



Saint Viator Draws More Than 500 Participants to its First Community 5K



The race began at Saint Viator High School, with the five-minute mile pace runners leading the pack.

A pair of Saint Viator High School students set the pace at the school's first 5K run and walk-a-thon to benefit area food pantries.

Junior Billy Krawzak of Palatine led all runners with a time of 19.30, while sophomore Katelyn Hammarlund of Arlington Heights was the first girl to finish, with a time of just over 21 minutes.

"The course was kind of tricky, with lots of turns, but that's what made it fun," said Krawzak, a forward on the varsity soccer team, playing tennis this spring.

Hammarlund was one of nearly 100 members of the girls' soccer program to participate in the event, sponsored by the

school's campus ministry program.

"I'm so happy Viator started this," Hammarlund said. "It's bringing so many people together and really showing our Viator spirit."

In all, more than 500 participants registered for the inaugural event. Those running the 3.2-mile course ranged from a 73-year old down to a 6-year old, though the majority of entries were students. They ran in a light rain but along a neighborhood course that took them past more than 600 homes.

"I think the rain helped, it cooled us off," said senior Brad Klune of Itasca, a member of the school's state championship golf team, heading to Boston College in the fall, who used the run as cross training. "This was my personal best in a 5K."

Besides the soccer team, members of the lacrosse and girls' softball teams participated, as did parents, siblings, faculty, alumni and neighbors of the school, as well as religious from the Clerics of St. Viator that operate the school.

The event was developed as part of a Lenten campaign at the school, enabling students and faculty to reach out and help struggling families in the community.

"In these uncertain economic times, Saint Viator has chosen to focus on the basic needs of individuals and families right in our own community," says Betsy Fons, campus ministry director.

Leading up to race day, students had contributed more than 6,000 non-perishable food items, while participants in the 5K brought in another 1,000 canned goods.

Their entry fees and donations added up to nearly \$10,000, Fons said, which they have earmarked for these food pantries: CEDA Northwest in Mount Prospect, Catholic Charities in Des Plaines, Journeys from PADS to Hope and St. Joseph Home for the Elderly, both in Palatine; and St. Edna Parish Food Pantry in Arlington Heights.

Deborah Scerbicke, dean of students, watched with pride at the start of the event.

"I love seeing all the spirit," Scerbicke said. "Any time you have young people giving back to the community, it's great to see."