

Kids For A Cure

Valley Forge Elementary School Relay Recess

A Relay For Life Event Coming to School June 4-8!

Valley Forge Elementary School is hosting its second student version of Relay For Life. In 2010 we held our first event which raised over \$4,400 and earned us a local Rookie of the Year award! Relay Recess is designed to help schools provide an opportunity for kids to get involved in their community while supporting fellow classmates, teachers and families who may be affected by cancer.

Monday, June 4th kicks off Relay Recess event week. There will be many ways for our students to be involved as we hope to make this an event that touches everyone and raises both cancer awareness and funds.

Two-thirds of all cancer is avoidable. If kids learn to make healthy choices about tobacco, physical activity, nutrition, and sun exposure at a young age, they will carry this knowledge with them throughout their lives.



They may also become public advocates for cancer prevention and education.

Look for posters on Mr. Johnson's bulletin board that touch on these health topics, and tell your child to listen for awareness tips during the week's morning announcements.

There are several ways for VFES students to fund-raise for this event and all are totally optional.

- **Coin Cans:** each classroom has one to throw loose change into from a pocket or a piggy bank.
- **Penny Wars:** competing jars in the cafeteria with teachers' faces on them. Pennies are worth points, silver coins are deductions. Add to one jar while sabotaging another. Teacher with the lowest amount loses and wears purple hair for one entire school day!

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MONDAY

Kick-Off Event!
Penny Wars begin

TUESDAY

Pay \$1 to
wear a hat

WEDNESDAY

Wear Purple
★ Walkin' Wednesday ★

THURSDAY

Pay \$1 to
wear sunglasses

FRIDAY

Pay \$1 to
wear slippers

Relay Recess Honorary Chairperson: Halle Middleton

If you see VFES third grader Halle Middleton today, you would probably never believe that she is in remission after a horrific battle with brain cancer. Her cancer story began during Mrs. Settle's kindergarten class. Halle occasionally woke up feeling nauseous, threw up before breakfast, and then went off to school feeling fine. It happened randomly for a while before her mom, Amy, took her to get checked by the doctor.

The doctor could not find anything wrong, but suggested a CAT scan "just in case." Amy thought that was a bit much, and she held off on the scan until one day when Halle threw up and also **screamed** that her head hurt. Amy scheduled the CAT scan as a precaution. Halle was having a blast swim-



ming at the YMCA right up to the hour before the appointment.

The test results were shocking; a large mass was found on her brain at the base of her cerebellum. Halle had surgery the next morning at CHOP to remove a tumor the size of a golf ball. Pathology results took several torturous days.

In 2009, shortly after the Fourth of July,

Halle was diagnosed with Medulloblastoma brain cancer. Within weeks she left with her mother for special radiation treatments, called Proton Therapy, in Houston Texas at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Over 8 weeks, Halle received Proton Therapy and weekly chemotherapy. She endured countless challenges including painful needles

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Benefiting the American Cancer Society

Relay Recess *(continued)*

- **\$1 Theme Days:** pay one dollar so you can wear goofy things to school like sunglasses, a hat or slippers. Bring your \$1 to the cafeteria the morning before school and receive a thank you prize!
- **Money Envelopes:** ask family and friends for a donation and turn them in to your teacher.
- **T-Shirts:** a limited number of \$10 Relay For life shirts will be on sale before school starting May 30th until sold out.
- **Five Below:** bring a FUNdraiser flyer when you shop at Five Below on **June 1–3** and VFES will get back 10% of the sale.

Final donation collection date is Friday, June 8th.

Relay Recess encourages exercise, so all students are asked to participate in **Walkin' Wednesday on June 6th**. The entire school will walk for 15 minutes around the property at a designated time slot. **Please wear a Relay For Life shirt or the color purple that day.**

Relay Recess also celebrates survivorship and remembers lost loved ones. **Paper luminaria candles were sent home for your child to fill out "In Honor of" and "In Memory of" someone affected by cancer.** Please bring the "candles" back to school to hang in the cafeteria during event week. We encourage this healing practice and will not require a donation to participate.

Help your kids join in our event in the ways that make them feel most comfortable and proud. **The goal of the week is to have fun!** Thank you for your support.



Honorary Chairperson *(continued)*

associated with her chemo and blood work, hair loss, and severe weight loss. She missed her dad, sister, grandparents, dog, friends, and home; however, Halle maintained a positive outlook (most of the time!) and made new friends at the Ronald McDonald house there.

Upon returning to Philly in late September 2009, Halle began an intense one-year course of chemotherapy that included many overnights at CHOP in lockdown due to low blood counts. She lost so much weight that her oncologist ordered a surgically installed feeding tube which provided most of her nutrition for the next year. Halle attended school as much as possible and was determined to keep up with her coursework as a member of Mrs. Shepherd's 1st grade class.

In September of 2010, Halle finished her treatment and within months, she had her feeding tube and chemo port removed. Since then, Halle has gradually gotten back to normal, and thankfully, has had consistent, clear MRI results showing no new cancer growth.

Since the day she was admitted to CHOP for brain surgery, Halle's friends, family, VFES teachers/classmates/staff, the Main Line community, and Pastor Dawn Taylor-Storm and the congregation of St. Mathews United Methodist church, all rallied around her with prayers, cards, gifts, and support. The caring people and many organizations that supported Halle and her family were **absolutely essential** to her ongoing spirit and the family's survival during treatment for this life-threatening disease.

Halle has a long future planned that includes becoming a vet, a mother, and an art teacher!

Valley Forge Elementary School is proud to announce that Halle Middleton will serve as our first Honorary Chair of Relay Recess. Halle's courage and positive attitude serve as a powerful example for our students. We are thrilled about her remission and wish her a healthy and happy future!

History of Relay For Life

Relay For Life is the signature activity of the American Cancer Society. In 1985, Dr. Gordon Klatt, a surgeon, spent 24 hours running around a track to encourage financial aid for his local ACS office. Today, events occur across the globe and involve over 3.5 million people.

A mini version of Relay For Life was created in 1997 by teacher Lisa Gimaplami-Libsch at Sarah Starkweather Elementary School. It was her way to involve kids in an event that didn't require a 24-hour stay. Today this type of event is officially endorsed by the ACS and is called Relay Recess. Last year, 15 schools in Chester County held Mini Relays that collectively raised over \$51,000.



We **save lives** and create more birthdays by helping you stay well, helping you get well, by finding cures, and by fighting back.

cancer.org | 1.800.227.2345