

Jack H. Marston II Melanoma Fund

We envision a world where every adult and child is aware of the risks of melanoma and takes preventative measures; where those who suffer from melanoma receive comfort and healing; and ultimately, where every case of melanoma will be completely curable.”

Our mission is to realize this vision by raising funds and providing programs to raise awareness, fund research, and promote healing.

The Jack H. Marston II Cancer Research Fund (Jack’s Fund) was established in July 2004, when melanoma took the life of Jack H. Marston II at the age of 47. An accomplished athlete and four-time Chicago Marathon participant, Jack loved the outdoors, and his compassion, kindness, and zest for life were and are an inspiration to all who knew him. Although Jack’s intention was to quietly beat the disease, his battle demonstrated that metastatic melanoma is a very complex cancer, with vague symptoms that are often initially mistaken for “nothing serious.”

In six short weeks after Jack’s death, friends and family members organized the first annual “*This Run’s For Jack*” 5K race, held in Glen Ellyn, which drew over 900 people. Now in its 8th year, “*This Run’s For Jack*” has become a regional gathering point for melanoma families and supporters drawing close to 2000 participants. The race is unique in that registrants are asked to make a donation, rather than pay a fee, and yet proceeds average around \$50,000 per year to be used in support of education, prevention, healing, and research.

In 2005, fundraising efforts were expanded to introduce the Jack’s Marathon Team program, where an inaugural team of ten runners raised \$10,400 in conjunction with the Chicago Marathon. Since that year, the number of participants on Jack’s Marathon Team has grown, raising over \$200,000, and running many marathons including Boston, Chicago, New York City, Vancouver and The Marine Corps.

Race funds and other donations are used to support research, healing, and education/prevention activities. To date, Jack’s Fund has contributed \$300,000 to leading melanoma researcher, Dr. Jon Richards, oncologist at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital in Park Ridge. In recognition of the efforts of Jack’s Fund, the Jack H. Marston II Rooftop Healing Garden was established at the Cancer Center of Advocate Lutheran General Hospital. The garden has become a place of hope and healing where patients undergoing chemotherapy can look out at a beautiful, natural park-like garden during their treatments. Furthering the partnership with Lutheran General, Jack’s Fund representatives were recently invited to join the newly formed Oncology Council of Advisors.

Jack’s Fund is committed to reflecting the values of perseverance, tenacity, compassion, and the competitive spirit that made Jack Marston determined to beat melanoma. Over the past seven years, Jack’s Fund has accomplished much, and at the same time, has grown to become a regional authority on melanoma prevention and support.

Education and prevention activities have been conducted throughout DuPage County. Jack’s Fund has partnered specifically with local high schools and park districts to target the prevention message toward young athletes who tend to spend a great deal of unprotected time in the sun. Events and projects include distribution of sunscreen to all DuPage County high schools,

participation in all Glenbard District 87 high schools' health fairs (as well as Lake Forest and Maine South), distribution of sunscreen and prevention information to the Glen Ellyn Park District sports teams and the Glen Ellyn Runners, the development and presentation of Lifeguard Sun Education to the Glen Ellyn Park District lifeguards, and presentations to employees and patrons at Maryknoll Park, and to Lisle Park District employees. Jack's Fund has also distributed sun awareness bookmarks through the summer reading programs at the Glen Ellyn and Wheaton Public Libraries.

Community events have included participation in sun safety presentations to the Kiwanis Club Wheaton; involvement in Health Track Sports Wellness Sun Education Events and the Morton Arboretum Employee Wellness Fairs; participation and distribution of prevention information at the Glen Ellyn 4th of July Parade, the Chicago Marathon Expo and Cheer Station at Old St. Pat's Church, the Shamrock Shuffle Expo, the Chicago Half Marathon Expo, Leukemia & Lymphoma Team-in-Training, and the University of Dayton-sponsored Dayton-to-Daytona. Lastly, Jack's Fund sponsors a four-year scholarship for one graduating senior from Glenbard West High School in Glen Ellyn. The successful applicant will have demonstrated Jack Marston's "Game-On" attitude in sports and in life, and in return for the scholarship, the recipient makes a four-year commitment to assisting the organization with its mission-related activities.

Activities have primarily centered on fundraising in support of the mission, youth education and prevention, and community education and prevention