

CHOC's ambassador to lead the way

In support of children suffering from cancer, the CHOC Childhood Cancer Foundation's annual fun walk is to be held on 14 September at Johannesburg's Zoo Lake.



CHOC's newest ambassador, internationally renowned swimmer Romina Armellini, who fought and won a sensational victory over cancer, will be taking part.

Romina Armellini's story

Born in Johannesburg of Italian parents, Romina started collecting swimming trophies from the age of eight and by 17 had achieved a global ranking of second in her event age group.

Then the teenager saw the family doctor for suspected flu and her fight with cancer started. Just seven days later she underwent a 10-hour operation to remove her thyroid due to stage four cancer. Doctors also removed three parathyroids, a piece of back muscle, as well as scraping pieces of cancer off her lungs.

When first told she had cancer, Romina's reaction was: "When can I get back into the water?" But because of the seriousness of the disease and the stress her body would go through, she was advised that she would never be able to return to a professional swimming career. Angry but undaunted, Romina faced the future.

Despite the endless treatments, controls and radiation therapy, the cancer spread to her liver and five months after diagnosis she was given a 25% possibility of survival. Romina decided to stop treatment and enjoy her life one day at a time. A month later a control scan revealed that the cancer had completely disappeared. The doctors were speechless.

Romina knew this was no miracle but due to her own holistic approach to healing - physical, mental and spiritual. Her mantra was: "Be positive, fight and you can beat this thing." Throughout her ordeal she kept swimming, and collecting trophies - in university games; local, European and World Championships; and in the Olympics in 2008.

Now, as a polished motivational speaker and fundraiser, Romina also represents a children's paediatric hospital specialising in cancer treatment in Padova, Italy.

Imagine rubbing shoulders with this remarkable young woman during the CHOC fun walk. There are two designated circuits, 4km and 8km - so you can choose whichever suits you individually, your family, including the canine members (yes, this is a dog-friendly event), a bunch of friends and your colleagues. Kids under five and canines are free. There'll be spot prizes, entertainment and food on sale.

Enter online at www.entrytime.com. For more information, please call 086 722 7006 or e-mail chocwalk@entrytime.com. You can also contact CHOC's HQ on 086 111 3500 or email bdu@choc.org.za.