

## **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.”*

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. 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, held in Glen Ellyn, which drew more than 900 people. Now in its eighth year, *This Run’s For Jack* has become a regional gathering point for melanoma families and supporters drawing close to 2,000 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.

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, an oncologist at Lutheran General Hospital.

In recognition of the efforts of Jack’s Fund, the Jack H. Marston II Rooftop Healing Garden was created at the Cancer Center of 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 Hospital, Jack’s Fund representatives were recently invited to join the newly formed Oncology Council of Advisors.

In addition to funding research, 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. Jack’s Fund has also distributed sun awareness bookmarks through the summer reading programs and participated in a variety of sun-safety presentations throughout the Chicago area.

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. Lutheran General Hospital is grateful for the support of Jack’s Fund and is proud to honor Sharon Marston, Amy Saletta and the entire Jack’s Fund Board of Directors this evening.