



26.2 Step Mini Marathon

PRESS RELEASE

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8th Annual 26.2 Step Mini Marathon Connects High-Risk Families to Resources and Support

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Omaha, Neb. — The 8th annual 26.2 Step Mini Marathon will take place at Cancer Survivors Park on Sept. 21, 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.

While the event is free, the 26.2 Step Mini Marathon does accept donations for the two charities that are spotlighted. The money benefits Nebraska Medicine's Oncology Patient and Family Experience Fund — which provides gas, food, and other resources 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.

"I know how incredibly lucky I am that I found out I had the BRCA1 mutation before I had cancer," says Denise. Going into the race this year she is more determined than ever to help make this accessible to everyone. In 2025, Ibsen Cole also collaborated with Nebraska Medicine for two additional events — the 30th Street Mini Marathon and the Cancer Survivorship Conference Mini Marathon — bringing awareness and access to North Omaha and over 200 cancer survivors.

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 advocate, donating her time to connect with others and educate families about their risk.

Each year there is a focus on a specific hereditary cancer; this year's focus is skin cancer and melanoma.

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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.”