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## Franklin Farm 5K returns to Cumberland on Sept. 25

Back after year's absence, road race looks to raise money for NRI Food Pantry, town's historic farm

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Aug 18, 2021



CUMBERLAND – When Kim Chula-Maguire created the Cumberland-based Ravenous Runners nine months ago, she wanted to form an inclusive running club that helped bring the community together and valued “the three F’s”: fun, fitness, and philanthropy.

And while the fun and fitness have been evident in the club’s weekly group runs and get-togethers at the Ravenous Brewery, so has the philanthropy. Not only have the Ravenous Runners raised money for Haymakers for Hope, but they also recently donated nearly 180 pounds of used running shoes to Sneakers4Good and collected over 600 pounds of food for the Northern R.I. Food Pantry.

Speaking of the Food Pantry, that local organization, as well as the town's historic Metcalf-Franklin Farm, promise to benefit from the Ravenous Runners' newest endeavor – revitalizing a 5K that was regarded as one of the region's top first-year road races in 2019, but wasn't held last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Saturday, Sept. 25, the Franklin Farm 5K will return to the roads of Cumberland, and the proceeds from the 3.1-mile run/walk will not only go toward the Food Pantry, but will also assist with the preservation and maintenance of the popular farm and homestead on Abbott Run Valley Road.

"I had the long-term goal of creating a road race, but I was going to wait until the club had been in existence for a year before doing so," said Chula-Maguire. "But with the demonstrated success of the club and our one-year anniversary coming in November, I was starting to entertain ideas of what to do next. That's when a serendipitous series of events was initiated that made it seem like building this race was meant to be."

"The Food Pantry was so impressed with our campaign to collect food that (club member) Rosemary Gately executed that they reached out to us to do more for them," added Chula-Maguire. "We had just started talks with the pantry to organize a very small event to help raise funds when the Franklin Farm started seeking volunteers to revitalize their 2019 road race."

The race, which was created by Brad Dean, who is the CEO of Dean Warehouse Services, Inc. and owner of the Upper Deck Baseball Academy, and his wife, Theresa, attracted 131 runners and walkers to that first race, and not only did everyone enjoy touring the 3.1-mile course, but they also received a free entry into the farm's Harvest Festival & Tractor Show that opened its gates after the race.

When road races began to return to the region this year, the Deans were unavailable to coordinate the 5K, "and the farm's leadership was overwhelmed with the idea of executing a race, so they started to solicit volunteers for a planning committee," noted Chula-Maguire, whose family has volunteered at the farm for over a decade.

"I immediately saw the potential for a union of the farm and the Food Pantry and their mission of alleviating food insecurity, and the Ravenous Runners with our mission of philanthropy and a long-term goal of having a road race," added Chula-Maguire. "I have directed road races in the past, and I knew that with help from the farm, the pantry, and volunteers from my club, we could get this thing off the ground."

The wheels to get the race up and running were set into motion a couple of weeks ago, and with only eight weeks to prepare for it, Chula-Maguire realizes that time isn't on her side to execute a big event that will draw hundreds of participants.

"The goal this year is just to re-establish the race, even if it's smaller in scale, with the long-term goal of an annual event that grows to be a mainstay on the community calendar," she remarked. "We're just thrilled to be a part of an event that will help the farm and the pantry and bring the community together – all goals I had when I started the Ravenous Runners' running club."

As for the course, it will again start and finish near the farm on Barn Drive. Runners and walkers will head down that street, take a left onto Lonesome Pine Road, cross Abbott Run Valley Road, and then continue onto Rawson Road.

The course will actually zip into Massachusetts and North Attleboro for a third of a mile before a left onto Paine Road brings the race back to Cumberland. After touring some of the neighborhoods near Rawson Pond, the course takes two right turns onto Woodcrest Drive and Rawson Road and heads back to the farm for the finish.

The race will begin at 8:30 a.m., 90 minutes before the start of the festival. The first 100 entrants will receive a tech T-shirt, and everyone will again get a free entry to the festival, which will offer tractor and pony rides, food trucks, hayrides, farm and barn tours, and craft vendors. There will also be a big raffle on hand at the festival, and everyone will also receive a free ticket for it.

Anyone will also be able to donate non-perishable food items at the race, and there will be a spot near the registration tent to drop them off.

Cash prizes will also be awarded to the top three overall male and female runners.

The fee to participate is \$25 until Aug. 31, \$30 between Sept. 1 to 24, and \$35 on the day of the race. Visit <https://runsignup.com/Race/RI/Cumberland/FranklinFarm5K> to sign up for the road race or [www.franklinfarmri5k.com](http://www.franklinfarmri5k.com) for more information or on how to become a sponsor for the race.