



Monday, October 4, 2004

## Rain doesn't dampen spirits at Heart Walk

By **Kalee Iacoangeli**, OU Student Writer

It was a cool and drizzly morning, but regardless of the inclement weather, Heart Walk participants poured onto the grounds of Meadow Brook Music Festival to show their support for the **American Heart Association**.

The event, which for the sixth year has been hosted at Oakland University, draws the largest crowd of any American Heart Association event in the United States. Nearly 20,000 people participated in this year's walk, reaching the goal of \$2 million for the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases.

Not letting the rain dampen their spirits, walkers of all ages made their way through the routes, each with their own story to tell of how heart disease and stroke have affected their lives.

Pam Razgunas of Canton, Mich., was walking in memory of Harold Smith, a friend who was a victim of heart disease.

"I think it's a great cause," Razgunas said. "It teaches us how to give back a little and also makes people aware of how good they have it. Plus, it promotes taking care of yourself throughout life."

A member of the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Network, Eleanor Throckmorton of Southfield also walked for personal reasons. Her father passed away from congestive heart failure and she was there in his honor.

"This is a very commendable event, and seeing all these people turn out on a Saturday like this one really shows the extra effort that people are willing to put in despite the weather," Throckmorton said. "It's especially sentimental for me to see such a turnout because of my father."

Many walkers shared similar experiences and were there in support of friends, family and co-workers, but some walkers were celebrating their own personal victories overcoming the disease.

Mike Fox of Orion Township survived a heart attack in January 2003. It was his first time at the event and he said he felt lucky to be a part of it.

"It's a really great cause. As a heart attack survivor, it's wonderful to see such an outpouring of support for the people who suffer from this disease and also for the American Heart Association," Fox said.

For more information on the American Heart Association and its efforts to fight heart disease and stroke, visit the **American Heart Association** Web site.

### SUMMARY

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