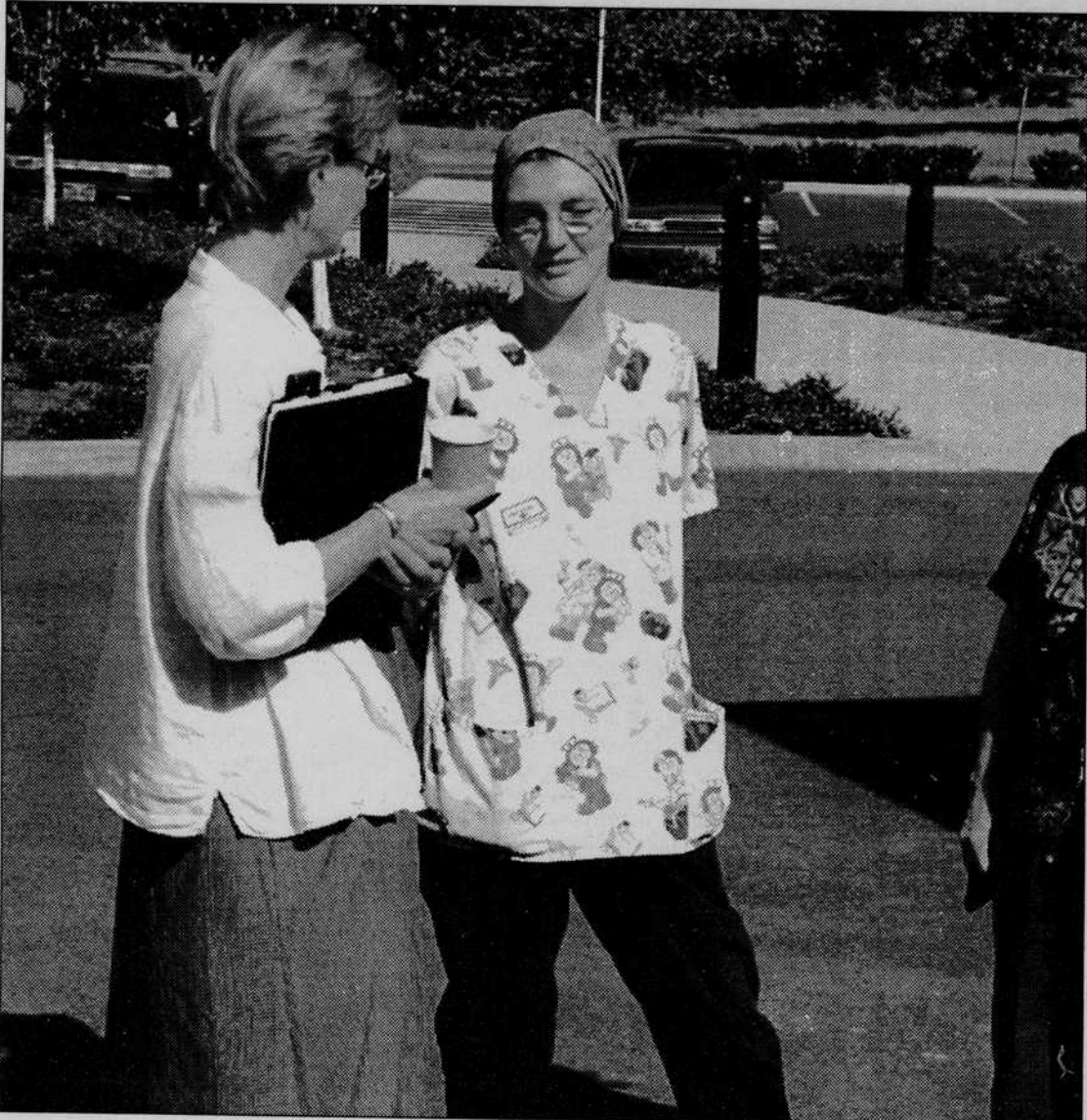


Walk For Life benefits breast cancer patients



Social worker Gretchen Matsuoka (left) talks with Jennette Chase, who will participate in the the annual Walk for Life event on Oct. 14. The walk benefits local women battling breast cancer, providing services like child care and housecleaning.

Rebecca Newell Emerald

■ The Willamette Valley Cancer Center and local Soroptimists plan an annual fundraising event in Eugene

By Rebecca Newell
Oregon Daily Emerald

For cancer patient Jennette Chase, mother of five, the Walk For Life fund offered not only financial help, but a support system.

"They've helped me with support, paying the bills along the way, helping me with things we needed when I wasn't able to work," Chase said. "The organization is great and it would be a shame if something happened to it, because there are a lot of people who depend on it. They're right there if you need them."

Local Soroptimists and members of the Willamette Valley Cancer Center gathered Sept. 29 to kick off National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Soroptimist International is the world's largest classified service organization for executive and professional women, with over 100,000 members in 112 countries. Soroptimists have raised over \$100,000 to assist local women since founding the walk in 1993.

The highlight of the month is the Oct. 14 Walk For Life, the seventh annual fundraiser sponsored by the WVCC and the Eugene, Springfield and Junction City Soroptimist branches.

"We sponsor the walk and set up the fund at Sacred Heart," said Vicki Simrell, chairwoman for the Walk For Life 2000. "Social workers administer the fund to women

who have been breast cancer or reproductive cancer patients and whose insurance doesn't cover it or other costs of living."

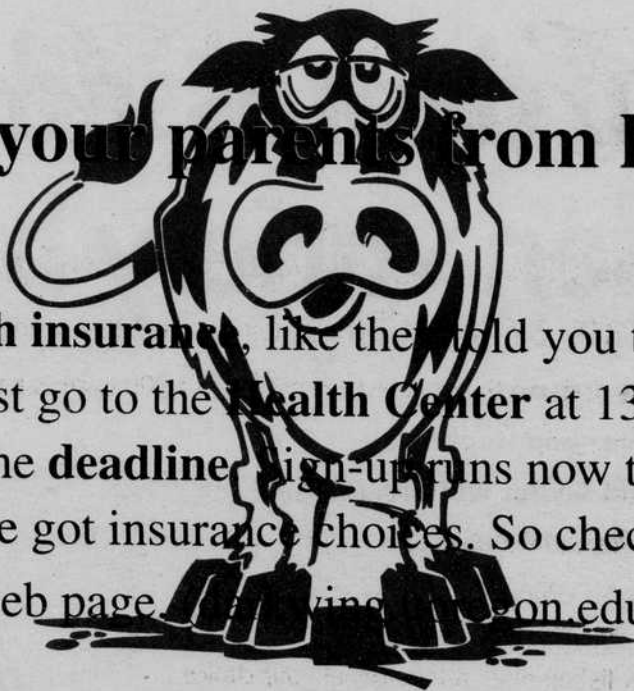
Walk For Life funds are distributed to single mothers and women in Lane County who aren't eligible for the Oregon Health Plan or Medicaid. Funds are distributed as personal emergency grants to pay for child care, uninsured medical treatment or grief counseling. The fund also provides rides to treatment, help with housework and grocery shopping.

"The Soroptimists have helped me keep up my health insurance since I've been off work," said Linda Painter, a cancer patient and former Sacred Heart employee. "Several contributions from the Walk For Life have come directly from Sacred Heart specifically for me. The hospital had a pop and pizza feed to raise money for me after I was first diagnosed."

The three-mile-long walk begins at 10 a.m. at the Eugene Water and Electric Board Oct. 14. The cost is \$20 per person and includes the entry fee for the walk and a sweat-shirt. "Our goal is to raise \$25,000," Simrell said. "We just want everyone there. It's a real festive event. The more walkers, the more festive it is."

Teams of walkers from companies or organizations — containing a minimum of five walkers — can participate for \$100. Each team receives a sign displaying their name for the duration of the walk. Donations can be brought to the event or sent to Walk For Life, SI-Eugene, P.O. Box 10664, Eugene, 97440. For more information, call 343-0737.

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