

# State and Local

## More than 700 raise about \$15,000 for March of Dimes in Walk America

By Lisabeth Rabun  
Reporter

More than 700 walkers participated in the March of Dimes Walk America Saturday morning at Central Park. The participants — walkers, runners, bicycle riders and even one toddler in a red wagon pulled by her father — raised about \$15,000 in pledges for the annual event.

Vonille Cassidy, the district director for the March of Dimes, said the walk is going on all over the nation.

Miss Texas A&M University, Stephanie Suzanne Smith, and the March of Dimes Central Texas District's Poster Child, Roderick Mathis, were on hand to cut the ribbon starting the event.

Mathis, a first-grader from Hearne, was born with spina bifida, a congenital birth defect characterized by an imperfect closure of part of the spinal column exposing some of the nervous system. His two-year-old brother walked with him in the beginning of the event.

The March of Dimes is in its 50th year of raising money for researching birth defects. Franklin D. Roosevelt started the organization during his presidency to encourage the search to find a cure for polio, Cassidy said. A radio announcer addressed the American people asking each person to send one dime to the White House to fund the research for the cure; hence the name March of Dimes. Once the polio cure was found, the organization diversified into researching birth defects.

"Locally, Dr. Robert Burghart is doing research on pre-term labor," Cassidy said. Anyone researching birth defects can apply for a grant from the March of Dimes.

"We also hand out lots of material that explains birth defects and how to apply for our grants," she said. It also distributes information to the public about discoveries made in the research.

One of the participants in the walk was Lisa Roop of College Station, who raised about \$150. The

*"I think it's an important cause. My husband was born with a heart defect and I'm pregnant, so it is important to me."*

— Lisa Roop, participant in Walk America

March of Dimes is important to her because she is seven weeks pregnant.

"I think it's an important cause," Roop explained. "My husband was born with a heart defect and I'm pregnant, so it is important to me."

Cassidy was proud of the walkers' efforts and the volunteers' time that combined to make a successful Walk America.

Linda Storms, chairman of the local walk, praised the volunteers who helped put the event together, but also commented that it will need more help next year.

She thanked REACT for handling the communications and security of the course. Texas A&M service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega helped set up and community service fraternity Beta Sigma Phi helped with registration.

Volunteers gave out drinks and food donated by several local businesses. Water for the walkers was donated by Ambrosia, and Bryan Bottling donated soft drinks, Storms said. At lunchtime volunteers gave away McDonald's hamburgers. Apples and oranges were donated by grocery stores from Bryan, College Station and Madisonville.

One of the volunteers at the soft drink booth was Laura Simms, who walked in the event last year.

"I didn't think my knee would take it this year," Simms said, "and I just wanted to help." Simms works in the A&M Athletic Department.

As the chairman of the Walk committee of eight volunteers, Storm said their organization procedures included setting the course and get-

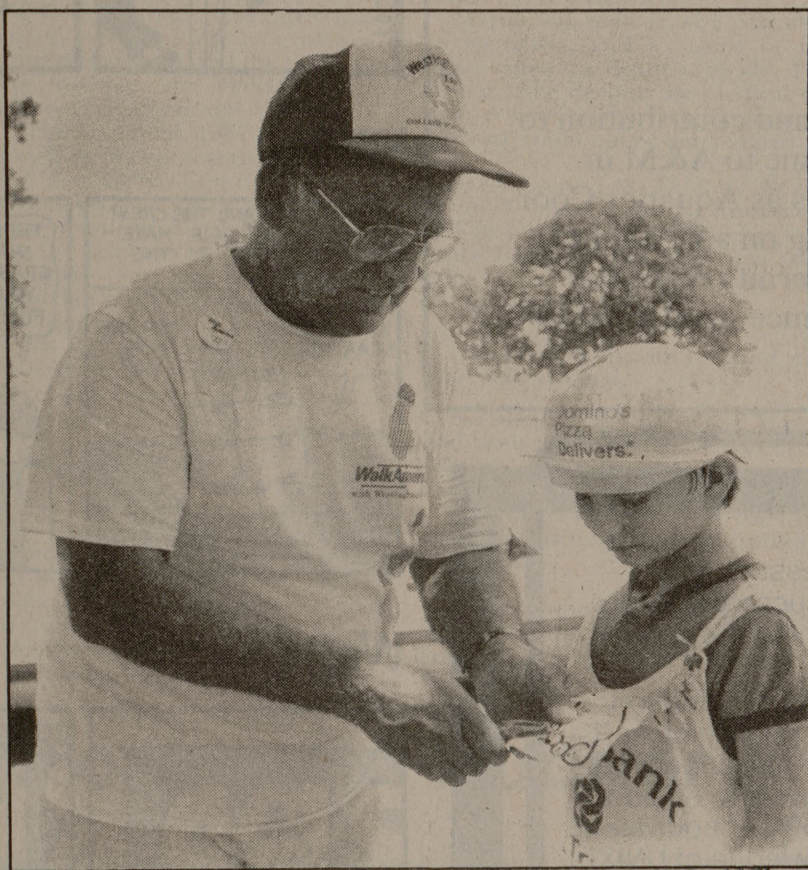


Photo by David Elmer

Brandon J. Plunkett, a student at Henderson Elementary School, gets his ticket punched by March of Dimes volunteer Roy Llanes, to signify his completion of Walk America in Central Park Saturday.

ting teams from the business community.

The local 10-mile walk started at Central Park. The participants went north on the bypass to Southwest Parkway and then to Texas Avenue and back to the bypass. A second trip around the course was required for the walkers to complete 10 miles. Rest stops were set up at each mile of the course to provide water and mark the walkers' cards to show they had completed the entire course.

Marvin Zimmerman crossed the

finish line first, finishing the race in an hour and 15 minutes.

The second runner to cross the finish line was Jeff Welch of College Station.

Zimmerman, Welch and several others who ran the course finished about the same time as those walking completed the first leg.

After all the pledges have been collected, awards will be given to the team and the individual who raised the most money, Storms said. The best T-shirt design as determined by the committee members also will be given a prize.

## Low turnout hampers 'Hands Across A&M'

By Carol Martin  
Reporter

Although the 30 people who showed up for "Hands Across A&M" Sunday didn't quite reach across campus, they were able to collect 3,000 pounds of food for the needy.

Kathy Denton, adviser for "Hands," said the postponement of the event, which was originally scheduled for April 17, probably confused people who had planned to participate.

Denton said the Student Y Association, which sponsored the event along with KKYS-FM radio, was disappointed with last week's weather.

"So much planning went into it," Denton said, "we hated to have to cancel it. But if anything else, it gave us another week to promote it."

Dave Mendoza, a senior computer science major from Beaumont and public relations chairman for "Hands," said the event was inspired by Hands Across America held in 1986 to raise food and money for the hungry people in Ethiopia.

Marnie Stewart, a freshman aerospace engineering major from Dallas and chairman of Hands, said about 3,000 pounds of food were collected.

The Texas Aggie Band's A Battery collected the most food and won the pizza party, she said. The proceeds will go to the Brazos Food Bank.

Barbara Day, director of the food bank, said the food will be delivered to food pantries, which will distribute the food to needy people.

"It's (food raised from the event) a major contribution," Day said, "and we do appreciate it."

Mendoza invited everyone in hearing distance to join hands as John Cougar Mellencamp's song, "Hand to Hold on To," blared from speakers set up in front of the Academic Building.

Participants had a chance to take their picture with Reveille V before the human chain was formed and newly-elected yell leaders led the hand-holders in a yell practice for the A&M baseball team.

Everyone had smiles on their

faces as they became links in the human chain which formed a circle in front of Sully.

Participants put the chain in motion which caused a few links to break, but the chain was quickly re-fastened.

Eight-year-old Jill McCallister, a second-grader at College Hills Elementary in College Station, won a Hands Across A&M T-shirt in a random ticket drawing.

"I would put it on," McCallister said, "but I don't think it would match my shoes. It would make a great dress — maybe it will shrink," she said.

## Man working on garage collapses

A man working at the parking garage construction site on the Texas A&M campus collapsed Friday afternoon while working on the structure.

Tim Fickey, chief of the College Station Fire Department, said that at 12:05 p.m. Friday the department got a call that a man had collapsed on the fifth floor of the garage, which is being built on the north side of campus adjacent to University Drive.

The victim was taken to Humana Hospital where he was examined and treated for possible heat exhaustion, Fickey said.

An official at Humana's emergency room said no information could be released about the patient.

Workers at the site said the victim collapsed after getting too hot while working.

The A&M Department of Meteorology forecast a high temperature of 86 degrees for Friday.

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