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Over \$33,000 raised from annual Jingle Bell Run/Walk

By Zach Levine

Despite the brisk 35 degree temperature, nearly 600 people pounded the pavement of Lake Como with bells on, literally, as they participated this past Saturday in the annual Jingle Bell Run/Walk for Arthritis.

All together, the race ended up raising over \$33,000 for the Arthritis Foundation, a non-profit organization that supports the more than 100 types of arthritis and related conditions.

The event was held on a 5K certified course throughout Lake Como, Spring Lake and Belmar that began and ended at Bar Anticipation.

Participants of all ages came from far and wide to take part in the event, decked out in holiday regalia.

There were numerous runners and walkers dressed like Santa Claus who came out for the event, as well as people wearing antlers, pointed ears and bright, red noses [to look more like Rudolph, not because of the cold weather.]

Numerous members of Lake Como's Borough Council also laced up their sneakers and took part in the event.

Mayor Michael Ryan noted the temperature on race day was "chilly," and he was quite pleased with the event and the overall effort of the local community.

"The race was just wonderful, everyone did a fantastic job," he said.

He went on to say everybody from officials at the Arthritis Foundation to the managers of Bar Anticipation showed their true community spirit by helping throw this special event together.

"From the public works department to the police, everybody stood up to the plate and did their fair share," the mayor stated. "It truly was a wonderful event."

Councilman Brian Wilton had his own team, and at the conclusion of the race, race officials documented that his team had 133 members in all, raising a total of \$6,221.

Other leading teams in terms of fundraising were O'Marathon, who raised \$2,385, and the Frostbiters, who raised \$2,265.

Councilman Wilton said he was thrilled with the final tally for his team with the race, as he only expected to have 75 members on his team raise \$3,000. The final total collected was more than doubled his original fundraising estimate.

Rather than run the course, Councilman Wilton pushed a stroller and walked the race with his wife, finishing with a time of 42:50.

He also agreed with Mayor Ryan that the race was one of the best he has ever seen run locally.

Photos

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Mayor Michael Ryan [center] was just one of many local residents who came out for the annual Jingle Bell Run for Arthritis, held throughout the borough this past Saturday. Overall, the event raised \$33,000. Photo by SUEANNE GOSS, STAR NEWS GROUP

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"It's just a really well run event," he said. "There was great food, great music and no expense was spared."

Two "heroes" stricken with arthritis were honored during the race, as well. These individuals were youth hero Amber Tedesco and adult hero Anita Magnan.

Amber was the youth chair for the event several years ago, and noted it was a pleasure for her to be this year's honoree.

"Educating people about arthritis will make them understand that we are not that different," Amber stated. "Don't let the pain of arthritis stop you from doing what you like to do."

Ms. Magnan, who has Rheumatoid Arthritis, said though she has finished in the back portion of the race for the last several years, she still feels quite accomplished just for completing the event.

"I'm proud to say I finished near last each of those years," Ms. Magnan stated. "Why would that make me proud? Because I finished!"

The men's winner, in a time of 16:32, was Pat Dalessandro. Jeff Propert came in second place with a time of 17:12, and Joe Ronney was the third overall male finisher with a time of 17:46.

Maggie Freeman was the top finisher at a time of 20:27. Allison Campbel came in second place with a time of 21:59, and Kim Pateman was the third overall female finisher with a time of 22:10.

A full list of results for the race are available online at www.jsrc.org.

Information about arthritis and the Arthritis Foundation is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling 1-800-283-7800 or by visiting www.arthritis.org.

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