

Danville Register & Bee

Monday, September 23, 2024

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ARKEMA 5K RACE & ONE MILE FUN RUN

DOZENS RUN FOR FUN, COMPETITION



CHARLES WILDORN, REGISTER & BEE

William Wiebking, the director of the Arkema 5K Race & One Mile Fun Run, interacts with children Saturday morning in Chatham.

Event draws about 150 racers to downtown Chatham

CHARLES WILDORN
Danville Register & Bee

CHATHAM — Lawrence McGinnis likes to support the local community.

"And this is racing season now in September and October," McGinnis, an assistant coach at Dan River Middle School, told the Register & Bee on Saturday morning.

He tries to make it out to about half of the running events in Danville and Pittsylvania County. For the Arkema 5K Race & One Mile Fun Run, he's taken part in it a "handful" of times.

He also enjoys being involved with the running community and seeing friends.

That's why he was one of about 150 who had pre-registered for Saturday's annual Arkema 5K Race & One Mile Fun Run.

The event started some 26 years ago after Arkema, a chemical manufacturer, came to Chatham.

"It's definitely grown," John Sullivan, Arkema plant manager, told the news-

paper. "We've had more and more people participating."

In fact, Saturday's pre-registration of 147 was the most William Wiebking had seen as race director.

Wiebking has been the director for six years and was a volunteer a year prior.

Children first lined up on Center Street for the fun run event. Making a loop, the young runners ended up on Main Street crossing the finish line with loud cheers of "wahoo" and "way to go."

Although fog and low clouds descended on part of the Dan River Region on Saturday morning, the sun was out in Chatham on Saturday morning. And with temperatures in the 70s, it was ideal weather for a fun or competitive race.

The proceeds are divided between Chatham fire and rescue operations and other nonprofit.

"We are very transparent," Wiebking said of where the funds flow.

After everything is "settled" surrounding expenses, historically about \$500 of seed money is left for the next year. Everything else goes to the charitable organizations.

"So the only thing left in our First Citizens checking account is 500 bucks," Wiebking said.

One-third goes to Chatham Volunteer Fire Department and another one-third funds to the Chatham Rescue Squad.

"We work with them throughout the year preparing to make sure we are ready in the case of an emergency," Sullivan explained. "Everything they do for the community is invaluable."

The remaining one-third goes to schools, school organizations or other nonprofits with "no strings" attached to how the money is used.

The only up-front stipulation is that organization must be local.

PHOTO BY CHARLES WILDORN

Chatham

From A1

There's a nominations procedure where volunteers and participants get a voice in what organizations benefit.

A race committee tallies the nominations. Based on the race group's guidelines, if there are enough nominations, the organization will get a percentage of the funding, according to the website.

The more nominations a group gets, the more funding it may receive.

"A big thank-you for the participation goes to the community and the generosity of the money that gets raised," Sullivan said. He also praised the efforts of Wiebking in organizing the endeavor.

Sullivan has been at Arkema, which employees about 60 people, for about 10 years.

He started off in health

and safety before moving to quality control.

"It's definitely been a bit of a change for me," he said of taking over as plant manager.

"We have facilities all over the U.S. and all over the world," he explained of Arkema. "We make a variety of materials."

The Chatham site on Tight Squeeze Industrial Road makes things like coatings for signs, flooring and adhesives used in cellphones and DVDs.

"Some of our material has gone into sneakers, football helmets," Sullivan said. "It's really a wide variety of products that our materials get in there."

Wiebking called Arkema a "big deal, actually."

Its impact is "more than Chatham realizes," he said.

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A child races to the finish line in the fun run part of Saturday's race activities in Chatham.



Danville's John Wilt, who last year joined an elite club having participated in marathons in all 50 states, gets ready for Saturday's Arkema 5K Race & One Mile Fun Run in Chatham.



Runners take off from the start line Saturday at the Arkema 5K Race & One Mile Fun Run in Chatham.

CHATHAM — Lawrence McGinnis likes to support the local community.



Lawrence McGinnis shares a light moment Saturday at the Arkema 5K Race & One Mile Fun Run in Chatham.

Charles Wilborn, Register & Bee

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Charles Wilborn photos, Register & Bee

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Company representatives work a table Saturday at the Arkema 5K Race & One Mile Fun Run
Charles Wilborn, Register & Bee

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Onlookers get cameras and cellphones ready to take photos at Saturday's Arkema 5K Race & One Mile Fun Run in Chatham.

Charles Wilborn, Register & Bee

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