

The Harvard Crimson ONLINE EDITION

News

Students, Staff To Run for Funds

Harvard runners in Boston Marathon will raise money for Project Health and PBH

Published On 9/30/2005 12:00:00 AM

By JOHANNAH S. CORNBLATT

Contributing Writer

Ranging from distance-running veterans to first-time competitors, 50 Harvard students and staff members will lace their shoes for the Boston Marathon in April—part of a new initiative to raise funds for social-service organizations on campus.

The Harvard College Marathon Challenge (HCMC), launched this year, selected participants from a pool of 500 people who entered a lottery that closed last Saturday. Those picked will collect pledges to benefit both Project HEALTH and the Phillips Brooks House Association (PBHA).

“The idea [for HCMC] arose because I saw the opportunity to build community among undergraduates and the folks who live and work with them,” said Craig F. Rodgers, a counselor at the Bureau of Study Counsel. “There are three prongs—community building, raising some funds for causes that are near and dear to the hearts of many undergraduates, and training for the marathon itself, which is a way of improving one’s physical and psychological health.”

Runners with all levels of experience will train together for the 26.2-mile run from Hopkinton to Boston, which will be held on Patriot’s Day, April 17.

“I always just wanted to run a marathon,” said Jacqueline E. Stenson ’08, who has never done it before. “I figured a marathon was a really good way to get myself in shape and to prove what I could do.”

HCMC participant Matthew R. Conroy ’07, by contrast, raced all summer and is running another marathon next weekend.

“Their plan is to make it a group effort in preparation for the event, despite the fact that a marathon is an individualistic sport,” said Conroy, who is also a Crimson editor. “The goal is to have people of all different levels fund-raising together.”

Undergraduates participating are required to raise at least \$500 between now and March 2006. Graduate students, proctors, and staff members need to raise at least \$1,000.

Organizers noted that these figures are lower than the minimum requirements for several other groups running for charity.

For example, Tufts has a \$1,000 fund-raising minimum for undergraduates and a \$2,300 minimum for employees. The Dana-Farber Cancer Institute has a \$2,500 minimum, according to HCMC’s website.

Each runner must pay a \$135 registration fee. But, as a fund-raising incentive, all Harvard College undergraduates who raise at least \$1,000 will be eligible to receive a full refund of their registration fee,

according to the website.

The HCMC online service provides each runner with an individual web page to take credit-card pledges. Runners can personalize their web pages by writing blurbs or uploading pictures. Donors can then read about the runners and post messages as they would on a facebook.com “wall.”

The service sends automatic “thank you” e-mails to donors after they have pledged.

Rodgers credited Associate Dean of the College Judith H. Kidd for supporting the new initiative.

He said the idea for HCMC came from his work with Athletic, Academic, and Personal Excellence—a partnership between the Department of Behavioral Health and Academic Counseling and the Athletic Department—which is designed to provide support for student-athletes at Harvard.

“[HCMC] seemed like an opportunity to exploit the nexus between physical and psychological wellness at Harvard College in a really new and exciting way,” Rodgers said.

<http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref=508706>