

Dear Palatine Cross Country and Track Alum/Parent:

It is hard to believe that this coming year at Palatine will be my tenth. It is astounding to think back on the success our boys and girls cross country and track teams have enjoyed during this time. Ten state trophies. Multiple state champions and numerous conference titles. Many of you ran, threw, or jumped on those teams, and many more of you participated on great Palatine track and cross country teams before my time. Many parents devoted hours of volunteer time at the Palatine Invite and the Palatine Relays. In my ten years, I have seen what devoted runners, coaches, and parents can accomplish, but as athletes and coaches we too often take for granted the privilege it is to run and live without restrictions. Now it is time to see what we can accomplish for others.

On Saturday, July 17th at 8:00 am, the Palatine boys and girls cross country teams and the Early Bird Running Program will sponsor the **First Annual "Run for a Better Life."** The event is an hour-long run at the PHS track where participants gather pledges and try to run as many laps as possible. The event is a joint fundraising venture for the Palatine boys and girls cross country teams and the Disability Outreach Foundation. All proceeds will be split evenly between the two groups.

A non-profit founded in 2001 by Palatine High School alumnus Bryan Pratt, the Disability Outreach Foundation seeks to "promote health, wellness, and positive mental attitude among youth and adults with physical disabilities through reinforcement of those ideas and support of like-minded organizations." Check Bryan's web site out at <http://www.disabilityoutreach.org>. The money we raise will help disabled individuals live with greater freedom, independence, and happiness.

Money collected for the cross country teams subsidizes equipment needs for our athletes as well as team events and experiences throughout the year. Proceeds for this year's boys team will subsidize our varsity trip to Colorado in late July.

This cause is a personal one for me. My brother, Chad, was born in 1978 with cerebral palsy. Many of you have met him at Palatine cross country and track meets. My family has worked throughout our lives to give Chad the opportunity to live an independent life. My parents have purchased custom conversion vans, motorized wheelchairs, ramps for the van and our house, a customized bathroom, and countless other devices that help Chad maintain a job and live life to its fullest. Unfortunately, many disabled adults struggle after high school to afford these necessary assistive devices. My brother is lucky to have the support he does, but we can fill that gap for others who aren't quite as lucky.

Here is how you all can help:

- 1) **Be a runner.** The goal is simple: Run or walk as many laps as you can in an hour. If you run, we ask that you gather as many pledges as possible. You can gather pledges as a flat donation or on a per lap basis. Pledge sheets are included with this letter. Entry fee is \$5.
- 2) **Volunteer at the event.** We need lap counters, breakfast organizers, and water station workers.
- 3) **Donate or pledge money.** If you are traveling or cannot attend, help us out by making a donation or pledging one of our athletes. All checks can be made payable to the *Palatine Cross Country* and sent to Palatine High School, 1111 N. Rohwling Rd., Palatine, IL 60074 c/o Chris Quick.
- 4) **Donate** breakfast items, fruit, juice, coffee, for our after-run party.

Come be a part of this special opportunity to help out our current runners and disabled adults who need help living a free and independent life. Many of you worked closely with the physically handicapped during high school through Fred Miller's adapted PE classes. Now, let's see how we can be of even greater assistance and ensure everyone a "Better Life."

Chris Quick  
Boys Cross Country Coach

Joe Park  
Girls Cross Country Coach