

Relay For Life around the world

Fact sheet · September 2026
globalrelaytrack.org/media/

Relay For Life is a community fundraising event for cancer organisations. Teams keep one member on a track at all times, usually overnight, while a community celebrates cancer survivors, remembers people lost to cancer, and raises money to fight the disease.

THREE WORDS, EVERY RELAY

Celebrate

The first lap belongs to cancer survivors, with the caregivers who walk beside them.

Remember

After dark the track is lit with luminaria. Each one carries a name.

Fight Back

Every lap raises money and awareness for research, patient support, and prevention.

FACTS YOU CAN USE

- The first Relay For Life took place in May 1985, when Dr. Gordy Klatt walked and ran around a track for 24 hours in Tacoma, Washington, USA.
- Relay For Life is a programme of the American Cancer Society, shared with 37 partner cancer organisations on six continents.
- Money raised at each Relay stays with the cancer organisation in that country.
- The Luminaria Ceremony, held after dark, is common to every Relay in the world.
- Relays run from a few hours to a full 24, in stadiums, parks, school fields, and town squares. Every country shapes the event its own way.

WHO TO CONTACT

For a Relay in a specific country, contact that country's cancer organisation. The global events directory lists each partner with its official site:

globalrelaytrack.org/relay-directory

For the volunteer programmes behind Global Relay Track, use the Global Heroes of Hope contact form:

globalheroesofhope.com/#contact

YEARLY MOMENTS RELAYERS SHARE

- **Relay First Lap**, second Saturday of January: one lap, anywhere in the world, posted with #RelayFirstLap.
- **World Cancer Day**, 4 February.
- **Cancer Survivors Day**, first Sunday of June.
- **Global Heroes of Hope**: nominations in September, the new class announced in November. Heroes are Relayers recognised by their national cancer organisation for extraordinary work.

NAMES, LOGOS, AND PHOTOGRAPHS

- The Relay For Life name and logo belong to the American Cancer Society. Official logos come from your country's cancer organisation or from the American Cancer Society. Please do not recolour or alter them.
- Relay, Relay For Life, and Relayers take a capital R. Survivor and caregiver are lower case. A person is a cancer survivor from the day of diagnosis.
- Photographs of survivors and caregivers are used only with their permission. For images from a specific Relay, ask the organising cancer organisation.