

For Immediate Release:

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Taylorville, Illinois: As a community bank, Peoples Bank & Trust recognizes the value of volunteerism in our communities. To recognize, commend and promote volunteerism, Peoples Bank & Trust has established a program to recognize outstanding community volunteers who personally exhibit outstanding volunteerism and promote the improvement of our communities.

Lisa Sims has been chosen as our current Volunteer of the Quarter for her work with Relay for Life. Lisa is a life-long resident of Taylorville, Illinois. After losing a grandmother to breast cancer at an early age, she always fundraised for breast cancer organizations. However, about eight years ago, Lisa took a big look at how many people she knew personally who have cancer and also looked at the relatives of her friends and co-workers, etc. that have cancer and she knew she wanted to do more. She said, "I wanted to help as many people as I could. I wanted to raise as much money and awareness for cancer as I could. I cannot do everything, but I can do something! I cannot change the world but I know I can make a difference."

That is how Lisa learned about Relay for Life. Relay for Life is the largest fundraising effort of the American Cancer Society. Not only does Relay raise money for cancer-fighting research, it also funds programs that cancer patients and their families right here in Christian County can utilize. She began her Relay journey eight years ago as founder and team captain of Relay for Life of Christian County's team Ladies Night Out. During her first Relay event, Lisa was taking it all in and also seeing the potential for how this event could grow in Christian County. After that event, Lisa was invited to attend American Cancer Society's Illinois Division Leadership Summit in Itasca, Illinois in the fall of 2008 and from there stepped into the Event Chairman role for Christian County. She has held this position for the past seven years. In this role, Lisa has had the honor of speaking at various organizational meetings including the Optimist Club, Moose Lodge, CPS-3 Information Meeting. She has been the emcee for Relay for Life Fall Leadership Conferences, and taught breakout classes at this conference as well. Lisa has enjoyed Relaying with her two children: Preston (age 12) and Mylie (age 9), who are also members of the Relay team Cancer Crushers. As a family, they attend meetings, hang signs, distribute yard signs to many homes in Christian County, hold fundraisers, attend fundraisers and actively look for more ways to make a difference. Lisa said, "My kids are learning about cancer and know it is up to volunteers to reach as many people as possible. They talk about Relay about as much as I do and I love it. They are reaching their peers and encouraging them to be involved. These kids are our future and knowing our county is reaching more and more youth just warms my heart!"

Lisa is not only a proud Relayer, but also a proud ACS CAN member where she is able to use her voice for cancer advocacy. The ACS CAN Network was one of the driving forces behind making Illinois Smoke Free.

Relay for Life has been present in Christian County for 15 years. This event is held June 17

from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on June 18 at the Taylorville High School and is a night of family fun raising money and awareness for the American Cancer Society. It is an outlet for the community to come together to celebrate our cancer survivors, remember our loved ones lost to the disease and fight back together for a future with more birthdays and less cancer. We walk for 12 hours because cancer does not sleep. The 12 hour event represents the journey of a cancer patient from diagnosis (sunset) to remission (sunrise).

It is nearly impossible to know the number of people who are served by Christian County's Relay for Life organization. The teams and participants reach others year-round, by holding fundraisers, speaking at engagements, talking with youth clubs and organizations. Committee members serve dinner to over 100 cancer survivors and their guests before our event begins in June, and our event hosts a few hundred people in the span of 12 hours. This does not count the people reached by our articles in the newspaper. Many people do not know the group is active the entire year, not just June. The teams are actively fundraising year-round. Event leads have spoken to various organizations (Optimist, Kiwanis, student council groups), organized fundraisers in the elementary schools, attended health fairs, etc. Cancer does not rest or take a break during the busy times of year, and neither do they!

Ultimately, their goal is to raise as much awareness as possible about Relay for Life and the American Cancer Society. They would love for the community to see all of the programs funded by Relay for Life events that are provided by the American Cancer Society. Cancer survivors in our county, as well as their families, use these services. This is not an organization that raises money and we never hear from them. We actually can put names with faces of families who have utilized the services and programs that our event funds.

Lisa said, "We are always encouraging people to become involved with Relay for Life! To register as a participant or a team, and for information about our Christian County event, please visit www.relayforlife.org/christianil. Also, we have monthly meetings at the Taylorville High School Cafeteria that are open to the public! Our next meetings are Monday, May 9 at 6:00 p.m. and Monday, June 13 at 6:00 p.m. We also post information on our Facebook page: Relay for Life of Christian County, IL. Our local ACS office is located in Springfield and can provide information about the services Relay for Life funds as well as information about our event! The phone number is (217) 523-4503."

In honor of Lisa's tireless service, Peoples Bank & Trust has made a donation in her honor to the American Cancer Society and her name is placed on a plaque displayed at the bank.

Peoples Bank & Trust is an independent Community Bank with ten offices located in Pana, Taylorville, Altamont, Charleston, Tower Hill, Springfield, Morrisonville, Palmyra, Waverly and White Hall. Peoples is a full service bank offering outstanding customer service to consumers, small business, and farmers in Central Illinois. People First Bancshares, Inc., with corporate offices in Pana, Illinois, is the holding company for Peoples Bank & Trust.