

Cancer survivor voice of inspiration

BY RON WOLF

THE second annual Relay for Life in Fort Frances was held at Fort Frances High School. The 12-hour relay is a fundraiser to support the Canadian Cancer Society.

More than 36 teams (about 12 participants in each) participated in this year's event.

Many dressed in clothes from different countries as they walked for cancer.

The Relay for Life in Fort Frances was the last relay event in Northwestern Ontario for 2010.

Fort Frances resident **John Homer** was the master of ceremonies for this year's event. In 2006, he lost his father to brain cancer.

The official tally is not in, but in a telephone interview Sunday afternoon, Homer said it's estimated that \$54,000 was raised. That's up from \$45,000 last year.

"We blew away last year's number."

"When it's all said and done, about \$435,000 in all was raised" across Northwestern Ontario, Homer said.

It is safe to say that most people have either been touched by cancer or know someone who has.

At the event, there simply were too many people to interview about their experiences. Unfortunately, I can't interview all of them.

But there is one person in particular, whose speech was so inspirational, that I had to include here.

Madison DeGagne, a 12-year-old cancer survivor, addressed the masses about her journey.



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She contracted cancer when she was only eight years old. Her tumor, the size of a football and weighing 2 1/2 pounds, was removed at Winnipeg Children's Hospital.

"While I was in the hospital I received over 400 cards and gifts which were greatly appreciated," said Madison.

"The community we have in Fort Frances is an amazing one. The overall support from everyone is huge and greatly admired by many people."

"It has been a little over four years and I've encountered more positive experiences than many 12-year-olds have the chance to."

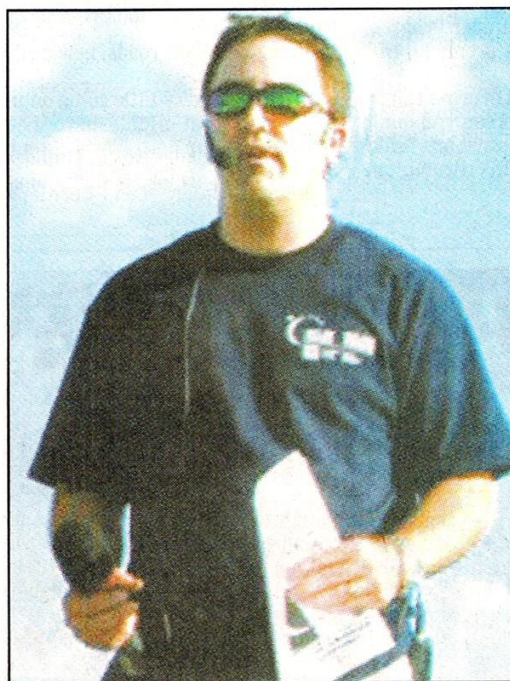
The confidence in her voice came across loud and clear that one day all forms of cancer will be a thing of the past.

DeGagne was the top fundraiser for this year's Fort Frances relay. She raised almost \$2,400.

Everyone who attended the event had the opportunity to walk around the high school track.

A few participants wept as they walked. It was an extremely emotional time for everyone at the event.

Ron Wolf's column appears every other Wednesday.



John Homer served as master of ceremonies at the Relay for Life in Fort Frances.



Cancer survivor Madison DeGagne shared inspirational thoughts with the Relay crowd.



PHOTOS BY RON WOLF

Walkers of all ages participated in the Relay for Life in Fort Frances. The 12-hour event is held in support of the Canadian Cancer Society.