

RESIDENTS SUPPORT Clearwater For Youth and Honor PHIL DOGANIERO

making a difference

By Dawn Daugherty, resident contributor

Phil Doganiero would have loved it – a perfect November morning along Clearwater’s sparkling waterfront with his family and many friends all present to celebrate Phil’s love for exercise – lots of exercise. That scene, said his brother Frank, was Phil’s world, a world that ended way too soon.

The inaugural Phil Doganiero 3 Bridge Half Marathon, 5K, and 1 Mile Fun Walk was held Saturday, Nov. 11 and benefitted Clearwater For Youth and their mission that no child will be denied the ability to play in a sports program because of financial concerns. By any measure, the race was a huge success.

Approximately 1,000 runners participated including 300 who ran the half marathon over three bridges: Clearwater’s Memorial Causeway, Sand Key Bridge and Belleair Causeway Bridge. More than 600 competed in the 5K race. Frenchy’s Restaurants was the presenting sponsor and other major contributors included the Doyle Family, Spectrum, Pinch A Penny, Crown Automotive, Boos Development, the Martino Family Foundation and Skilled Resources. The race’s two-day Expo included displays by Quality Boats and Crown Auto, and Chili’s; The Original Crabby Bill’s along with Clear Sky on Cleveland provided food and drink.

The pre-race packet pick-up was a one-of-a-kind event at Baystar’s newest restaurant, Marina Cantina on the Thursday before the race. Sponsored by Clearwater Gas System, some 300 runners, sponsors and their guests enjoyed a festive, private party featuring live music overlooking the beautiful Clearwater Beach Marina. WDAE radio’s Ronnie Lane emceed both Thursday’s pre-race event and Saturday’s race.



Peter Dimmitt of Island Estates and the Dimmitt Automotive Group was pleased to participate and support Clearwater For Youth.

It was all to honor a man who was considered by many to be Clearwater’s leading ambassador and best friend. Doganiero, a graduate of Clearwater High School and Florida State University, a nationally recognized entrepreneur, humanitarian and dedicated athlete, passed away in 2015 at the age of 58. He loved to compete and did so in numerous marquee athletic events around the country. His vision was to hold a race that took runners over Clearwater’s three bridges.



As always, Island Estates residents and friends had a blast showing their support for a great community event.



Clearwater Police Chief Dan Slaughter, left, and Allen Braswell of Island Estates.

“There is not a race like this anywhere,” said Clearwater For Youth Chairman Brian Aungst. “Once the word gets out, we figure this will be not just a signature event for our organization, but a signature event for the running world in the south-eastern United States.”

JC Daugherty, a Clearwater for Youth board member who considered Doganiero a mentor, said, “A race over the bridges that were part of Phil’s training regimen and his vision was the perfect tribute.”

Many agreed with Daugherty’s idea and supported the event to make it the success it was.

Dave Bair, the owner of Quality Boats, was a sponsor. “Phil and I grew up together. We swam together. He was nice enough to invite me out to go biking with him in Colorado. Over time, he said I would only go with him to the big events so he nicknamed

me ‘Big Show.’ Well, that’s interesting because this is the ‘Big Show.’ The ‘Big Show’ is here, Phil. It’s in your honor and the support has been amazing.”

Kristen Tenaglia, the top women’s finisher in the half marathon, cruised the 13.1-mile course with a blazing time of 1:25:17.8. “My husband and I knew Phil and we wanted to come out and support the race,” Kristen said minutes after crossing the finish line at Coachman Park. “It was a beautiful course. The views throughout the race took your mind off of running. It was great to see so many people here. I would assume it will just continue to grow.”

Race participant Peter Dimmitt said the Dimmitt Automotive Group was pleased to be a Supporting Sponsor of the 3 Bridge Race. “Phil and the Doganiero family have always been great members of the community. Phil was a family friend and we feel that it is right to support CFY,” he said. “It was an honor to be part of this event.”

The race’s chairman, Clearwater’s Chief of Police Daniel Slaughter, summarized it this way: “It all came together very smoothly. My tagline leading up to the race was that we wanted to properly memorialize Phil and raise money for Clearwater For Youth, which the latter is something Phil would have insisted on. And I think we accomplished that and more. We exceeded the amount of runners that is normal for a first-year race and the sponsor feedback was fabulous. They were extremely happy. I think they came on board at first to be a part of the tribute to Phil, but in the end, I believe there were very pleased with the exposure as well.”



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