



26.2 Step Mini Marathon

PRESS RELEASE

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7th Annual 26.2 Step Mini Marathon Connects High-Risk Families to Resources and Support

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Omaha, Neb. — The 7th annual 26.2 Step Mini Marathon will take place at Cancer Survivors Park on Sept. 15, benefitting the Hereditary Cancer Foundation and the Nebraska Medicine Oncology Cancer Patient & Family Experience Fund. It is free to register on the Mini Marathon website or in person prior to the race, but donations will be accepted for the previously mentioned nonprofit organizations. The organizer, several physicians, and participants will be available for interviews.

More than \$6,800 was raised last year, and over \$60,000 since the start of the event. The money benefits Nebraska Medicine's Patient Assistance Fund — which provides gas cards to cancer patients who need help getting to the hospital for treatment — and the Kamie K. Preston Hereditary Cancer Foundation, created to help people pay for genetic testing if their insurance doesn't cover it. These causes are especially important to Mini Marathon organizer Denise Ibsen Cole.

"I know how incredibly blessed I am that I found out I had the gene mutation before I had cancer," says Denise. Going into the 7th annual race she says, "It also brings me to tears knowing I really want to share this with my mom, but without her passing from cancer none of this would happen. No Mini Marathon, no high-risk friends, none of it."

Denise is a "previvor," meaning she took preventative measures to lower her risk of certain cancers after losing her own mother to cancer. It was after her mother's death that Denise learned she was a BRCA1 mutation carrier, putting her at elevated risk for both breast and ovarian cancers. Since learning about her risk, Denise became an active member of Bright Pink and the Hereditary Cancer Foundation, donating her time to connect with other previvors and educate families about their risk.

For many cancer survivors, high-risk families, and gene carriers, this is more than a fundraising event. It's an opportunity to meet others who can relate to the impact cancer has had on their lives. Each year there is a focus on a specific hereditary cancer; this year's focus is prostate cancer.

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About the 26.2 Step Mini Marathon

In 2016, Mini Marathon organizer Denise Ibsen Cole planned to run in the Chicago Marathon before breaking her hip while training. That's when she came up with the idea to have a mini marathon here at home, but instead of 26.2 miles, it was 26.2 steps. Denise believes everyone deserves the experience of crossing a finish line, even if they aren't capable of training for a full marathon. Denise is a BRCA1 gene mutation carrier, putting her at an elevated risk of breast and ovarian cancers, something she didn't know until after her mother's death from cancer. Since learning her risk, Denise has become active in the hereditary cancer community, including serving as a

board member for the Hereditary Cancer Foundation. The Mini Marathon is one way she works toward her goal of educating the community about cancer risk so “no one else has to say goodbye to someone they love simply because of bad genes.”