



Friday, September 21, 2001

Heart Walk participation benefits us all

By Dr. Gary Russi, president of Oakland University

For the third consecutive year, Oakland University is joining forces with the American Heart Association to help stamp out heart disease and stroke, as we host the 2001 Metropolitan Detroit American Heart Walk Saturday, September 22. It's a cause that each and every one of us should be interested in.

Heart disease and stroke are two of this nation's biggest killers, but many cases are completely avoidable. The Heart Walk raises money to create awareness, educate people and fund research that will hopefully someday stop these killers.

In addition to the devastating human toll that heart disease and stroke take, they also exact a tremendous economic cost. In 1999 alone, the economic impact of heart disease and stroke totaled more than \$286 billion in medical and healthcare expenses and lost productivity due to disability.

Last year's Heart Walk brought 13,000 walkers to campus and raised more than \$1 million, making it the most successful single Heart Walk event ever, both in walker participation and in money raised. This year, our goal is to have 17,000 walkers and to raise \$1.65 million.

One of the great things about the Heart Walk is the way our communities come together to fight a common cause. Numerous area businesses are chipping in by volunteering, raising money and walking. The chair of this year's event, Douglas Ebert, vice chairman of Michigan National Bank, has been very involved in all aspects of planning and executing the event. Many others have followed Mr. Ebert's lead in becoming involved in the Heart Walk.

On Oakland University's campus, we already have seen tremendous participation, involvement and interest from faculty, students, staff and administration. In August, we launched a campus-wide spare change drive and paid "dress down" days, which together have raised more than \$1,000 so far.

Heart disease and stroke affect millions of Americans, without regard for age, gender or socioeconomic status. There probably is not one person on our campus who has not somehow been affected by these diseases.

Oakland University is proud to host the 2001 Metropolitan Detroit American Heart Walk this Saturday, September 22, and we hope you'll join us in the fight against heart disease and stroke. With your help, it's a fight we can win.

(This guest column ran in The Oakland Press Thursday, Sept. 20.)

SUMMARY

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