



Candle of Hope Handbook

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1. Relay For Life Candle of Hope Chair Role Profile

Why we need you

Cancer Research UK is seeking a committed and compassionate individual to co-ordinate and help promote the Candle of Hope Ceremony for their community's Relay For Life.

The Candle of Hope Ceremony takes place at dusk and involves the placing of 'Candles of Hope' (bags filled with sand and a glowing candle) around the Relay track. These Candles of Hope are dedicated in celebration of a loved one who has experienced or is going through cancer or in remembrance of someone who has died from cancer.

What will I be doing?

- Promoting/coordinating the dedication of Candles of Hope for Relay in your local community and with the teams.
- Ensuring that all Candle of Hope dedications made online are fulfilled at the event.
- Sourcing LED candles and sand. Cancer Research UK will provide the candle bags.
- Recruiting people to support you prior to the Relay and on the day.
- Decorating Candles of Hope bags prior to the event.
- Planning and organising the Candle of Hope Ceremony, including choosing appropriate music, poems and speakers to reflect the significance of the ceremony.
- Setting up candles at the Relay and clearing everything away at the end of the event.
- You will be a representative of Cancer Research UK and as such will always uphold the vision and purpose of the organisation.

What skills do I need?

- You'll need to be thorough and organised for this role, as you'll have to keep a careful track of each candle dedicated as well as all monies received and ensure that every candle bag is set out on the night.
- Imagination! Though there are certain standards for the ceremony but it will be you who creates the impact. You should consider inspirational poetry, emotive songs and motivational speakers.
- You'll need to be sensitive and tactful as the candles and dedications can have a big impact on people.
- Ability and willingness to lead a team of volunteers to help you before the Relay and on the day itself.
- You should be IT literate and ideally have access to a computer.

How much time do I need to commit?

You will need to start promoting the dedication of Candles of Hope as soon as you can prior to the Relay. You'll also need to attend all committee meetings (these will probably be monthly and then weekly as the Relay approaches). You'll also be busy in the weeks before the Relay as this is when the Candles of Hope will need to be decorated; however, there are many ways in which help can be enlisted to assist with this.

What support will I be given?

Everyone on the Relay Committee will help by playing their part in promoting the dedication of Candles of Hope. As well as being part of an enthusiastic and supportive committee, your staff contact will provide you with the Candle of Hope bags. Part of your role is to find willing and able volunteers to help you so you won't have to do everything yourself on the day.

What benefits can I expect?

You will be involved in one of the most memorable and emotional parts of Relay and your role will certainly inspire others to get more involved in the next year's event. It will be a tremendous achievement to organise this special ceremony – truly uniting your community to beat cancer. Relay is also a great way to meet people in your local community and make new friends.

Where will I be based?

Much of the organisational work involved in this role can be completed from home, although attending committee meetings and working with volunteers to decorate the candles e.g. local schools will require being 'out and about' in the community. The Relay itself takes place in a stadium, park or field and there is normally a tent for the Candle of Hope dedications/donations which is available throughout the day and is staffed all times.

2. The Candle of Hope Ceremony

The Candle of Hope Ceremony really brings home the true meaning of Relay For Life. For many, this ceremony is the most meaningful time at the Relay and an occasion that is remembered forever. It is the only time that Relay stands still and is a time when people share both grief and joy and when everyone draws support from one another.

Everyone on the Relay Committee plays a part in promoting the dedication of Candles of Hope but the Candle of Hope Chair is responsible for tracking dedications, and planning/coordinating the ceremony on the day.

It is strongly recommended, where possible, that you attend a Candle of Hope ceremony at a Relay prior to your own event. Speak with your staff contact who will be able to help with photographs and ideas. This will help you to not only get a sense of the ceremony visually, but also the emotion you will need to achieve at your Relay.

What is a candle of hope?

This is simply a bag filled with sand and a glowing LED candle which has been dedicated to the memory of someone lost to cancer, dedicated in honour of someone on their cancer journey or in celebration of someone surviving cancer. The LED candles are lit prior to the commencement of the Candle of Hope Ceremony and remain lit into the night, lighting the way for the Relay participants.

"Keep the fire of hope burning by dedicating a candle to someone you wish to remember or whose courage and life you wish to celebrate."

3. Materials and Supplies

- Your staff contact will be happy to supply you with Candle of Hope bags.
- 'Candle of Hope dedication forms can be downloaded from the relay website: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/relay-for-life-resources>

You'll need to source:

- LED Tea lights – approach local shops and outlets (check with your staff contact to coordinate your approach with other local fundraising approaches)
- Sand – often available from the long jump pit if your Relay is held at an athletics track. Or you could try local builders' merchants and DIY stores (if using builders sand it is important NOT to empty it into the venue sand pit as this contains harmful elements such as silicone and carcinogens)
- Permanent markers, stickers etc to decorate the Candle of Hope bags.
- A team of helpers assigned to help man the Candle of Hope stall, decorate the bags, set out and light the candles on the day.
- Volunteers with great handwriting to write the dedications onto the bags. A team from a local school might like to help with this. Some people may like to decorate their own Candles of Hope and if so, they can do this on the day at the Candle of Hope stall.
- Recruit helpers to clear away after the Relay. Do this sensitively – it's best to wait until everyone has left. Some people may take their Candle of Hope home, others will leave it behind. It is important to communicate to everyone when the bags will be removed and where they will be should anyone wish to take their bag away with them.
- Liaise with Logistics Chair to set aside an area for Candle of Hope dedications, where they will keep dry in case of bad weather – a tent or covered area is ideal for this.
- Think about contingency for the ceremony if the weather is bad.

4. Ideas for Promoting Candle of Hope Dedications and Donations

- Distribute Candle of Hope forms to display points in the local community, e.g. Medical Centres / Hospitals / Hospices / Funeral Directors. These are available to print on the Relay Resources website.
- If you use a school to help decorate the bags, it gives you an opportunity for these bags to be sent home, and a covering letter, asking parents if they would like to dedicate a bag/attend the event/ceremony.
- Hold a team/team captain night themed around the Candle of Hope dedications and ceremony. Ensure your teams know how to promote and help secure Candle of Hope dedications/donations by understanding what the Candles of Hope represent – Remembrance, Reflection & Celebration.

- Secure a stand in a local shopping centre, local fair, or any community event, to promote Candle of Hope dedications, along with team recruitment etc. Always remember it is a very sensitive area and requires great understanding and empathy when promoting to the general public. Download forms at <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/relay-for-life-resources>
- Invite as many people as possible to experience the ceremony itself. A personal invitation always works well. They may be your teams of the future.

5. Making up the Dedications

- Liaise with the Accounting Chair to record every dedication and donation so you know who has dedicated a candle and the value of their gift. This will enable you to keep track of each candle dedicated, ensure every candle is set out on the night and provide Cancer Research UK with the relevant data for its accounts.
- Prepare as many Candles of Hope bags as possible in advance of the Relay day. This is where your decorating team comes in!
- Dedicating a Candle of Hope to all of the Survivors is a great idea and a good way of ensuring that your Survivors, and hopefully other family members, return for the ceremony.

6. Planning the Ceremony

The Candle of Hope ceremony is one of the most inspirational moments of the Relay and offers everyone in the community the opportunity to pay tribute to those people whose lives have been directly affected by cancer. Remember that the ceremony is an emotional time for many and allows time for reflection. It is also about hope for the future – our shared reason to Relay and our desire to make a difference for future generations. Make the ceremony memorable and meaningful to everyone by creating something they can remember forever.

- The Candle of Hope ceremony should take place at dusk but should last no longer than 20–25 minutes including reflection time. Check all readings and music with the Event Chair and staff contact if in doubt.
- Create a programme for the ceremony. This does not have to be printed as you can explain the format in your introduction. The programme should be rehearsed and well planned.
- Consider asking a cancer survivor or someone who has lost a loved one to speak and share their reason for supporting Relay For Life and for being present at the Candle of Hope ceremony.
- Speak with committee members/teams/survivors – are there singers/confident public speakers amongst them who might like to sing or read a poem (examples of which are given later in this handbook).
- Consider observing a minutes silence in remembrance of those touched by cancer.
- Have a rehearsal so everyone is prepared and relaxed on the night.

- Once the ceremony is over bring the atmosphere back up slowly. Consider the music you play at this time (examples can be found at the end of this handbook).
- Preparation, both before and after, the ceremony itself is essential. Prepare the participants; ensure everyone is briefed as to the length of the ceremony, what will happen and when. Music should be softer and less up-beat prior to the ceremony and time must be taken after the ceremony finishes for people to gradually return to the party mood. Several tracks should be played which begin to lift everyone's spirits – examples of these are given at the end of this handbook.

7. On the Day

Set up the Candle of Hope stall/tent for the start of the event – people will visit regularly throughout the day, so it is important that it is always staffed.

- Fill bags with sand. Start early as it is very time consuming. Have a rota of people to staff the stall and help fill bags.
- Liaise with your Logistics Chair on health and safety.
- Windy venue? Try rolling down the top of the bag to give more stability. If you're going to do this, plan ahead and make sure the names are written low enough on the bags!
- Put enough sand in the bags... but not too much. Two inches seems to work well. Too little sand and the bags will be unstable; too much sand and you'll risk the bags breaking.
- Distribute bags around the event space (a 'pull-along' trailer is helpful for moving them into position)
- Light the LED candles. This can take a long time, so the more help you have the better
- Use blank Candles of Hope bags to spell 'HOPE' at the venue.
- Tidy up at the end of the event – and do this sensitively. Do not remove and dispose of any candle bags in front of participants, and make sure that everyone knows that their bag will be available and where it will be should they want to take it away with them.

8. Sample Programme for the Candle of Hope Ceremony

Softer Music (for approximately 15 minutes prior to event)

The Ceremony Explained (Candle of Hope Chair)

Poem

Song

Survivor speaks...

Poem

Song

Minutes Silence

Gradually build atmosphere with more uplifting music

Song ideas for candle of hope ceremony and post ceremony build-up.

- 'I'll Stand By You' by The Pretenders
- 'Wind Beneath My Wings' by Bette Midler
- 'Greatest Love of All' by Whitney Houston
- 'You'll Never Walk Alone' by Gerry and The Pacemakers
- 'Hero' by Mariah Carey
- 'Circle of Life' from The Lion King
- 'Amazing Grace' by various artists
- 'Stand by Me' by Ben E. King
- 'Something Inside So Strong' by Labi Siffree
- 'He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother' by The Hollies
- 'Because You Loved Me' by Celine Dion
- 'Flying Without Wings' by Westlife
- 'Let It Be' by The Beatles
- 'Over the Rainbow' by Eva Cassidy
- 'Count on me' by Whitney Houston
- 'Even Though You're Gone' by Angelis
- 'The Climb' by Miley Cyrus

Build up – post ceremony

- 'I can be' by Tao Cruz
- 'Lifted' by The Lighthouse family
- 'A little High' by Simon Webbe
- 'Hold up a light' by Take That

H.O.P.E. Display Speech

As we light the "H" in hope, let us take a few moments to think about the true meaning of the word. Emily Dickinson refers to hope as "The thing with feathers that perches on our souls", while the dictionary defines it as "A desire for some good, accompanied with at least a slight expectation of obtaining it, or a belief that it is obtainable." Everyone with cancer and those who surround them must have hope, we must embrace it as we awaken to a new day, and we must tuck it in with us as we dream in the night. We must place it deep within our hearts, and know it is the very thing that gives us strength when all seems lost. It is with hope that the illness is at all even bearable, for hope is at times the only light at the end of the tunnel. It is with hope that our souls are nurtured, our dreams are fulfilled, and our lives are lived. When hope is all you have, know that you hold the key to serenity, for it is obtainable, it is believable but, most of all, it is what truly feeds our souls.

We light the letter "O" to symbolise what people who suffer from cancer can discover, that everyone should live their lives "One day at a time." To know that today was given to you to enjoy – whether it be the sun glistening on the trees, or the rain falling on your doorstep – it's a gift that's yours, live it as if it will never come your way again, for it belongs to you only once. As the sun begins to set, take a few moments to reflect on the day's treasures, and know that you were truly given a gift. Know that 'one day at a time' is more than any of us could ask for, because tomorrow is never guaranteed, it is only promised. So when the promise of a new day is fulfilled, don't merely exist in it; live in it, and love it. It is the hope of a new day that gives us all a reason to dream.

Let the "P" in hope stand for progress. It is with progress that cures are to be found. Each year research has progressed in a way unachievable without the help of people such as you, who are dedicated to helping Cancer Research UK beat cancer faster.

As we light the letter "E" in hope, it brings the word together. As we all stand here tonight, together for the cause, together defining hope, we search each other's faces for the meaning to all this. One day we will discover that hope is each of us together, united in the search to find cures for every form of cancer. We light up the night together with hope in our souls. We stand confident that one day this disease will be overcome. It is with this belief that we will see the day cancer ends for us all, so that our mothers and fathers, our sisters and brothers, our children and grandchildren, our friends & loved ones can live in a better world. As we light up this night together, let's stand in hope that one day we will see that bright, beautiful light at the end of the tunnel, and that what we had hoped for will be achieved.

Adapted from the American Cancer Society Relay For Life Handbook, California 2004

Inspirational words & poems

Every Candle Has A Name by John Storey

We're like sailors in the night... being guided by a light.
Just a beacon on the shore, giving hope and strength and more.
Walking through this sea of lights... I sense unity and might.
The power of passion in this place, every memory has a face.

These are loved ones we have known... some still here, but some are gone.
In this time, in our own way... As the footsteps melt away.
We see love in every flame... like a never-ending chain.
And we know... that every candle has a name.

There's a name of the ones who still are here...
There's a name of those gone – we still hold dear.
There's a name, each one shining in the flames,
And I know... that every candle has a name.

Candle of Hope Poem

Tonight as we stand together
Through tear filled eyes I will see the light
I will pray for those who still battle bravely
And remember those who lost the fight
We talk of cancer like a battlefield
Simply because we have yet to overcome
But where there is faith there has to be hope
Cancer can not and has not won
As we stand here silently and hold our thoughts
Each one of us has a reason within our heart
A reason that tonight unites us together
A reason why we have taken part
In our silence we will remember
The ones that we have lost
We honour those who have survived
Praying for cures no matter the cost
For each person that cancer has touched
Let it be the reason we continue our plight
Let our candles burn brightly always in our hearts
Knowing we will win this fight.

Cancer is so limited

It cannot cripple love.
It cannot shatter hope.
It cannot corrode faith.
It cannot destroy peace.
It cannot kill friendship.
It cannot suppress memories.
It cannot silence courage.
It cannot invade the soul.
It cannot steal eternal life.
It cannot conquer the spirit.

One Little Candle by Carol Dunn

It's just one little candle, One tiny flickering light. A challenge to the darkness, A small beacon in the night.

It could be just a gentle touch, A reminder that you're here. Or a warm, compassionate hug, That

shows you understand and care.

Maybe it's a helping hand, A thoughtful, practical deed. A casserole, some laundry, Whatever meets the need.

Sometimes it only takes your smile, To encourage and uplift.

And should that smile lead to laughter, You've shared a precious gift.

There's comfort in shared silence, Or in a softly spoken word. Or in taking time to listen, To feelings that must be heard.

Yes, it's just one little candle, Softly glowing in the night. But it can overcome the darkness, If it will only share its light.

Just one candle at a time, Each one giving from its heart. Reaching out to those nearby, Asking them to do their part.

To make sure the light keeps growing, Reaching out to those in sorrow.

Offering comfort, warmth and hope,

Strength and courage for tomorrow

[Light a Candle by Paul Alexander](#)

And I will light a candle for you. To shatter all the darkness and bless the times we knew. Like a beacon in the night The flame will burn bright and guide us on our way. Oh, today I light a candle for you.

The seasons come and go, and I'm weary from the change. I keep on moving on, you know it's not the same. And when I'm walking all alone Do you hear me call your name? Do you hear me sing the songs we used to sing?

You filled my life with wonder, touched me with surprise, Always saw that something special deep within your eyes. And through the good times and the bad, We carried on with pride. I hold onto the love and life we knew.

And I will light a candle for you. To shatter all the darkness and bless the times we knew. Like a beacon in the night. The flame will burn bright and guide us on our way. Oh, today I light a candle for you.

Just One by unknown

One song can spark a moment, One flower can wake the dream

One tree can start a forest, One bird can herald spring.

One smile begins a friendship, One handclasp lifts a soul.

One star can guide a ship at sea, One word can frame the goal

One vote can change a nation, One sunbeam lights a room

One candle wipes out darkness, One laugh will conquer gloom.

One step must start each journey. One word must start each prayer.

One hope will raise our spirits, One touch can show you care.

One voice can speak with wisdom, One heart can know what's true,

One life can make a difference, You see, it's up to you!