

MACOMB COUNTY

Spirit and Support

OU volunteers keep things moving at Let's Move Macomb Festival of Races



OU student Tyler Prisby, left, was the 5k race winner with a time of 20:02.9. The Macomb County resident beat 372 other runners to earn the top spot. Nikki Hansinger, was the women's overall 5k winner with a time of 21:58.

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Mount Clemens residents know the Let's Move Macomb Festival of Races as one of the first local signs of spring – and they know OU is a key part of making it happen.

The annual event, which returned Saturday, April 27 for its ninth year, features a 5K sponsored by OU, as well as a half-marathon, 10K and a one-mile run, all going through downtown Mount Clemens.



An enthusiastic group of volunteers cheered on runners at the OU water and spirit station during this year's Let's Move Macomb Festival of Races.

For the past five years, OU graduate student Megan Fisher has volunteered at the Festival of Races. Fisher decided to volunteer at the event for the first time in 2015 because it was held in Mount Clemens, her hometown. Then, she says, OU's outreach efforts in Macomb County drew her to study here.

"It was a nice way to go back home and see my family, but also to interact with OU," Fisher said. "OU wants to show that it's participating in local events and dedicated to this community. It's just a great way to show how OU is thriving."

OU has sponsored the event since 2013, with more than 300 alumni, staff, faculty and students participating – either running as part of Team OU or volunteering at OU's water and spirit station. This year, there were 38 Team OU 5K runners. OU student Tyler Prisby was the 5k race winner with a time of 20:02.9. The Macomb County resident beat 372 other runners to earn the top spot.

Mike Fontana, chairman of the Macomb Health and Fitness Foundation which organizes the festival, describes OU's sponsorship and volunteer support as crucial.

"Handing out water to runners and cheering them on as they race may not sound like a big to-do, but it is," said Fontana. "When you have 500 people running, the impact and importance of the OU volunteers at the water and spirit station can't be understated. Our Board – and I know our runners – appreciate and value their presence."

For Fisher, volunteering at the Festival of Races means more than just cheering on runners and handing out water bottles. It's a way to show her hometown what she loves about her school – and, that OU isn't just confined to Rochester Hills.

She said, "People in Mount Clemens get to talk to the OU volunteers and they're like, 'Wow, this is probably a cool place to go to school.'"