

Diabetes supporters walk for cure

FUND-RAISER:

Walktoberfest designed to generate funds and community awareness

By Jennifer Haliski
Freelance Reporter

More than 250 people flocked to Alton Baker Park early Saturday, Sept. 30, to participate in Walktoberfest, an event sponsored by the American Diabetes Association. The annual fundraiser takes place in approximately 200 cities across the United States, including seven cities in Oregon.

The American Diabetes Association is the leading voluntary health organization that supports diabetes research and education. In 1994 the event raised more than \$6 million nationwide for diabetes research. Eugene held the highest average

pledge per walker in the state. This year the national goal was \$7 million, or slightly more than \$100 for each participant.

After a light warm-up and a team spirit competition, five diabetic children broke the ribbons across the starting line. Co-workers, families and friends walked together, often dressing alike and wearing company signs. "People really get into this," said Cindy Benton, a area director for the association.

For many families living with a diabetic, Walktoberfest is more than just a race for the cure — it is a way to find community support. Jo Ann Axling, who walked with the Bi-Mart group, is one example. "I'm walking because my daughter is diabetic. Through this event we have met a lot of people who are in similar situations and formed support groups," she said.

The 15K route led walkers

under the Ferry Street Bridge, past Valley River Center, over Owosso Bridge, along the Willamette River and back to Alton Baker Park. Music from Sheldon High School's band greeted walkers as they finished the course.

Barbara McVicker, owner of Baker's Pharmacies, was one of more than 200 volunteers for the event. Like many other local and national business people, she donated both her time and products to the event. "I decided that I should do more in the community," said McVicker. "There needs to be more knowledge about diabetes."

"We want to find a cure so that American Diabetes Association can disappear," said Denise Prewett, volunteer chairwoman for the association. "We're one organization that hopes to go out of business."



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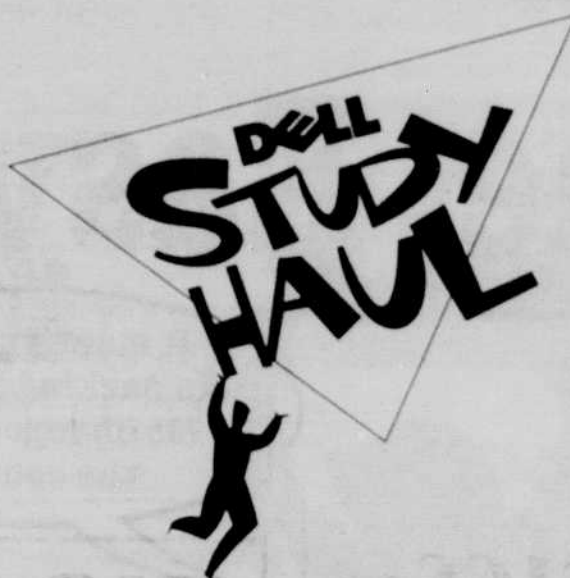
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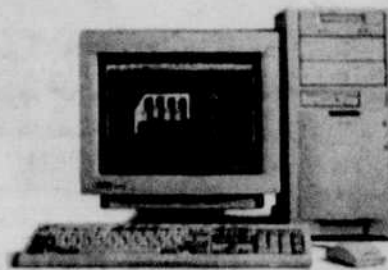


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