

‘Bark For Life’ honors four-legged caregivers

Written by Stephanie Groves
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BY STEPHANIE GROVES

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DELPHOS— Dog lovers, as well as all animal lovers, are invited to enjoy the first-ever “Bark For Life” event taking place from 2-5 p.m. on Saturday at Leisure Park in Delphos.

It is an event honoring the life-long contributions of Canine Caregivers, to celebrate cancer survivor-ship, to honor people lost to cancer and to fund raise in support of cancer research, education, advocacy and service. Canine companions demonstrate unconditional love, joy, security, compassion and no judgments of cancer survivor’s abilities or appearances.

The Delphos Animal Hospital is sponsoring the walk and its very own Dr. Bonnie Jones, D.V.M., who is chairing the event, is infusing her contagious enthusiasm into the project and is extremely excited about being part of the Relay for Life’s goal of reaching one million dollars in donations.

Bark For Life will be an opportunity for people to be empowered through their canine companion partnerships, share quality time with a canine best friend, and make new canine and human friends.

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"Who among us has not been touched by cancer?" Jones asked. "Everybody should join the fight against cancer."

The heart of the Bark For Life is the relationship between survivors and their canine companions. Every family, co-worker, friend or community member who has been close to a cancer experience and has a dog in their life is invited to support the American Cancer Society by registering and fund raising through the Bark For Life.

Pre-registration for the dog walk is \$10 and registration on the day of the event is \$15, which includes a colorful purple bandanna for the canine. Registration can be completed at the Delphos Animal Hospital and Paw Prints can also be purchased there for \$1.

The animal hospital's team captains, comprised of clients and staff, have been busy raising funds the past six to eight weeks—Jones challenged each team to raise \$100—and so far, they have taken in \$1,000.

Jones describes Leisure Park as the "best-kept little secret" in Delphos. The environment will be very favorable for pets, their owners and everyone participating in the event. Aside from the three large shaded areas, wide open spaces, public restrooms and shelter house, there will be plenty of refreshments available—for a small donation—and includes ice cream from the Creamery and hot dogs.

The walk will open with Pastor Brian Knoderer performing the blessing of the animals, followed by remarks by Grand Marshal Bob Ulm, who will have his guide dog, Pippa, by his side.

Ulm has been adversely affected by cancer. At 11 months of age, he lost his sight because of it. The same retinal cancer resulted in the loss of vision in one eye for three of his five sisters and his daughter, Gina, during childhood. He also lost his father, William Ulm, and a sister, Sue Hickey, to cancer.

Throughout the park there will be dog-oriented booths, including a rabies vaccination clinic and toenail trimming by Elida Dog Grooming. Raffle tickets will be available for baskets of dog items

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and there will be prizes for the team that raises the most donations. Lima Police officer John Dunham will bring a police dog for a drug detection demonstration and the Allen County Humane Society’s Director Michael Ley will also be on hand.

Jones shared the fact that she is the daughter and daughter-in-law of cancer victims.

“I hope to see a cure for cancer in my lifetime,” Jones said profoundly. “If I don’t see a cure for cancer in my lifetime, animals will always be the best medicine for me.”

Bark For Life gives cancer survivors a chance to participate and be empowered in the fight against cancer. It is a perfect way for all people—survivors and animal lovers—to feel comfortable socializing with their dogs.

“It is a day of recognizing pets as caregivers, the importance of them in our lives and having fun,” Jones said with enthusiasm.

A rain date has been scheduled for June 29th. Leisure Park is located at 625 Lima Ave. in Delphos. For directions to the park, go to mapquest.com.