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Art aches

Date: May 8, 2006 **Section:** News

CRYSTAL LAKE - For some, Sunday morning was a walk in the park. For others it was an invigorating test of physical stamina. About 375 early risers participated in the ninth annual Bob Blazier Walk and Run for the **Arts** and Corporate Challenge.

"I'm running very slowly," said Rick Schildgen, 49, of Crystal Lake. "I'm not competitive. I'm just doing it to say I did it and hopefully I'll complete it."

Joel Keller, also 49 of Crystal Lake, was a bit hesitant to admit it, according to his friend, but he was approaching the race a bit more competitively.

"It's fun because it's a local event," Keller said. "You get to see people from the neighborhood."

The annual event, in its ninth year, aimed to raise about \$15,000 for the Raue Center for the **Arts**.

"I feel pretty comfortable we met our goal," said Holly Richard, assistant director of the Raue Center.

Race participants of all ages took to the streets of Crystal Lake for both 5K and 1 mile runs.

Liz Vinton of Crystal Lake stood near the finish line on North Williams Street to cheer on her 9-year-old daughter who was running the mile race.

"I'm not a runner, but I'm a good spectator," Vinton said. "That's my limit."

Her daughter, Sarah, said she enjoyed her first race and planned to run

in others to prepare for joining her school's track or cross county teams.

One runner missing from the pack this year was Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce president Bob Blazier, for whom the race was named. Blazier, who's run in the past eight races, said he took this year off to get a different perspective.

"I've never seen the end of the race," said Blazier as he watched runners cross the finish line. "I get to watch this year as the people are crossing."

Blazier, 79, said his age had him "picking my races now." He said he planned to resume running again in next year's event.

The money raised on Sunday was critical to the Raue Center's "Mission Imagination" program, which connected artists and youth, said Bill Dwyer, Raue Center board chairman.

The youth program is one component of the center's larger goal of exposing more people to the **arts**.

"The race also introduces some people to the Raue who may have never been inside the theater before," Dwyer said.

An award ceremony, which featured a performance by a magician and David Radford, was held in the theater following the run.

RACE WINNERS:

Top 5 males

1. Bill Jensen, 40, Algonquin: 17:59
2. Keith Brezezinski, 44, Lake Villa: 19:07
3. Patrick Harris, 41, Crystal Lake: 19:25
4. Owen Klenske, 17, Marengo: 19:45
- 5: Steve Emricson, 47, Woodstock: 19:55

Top 5 females

1. Cari Setzler, 27, Wonder Lake: 19:28
2. Brenda Napholz, 38, Crystal Lake: 20:05
3. Laura Jones, 31, Marengo: 20:32

4. Jean Weber, 39, McHenry: 21:23

5. Kristy Searles, 24, McHenry: 21:29

By BRANDON COUTRE

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