

Cancer survivor fills missing piece of Relay for Life



Parents and children play games at Kidz Corner during the 2008 Kaw Valley Relay for Life event. Kidz Corner was started as a way to get younger children involved with the Relay for Life, which raises money for the American Cancer Society.

By [Nicole Kelley](#)

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Lora Robinson's first experience with Relay for Life was a special one, but the 10-year cancer survivor couldn't help but notice something was missing.

After being diagnosed with liposarcoma in 1998, the former Bonner Springs resident decided to attend the 1999 Overland Park Relay for Life. With four young daughters in tow, Robinson joined hundreds of others whose lives had been affected by cancer.

"I realized there was not a lot for younger kids to do there," Robinson said of that first year. "At that time my children were very young, and I was looking for things for them to do. The event was more designed for the participants, but not for their families there with them."

That's when Robinson decided to start Kidz Corner, an area set aside for children ages 2-12 to play games while participating in an event that raises money for the American Cancer Society. When the Kaw Valley Relay for Life was created in 2003, Robinson decided to move Kidz Corner from Overland Park to Bonner Springs.

"I graduated from Bonner Springs High School in 1983," Robinson said. "I grew up in Bonner, so when we decided we couldn't handle it to do two Kidz Corners, we decided to move it to Bonner. My roots are here."

Kidz Corner has been a main attraction at the Kaw Valley Relay for Life ever since. With the help of her husband, Joe, her four daughters who range in age from 12 to 23 and her mother, Robinson said she planned to keep Kidz Corner going as long as she could.

"(Kidz Corner) adds family involvement (to the event). It gives younger kids with parents going through (cancer) a piece of the evening that is designated to them," Robinson said. "Family involvement is very critical (in the fight against cancer). It kind of keeps you going. You know (your family) cares, and you've got to get better for them."

Kidz Corner features several carnival-like games such as limbo, a bean-bag toss, a duck pond and a Plunko board, in which children can win “Kidz Corner dollars.” The fake money can then be redeemed for prizes and raffle tickets.

One aspect about Kidz Corner that Robinson stresses is that all the games and prizes be free to participants.

“It’s really important to me that kids get something good out of cancer,” Robinson said. “If you’re fighting cancer, it’s a financial burden.”

This year’s Relay for Life will be from 7 p.m. June 12, to 7 a.m. June 13, at Bonner Springs High School’s David Jaynes Field.

So far, 42 teams have signed up in an attempt to top last year’s event, which raised more than \$149,000 for the American Cancer Society.

The event opens with cancer survivors walking or riding the first lap around the track.

The highlight of the evening is the 10 p.m. luminaria ceremony to honor cancer survivors and to remember those who have lost the battle against cancer. Survivors will circle the track rimmed with candles in hand-decorated white paper bags while the names of survivors and the dead are read aloud. Luminaria can be purchased for \$5 the night of the event. Contributions to the Kaw Valley Relay For Life can be made at www.relayforlife.org/kawvalleyks.