

After 5 years, 5k now a habit

More than 350 participants come out to help Little Sisters of the Poor and their residents

Written by **NICHOLE DOBO** – Sunday 9/18/11
The News Journal



Sister Christine Thomas heads for the finish line Saturday during the fifth annual Nun Run 5K at the Jeanne Jugan Residence along Salem Church Road. / THE NEWS JOURNAL/SUCHAT PEDERSON

MORE INFO

To help support the Little Sisters of the Poor Jeanne Jugan Residence, go to www.littlesistersofthepoordelaware.org. The next fundraiser will be the 28th Annual Spaghetti Dinner at Jeanne Jugan Residence on Oct. 23. For more [information](#), call 368-5886. Learn more about the annual Nun Run, including race results, at www.nunrun5k.org. Runners and walkers are both welcome.

They hope the event will be habit-forming.

Now in its fifth year, the 5K Nun Run had more than 350 participants for a fundraiser that supports the Little Sisters of the Poor Jeanne Jugan Residence, a home for the elderly who are of modest means. As usual, several sisters joined in the race, mostly walking, but spryly jogging near the finish line as their religious habits flapped in the breeze.

The race took place near Newark at the Jeanne Jugan Residence and a nearby neighborhood.

"It really is a healthy event for our runners, and it's a beautiful thing to see how much our residents enjoy watching it," said Sister Dorothy Struzinski.

The love and compassion shown by the sisters, combined with a love of running, are what drew Jennifer Mattes to round up a group of friends to participate in the Nun Run. Mattes and several other friends, including Leann Barnett, bobby-pinned long, white fabric in the shape of a religious habit to their heads.

It was a nod to the sisters who run the Jeanne Jugan Residence.

"They are so humble and so generous," said Barnett, of Newark.

At the race, sisters were there greeting runners with water and bags stuffed with gifts after they crossed the finish line. They worked a bake sale stand and mingled with the crowd. There was also fresh fruit, pizza, a DJ, chicken sandwiches, massages and beer awaiting those who finished the race. It made for a festive atmosphere in the parking lot in front of the residence.

Many of the people who live at the Jeanne Jugan Residence came outside to watch the runners -- who looped around the building -- and say hello to visitors. Irene Dugan and Mildred Gamble sat on a bench after seeing all that was offered in the vendor booths set up in the parking lot. Dugan bought some homemade biscotti at a bake sale stand as a gift for a friend. The women said they are grateful for people who donate to the home and to the sisters.

"This really is a good place to be," Dugan said. "We really like it here."

Dozens of businesses donated to the event, including billboards that the sisters credit with boosting participation from about 200 in 2010 to more than 350 this year. There is almost no overhead for the event, Sister Dorothy said, because all the things they give away and use to promote the race are donated.

"All the proceeds go for the care of our residents," she said.

Contact Nichole Dobo at 324-2281 or ndobo@delawareonline.com.

