

# NORTHWEST HERALD

## Race raises nearly \$25K for arts center

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CRYSTAL LAKE – The annual run for the Raue once again resulted in nearly \$25,000 for the Crystal Lake-based visual and performing arts center.

The 16th annual Bob Blazier Run for the Arts attracted a record-setting 454 participants and generated about \$24,000 to support programs at the Raue Center for the Arts.

While the total is down from last year's \$26,200, Richard Kuranda, the Raue Center's executive director, said community support for the theater continues to grow.

"The event has grown every year, and we are thrilled that over the past four years more and more corporations and community groups are participating," Kuranda said of Sunday's event. "It really is tremendous to see companies like Eisenmann and Intren participate next to the Rotary, the Chamber and the Crystal Lake library."

The event featured the signature 5-kilometer race through historical downtown Crystal Lake, along with a 1-mile walk and a 50-yard dash for children.

Bob Blazier, the event's namesake and former superintendent of Crystal Lake School District 47, said the fundraiser is more important each year as schools scale back art programs.

"My wife and I are both former educators, so it pleases us a lot to help kids pick up some dramatic skills and learn about theater and the arts," Blazier said. "It does fill a gap."

Raue Center programs include Williams Street Repertory, its in-house production company; Sage Studio, which offers theater, film, and improvisation classes; and Mission Imagination, an educational performing arts program that serves thousands of children, Kuranda said.

Blazier said he expects the annual race to continue and improve each year with additions such as the corporate challenge, which was implemented this year. But there is one change he is glad has not happened.

"When we started this 16 years ago, we didn't have any idea how long it would go," he said. "I always say I'm just glad it's not a memorial race."