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News

Going the distance for charity in North Attleboro

BY SAM HAYES FOR THE SUN CHRONICLE

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North Attleboro High School building.

NORTH ATTLEBORO - The high school track team is preparing for a race unlike their usual meets.

It's not for first place, a new personal best time or to qualify for state. It's for charity.

Twenty North Attleboro High School track athletes and cross-country coach Anne-Marie McGrail will race in Providence's Rock 'n' Roll half marathon Aug. 7 to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House of Providence.

McGrail has run for the Ronald McDonald House running club for the past three years, and was planning to do so again when she heard of the half marathon.

The only problem: She needed 20 runners to be an official sponsor for the event. So, McGrail asked her high school team.

"Coach McGrail, we'll run!" they said when I finished explaining the situation," she said. "I was overjoyed at the kids' will."

North Attleboro runner and 17-year-old Jeff Haworth said that his answer was an "automatic yes," and the rest of the team felt the same way.

The team's entrance fee goes toward publicity for Ronald McDonald House of Providence, which helps house families of children receiving medical attention far from home.

The goal is to raise \$200 per runner. The team has raised money by asking for donations at the Kids Day road race this past Sunday and Old Navy at Patriot Place. In addition, there are donation jars elsewhere in town, including the high school, Dairy Queen and Airport Golf. Papa Gino's in Plainville also donated to the cause.

Now, the team's working on getting in shape. The high school athletes are not marathon or half-marathon runners, and most have never run 13.1 miles.

The high-schoolers are meeting with each other and training over the summer, and their coach could not be prouder. "I'm so impressed, so proud. I don't have kids of my own, but this is how parents must feel when kids do the right thing," McGrail said. "North Attleboro should be proud. Official charity status is huge, and it wouldn't have happened without them."

The marathon is part of the national Rock 'n' Roll Marathon Series, which started June 5 in San Diego and will end May 20 in Portland, Ore. The Providence race will begin in front of the Rhode Island Statehouse and loop around up through Brown University and back into downtown.

Besides McGrail and Haworth, North Attleboro runners include: Alex Cole, Briana Kimball, Dominick Pacelli, Forrest Soule, George Augostakis, Ian Flanagan, Jennah Jacobs, Laura Speicher, Matt Keller, Mike Kelleher, Matt Cumberly, Rob Boulanger, Lizzy Blanchard, Alyssa Fontaine, Mike Morra, Mike Kurley, George Bradley and his mother.

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