

Walking With a Cause

- Alicia Katz

The air is colder, lips are chapping, and snow is beginning to fall. It is that time of year again, the time of year when we bust out our coats and huddle close with our families. But this year, let's go even bigger: Let's stretch that hug to our fellow neighbor. There is no better way to do that than participating in a walk for a great cause.

This year, on October 24, at the Boston Common-Parkman Bandstand, the Lupus Foundation of America will be hosting its 2015 *Walk to End Lupus Now*. This annual walk is held in 60 cities across the country in order to spread awareness and raise money for a cure to the disease. Lupus is in desperate need of attention; the average American will more than likely fail to name a symptom of the disease, which is devastating, considering that 1.5 million Americans currently suffer from Lupus according to the Lupus Foundation of America.

Lupus is an autoimmune disease that has the potential to afflict every part of the body. The disease is chronic, meaning that symptoms can last years. Someone who has Lupus produces antibodies to fight off an illness, like most of us do, but these antibodies cannot differentiate between the foreign bodies and the body's own healthy tissue, so the body ends up attacking itself. This can cause inflammation and incredible pain anywhere in the body. Symptoms can range from headaches to anemia, photosensitivity, and even hair loss among numerous others. Lupus can affect anyone, but it is most common in women and people of African American, Asian and Native American descent. It usually develops in people aged 15 to 45.

Most recently in the news, Selena Gomez has come forth with the information that she has Lupus, which has often interfered with her ability to go on tour. She is one of many across the country who continue to struggle daily. Simple actions, like getting out of bed in the morning, can become nearly impossible due to the symptoms.

Currently, the *Walk to End Lupus Now* has raised almost \$85,000, but the foundation remains far from its goal. If you find yourself with nothing to do on Saturday, why not help a good cause? As of now the weather is predicted to be partially sunny and perfect walking weather. More information about the walk can be found at <http://lupus.donorpages.com/BostonWalk2015/>. Whatever you choose to do this weekend, I suggest you grab that coat.