

Stepping out and walking to fight diabetes

Dallas Middle School students, faculty and members of the community participated in the American Diabetes Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania 2009 "Step Out: Walk to Fight Diabetes" on Saturday, Oct. 3, at the Dallas Middle School track.

Lauren Wiley, director for the American Diabetes Association of Northeastern Pennsylvania, says because so many of the participants in the annual event are from the Back Mountain, the organization decided to move the walk to Dallas this year. It was previously held at Harveys Lake for many years and moved to Kirby Park several years ago.

The relocation to Dallas is also in recognition of the fundraising efforts of the Dallas Middle School Student Council for the diabetes walk for over 30 years.

Joan Rakowski has served as

the adviser of Dallas Middle School's Student Council for 10 years but has been a member of the American Diabetes Association for 30 years. Rakowski is adamant in the fight against diabetes because it killed her husband, Michael, and her mother, Helen Levandowski. The disease also runs on both sides of her family.

Dallas Middle School faculty members held a dress down day on Oct. 2 to raise money for the walk. The high school and elementary schools also showed support by providing walkers and event volunteers.

Community members and businesses also helped with sponsorship and donations of food and water.

About 600 people were expected to attend the walk and the goal was to raise \$100,000.



BILL TARUTIS PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

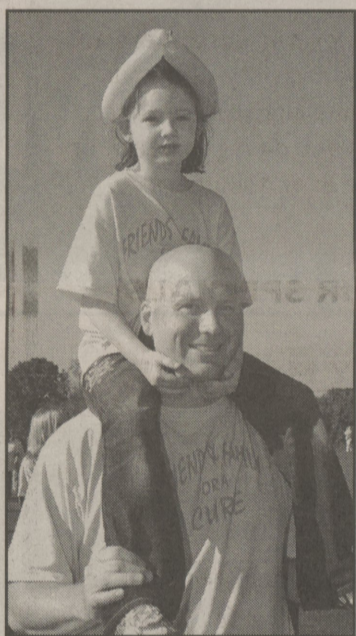
Some of the hundreds of participants at the Dallas Middle School track for "Step Out! Walk to Fight Diabetes" last Saturday morning.



Stopping to pose for a photo during the Walk to Fight Diabetes in Dallas are, from left, Anna Giacometti, 12; Kaitlyn Yakus, 12; Catherine Dillon, 11; Michaela O'Connell, 11; and Katie Kapra, 11, all of Dallas.



Participating in the Walk to Fight Diabetes are, from left, Alicia Duque of Philadelphia, Kaitlyn Hastings, 12; Elizabeth Hastings, 12, both of Shavertown; and Mary Duque, of Pittston, take part in the Walk to Fight Diabetes.



Six-year-old Amelia Anderson of Wilkes-Barre, the 2009 Walk to Fight Diabetes Youth Chair, sits on the shoulder of her dad, Eric, as he walks around the Dallas Middle School track.



Nancy Karpovich, of Hanover Township, as "Dotty the Clown," right, assisted by her granddaughter, Hailey Karpovich, 6, as "Squiggles," blow up balloons for Abby Cooper, 3, second from left, and her brother David Cooper, 6, both of Swoyersville, on the Dallas Middle School track during the Walk to Fight Diabetes.

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