

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

Chase County Community Hospital is gearing up for its fifth annual All Cancer Walk. The walk will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. Oct. 2 at Chase County Schools.

The "Taking Steps to Stomp Out Cancer" walk and related events will run from 9 a.m. to about 1 p.m., according to committee member Vicki Buffington.

The 5K walk will be held outside, beginning and ending at the school. However, Buffington noted that participants may walk the indoor track, or, "If you don't want to walk, come and enjoy the food, talks and door prizes," she said.

After the walk a soup lunch will be served. Speakers include Alice Musgrove of Imperial, who has just completed treatment for uterine cancer.

In addition, Buffington said many door prizes will be given away, including a fleece blanket, John Deere and Case IH tractors and gift certificates.

"Businesses have been so generous," Buffington commented. "I'm floored."

The cost of the walk is \$15 to preregister, which includes a shirt and meal. The cost is \$20 the day of the event. Registration forms may be picked up at the hospital or clinics. They may also be accessed at chasecountyhospital.com.

Walkers may sign up sponsors, or just make a donation.

Buffington said she hopes to have 200-250 people participate in the walk.

Musgrove's journey

Forty-seven-year-old Alice Musgrove of Imperial never suspected she had cancer. She'd been experiencing some uneasiness about a few symptoms, but never connected them to cancer.

Musgrove had her yearly health checkup, then returned to her job at Chase County Schools as a para-educator.

She received the official diagnosis of uterine cancer on Dec. 7, 2009, while at school.

At first, she was angry. Later, she realized that God had a purpose for her. "He intended for me to slow down and have trust in Him," she declared.

Musgrove has always been the type of person who wants to do things herself and do them in an orderly fashion. Her cancer diagnosis changed all of that.

On Jan. 7, 2010 she had a complete hysterectomy in Denver. The gynecologist/oncologist found that there was lymph node involvement.

The nodes weren't large but they were outside the uterus and were Stage 3 cancer, Musgrove said.

Chemotherapy and radiation were to follow the surgery, but an embolism trashed that schedule. Again, Musgrove felt she had to relinquish some of the control she was so used to having.

She began chemo in March, with six cycles involving 18 weeks. Halfway through the schedule she needed a blood transfusion, and then one at the end, as her blood levels were low.

Musgrove experienced some nausea during the chemo, but mainly fatigue. The chemo ended June 15.

Then it was on to radiation, daily for five weeks, given in North Platte. She finished those treatments during the Chase County Fair.

Back to school as an aide and a crossing guard, with her blond hair growing back, Musgrove feels "pretty good."

But, she's changed. "You appreciate the little things like going back to school. There've been a lot of little changes in attitude, too."

A very detail-oriented person, Musgrove has learned to sit back. "Now, if it gets done, it does, and if it doesn't, there's tomorrow."

Cancer "makes you stronger by changing your attitude," she feels. "You don't get uptight about the little things."

What advice does Musgrove give to women? Getting an annual health checkup is the first point.

The second is a combination. "Never underestimate the power of friends. Now I call on my friends, when I used to do everything by myself. Stop and relax and be friends and work on those relationships."

Musgrove added that prayer has been a big part of her recovery. "Friends were praying for me who I didn't know were friends."

Musgrove said she wants to speak at the cancer walk because her experience is so current. Her emotions are at the surface right now, so she's afraid she might break down during her speech.

But, that's OK. It's just one of those little things about which she doesn't need to be uptight.