

# South Tahoe cancer survivor to fire Amgen start gun

South Lake Tahoe resident and cancer survivor Valerie Smith will fire the gun to start the largest cycling event in the United States.

Smith was selected to start the May 15 race by Amgen's Breakaway from Cancer, a national initiative to increase awareness of the important resources available to people affected by cancer – from prevention through survivorship.

Smith was diagnosed with ovarian cancer two weeks after her 34th birthday in December 1999. Doctors found three tumors and the cancer had metastasized throughout her abdomen.



Valerie Smith

Today, she has no evidence of the disease and she continues to run not only because she loves it, but also because she feels it keeps the cancer at bay.

As part of the Breakaway from Cancer Amgen Tour of California activities, cancer survivors will not only participate in each of the race starts, but also jersey presentations at each finish and other activities throughout the eight-day event.