

Susan C. Hicks foundation sponsoring run/walk for lung cancer research

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The Susan C. Hicks Hope Charities, the foundation established by the family of the late Susan Crowder Hicks of Roxboro, will sponsor the Free to Breathe Lung Cancer 5K and 1 Mile Run/Walk and Rally in Boone on Saturday, Oct. 31.

Chi Omega is cosponsoring the event, the first of its kind, which will be held at Duck Pond Field, Stadium Drive at Appalachian State University.

Hicks, former Person County Tax Collector, never smoked and was always careful to take care of herself, said her sister, Connie Mundy. In October 2006, however, Hicks died of lung cancer.

Lung cancer is on the rise, Mundy said, in people who have never smoked. It is on the rise in women and researchers and doctors have little explanation for this frightening phenomenon.

In North Carolina, 6,670 people will be diagnosed with lung cancer and 5,630 will die from the disease.

Mundy said her sister's doctors speculated on environmental causes for Hicks' cancer. They said the adenocarcinoma that took her life could have come from a product or products that she used in cleaning her home. It could also be partially genetic.

At the time of Hicks' death, there was not a lot of research to turn to. Mundy said at the time, "Funding for research in this area is a joke. There is a stigma to lung cancer," she said, with a majority of the public believing it is a self-inflicted disease brought on by tobacco use.

That is why the family decided to form the Susan C. Hicks Hope Charities to raise awareness about the causes of and prevention for lung cancer and to raise money for research.

The National Lung Cancer Partnership states that 215,000 people are diagnosed with lung cancer in the United States each year. About 27,000 of those people have never smoked. Of that number, about 60 percent are women.

Lung cancer kills 30,000 more American women each year than does breast cancer. One in five women with lung cancer has never smoked and one in 10 men diagnosed with lung cancer has never smoked.

Some evidence suggests that women may be more sensitive to cancer-causing effects of chemicals in cigarettes.

The leading cause of lung cancer is cigarette smoke, either from smoking or second-hand and the second leading cause is radon. There are other toxins such as air pollution, inhaled particles in factories or coal mines, arsenic and radiation which also are known to cause lung cancer.

The Oct. 31 run/walk will benefit lung cancer research and awareness. The day will begin with registration from 7:30 to 9 a.m. A survivor's breakfast will be held from 7:45 to 8:15 a.m. with the rally beginning at 8 a.m.

There will be speakers, music and food at the hour-long rally.

The one-mile run-walk begins at 9 a.m. with the 5K run/walk getting underway at 9:30 a.m. Children six and under will be able to participate in the kids' dash free at 10 a.m.

Early registration for adults is \$20 for recreational participation in the 5K or one-mile event and \$25 for competitive participation in the 5K. Registration can be completed online at [www.FreetoBreathe.org](http://www.FreetoBreathe.org) by Oct. 28 or by mail before Oct. 26.

Event-day registration will be \$25 for recreational and \$30 for competitive participation.

Lung cancer survivors will receive free registration, t-shirt and check-in.

Awards will be presented in the competitive events to the top three males and female overall in various age brackets.

For more information about the event, involvement opportunities and general information, contact Beth Hicks at [eh74166@appstate.edu](mailto:eh74166@appstate.edu). For sponsorship opportunities, contact Gary Hicks at [gahicks@charter.net](mailto:gahicks@charter.net).