Thousands Will Celebrate Life And Cancer Survivors On National Cancer Survivors Day June 7

ATLANTA (June 1, 2015) – On Sunday, June 7, thousands of people in communities across the country and around the world will hold celebrations to honor cancer survivors and celebrate life on the 28th Annual National Cancer Survivors Day®. The celebrations will call attention to the ongoing challenges of cancer survivorship and show that life after a cancer diagnosis can be rewarding and inspiring.

The American Cancer Society estimates there are about 14.5 million cancer survivors in the United States. According to the National Cancer Survivors Day Foundation, administrator for the celebration, a survivor is anyone living with a history of cancer – from the moment of diagnosis through the remainder of life.

“There was a time when a diagnosis of cancer was thought of as a death sentence, but that has changed dramatically,” says Catherine Alfano, vice president of survivorship for the American Cancer Society. “Since the early 1990s, the cancer death rate has declined by 22 percent. The five-year cancer survival rate is now at 68 percent, up 12 percentage points since the first National Cancer Survivors Day in 1987. Thanks to improved detection and treatment, more people than ever before are surviving cancer and going on to lead inspirational, productive lives after cancer.”

According to the American Cancer Society’s Cancer Treatment & Survivorship Facts & Figures 2014 – 2015, the number of cancer survivors alive in the United States today is expected to grow to almost 19 million by 2024. Even though cancer incidence rates are dropping, the number of survivors is rising due, in part, to earlier detection and better treatments. As the number of cancer survivors continues to grow, it will be more important than ever to address the unique needs of these individuals.

With the decline in cancer deaths, there have been significant declines in lung and breast cancer mortality. Research breakthroughs such as the development of Gleevec to treat chronic myeloid leukemia and targeted cancer drugs like Herceptin to treat breast cancer, both funded in part by the Society, have helped increase cancer survivorship.

The American Cancer Society also provides a wealth of lifesaving services and programs to assist cancer patients and their caregivers, including free transportation to and from treatment through the Road To Recovery program, free lodging for cancer patients and caregivers at 31 Hope Lodges nationwide, and 24/7 cancer information by visiting cancer.org or calling toll-free 1-800-227-2345.

Many survivors face issues after cancer, including lack of information about new treatments, inadequate or no insurance and psychosocial struggles. Once active treatment ends, cancer survivors still must cope with the long-term effects of cancer, which can include physical side effects; psychological, social, and emotional concerns; and financial hardships. The American Cancer Society’s community-based programs and services are there to help.

The Society’s Survivorship Resource Center is working with external experts to create survivorship clinical care guidelines for primary care providers — all to make sure that cancer survivors who transition out of oncology and back to primary care get the comprehensive care they need to keep them healthy in the long run. Defining what care they need is an important step in helping make sure that cancer survivors have the optimal quality and length of life possible. The Society has published the prostate cancer survivorship guideline and breast,

colorectal, and head and neck guidelines are on the way. There are also tools for survivors and caregivers at www.cancer.org/survivorshipcenter.

To locate the nearest National Cancer Survivors Day Foundation event in your community, check with your local cancer treatment center, hospital, or American Cancer Society office. For more information, visit the NCSD website at ncsd.org.

NCSD started in the United States in 1987, and it is now celebrated worldwide in countries including Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, Greece, Saudi Arabia, Italy, and Malaysia, according to NCSDF.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of 2.5 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 celebrate 100 years of service, 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

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