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**PEORIA RESIDENT BECKY ZENTKO TO JOIN HUNDREDS AT  
25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY WALK MS, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, AT TOWER PARK**

**CHICAGO**— Peoria resident Becky Zentko was diagnosed with benign multiple sclerosis in 2008 following a bout of pars planitis, a rare inflammation of the eye that is sometimes linked to MS. A few months following her diagnosis, an MRI revealed evidence of new lesions on the brain and she was re-diagnosed with relapsed-remitting multiple sclerosis, the most common form of the disease.

Zentko's plight began to resemble that of her mother, who also at the age of 49, was diagnosed with MS before passing away from cancer complications.

"Toward the end of her life, I watched the disease steal her mobility and her ability to fight back," said Zentko "When I was diagnosed I was scared and uncertain of the future and I knew I didn't want to let the disease affect me the way it did my mother."

In 2008, Zentko decided to be proactive in battling her MS, participated for the first time in Walk MS, the largest annual fundraiser of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Greater Illinois Chapter. Two years later, she and her husband formed *Bright Future*, their Walk MS team, and began recruiting friends to help them raise funds and awareness.

"I had such a feeling of hope and encouragement that first year—there was so much possibility," said Zentko. "I walked hand-in-hand with my husband and we both knew that no matter what was in store for us, we'd be ok because we had each other."

Zentko and *Bright Future*, now 30-members strong, will once again participate in Walk MS and celebrate the event's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with hundreds of other walkers, Sunday, September 8, at Tower Park (1222 East Kingman Avenue) in Peoria Heights.

Knowing that every dollar counts in their fundraising efforts, Zentko and her team have gotten creative in recent years—holding bake sales, garage sales, and simply asking friends and family to donate what they can. Collectively, they raised over \$3,700 last year and are aiming to top that amount in 2013.

"My son and daughter-in-law sell Mardi Gras beads they bring back from New Orleans and match the donation, it's brought in over \$1,000," said Zentko. "We even have a friend who is collecting donations to cut his hair and donate it to Locks of Love. The possibilities are endless when you get creative."

Peoria's Walk MS event is part of a 13-site network of walks taking place throughout Illinois, bringing over 12,000 people together with a goal of raising over \$2.7 million for MS research, programs and services. To participate in Walk MS 2013 as an individual, volunteer, or part of a team, visit [walkMSillinois.org](http://walkMSillinois.org) or call 1.800.344.4867.

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(Becky Zentko Walk MS, p.2)

Multiple sclerosis, an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system, interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body. The disease affects more than 20,000 individuals in Illinois and 2.1 million worldwide.

The Greater Illinois Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society mobilizes people and resources to address the challenges of everyone affected by MS. Envisioning a world free of MS, the Chapter moves toward that end by driving change through advocacy, facilitating professional education, collaborating with others and by providing helpful programs and services. For more information, visit [MSIllinois.org](http://MSIllinois.org).

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