

Tough Enough to Wear Pink at SWOSU

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The Southwestern Oklahoma State University rodeo team, Collegiate Activities Board and the SWOSU Athletic Department are selling attractive pink t-shirts that will help raise funds and awareness for cancer research. The groups plan to donate proceeds at the annual Relay for Life event that will be April 27-28 at the new SWOSU Wellness Center. Among the participants are (from left): Chad Ramirez, rodeo coach; Relay for Life Public Relations Director Donovan Fuller; CAB "Tough Enough" Project Chair Jacee Nuttle; CAB Relay for Life Captain Heather Leach; "Tough Enough" Financial Officer Wendy Billington; American Cancer Society District Director Cheryl Smith; and SWOSU Assistant Athletic Director Rouben Tourian.

Are you tough enough to wear pink? That's the question several Southwestern Oklahoma State University organizations on the Weatherford campus are now asking everyone.

The SWOSU rodeo team, Collegiate Activities Board and the SWOSU Athletic Department are selling attractive pink t-shirts that will help raise funds and awareness for cancer research.

The concept was developed by Wrangler to raise funds for the cause by dressing fans and participants in pink at the National Finals Rodeo, held recently in Las Vegas. Chad Ramirez, SWOSU rodeo team coach, brought the idea to the Athletic Department. He and SWOSU Assistant Athletic Director Rouben Tourian then pitched the idea to CAB.

"From there it was off to the races," said Ramirez, who lost his mother to ovarian cancer last year. "Those kids had a great pink bulldog shirt designed and on sale to raise funds within a week!"

Later this semester, the entire SWOSU rodeo team will "go pink" in celebration of life and the fight, according to Ramirez. The efforts have not gone unnoticed. Wrangler plans to send some of their representatives to the SWOSU Rodeo on April 12-14 in Weatherford. The Wrangler reps plan to congratulate the SWOSU students and give extra incentive prizes to all rodeo event winners who are in pink at the time of their victory.

Cindy Dougherty, dean of students at SWOSU, got Wrangler's permission to use the popular idea and slogan and employed SWOSU's Brandy the Bulldog to sell the idea in western Oklahoma. SWOSU Graphic Designer Kyle Wright designed the shirts, which were an instant hit on campus, according to Heather Leach, CAB Relay for Life Captain.

Tourian and Tommy Sides of the SWOSU Athletic Association are helping Dougherty get sponsors for the t-shirts so all proceeds go to the American Cancer Society.

"That is amazing," said Cheryl Smith, American Cancer Society's western Oklahoma community manager. "All I can say is 'wow' at the generosity."

Tourian said several local businesses are buying in bulk for their entire staff as a show of support.

The annual Relay for Life will be April 27-28 in the SWOSU Wellness Center where the "Tough Enough" proceeds will be announced and handed over to Smith at that time.

The \$10 shirts can be ordered through any CAB member, the Dean of Students Office, Tourian or Ramirez. The shirts can also be ordered at the remaining home basketball games and at various campus activities. Sizes range from "Youth M" to "Adult 3X." Tax deductible checks should be made to the SWOSU Foundation.

The participating SWOSU groups say they ARE "Tough Enough to Wear Pink" and they hope everyone else is also.