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Turkey Trot gains ground with record 4,000 runners

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December 7, 2010

By **PATRICK BUTLER** pbutler@pioneerlocal.com

A record 4,000 runners and walkers took part in the 14th annual Edison Park Turkey Trot Thanksgiving morning.

According to organizers, proceeds from this year's event went to three epilepsy-related charities: Danny Did Foundation, Emmett's Hope and the Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Chicago.

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Park Rebecca Boudos, Amanda Milnamow and Alison Milnamow, all of Chicago, wore their feathered finery to run in last year's Edison Park Turkey Trot, held Nov. 26, 2009. The race through Edison Park took place this year on Nov. 25, Thanksgiving Day.
| File photo

The 5K (3.1 mile) Fun Run/Walk for Charity started and finished at Edison Park Fieldhouse, 6755 N. Northwest Highway.

A special "Gobble Gallop" event for children younger than 12 started an hour earlier. Competitions included a 50-yard dash for 3- to 6-year-olds, an eighth-mile run for 7- through 9-year-olds and a mile race for 10- to 12-year olds. This year 400 children took part, which according to Turkey Trot founder Mary O'Connor, was another record.

"We're still counting the money," said O'Connor, noting that each participant paid \$20 in advance and \$25 after Nov. 22.

"Over 600 registered on the morning of the race, so we ran out of T-shirts," O'Connor said, adding that latecomers wanting the souvenir T-shirts should call the hotline, (773) 792-9005.

She added that organizers haven't yet decided whether to order more to give to the late-registrants, but will take their cues from caller response.

"We knew we were going to have some growth, but we didn't anticipate this," O'Connor said. "People love this Turkey Trot. It's becoming a neighborhood tradition" for spectators as well as participants.

Winners in the men's division of this year's Turkey Trot were Mike Egle, of Glenview, with a time of 16 minutes, 17 seconds; Adam Wolf, of Hackensack, N.J., 16 minutes, 18 seconds; and Kevin Reed, of Park Ridge, 16 minutes, 24 seconds.

Top-finishing women included: Allegra Mayor, of Palo Alto, Calif., a

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Northwestern University law student, with a time of 18 minutes, 28 seconds; Catherine Bryson, of London, 18 minutes, 38 seconds; and Stephanie Hughes, of Edison Park, 19 minutes, 3 seconds.

The Northwest Side-based Danny Did Foundation was created in memory of 4-year-old Danny Stanton, who died in his sleep Dec. 12, 2009, during an epileptic seizure. The tragedy prompted Danny's family to organize a foundation aimed at educating parents and doctors about SUDEP (Sudden Unexplained Death in Epilepsy) and the already-available medical-alert systems warning of a potentially fatal seizure during sleep.

Tom Stanton, of Danny Did Foundation, said more than 50,000 people die from seizures every year in the United States. Together with the Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Chicago the foundation has distributed more than 8,000 SUDEP-information brochures to families, hospitals, doctors and epilepsy organizations nationwide, he said. In the past year the foundation has provided seizure-warning devices to 19 families in 13 states.

Epilepsy affects more than 3 million Americans and 50 million people worldwide. More than 45,000 American children younger than 15 are diagnosed with epilepsy every year.

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