

They'll walk to help in birth-defect battle

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March of Dimes officials are expecting 5,000 participants in this year's Walkathon May 4.

Plans were announced by Bob Perani, former goalie for the Flint Generals and chairman of the Walkathon.

Rain drenched walkers in the first three Walkathons.

"With sunshine we're sure to have 5,000 people," Perani said.

Last year 3,600 persons were in the walk, most of them youngsters. They raised \$69,000 for research on birth defects and care of children with birth defects.

After the walk, the Flint Rogues Rugby Club will play a match against a

team from Hillsdale. The game will begin at 2 p.m. on the athletic fields behind the General Motors Institute parking lot.

The Rogues regularly take donations for charity from fans at their games.

Walk officials are hoping to collect \$100,000 this year. Participants find sponsors who agree to pay a certain amount for each mile walked. Logs are kept on each walker and the money is collected from the sponsors.

The walk route covers 20 miles. It begins at GMI and winds through the central and northern sections of the city, ending back at the institute.

Registration is from 8 to 9 a.m.

Church services will be at 8:30 a.m.

Walkers are urged to take a sack lunch, spare pair of shoes, telephone change and an identification card.

Water will be available along the route and drinks will be served at the lunch area in Hasselbring Park. Doctors and nurses will provide first aid services at five checkpoints.

Registration forms are available at Genesee County's junior and senior high schools, at Citizens Commercial & Savings Bank branches and at Hamady Bros. stores.

Walkers under 18 must have signed notes from parents.

Some of the money collected by the March of Dimes here is used to support a prenatal clinic, genetic counseling services, an oral cleft palate clinic at Mott Children's Health Center and the newborn intensive care unit at Hurley Hospital.