

# **American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Second Life Celebrates Seventh Year with “Seasons of Hope” Theme for 2011**

## **Virtual Online Event Reaches \$1 Million Fundraising Milestone in Furthering the Quest for a World with Less Cancer and More Birthdays**

ATLANTA – July 11, 2011 – The seventh annual American Cancer Society Relay For Life® of Second Life will take place July 16-17, 2011, as avatars – three-dimensional, graphic visualizations of persons’ alter egos – representing cancer survivors, caregivers, their families and passionate supporters gather virtually to commemorate “Seasons of Hope.” Together, they will celebrate the lives of those who have endured and those who are currently battling cancer, remember loved ones lost, and fight back against the disease by raising funds to help further the American Cancer Society’s vision of a world with less cancer and more birthdays.

Relay For Life of Second Life also emphasizes participation among cancer survivors who are active within the virtual world, where, already this year, more than 150 survivors have pledged their support for the American Cancer Society and its impact on their individual battles with cancer. To learn more about Second Life, including information on how to join a team, visit [http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR?pg=entry&fr\\_id=34810](http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR?pg=entry&fr_id=34810)

Second Life is an online, three-dimensional world imagined and created by its residents, who enjoy almost unlimited freedom in virtually engaging in everyday life much as they would in the real world. Linden Lab, which more than a decade ago created Second Life (secondlife.com), enters 2011 as the premier sponsor of Relay For Life of Second Life.

During the early fundraising period for the 2011 Relay For Life of Second Life, the \$1 million milestone was passed for the event’s seven-year legacy as the digital parallel to the American Cancer Society’s signature, real-world fundraising initiative, Relay For Life. More than 3,000 participants are expected to attend Relay For Life’s Second Life experience this summer, as 130 teams unite toward a fundraising goal of \$275,000.

Relay For Life of Second Life began in 2005, when American Cancer Society volunteers in the Second Life community approached Society staff about creating a Relay For Life event in the virtual world. The result of this collaboration is a cyberspace community gathering in which participants continuously navigate a custom-built track, encompassing a 480-acre virtual park, to raise money to fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. Marking its global involvement, the 2011 Relay For Life of Second Life event features volunteer representation from 130 of the world’s 196 countries.

Throughout this year, the Relay For Life of Second Life volunteer committee has worked to increase donation security, to invite and train new volunteers, and to design this year’s virtual event track. Volunteers have also donated a renovated design for the American Cancer Society Island, its Second Life property, to allow visitors to intuitively find the information and/or resources they need, including survivor and caregiver support.

Several large-scale team fundraisers have benchmarked the months leading up to this year's virtual Relay For Life event – starting with Fashion For Life, a kickoff festival featuring the virtual world's best digital clothing and accessory designers and directing the proceeds of specific items to the American Cancer Society. Other notable events include the Fantasy Faire, a festival in which shoppers purchase digital goods to decorate their avatars, and the Home and Garden Expo, which features virtual houses, gardens and landscapes. These marquee fundraisers complement Relay teams' and individuals' general fundraising initiatives.

“We have added new teams to this year's Relay For Life of Second Life experience, and a number of new businesses with the Second Life community are investing resources in our event. As well, we are hopeful that this summer's event will surpass our largest single-year fundraising total,” said Scott P. Bennett, American Cancer Society national vice president, marketing. “Recognizing the passion that our Second Life volunteers have for how Relay helps fulfill the American Cancer Society's lifesaving mission, we are also exploring expansion opportunities for Relay in other virtual worlds.”

In 2007, the American Cancer Society created a virtual headquarters in the Second Life community to provide the same, round-the-clock cancer information and services that the organization delivers in the real world. The Second Life headquarters continues to develop opportunities to serve the needs of survivors, caregivers and families.

In the real world, Relay For Life is a fun-filled, overnight event that convenes millions of people in support of the American Cancer Society's lifesaving movement. Relay in the real world traces its roots to 1985, when Dr. Gordy Klatt of Tacoma, Washington, a colorectal surgeon, circled a track for 24 hours to raise money for the Society.

During real world Relay events, teams of people gather at schools, fairgrounds and parks and take turns walking and/or running laps with the goal to keep at least one team member on the track at all times. Since 1985, Relay For Life events, held in 5,200 real world communities, have cumulatively raised more than \$3 billion to help the Society accelerate the progress against cancer.

The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; by helping people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; by finding cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and by fighting back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying communities worldwide to join the fight. As the nation's largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, contributing more than \$3.5 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, more than 11 million people in America who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more about us or to get help, call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit [cancer.org](http://cancer.org).

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