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Block 6: What Team? Wildcats!

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Evanston Community Foundation President and CEO Monique Brunson Jones with Eleanor Revelle, City of Evanston Alderman and former ECF board member

(Sherry Li/The Daily Northwestern)

As dancers began their 15th hour in the tent, students, families and community members gathered in front of Norris University Center for a 5K and 10K run.

“We raised an unprecedented amount from (the race),” said Weinberg senior Erica Grubbs, a member of DM’s special events committee.

Compared to previous years in which runners were required to pay a registration fee of \$20, this year’s runners were able to fundraise prior to the race in addition to an increased registration fee of \$25, said DM’s special events co-chair Connor Smith, a Weinberg senior.

This change in fundraising boosted the total money raised to about \$2,500 from a few hundred dollars in past years, said special events co-chair Jacob Greenberg, a Medill senior.

The race also saw an increase in participants from 20 last year to nearly 50 this year, Grubbs said.

McCormick freshman Akash Borde won the 10K in 40:56. Borde ran track and cross country in high school and is currently training for a marathon in Iowa this June.

“It was a good race,” he said. “I was supposed to do 11 miles today, so I ran another five afterwards. I’m pretty tired right now.”

Borde was awarded a package of five mind-body classes from Exhale Spa, a spa and fitness center in Evanston, for his win, while all other participants were given gift bags of Snapple products.

The race allows non-dancers an opportunity to participate in DM in an alternative way. Weinberg freshman Megan Culligan said she had never run a 5K before, but because she wasn’t able to dance, she wanted to find another way to support DM.

“I didn’t come in last, I don’t think, which was fun,” Culligan said. “But I think I got lapped by someone doing the 10K.”

In addition to students, a number of parents and staff participated in the race. Maureen Palchak, assistant athletic director for community relations, even brought her infant son along for the ride. Palchak said that pushing the stroller as she ran was not as difficult as she thought it would be.

“He did great, he enjoys the view,” Palchak said. “And (pushing the stroller) keeps me distracted from any pain.”

At around 11 a.m., the last of the 10K runners crossed the finish line. Meanwhile in the tent, a musical theater-themed playlist re-energized the students dancing underneath a banner painted with the Block 6’s theme, “What Team? Wildcats!”

“I’m a theatre major, so I love when they do ‘Grease’ and ‘Hairspray,’” Communication junior Amanda Odasz said. “I’m really, really hoping that (they play) a song from Hamilton before the block is over.”

During the block, DM’s community engagement co-chairs Marissa Mizroch, a Medill junior and former Daily staffer, and Justin Marquez, a Weinberg senior, also spoke about the organization’s focus on service this year. Marquez discussed Blessings in a Backpack’s built-in service component, which included packing bags of food for students in Evanston each Thursday during Fall and Winter Quarter.

Mizroch talked about a day of service DM hosted through the Evanston Community Foundation where NU students worked at 30 different sites across the city.

“We’re not only fundraising this year, but we’re giving back directly,” Mizroch said.

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