

## INTRODUCTION

For our Leadership Hendricks County community project, our team wanted to do something to further the cause of community „green space“, recreation, or wellness. Specifically, we decided to plan and execute an event to raise money for the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County.

The Foundation is a non-governmental, non-profit organization founded in 2009. According to its web site, the mission of the Foundation is to fund projects that will enhance our county and promote the physical and spiritual well-being of Hendricks County residents. It is a volunteer-governed organization that supports Hendricks County Parks and Recreation in the development of new and existing parks, facilities, and programs. Why does the Foundation’s mission matter? According to standards established by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, each county should have 55 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. With its current population, Hendricks County is over 6,000 acres short of meeting that standard.

The fundraising event we chose to plan and execute was a 5-kilometer run/walk on the trails of McCloud Park. McCloud Park is a 232-acre county park located in the northwest corner of Hendricks County. Because the park is not located close to the major towns in the county, it’s not as well known as some of the town parks. Therefore, we felt that holding a 5K run/walk there would also support a secondary objective of raising the awareness and visibility of McCloud Park across the county.

It was the team’s hope that the trail run would be successful enough to consider turning it into an annual McCloud Park fall event. As of today, it appears that hope will become a reality. The Physical and Occupational Therapy Department of Hendricks Regional Health currently plans to take over responsibility for this event as the department’s annual community project.



## EVENT OVERVIEW

We had several „guiding principles“ that we used while developing the event: 1) Keep it family oriented, 2) keep the operation simple, and 3) keep the operation inexpensive.

In order to make the event family-oriented, we included a 1-mile walk event that started immediately following the 5K run/walk. We also included a pumpkin decorating station for kids. Finally, we set the registration fees at a level where families could afford to participate—all kids were free.



Keeping the operation simple and inexpensive (details in later sections) meant that we were able to minimize the manpower necessary to execute the event and to maximize the profits donated to the Foundation.

Finally, we decided to hold the event on Saturday, 17 October. This scheduling enabled us to „show off“ McCloud’s attributes during the peak of fall colors. It also avoided a conflict with other major Hendricks County events.

## ADVERTISING

We executed our advertising campaign through multiple avenues. The primary method of advertising was the *Hendricks Flyer* newspaper, which donated approximately \$3000 in free advertising, as well as running a Hendricks Parks Department news article during the week prior to the event.

Other advertising venues we used were the Indyrunners.org web site, the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department web site, and the Parks Department’s *Nature Explorer* quarterly magazine.

We distributed electronic announcements and flyers through the Leadership Hendricks County e-mail distribution list. Hendricks Design and Print donated a total of \$500 in

free printing. We used \$225 of that in-kind donation to print 500 tri-fold brochures with registration forms. These were distributed to local fitness centers, libraries, and businesses.

## **SPONSORSHIP AND PRIZES**

To solicit sponsorship for the event, we established the following levels of sponsor contribution/benefits:

### **Logger Level - \$100**

- Name on signage at event
- 1 free entry

### **Miler Level - \$250**

- Name on signage at event
- 2 free entries
- Name on marketing material in 3<sup>rd</sup> tier font (shirts)

### **Mini-Marathon Level - \$500**

- Name on signage at event
- 4 free entries
- Name on marketing material in 2<sup>nd</sup> tier font (shirts, advertisements, registration forms)
- Opportunity to provide marketing items for goody bags

### **Marathon Level - \$1000**

- Name on signage at event
- 5 free entries
- Name on marketing material in 2<sup>nd</sup> tier font (shirts, advertisements, registration forms)
- Opportunity to provide marketing items for goody bags
- Opportunity to provide marketing material at event tables

### **Triathlon Level - \$2000**

- Name on signage at event
- 5 free entries
- Name on marketing material in 2<sup>nd</sup> tier font (shirts, advertisements, registration forms)
- Opportunity to provide marketing items for goody bags
- Opportunity to provide marketing material at event tables
- Premiere placement in event advertisements
- Company name noted in all announcements at event
- Company touted as event sponsor on park-related websites for 6 months (w/hyperlink)

We collected a total of \$5800 in cash donations from event sponsors. The title sponsor for the event was Hendricks Regional Health, which contributed \$2500. Other cash sponsors were Hendricks Power, Banning Engineering, Target Metabolism, Eagle Ridge Civil Engineering Services, First National Bank, American Structurepoint, Wild Birds Unlimited of Avon, Larry E. Nunn & Associates, Citizens Bank, Deer Creek Golf Club, and the John Sparzo family.

We collected a total of approximately \$4160 in „in-kind“ donations from the following companies: *Hendricks Flyer* (advertising), Hendricks Design & Print (brochures/signage), Athlete’s Foot in Avon (award prizes), Kroger’s in Danville (fruit), Aqua Systems (water), and Arbor Terra (pumpkins/straw bales).

On the day of the event, we held a random drawing for small door prizes contributed by local businesses. The door prizes were free or reduced-price certificates. We distributed a total of 24 door prizes from the following companies: Massage Envy, McAlister’s Deli, Texas Roadhouse, Olive Garden, On The Border, O’Charley’s, Charbono’s, Pizza King, Starbucks, Hendricks Regional Health Childbirth Center (movie tickets), and TGI Friday’s.

## EVENT SET UP

The registration area consisted of 4 tables: 1 for pre-registrants, 1 for same-day registration, and 2 to hold the T-shirts. This area also included a “Registration” sign and a sign (on easel) listing the event sponsors. Hendricks Regional Health (the event’s title sponsor) installed 2 canopy tents on-site near the nature center shelter and one of these was used for registration.



Registration fees were established as follows: \$20 per individual/\$40 per family if pre-registered, \$25 per individual/\$50 per family for same-day registration. Registration age groups were Under 10, 10-15, 16-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, and Over 65.

The door prize drawing table was located near the registration tent. It included a sign listing the door prize donators and a plastic pumpkin to collect door prize tickets. The blank door prize tickets were handed out at the registration table and registrants wrote their names on the back of their ticket. All door prize tickets were drawn during the trail run/walk and the prizes were waiting for the winners when they finished.

The refreshment area was located adjacent to the registration tent. It consisted of 2 tables--1 for fruit and 1 for water/Gatorade. In addition, one water station was set up near the halfway point of the course. Kroger's in Danville donated 1 box each of apples, oranges, and bananas. Aqua Systems in Avon donated 15 gallons of water. The Hendricks Regional Health Physical Therapy Department provided 4 large water jugs and also donated 25 packets of Gatorade mix. The leftover fruit was donated to the Sheltering Wings Center in Danville.

The finish area was located separately from the start/registration area. The finish line was marked by ground paint and orange cones. After the line, we set up 2 finisher chutes marked by orange cones (1 each for male and female). At the end of each finisher chute was a table where finisher names and ages were recorded. One person timed the race with a stopwatch and called out times at the finish line. We did not record finisher times.



Athlete's Foot in Avon donated \$500 in store certificates. These certificates were used as first-place award prizes for runners and walkers in each of the eight age groups. First-place runners received a \$20 gift certificate and first-place walkers received a \$10 certificate. In addition, the first-place overall male and female finishers received an additional \$20 gift certificate.

The 1-mile walk event was started immediately following the start of the 5K event. This event was not timed or recorded. Every child finisher received a small plastic medal for finishing. The medals were donated by Sharon Severy.

The pumpkin decorating event was set up under the nature center shelter. The mini-pumpkins and bales of straw were donated by Arbor Terra. Other decorations included scarecrows and pots of mums.



The course was marked with signage provided by Hendricks Design & Print through an in-kind donation. 1K, 2K, 3K, and 4K signs were used to mark distance along the route. Black arrow signs and ground paint were used to mark changes in trail direction. Caution signs were used at the two creek crossings to slow the runners down. The total cost of signage for the event (to include registration, pumpkin decorating, and finish area signs) was \$275.



The T-shirts for the event were made by Hurst Impressions, Inc. for a total cost of \$879. The first 100 registrants were guaranteed a shirt. We made a total of 155 shirts, which

included 120 white T-shirts for the run and 35 gold T-shirts for our team and volunteer workers. The cost for white T-shirts: \$5.48 sm-xl/\$6.48 xxl. The cost for gold T-shirts: \$5.95 sm-xl/\$6.95 xxl.

The North Salem Fire Department provided an on-site Emergency Medical Technician to deal with any medical emergencies. We also posted 7 volunteer workers with radios and cell phones on the course to report emergencies, monitor the course, and generally encourage the participants. We're pleased to report that there were no emergency medical issues.

## RESULTS

The weather on 17 October was unseasonably cold with temperatures in the low 40s, but dry and mostly sunny. The trails were in good condition, thanks to the hard-working staff at McCloud Park who mowed and cleared trails that week in preparation for the event.

The total direct cost of executing the event was \$1013. This included the T-shirts, pumpkin decorating supplies, and other miscellaneous items. All other expenses were handled through in-kind donations as detailed previously.

The total number of registrants for the event was 91. This number consisted of 71 people who were pre-registered and 20 who registered that morning. The total amount of money raised through registrations was \$1275.



The total amount of money raised through direct cash sponsorship was \$5800.

BOTTOM LINE: this event raised \$6062 for the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE**

Next year the project linking the north and south parts of McCloud Park via an antique truss bridge will be complete. This year's event took place on the south side. We recommend the course be revised to incorporate both north and south side trails with a bridge crossing.

This year's event had a start time of 0900, with registration from 0730 to 0830. We discovered that it's still pretty dark before 0800. Also, people were still arriving and registering after 0830. We recommend shifting the event start time to 0930, with registration from 0830 to 0915. This will 1) ensure adequate set up time after sun rise, 2) warm things up a bit, and 3) better accommodate later arrivals since McCloud Park is a good distance from county towns.

We established separate courses for the 1-mile walk and 5K run/walk. We didn't really have a formal finish line for the 1-mile walk. We recommend setting up the 1-mile route so that the kids finish with a little more fanfare, preferably at the same location as the 5K participants.

On the registration form we had participants sign up for the 5K run *or* the 5K walk. This created an additional 16 age categories (8 male and 8 female) for which we had to award competition prizes. We recommend changing the registration form to eliminate separate running and walking categories for the event.

## **ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Besides all the generous support provided by the companies and organizations listed above, our team would also like to acknowledge the following individuals for their support: Suzanne Whicker, Executive Director of Leadership Hendricks County, William Roche, Superintendent of the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department, and the members of the Board of the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County.

## **SUMMARY**

Our team's overall goal was to further the cause of „green space“, recreation, and wellness in our community. We chose to do this by planning and executing an event to raise money for the Parks Foundation of Hendricks County--an organization dedicated to improving the county parks system. We also wanted to raise the visibility of McCloud Park, a gem „hidden“ in the northwest corner of the county. Based on the level of participation *and* the feedback of the participants, we feel that we successfully accomplished our objectives. Additionally, we successfully established a template that will make this an annual Parks Foundation fundraiser. It is our hope that, over time, the *“Dash for the Parks”* will grow to become a Hendricks County highlight!



#### Team Members

Front Row: Amanda Jensen, Julie Wilson, Lesley Rhoden

Middle Row: Sharon Severy, Suzanne Whicker (LHC Exec Dir), Denise Ridgway

Back Row: Amy Watson, Shane Sommers, Mike Warner