

# Caregiver and cancer survivor to be honored at Relay for Life



AnnMarie Salviski, left, Emily Reynolds and her sister, Caralyn, will be honored at the June 8 Rally for Life on Grand Island, to benefit the American Cancer Society. James P. McCoy/Buffalo News

**By Samantha Maziarz Christmann** / News Staff Reporter / on May 11, 2013 -

Emily Reynolds needed extra love when she was younger. She was a shy, sensitive kid and suffered from severe, undiagnosed migraines. Her little sister, Caralyn, was always by her side, ready to give her a hug and to lift her up when she needed it.

Now that Caralyn, 8, has been diagnosed with a brain tumor, it's Emily, 10, who is the one caring for her sister.

At this year's Grand Island Relay for Life to benefit the American Cancer Society, Emily will be celebrated as honorary caregiver – someone who has gone the extra mile in caring for someone with cancer. AnnMarie Salviski, who is about to celebrate 10 cancer-free years after being diagnosed with breast cancer in 2003, will be its honorary survivor.

Jennifer Reynolds, Emily and Caralyn's mom, said the girls still walk to school hand-in-hand.

"Emily is in fifth grade now, but she doesn't care if the other kids look at her or think it's weird," Jennifer said. "For so long, she was the one who needed that care. And now she's the one who's going to make sure she's taking care of her little sister."

At an event earlier this year to kick off the 2013 Relay for Life campaign, there was barely a trace of the old, timid Emily Reynolds. As she stood with a stack of index cards and prepared to read a speech before the crowd, something incredible happened.

"She started to read them and then she just looked up. She stopped for a few seconds and then just spoke from her heart," said Becky Sommer-Stufkosky, the event's co-chairwoman. "Can I tell you there was not one dry eye in the room? She brought chills to your spine."

By all accounts, the Relay for Life is a magical event for those touched by cancer and their supporters.

"When we light the luminarias at dusk, you can hear a pin drop," said Salviski. "As we're walking the course, the bagpipes are playing. It's just extraordinary. It's very moving."

AnnMarie said she is humbled to have been chosen as the honorary survivor. She can remember standing in the audience and listening to a previous year's survivor tell her story. Seeing someone who had come through the other side and beaten the disease was an inspiration and gave her hope.

"When somebody is in the midst of cancer and treatment, it's so scary," she said. "I don't care who you are, everybody thinks the worst."

The Relay for Life is an enormous event on Grand Island. It raised a record-breaking \$163,000 last year and has raised more than \$1 million over 10 years.

"For such a small community, it's amazing to see what a big event this is and how many people come out to support it," AnnMarie said.

The relay event will take place June 8 at Veteran's Park. To get involved, call Becky Sommer-Stufkosky at 774-8978 or visit [RelayForLife.org/GrandIslandNY](http://RelayForLife.org/GrandIslandNY).

