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More than 20,000 participate in Heart Walk

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Oakland University's picturesque east campus, with its rolling hills and Meadow Brook Hall estate, is normally quiet and tranquil on an early fall morning. However, the grounds came alive with activity Sept. 20 during the American Heart Association's **Metro Detroit American Heart Walk** as more than 20,000 people participated to raise funds to fight against heart disease and stroke. This year's event drew more participants than any other year.

"This year's walk was definitely the biggest one yet," said Joann Burrington, administrative project coordinator for OU's School of Nursing and Heart Walk organizer. "Our initial estimate on the number of attendees is close to 22,000. In fact, we delayed the walk by a few minutes because people were still arriving to participate.

"The weather was perfect and the majority of the participants remained after the walk to take advantage of the activities offered."

Dollars raised from the Metro Detroit American Heart Walk will provide funds for cardiovascular research and community education programs in metro Detroit, including the American Heart Association's Operation Heartbeat Initiative, Operation Stroke Initiative and other programs like the Soul of the Heart and Stroke Connection Retreat.

More than 200 volunteers, including many OU students, helped organize the event and provide activities for children and adults. Among the activities were free massages from Irene's Myomassology Institute, exercise displays by OU's **Department of Campus Recreation**, and nutrition displays geared for children. The Ferndale Fire Department brought its fire house display to teach children proper bedroom window escape as well as kitchen and bedroom safety. Subway representative Jared Fogle also led a special walk team of students from top schools in the American Heart Association's Jump Rope and Hoops for Heart programs.

"Not only was the community generous by participating, but Oakland University was very generous in hosting the event once again," said American Heart Association spokesperson Cindy Hawken. "The help that OU staff and students provided was simply wonderful. Their continued efforts, and those by other volunteers, help make this one of the most successful heart walks in the nation."

The **Metro Detroit American Heart Walk** is the second-largest Heart Walk in the country. Though this year's funds have yet to be tallied, the goal was to raise more than \$1.65 million.

For more information on the prevention of heart disease and stroke, contact the **American Heart Association** at (248) 827-4214.

SUMMARY

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