



Members of the Konicek family at the 2015 Family Fitness Run with friends from the Yapp family.

Make It a Fourth of July Tradition

REGISTER FOR ADVOCATE GOOD SHEPHERD HOSPITAL'S
FAMILY FITNESS RUN

SHORTLY AFTER THE SUN RISES on July Fourth, runners take their positions at the corner of Cook and Main Streets in Barrington for Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital's annual "Family Fitness Run". The scenic, competitive 10k/5K run and 2/K walk takes athletes up a few hills, past stately homes in neighborhoods lined by mature trees, and back to the finish line. In U.S. Olympics' style fashion, custom awards in gold, silver, and bronze, embossed with the 2017 race's logo, designed by a Barrington High School student, are handed out to the top three finishers.

Age-group awards for men and women, and participation awards for everyone who races that day cap off the ceremony and get everyone excited about the next event, the Fourth of July parade. The race takes place on the parade route, from 7:15 a.m. to about 8:15 a.m., and the awards ceremony wraps up right before the parade begins, making it a convenient start to the day's activities.

Originally called the "Run for the Arts" when it began more than 20 years ago, the competitive race

raises money for the Barrington Cultural Commission, a 21-member organization that coordinates and promotes cultural programs in Barrington put on by organizations dedicated to the arts.

"We decided that the name 'Family Fitness Run' was more in line with the hospital's commitment to community health and fitness," said Rick Gerwin, Fitness Team Lead at Advocate Good Shepherd Hospital Health & Fitness Center. "It started as a way to support the arts and cultural events in Barrington and we've continued that tradition with an additional emphasis on family health and fitness. A lot of runners have made it part of their Fourth of July tradition. Parents run with kids. We have about 500 to 550 participants each year."

From the first time they participated in the race, more than two decades ago, the Konicek family of Barrington Hills—Frank and Marimarie with their five adult children and one daughter-in-law—became hooked. They loved competing for bragging rights and two free tickets to the Catlow for the "family with the most participants" award. They also got a kick

from hearing Dave Nelson of the Barrington Cultural Commission, traditionally emcee of the event, yell out, "there's another Konicek" as each family member crossed the finish line. Multiple weddings and births later, the Koniceks have never missed a race. As many as 17 to 18 of them participate each year. Even an injured ankle didn't keep Colleen Konicek away. She participated on crutches, walking the 2K with her mom, Marimarie, and the youngest of the family's 15 grandchildren. "That's how much fun it is and how much a part of our lives it's become," she said. "You want to be out there whether or not you can actively run it."

FOR SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Different sponsorship levels are available to local businesses, offering them a variety of ways to promote their companies at the event. Sponsorship fees will be waived for all nonprofit organizations that supply 12 volunteers to work the race that day, manning a water station that they are encouraged to decorate with signage advertising their organization. Nonprofit's names will also appear on the race T-shirt.

Interested sponsors and participants can email Rick Gerwin at richard.gerwin@advocatehealth.com for more information. 

Melanie Kalmar is a freelance writer, specializing in human interest and business features. When she's not writing, she enjoys spending time with her family.