



Monday, September 24, 2001

OU Heart Walk attracts record numbers

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

With the morning dew still fresh on the grass of Oakland University's campus, a record number of walkers arrived to participate in the 2001 Metro Detroit American Heart Walk.

The walk, organized in conjunction with the **American Heart Association** to help raise funds for heart disease and stroke research, took place Saturday, Sept. 22.

"This is my second year of doing this walk and I love it," said Lisa Schocke of Armada, who walked with a group from Crittenton Hospital. "My grandma died in 1981 of heart disease. It's a great way to pay tribute to her."

OU has hosted the nation's largest heart walk for three consecutive years. Last year, 12,000 participants raised about \$1.2 million. Though final totals are not yet available for this year's walk, event organizers estimate there was a bigger turnout and expect the amount raised to exceed last year's total.

"It's a great program to raise funds for heart research," said Shelley Bleu of Royal Oak who walked for a third year with friends from Standard Federal Bank. "It's a pretty campus for the walk, and the musical acts along the walk are a nice touch. There are also lots of activities for families with children."

The winding, one-mile route took participants past Sunset Terrace, **Meadow Brook Health Enhancement Institute** and **Meadow Brook Hall**. Celtic, country and jazz musicians, as well as the Cass Tech and Clintondale High School marching bands, performed at various points along the walk. Many walkers enjoyed the exercise and entertainment so much they opted to complete the route more than once.

"This is an excellent, low-impact way to help others with heart disease," said Ursula Bowman of Clinton Township who walked for a second year with over 100 participants from St. John Health System. "Not only are we helping others, but we're also getting some good exercise by walking. Everybody should be willing and able to get out and walk because everyone knows someone who has had heart disease."

At the beginning of the walk, participants were given complimentary snack bars and fruit. There also were booths and tents set up by various corporate sponsors. At one of the booths, walkers could get flexibility and body fat analysis and learn about nutrition facts and healthy lifestyles from the Oakland Fitness Council.

At the walk's conclusion, participants were treated to over 10,000 sandwiches prepared by Subway. They also had the opportunity to tour a Midwest Med Flight helicopter and were offered free swing dance lessons. For the kids, there was a sea monster maze and moonwalk.

Jean Ann Miller, Heart Walk Logistics Committee Chairperson, said she was especially proud of the OU student volunteers who performed various functions.

"They all did a great job," Miller said. "They helped a lot with things like parking cars, handing out water, working at the information tent and serving as route guides."

Not only was it a day to help raise funds for heart disease and stroke research, but also a time to remember the victims of the recent terrorist attacks and their families. During the opening ceremonies for the Heart Walk, the American Heart Association contributed \$250,000 from its national heart walks to the New York Firefighters **9-11 Disaster Relief Fund**. This fund assists the families of the firefighters and EMS personnel who lost their lives during the terrorist attacks.

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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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Monday, September 24, 2001
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Monday, September 24, 2001
Article Start Date: Wednesday, December 10, 2003