

Race's spirit beats clouds in Oklahoma City

Courage Run 2010 raises money for rehabilitation at Châtenay Square

Light rainfall did not put a damper on the runners and walkers involved in the sixth annual Integris Jim Thorpe Courage Run Saturday.



PHOTOS BY PAUL HELLSTERN, THE OKLAHOMAN

"We've been doing this for six years and a bit of rain isn't going to mess us up at all," said Susan Shepard, clinical manager and an organizer of the race. "We're always excited about this event no matter what."

Jordan Evans, a sophomore at Deer Creek High School, completed the 5K run and said he thought the rain felt good. "The rain didn't bother me, it actually felt great while running," he said. "It's a great reward to participate knowing it's for such a good cause, and I'm glad my grandma got me involved."

Shepard said the Courage Run raises money for treatment that traditional medical reimbursement does not cover for the hospital's patients. The hospital specializes in treating people suffering from brain and spinal injuries, stroke, brain tumors or who have had amputations or other orthopedic conditions, according to the hospital's website.

The event included a 5K run and a one-mile run and was for runners and wheelchair athletes. Shepard said more than 600 people participated in the race.

Not just humans were involved, but pets as well.

Phil Mosca, a physician at Southwest Medical Center, was accompanied by Spike, a therapy dog for patients. Spike was dressed for the occasion in a "Spikeman" cape.

"This is the only major event held in southwest Oklahoma City that really touches many people," Mosca said. "The Courage Run is only continuing to grow and get bigger, and what better way to support those needing it."

Hayley Savage, 13, said she and her father, Jeff Savage, were both excited and ready to participate for the first time. Hayley was one of the wheelchair participants, along with other Greater Oklahoma Disabled Sports Athletes team members. "I think this event is really great and lots of fun," Hayley said.

Jeff Savage said he believed the staff and workers for the Courage Run did a good job making people feel comfortable, having things organized and keeping people excited.

There were things for everyone to do, even those not running or walking in the event.

"I'm just here to help keep an eye on my friends' daughter while they run," Melissa Dandis said. "It's great that they have jumping houses for the kids, snacks, face painting, live music ... to keep everyone entertained."