



Princeton ROTC Run For The Warriors™

From: HOPE FOR THE WARRIORS™

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PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY, April 25, 2009 - Hope For The Warriors™ hosted the *1st Annual Princeton Army ROTC Run For The Warriors™* on Saturday, April 25th held on campus at Princeton University. Spirits were high, running times were fast, and the weather was perfect.

Over two hundred and thirty runners came out to show their support for the nation's wounded service members. "The turnout was great for a 1st annual race, but what really made the run so successful was the dedicated time and work of the volunteers," said Emma Riley, Hope For The Warrior's™ Northeast Event Coordinator. Many of the volunteers are personally invested in the Hope for the Warriors™ mission: to ensure that the sacrifices of wounded and fallen warriors and their families are never forgotten nor their needs unmet. Christy Burkart and Kimberly Geonnotti are two such dedicated supporters, showing up early Saturday to run the registration table. Burkart is a Gold Star wife who lost her husband in 2006 and a Hope For The Warriors™ spouse scholarship recipient, while Geonnotti is a Gold Star mother who lost her son in 2007. Other volunteers traveled all the way from New York City.

Princeton's ROTC program provided the backbone of the Run For The Warriors™. "You can't beat the Army ROTC for great organization and planning," says Toni Aurilio, Race and Team Development Director, Team Hope for the Warriors™. "They truly made this event possible and we look forward to working with them in the future." From hanging posters on campus, to posting the colors and running the course, Princeton ROTC was there every step of the way.

After registration, runners browsed through booths of local supporters, including: Trenton JROTC; Fort Dix Family Moral, Welfare, and Recreation; The Air Force; and T.C.N.J. Strong. Princeton's Gold's Gym brought personal trainers to demonstrate a stretch routine for the runners. Princeton's 94.5 radio station kept the runners motivated before the race, and Roadhouse Band blasted tunes during and after. The band also sang a beautiful version of the National Anthem to lead the group in the opening ceremony.

As the opening ceremony began, New Jersey Patriot Guard members lined the road with their flags whipping in the air, while the wounded and families of the fallen gathered before the runners. LTC Stark, of Princeton ROTC, said a few words as the wounded and family members were honored with three presentations: an American flag, symbolizing America's dedication and appreciation for our service members; a Hope For The Warriors™ coin symbolizing that their sacrifices will never be forgotten nor their needs unmet; and a copy of the "Thank You

Song.” As one runner and fellow service member said: “It was a very good race and being a veteran of OIF, I was proud to be a part of it.”

Immediately after the ceremony, runners lined up and the race began. Despite the beating sun, runners had incredibly quick times on a course that took them through the beautiful Princeton campus with views of the Delaware and Raritan Canal Towpath as well as glimpses of Carnegie Lake. Awards were presented to male and female over-all winners and top achievers in designated age categories. At the finish, runners refueled with refreshments provided by WaWa and one of the Gold Race Sponsors, Bovis Lend Lease.

Hope For The Warriors™ wishes to thank everyone who came to show their support on Saturday and a special thank you to the following race sponsors who made the Princeton Run For the Warriors™ possible: Bovis Lend Lease, Gold’s Gym, Alumni and Friends of Princeton ROTC, North Brunswick Pub, and Tiger’s Tale Bar and Grill.

For more information about Hope For the Warriors™, future Run for the Warriors™ races or to find your race time, please visit www.hopeforthewarriors.org.

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Hope For The Warriors™ is a national, non-profit group actively seeking to ensure that the sacrifices of wounded and fallen warriors and their families are never forgotten nor their needs unmet, particularly with regard to the short and long-term care of the severely injured. For more information, visit their website at www.hopeforthewarriors.org.