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## Ovarian cancer survivors set to walk in Edina

**By Mike Schoemer - Sun Newspapers**

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What was once an upstart group hosting a walk to raise awareness for a "silent" killer has paved the way for an annual event in Edina.

The Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance (MOCA) hosted its first "Silent No More" Walk/Run for Ovarian Cancer in 1999. Then, the group was new on the scene, raising awareness for a disease that affects 1 in 57 women nationwide.

Now, the group has made its fall walk an annual tradition, raising more than \$250,000 for ovarian cancer research last year alone, as about 2,500 walkers descended on Rosland Park for the day.

This year, MOCA Executive Director Kathleen Gavin said numbers are on pace to double, with an expected 5,000 walkers and runners coming to Edina Saturday, Sept. 15.

The day will start with registration from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Though thousands have already signed up, more than 500 will sign up on race day, and more are welcome.

The poignant moment of the day, a group photo of ovarian cancer survivors, is scheduled at 8 a.m.

A shotgun start for the five-kilometer run will be at 9 a.m., followed soon after by the two-kilometer walk at 9:30 a.m.

Children can get into the act with a fun run at 10 a.m.

The morning wraps up with awards for fundraisers, runners and walkers at 10:30 a.m.

Registration is \$25 for adults, \$12 for children. Donations are appreciated, but not required to participate.

"Our organization is growing year by year," Gavin said, "so the interest in this event is also growing. We had about 200 ovarian cancer survivors in our group back when this started, and our association includes more than 600 today in our membership."

The event is quick, lasting just a few hours, so it doesn't blow the entire weekend, which also appeals to families, Gavin said. Plus, for some, it is now a tradition that they want to get more and more people involved with.

"Some of our members bring huge groups of family members and friends, and the word just spreads," Gavin said.

For example, Sarah Noonan, who sits on the MOCA board of directors, has made the walk a part of her fall kickoff each year. This year, she has developed a website to keep family and friends apprised of the date, and has organized a golf outing for the Friday afternoon before the race.

Noonan said the race has "become an important part of our lives."

Marty Skemp Brown is another regular, who walks for her mother, Eliza "Marty" Skemp, who was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2003.

"So many of our members have gone all out with it," Gavin said.

The group has found a home in Edina, using Rosland Park's setting as the gathering spot for the event, then walking through the park and around the Lake Cornelia neighborhood.

The park, 4300 W. 66th St., is close to France Avenue and Minnesota Highway 62.

"The city has been very good to us, and we're always mindful to pick up the park when we're done," Gavin said. "We have volunteers on the site that do just a great job of keeping everything organized."

MOCA sends out letters to the Lake Cornelia neighborhood, informing them of the walk, she said. There are also signs posted in southeast Edina with more information.

"It's always a great day, and we're hoping the weather is great so we can have more people than ever before," Gavin said.

More information on the Silent No More Walk/Run can be found at the MOCA website, [www.mnovarian.org](http://www.mnovarian.org). Those who can't participate, but want to give to the cause, can do so online at [www.active.com/donate/moca8](http://www.active.com/donate/moca8).

What: The eighth annual Silent No More 5K Run/2K Walk for Ovarian Cancer.

Where: Rosland Park, 4300 W. 66th St., Edina.

Who: The Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance.

When: "Last-minute" registration starts at 7:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 15. The 5K begins at 9 a.m., followed by the 2K walk at 9:30 a.m. The event ends with an awards ceremony at about 10:30 a.m.

Information: [www.mnovarian.org](http://www.mnovarian.org).

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