Community Awareness

Childhood Cancer Campaign: El Paso Awareness of Acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL)

Targeting an audience of all ages

50 participating members of target audience

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The city of El Paso, Texas has a metropolitan population of 840,410, and according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the racial composition estimate of El Paso in July 2018 was 82.8% Hispanic or Latino, 11.8% White (non-Hispanic), 3.9% Black or African American, 1.3% Asian, and 1.0% American Indian or Alaskan Native. Due to these demographics, El Paso significantly forms the "Western Hemisphere's largest bilingual, and binational work force" ("El Paso, Texas Population 2019," 2018), also hosting a Tier 1 Research university, The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP).

As part of one of UTEP’s research teams, current HOSA member Diana Padilla, grew exponentially concerned for the welfare of El Paso’s youth in regards to the prevalence of cancer in Hispanic children. They have the highest rate of leukemia, one of the deadliest cancers among children throughout the United States. This leukemia, Acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) is the most common type of childhood cancer. In the experiments she and her colleagues conducted, they found that ALL is characterized by rapid uncontrolled accumulation of immature lymphocytes in the bone marrow and peripheral blood, cells in which novel biomarkers of this cancer were found ("A novel threonine," Robles et al., 2016). Inspired by these scientific projects, and the sparse healthcare resources available (El Paso has a physician shortage) to the community witnessed in person via community service by both Diana Padilla and Priscila D Padilla, they were motivated to help organize and fundraise an event to benefit children with and research in cancer; Childhood Cancer Campaign.

The HOSA team, Diana and Priscila D. Padilla, also Optimist Club, and DLP Dreams for Dreams nonprofit organization members, coordinated with the officers and sponsors of the societies to plan and execute the walk. We contacted the El Paso Children’s Hospital to reach out Ayana, a beautiful child who had recently recovered from cancer, to hold the walk in her honor. The Cielo Vista and Skyline Optimist clubs provided the main sponsorship for the event while numerous local businesses or organizations, and the participation of 50 members of the public (students, researchers, and other civilians) offered donations. The heaping amount of money raised through the support of the community was donated to national cancer research organizations, local cancer laboratories (such as those in UTEP), families of children who are currently suffering from cancer (for treatments and leisure for the child) or have recently recovered (items for diversion).

Not only were people in positions of authority for change made sentimentally conscious of childhood cancer in our city, but children of all ages up to the age of eighteen were taught philanthropy (care for others) and courage through speeches given by sponsors and interactive artistic activities provided by DLP Dreams for Dreams. The Childhood Cancer Campaign walk was a family friendly event that ignited the interest, learning, and enjoyment of everyone involved; some researchers volunteered to explain the cellular pathways of ALL! All organizations have concurred to make the campaign an annual event and expand its audience with every year in order to deliver health and happiness to every childhood cancer patient, and with the hopes of one day being able to provide resources for cancer diagnosis/prevention of other El Pasoan children.
Saturday, September 15, 2018 at 8am: Presentation of the United States and Texas Flags by Del Valle High School JROTC marking the commencement of the Childhood Cancer Campaign Walk held at Skyline Optimist Youth Park.

El Paso Ballet Folklorico perform to celebrate the El Pasoan culture and customs, but especially to honor the fight against cancer won by young former cancer patient, Ayana.
Presenting Ayana, special guest and childhood cancer survivor, and her family to the audience before the start of the walk. She was gifted a golden star resembling the El Paso, Texas Franklin Mountain Star, and symbolizing the loving concern and unconditional support pediatric cancer patients have from El Paso.

Members of the Optimist clubs (Skyline and Cielo Vista) and high school volunteers passing out shirts previous to the walk and donuts as breakfast for walkers/participants.

Two young girls participating in the walk, join the arts and crafts DLP Dreams for Dreams booth, painting self-portraits in their dream version of themselves.
Ceci Medina the Optimist International Representative and fundraising chair, with Diana Padilla, HOSA and DLP Dreams for Dreams member. In the image on the right, HOSA and Optimist Club members, Diana Padilla and Priscila D. Padilla.

Diana Padilla, HOSA member, with Optimist Club members, Ayana and her family, and Mission Early College High School KEY Club members in background.

Students, and researchers from the University of Texas at El Paso (became aware of the Childhood Cancer Campaign event from flyers that were posted in many buildings thoughtout the UTEP campus).
References


