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Residents run for Raue

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That last mile was a doozie. But a stiff headwind didn't slow the enthusiasm, or the times, of runners, joggers and walkers participating Sunday morning in the 10th annual Bob Blazier **Run for the Arts**. About 350 people took on the 5K and 1-mile routes as part of a fundraiser to support the **Raue Center for the Arts**.

Many of those early-morning warriors stayed around after the race and poked into the art booths set up **for the inaugural Raue Center Cultural Festival** that immediately followed.

Mike Patterson, a native of Crystal Lake now living in Chicago, made the trip back to his hometown to **run** in support of a hometown organization. The 25-year-old posted the fastest time **for** men, ringing in the 5K at 16 minutes and 53 seconds.

"The last mile was straight into the wind," Patterson said. "By then, you're usually out of gas anyway."

But Patterson didn't mind. An avid runner who races an average of every other week, he said he was glad that his entry fee would help keep the fine arts here.

"They've really done a great job on the [**Raue Center**] renovations," Patterson said. "It's nice to see a race supporting something in your hometown."

As he spoke, children danced in the middle of Williams Street to live music blasting from a stage. Artists selling everything from hand-made wood carvings to original acrylic paintings alternately set up booths and cheered on racers making their way down the homestretch.

The atmosphere, as well as the music, fresh food and children's

activities, continued on Williams between Brink Street and Crystal Lake Avenue until 4 p.m.

Holly Richard, **Raue** Center assistant director, was kept busy coordinating race awards and managing a crew of about 50 volunteers. But she didn't mind.

"I am very, very, very happy," Richard said. "This is a great day."

Julia Clemen may have agreed - had she been awake and able to talk. The 6-week-old infant from Crystal Lake took part in her first 1-mile fundraiser Sunday, snuggled up to her mother, Kate Clemen.

"It was great, a beautiful morning," the elder Clemen said. "It was a good excuse to get out and walk."

And while Clemen admitted that it had been a while since she last visited the **Raue**, she said she most likely would bring her family back **for** next year's race and cultural festival.

That event should be even better than this year's, **Raue** Center Executive Director Richard Kuranda said.

"The goal is to build [the cultural festival] to two blocks, 40 booths and a bunch of food vendors," he said. "We thought 'We have all the runners down here anyway, we may as well open it up.'"

"We are just amazed."

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