

Berkeley Heights Charity 5K Charity Road Race and Fitness Walk Raised \$24G in 2012

TheAlternativePress.com Staff

Thursday, June 20, 2013 • 10:01am

BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NJ - The **16th annual Berkeley Heights 5K Charity Road Race and Fitness**

Walk generated **\$24,000.00**, as 550 runners and walkers took to the township streets on Sunday Sept. 16, 2012.

"Once again, we were blessed with a glorious morning so that our participants and spectators could enjoy another wonderful family event," said **race director Dr. Patrick Smith** of Smith Chiropractic in Berkeley Heights.

Nineteen local non-profit organizations and one individual in need will share the money raised at the event through grants from the Smith Chiropractic Foundation, host of the Berkeley Heights 5K.

"This year's donations will bring our 16 year total to **\$129,600**, which are given on behalf of all those (runners, walkers, patrons, and volunteers) who make our charity event possible. We feel very positive that our event continues to be an annual, small-town road race and fitness walk that embraces family fun and friendly competition. As a result, we are able to fulfill our goal of community support through donations to local organizations and individuals in need," said Smith. "The organizations we support directly improve the lives of our neighbors. The notion of neighbors helping neighbors is really what the Berkeley Heights 5K is all about. When I started this event 16 years ago, my dream was to create an annual small town road race, which local residents would enjoy, and together we could raise a few dollars to give back to our wonderful community. With this year's donations, my dream has again been realized and exceeded what I thought was possible," Smith said.

Smith was quick to point out, "Without the generous support of our Corporate and local Business patrons and the dedication of our Volunteers, our charity event would not be possible, which is another example of how great this community is, good people willing to give both time and money to help one another. For me, the real hero's of this year's event are again our sponsors, both the local business community and our larger corporate friends stepped forward in a continued down economy to help make this event our most successful in 16 years."

In addition to 550 runners and walkers who took to the streets, nearly 150 children, ages 2 to 11, dashed across Memorial Field in the free fun runs.

Athletes were pampered by local professional massage therapists Michael Jagiello & Bruna Kruse with free pre- and post-race sports massages compliments of Smith Chiropractic, free blood pressure screenings were performed by sponsors Walgreens and E Medical Offices, a DJ entertained the crowd with music and dancing. Everyone enjoyed munching on fresh bagels and oranges, bottled water and sports drinks were enjoyed by all, as were healthy fruit & vegetable smoothies provided by Mad Nutrition with protein sport shakes provided by Xymogen Nutrition. Post-Race drawings were plentiful as; the John Hawk Agency, an Allstate insurance and financial services firm in Chatham donated an iPod, two iPods were donated by Smith Chiropractic. Weichert Realtors Watchung gave several substantial prizes with lots of other sponsors at tables providing many more free offers. Runner and Walkers moved under a red, white and blue balloon arch donated by Taylor Rental in Berkeley Heights, and all participants received a reusable eco tote goodie bag filled with a custom race tee and lots of free items and offers from our sponsors.

Again this year, the **Berkeley Heights 5K/Red Cross Community Blood Drive** took place during and after the race, across Park Avenue from Memorial Field @ the Berkeley Heights Community Center, with more than 30 individuals presenting to donate life saving blood. As a thanks to all participants in this vital community event, the Berkeley Heights 5K held a special drawing for a **iPAD** which was won by Ryan Sandt from Berkeley Heights. The BH5K/Red Cross community blood drive will again take place@ **the 17th Berkeley Heights 5K Charity Road Race & Fitness Walk, Sunday, Sept. 22.**

Also, representatives from the Wounded Warrior Project were on site to give out information about the organizations important work. The Wounded Warrior Project is a growing grass roots program which assists servicemen and women who have been severely injured during the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the world. If you would like more information about this organization or would like to **help**,go to: www.woundedwarriorproject.org.

This year's top three male and female finishers received custom Lucite race plaques. Receiving the top hardware was men's champion John Hendy from Berkeley Heights, in a time of 18:35, Dean Debonis from Scotch Plains finished second, with a time of 19:11, and Ian StClair from Berkeley Heights took third place, with a time of 19:30.

On the women's side, Champion Tara Zimlik from Branchburg, in a time of 20:07, Susan Kinsella from Millington finished second with a time of 20:49, and Kathryn Curren from Berkeley Heights grabbed third place, with a time of 21:53.

Additionally, 76 age group custom Lucite trophies were handed out to male and female winners in age groups ranging from 10 and under to 80 and over.

"Each year it is very uplifting to see the triumph of human spirit displayed at the Berkeley Heights 5K, Madeline Teska age 6 was the youngest finisher, and Bill Welsh age 83 was the oldest to finish the main event, Smith said. "I never know what kind of good things are going to happen each year, I just know they will. I am honored that our event touches so many people's lives in so many positive ways, for example this year we provided a grant to Hope on the Horizon an expedition for ALS, well during the month after our event, they completed their amazing hike of the 48 high peaks in the White Mountains of New Hampshire and are making a documentary to help raise awareness for ALS."

Dr. Smith added, "This year's Patron support was again overwhelmingly generous. Without the following local business and corporate leaders, during a tough economic time, our charity event and all the good it does, would not be possible."