

The Hopkinton Independent

“Team Papa G.” Raises Money for ALS Care

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By: Jean Cann

Current and former Hopkinton residents teamed up at the 35th Falmouth Road Race on August 12 to support “Team Papa G.” George Kerr, an outgoing man known as Papa G. has ALS and completed the Falmouth Road Race in his motorized wheelchair. Kim and Nick Chisholm, both Hopkinton natives whose parents still live in town, walked with Kerr helping to raise funds for Compassionate Care ALS (CCALS). Hopkinton Athletic Association president Tim Kilduff ran for the team.

The Falmouth Road Race, one of the country’s best-known races, fielded over 10,000 runners this year and offered numbers to 43 runners and walkers raising funds for CCALS, a Falmouth-based non-profit organization that offers a wide-range of services and support to ALS patients and their families. CCALS runners raised \$116,000 this year.

Ron Hoffman, Founder and Executive Director of CCALS, said “We support people physically, emotionally and spiritually.” While his organization covers equipments like wheelchair ramps not covered by most insurance plans, he notes that the equipment is a small piece of what they do. “ALS is so much more than physical symptoms,” he said. “We do our best to practice the art of listening...the connection that happens helps us form an intimate relationship.”

George’s wife, Marie, confirms the importance of CCALS.

“They’ve been wonderful with equipment, but even more than that they’ve been a part of our life on this journey—that’s the most wonderful thing they’ve given us.” Marie walked the 7.1-mile race course in high heat and humidity alongside her husband and the Chisholms. “To see George’s expression as he got to high-five people along the course was worth it,” she said. “I think I’ll always remember the day.”

Kim Chisholm, a former student of Marie Kerr at Marian High School, received a call from her former teacher about her plans to walk in the Falmouth Road Race and instantly agreed to join the team.

“I knew that my dad [Kilduff] was running as part of the CCALS team and were we happy to be able to show our support as well,” said Chisholm. “Nik and I have never participated in the Falmouth Road Race. We didn’t know what to expect but it was better than we could have anticipated and seven miles went by quickly. We had a great time with George and Marie and seeing how much George enjoyed it made it all worth it. He was giving high-fives out to all the fans along the way and a thumbs-up to everyone who yelled out, ‘Go Sox!’ A lot of the runners gave George a pat on the back as they went by and told him, ‘Way to Go’ and ‘Great Job.’ George was just as determined to cross the

finish line as all of the other participants in Falmouth, we were very proud to be a part of Papa G's team!"

Kerr, himself, sent an e-mail to a group of friends and supporters titled, "What a Day We Had." The e-mail, riddled with jokes, brims with enthusiasm about the experience and CCALS. "We came in first in our division (handicapped electric wheelchair division)," he wrote. "But there was only one in our division-ma- haha...we then went to a party Ron had for all the ALS runners and supporters. Hope next year he rents a hall with air conditioning in it. At the party I met so many great people who were care givers for someone they lost to this God awful disease or the new ones trying to figure out what hit them or where do we go next for help. This is where Ron Hoffman (compassionate care ALS) comes in and another girl that was there also named Maryann Singerson. These are the greatest two people in you need assistance, questions, or help with ALS."

For more information about CCALS please log on to www.ccals.org.