

Francie's Family 5K donates \$4,000 to Remsberg Park

by Robin Maliszewskyj

We want to thank the town of Middletown for all the support over the years in all different aspects of this tragedy and in the race itself," said Angela Phillips, sister of Francie Bilotti and organizer of this year's Francie's Family 5K Run/Walk, held Saturday, March 23. "They have supported us with route coverage from the Sheriff's office and use of the town park for packet pickup, as well."

Phillips said over 300 people participated in this year's 5K event, with 218 finishing the race. Over 40 children participated in the fun run. Phillips said participation among the 60-plus crowd was a little lower than usual this year due to the cold weather.

The Francie's Family 5K fund will make a \$4,000 donation to the Middletown Valley Athletic Association toward the construction of the planned pavilion at Remsberg Park. The MVAA hopes to complete the structure by the beginning of summer.

Phillips said, "That was slightly more than our net profit; we had some money in the bank. It is nice to be able to give them a little bit more of a push to get it done."

Girls Scouts under the leadership of Jennie Mettert-Young, womaned the water station at the race's half-way point on Linden Boulevard.

Girl Scouts, under the leadership of Rhonda Fulton, collected food for the Middletown Food Bank, leaving the event with 273 donated items. Five boxes of these food items were delivered by the Middletown Valley Bank, who collected them at their branch locations in the weeks leading up to the event.

Phillips said, "This year for the first time, Middletown Valley Bank (MVB) got involved, and I mean thoroughly involved."

She said MVB not only supported the event financially, but also encouraged several of their employees to volunteer. Phillips said the bank's Chief Financial Officer Michael Hill was practically the first one to arrive and the last one to leave at both Friday evening's packet pick-up and Saturday's race event.



Prior to the start of the Francie's 5K race, those at the starting line did aerobics to warm up. Photo courtesy of Maya M. Pilkington Photography.



Girls Scouts in Troop 81374 collect food items for the Middletown Food Bank at the Francie's Family 5K Run/Walk. Photo courtesy of Maya M. Pilkington Photography.

Naming both the town and the MVB, Phillips said, "It would have been tough without their

support. Those two organizations have been a huge part of this year's race."