

# NSSA NEWS

The Newsletter of Nassau Suffolk Services for Autism/The Martin C. Barell School

Jack's Run Supplement

Summer Special Edition 2007

## A Reason to Run

Jack's Run had its inauguration on June 9<sup>th</sup> at Wilson Park in Mineola. The 5K run/walk was inspired and organized by Michael Miranda and his wife Ondine Slone, partners at the law firm Miranda Sokoloff Sambursky Slone Verveniotis LLP. Their nephew Jack, for whom the race was named, is a 13 year old student with autism. Jack attends NSSA's Martin C. Barell School. The race was planned to raise awareness of autism and to benefit NSSA.

Though race day forecasts of rain and thunder proved false, the crowd of nearly 400 enthusiastic participants arrived ready to run. Runners and walkers came from across Long Island, and also drew from New York City, Westchester and Rockland Counties, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Rolling Thunder, a non-profit group of developmentally disabled athletes, were specially invited guests that enrolled 75 participants.

Jack's Run drew high praise from experienced runners as well as novices. Veteran racer Mike Beard wrote "As someone who's been running & racing for well over twenty years, I must say that first year races always seem to have some bumps & kinks to work out. Your race had none of these and went off as though it had been operating for years.... You and your staff deserve hearty congratulations for an excellent job all around and I hope to see you all again in 2008."

Nancy Marksteiner, an employee of NSSA's Consultation Services Program and race novice, wrote "I just wanted to let you know that you did a wonderful job with this event. This was my first 5K run ever and I really enjoyed it. I can't believe I was able

to run the whole way! Thanks again for making my first 5K run a memorable one."

The race began at the Union Avenue entrance to Wilson Park and ended just past the park's State Place entrance. The course took 15 turns and encountered 31 intersections. In an effort to keep runners on course and ensure their safety, Course Supervisor and NSSA parent Ray Olsen made brightly colored flags for volunteers to wave along the race route. The flags received high praise from the runners. "One touch that I thought was extremely innovative," Mike Beard added "was having volunteers out on the course with bright lime green flags directing runners. I have never seen this in a road race before, and hope that it catches on as it never leaves a runner lacking for direc-

tion. Also, a beautiful finish into the park topped off the day as well."

Congratulations to Franklin Diaz of Farmingdale for his first place finish. Mr. Diaz completed the 5K race in 17:09, a pace of 5:32. Marie Casimir of Uniondale finished first among the women with a time of 21:36, a pace of 6:58. Additionally, 80 year old Bert Jablon easily won his division with a swift time of 31:57, a 10:17 pace!

Trophies were awarded to the top three male and female athletes in each race category. Many thanks to Trophy Depot of New Hyde Park for designing and donating the trophies, that featured the autism awareness ribbon.

Music from local DJ Don Simpson greeted the runners as they crossed the finish line. Special thanks

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Michael and Jack Miranda

# Ready, Set, Go...!



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to Don, who graciously donated his time.

After the race, participants were treated to a delectable breakfast spread. Panera Breads of Carle Place donated a wonderful assortment of scones, muffins, pastries, bagels, and juices. Horn of Plenty, New Hyde Park; Holiday Farms, Roslyn Heights; and Let There Be Bagels, Port Washington donated bananas and

bagels. Our friends at Nestle Waters, Islandia; Gonzo's Mexican Grill of Mineola/Franklin Square; and Kuck's Deli, Mineola donated cases of Poland Spring water. The owner of Kuck's, Sandy, also supervised the water station with Mineola girl scouts performing their community service. NSSA is very appreciative of these generous and delicious donations.

After the race the top five grossing pledges were



also announced and prizes were awarded ranging from Ipods to Gold's Gym products. Michael Mariotti of Mineola, who raised the top pledge amount of over \$1,100, won a flat screen TV. Although barely edged out of prize contention, special mention goes to Heart of Portugal Restaurant on Mineola Blvd., whose waiters collectively pledged almost \$400!

Together sponsorships, pledges, donations, and

registration fees contributed to the over \$30,000 raised from Jack's Run! Thanks to all who gave so generously to make Jack's Run a wonderful success.

We are especially appreciative of the running community for their warm embrace of this inaugural run. Your support means so very much to all of us at NSSA. We look forward to seeing you again next year! ■

# *We would like to thank our sponsors...*

Nassau Suffolk Services for Autism is very grateful for our race sponsors and hopes you will support them as they have supported us.

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