



Wilhelmina E. Bell-Taylor

Race for Lung Life

5K RUN  WALK

it's not just about smoking

Get Busy Living!



In the fall of 2008, **Wendy Balazik** was on top of the world. She was less than a year from completing a Masters Degree at George Mason University. She was doing meaningful work for a non-profit organization. She was volunteering at a neighborhood soup kitchen—feeding her own passion for helping others. Life was happy, challenging, and full of opportunity.

Yet there was one small thing annoying her—a dry, persistent cough that wouldn't seem to go away. When Wendy finally ran out of patience, she made an appointment to see her doctor.

Less than a month later—on October 20, 2008—following a series of examinations and tests that had become more and more ominous, Wendy faced a diagnosis she could never have imagined. Stage IV lung cancer. She had never smoked. She was young and active. There was no history in the family. At age 32, she was being told that her remaining time might be measured in months.

Arriving at this completely unexpected crossroads, Wendy did what her friends and family could have predicted. She chose to move forward on a path of courage and optimism, not fear and resignation.

“She was always like that,” recalls her mother Becky. “She had a mind of her own, and you couldn't tell her no. When she was diagnosed with cancer, she came up

with a simple credo for herself: ‘Get Busy Living.’ And that’s exactly what she did.”

Despite rapid progression of the cancer, and debilitating rounds of radiation and chemotherapy, Wendy mounted the daily energy and courage to continue her life. She posted regular updates to her social network of friends. She attended the Presidential inauguration. She planned a trip to the Dominican Republic.

Wendy didn't have the strength to participate in the Race for Lung Life, but she was still determined to attend the event—in order to cheer on her team. True to her generous spirit, following the event she told organizers to add her to the planning committee for the 2010 race. For those who attended the race that day, Wendy's optimism and valor in the face of her own mortality left a deep, remarkable impression.

Less than three weeks later, with cancer ravaging her body, Wendy mustered one final act of determination, love and courage. Having told one of her youngest relatives that she would take him to the National Zoo, she gathered the last of her strength to carry through on this promise. Four days later, and exactly six months and a day after her diagnosis, Wendy passed away.

Each year the Race for Lung Life honors a different person who has been diagnosed with lung cancer. This year, participants will take to the course for their own personal reasons—but also to celebrate the life of Wendy Balazik. With this dynamic young woman as our inspiration and example, we will all find it easier to “Get Busy Living!”



**CIRCLE
THE DATE**
FURTHER THE CAUSE
APRIL 24, 2010



Wendy Balazik
and friends at last
year's inaugural race.