help to make this cancer's last century. There cannot be too many hands on deck."

The American Cancer Society is using its 100th birthday on May 22nd to encourage people to join together, make noise and take action to finish the fight against cancer. The Society urges everyone to make some noise by:

- donating at cancer.org/fight
- participating in a local Relay For Life or Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk in their community
- enrolling in its groundbreaking Cancer Prevention Study-3 to find better ways to prevent cancer.
- creating a "life list" with the American Cancer Society's Facebook application
- taking a "Moment Against Silence" by pledging to do one thing to help finish the fight against cancer

Today, two out of three people diagnosed with cancer are surviving the disease for five years or longer. More than 400 people a day in the U.S. are celebrating birthdays that would have otherwise been lost to cancer. As the Official Sponsor of Birthdays ™, The American Cancer Society will continue to make noise by its increasing efforts to ensure lifesaving cancer research gets funded; by making sure people facing cancer have the help they need, such as a free place to stay during treatment or a ride to get there; and by fighting for equal access to quality health care, lifesaving screenings, and clean air.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers saving lives and fighting for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. As the largest voluntary health

organization, the Society's efforts have contributed to a 20 percent decline in cancer death rates in the U.S. since 1991, and a 50 percent drop in smoking rates. Thanks in part to our progress nearly 14 million Americans who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will celebrate more birthdays this year. As we mark our 100th birthday in 2013, we're determined to finish the fight against cancer. We're finding cures as the nation's largest private, not-for-profit investor in cancer research, ensuring people facing cancer have the help they need and continuing the fight for access to quality health care, lifesaving screenings, clean air, and more. For more information, to get help, or to join the fight, call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

SOURCE American Cancer Society