

Road race to honor memory of girl slain by drunken driver

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NARRAGANSETT - The road race weaving through the streets of Narragansett next month will be more than a contest for prizes and praise. It will also serve as a celebration, a remembering, if you will, of a young life taken too soon.

Kaitlyn DeCubellis, 13, and 44-year-old Marsha Bowman, of Narragansett, died last Oct. 29 when the Toyota Camry in which they were riding was slammed from behind on Route 4, near the 95 merge in East Greenwich.

Stephen M. Reise, 39, of Jamestown, pleaded no contest to five charges, including drunken driving, in connection with the accident. He was sentenced to 14 years in prison and 15 years' probation.

Now, more than six months later, the Katie DeCubellis Memorial Foundation is planning the first 5K run/1-mile walk in the girl's memory. Scheduled for June 11, the event is an effort both to remember the vibrant, popular eighth grader and to help the community heal.

We've all grieved, we're still grieving, but I wanted this to be a day for people to celebrate her life not just grieve her death, said Sheila Felice Hanlon, the event's organizer.

The DeCubellis case became a rallying point for those in favor of tougher drunken-driving laws in Rhode Island. And it may have been influential in pushing a bill through the state House of Representatives that would lower the legal blood alcohol concentration from .10 to .08.

The race, hosted by the Katie DeCubellis Memorial Foundation and sponsored by the Narragansett Lions Club, is another way to bring the dangers of drunken driving to the public's attention, Hanlon said.

We want to further education and make people aware of the dangers of drinking and driving. We want to raise money so we can raise awareness, she said.

Proceeds from the run will be earmarked only for educational purposes and academic scholarships. The foundation's board of directors will decide the details of the distribution.

The foundation's goal is to certainly keep Katie's memory alive, but it also is to bring about the awareness on the dangers of drunk driving and substance abuse, Hanlon said.

Aside from the memorial race, the foundation is also planning a September golf tournament and sponsoring a \$500 college scholarship for a Narragansett high school senior. It will likely sponsor a more broad-based academic scholarship sometime in the future, Hanlon said.

The one-mile walk will stay on school grounds and will step off at 2 p.m. from Narragansett High School. The 5K run through town starts at 2:30 p.m.

Refreshments and socializing will follow. Wheelchairs are welcome, but in-line skates and strollers for insurance reasons are not.

It pays to register early. Not only do the first 500 people to sign up get a T-shirt, they will also get a fee break. Registration before June 4 costs \$13 (\$10 for students high school age or younger). Race day registration costs \$15.

For more information on the run, look to <http://community.web-tv.net/katiesrun/KatiesRun>. To register or volunteer to help on race day call Kenny Rosbottom at 783-2456 or send e-mail to katiesrun@webtv.net.

Hanlon said that interest in the event seems high she's already had application requests from as far away as Missouri.

This is a healing event for the state of Rhode Island for anyone who's ever been affected by drunk driving, she said.