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Dogs, owners raise funds to fight cancer

By Elizabeth Coyle
Gazette Associate Editor

The second annual Bark for Life at Tenley Park Saturday raised about \$500 for the American Cancer Society.

Eleven dogs and their owners attended the event that included a Mr./ Ms. Relay Canine, an obstacle course for the dogs, a ball-on-spoon race and appearances from the state police K9 unit from the Rockview station in Centre County and McGruff the Crime Dog, obtained with the help of the Duncansville Police Department.

Chairman Jeff Morse also presented the Alex Award to Robin Thompson of Bedford on behalf of her dog, Luke, who died in February. Morse said the award will be handed out each year in honor of a dog who is battling cancer or is a caregiver for a cancer patient, or one who has died of cancer.



Jeff Morse, chairman of the American Cancer Society's Bark for Life Saturday at Tenley Park, presents the Alex Award plaque to Robin Thompson of Bedford in memory of her dog, Luke. The 7-year-old Labrador retriever died in February after a battle with lymphoma. The award is given annually to a dog that has cancer or is a caregiver for a cancer patient or has died of the disease. Gazette Photos/Elizabeth Coyle

Thompson said Luke, her 7-year-old black Labrador retriever, was diagnosed with lymphoma last October. She took him each week for treatments in State College and also to Port Matilda.

Thompson built a "Luke for Life" web page and through friends, was connected to the Magic Bullet Fund that helped her pay for Luke's treatment. The dog actually belonged to her neighbor, who had two other dogs. But, said Thompson, retired military, Luke continually showed up at her door.

Her neighbor and Thompson agreed that Luke should be her dog, she said. "He just up and decided he wanted to live with me. "I took him everywhere with me. Everyone that met him fell in love with him. They'd say, ' Make sure you bring Luke with you.'" Luke had just two more of his 17 treatments to go when he died on Feb. 24.

"I did everything I could to help him. Some dogs make it, some don't," Thompson said, tearfully. The money raised supports the Bedford Relay for Life which will be held June 28 and 29 at Friendship Village campground. For more information, contact Marcy Pebley at 888- 227- 5445 or visit www.relayforlife.org/bedford.