Thousands Will Celebrate Life And Cancer Survivors On National Cancer Survivors Day June 5

ATLANTA (May 23, 2016) – On Sunday, June 5, thousands of people in communities across the country and around the world will hold celebrations to honor cancer survivors and celebrate life on the 29th 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.

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. The foundation provides free guidance, education, and support to hundreds of hospitals, support groups, and other cancer-related organizations that host National Cancer Survivors Day events in their communities.

“There was a time when a cancer diagnosis was thought of as a death sentence,” says Catherine Alfano, vice president of Survivorship for the American Cancer Society. “The good news is that since the early 1990s, the cancer death rate has declined by 23 percent. Thanks to improved detection and treatment, more people than ever before are surviving cancer and going on to lead productive, happy lives after cancer.”

According to the American Cancer Society, the number of cancer survivors continues to grow in the U.S. despite overall declining incidence rates in men and stable rates in women. This reflects, in part, a growing number of new cancer diagnoses resulting from a growing and aging population, as well as increases in cancer survival because of advances in early detection and treatment. As the number of cancer survivors continues to grow, it will be more important than ever to address the unique needs of these individuals.

During treatment, the American Cancer Society 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 more than 30 Hope Lodges nationwide, and 24/7 cancer information by visiting cancer.org or calling toll-free 1-800-227-2345.

“After treatment, many survivors face ongoing physical and psychosocial problems and are at risk for late effects of cancer treatment,” Alfano says. “They worry that their cancer will return and they may feel uncertain about their future heath. These fears can stay with the person for a long time after treatment is completed and may affect their quality of life.”

Alfano says survivorship care should help cancer survivors 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 has worked with external experts to create survivorship clinical care guidelines for primary care and other survivorship providers — all to make sure that cancer survivors 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. Tools for survivors and caregivers can be found at www.cancer.org/survivorshipcenter.

"Not all outcomes of having cancer are bad," Alfano adds, "Many survivors report that they have a new appreciation for life, are more effective in coping with stress, have improved relationships with family and friends, and have greater meaning and purpose in their life."

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. The nonprofit National Cancer Survivors Day Foundation provides free guidance, education, and networking resources and assistance to hundreds of hospitals, support groups, and other cancer-related organizations that host official National Cancer Survivors Day events in their communities. The Foundation's primary mission is to bring awareness to the issues of cancer survivorship in order to better the quality of life for cancer survivors.

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