

Knoxvillians run to show support for diversity

YWCA Knoxville to host growing Race against Racism

Deborah Ince
Staff Writer

Eliminating racism and empowering women has always been the prominent goal of YWCA Knoxville since its establishment in 1899. In keeping with this mission, the YWCA hosts its annual Race against Racism on Jan. 14 at the YWCA Phyllis Wheatley Center.

"We're about celebrating diversity throughout the community," Danielle Benson, YWCA's Director of Operations, said.

Each year, the event offers participants the opportunity to listen to guest speakers and to enjoy many different entertainment venues.

This year, Steven Waller, UT associate professor of recreation and kinesiology, will be speaking about diversity and increasing its awareness throughout the community.

Beginning at 11:30 a.m., participants complete a 5K run around many historic landmarks that emphasize the progression of diversity. A one-mile walk, stroller walk and stroller run are also offered this year. Awards will be presented at 1:45 p.m. to all participants.

"We want to promote a better understanding of the diverse population in the community and of ways to create diversity every day of the year," Benson said.

Held annually, the race has been one of the major events for YWCA for over 15 years, and Benson is pleased with its expansion over the years.

"The race is growing every year," Benson said. "We've already got over 300 people signed up for this year."

Corporate sponsors and non-profit organizations often partner with the YWCA in helping host the event.

Benson also said that student volunteers are needed to

help with the race and encourages UT students to become involved. Anyone who is interested in helping on race day is encouraged to contact her directly at the YWCA for more information.

"We are actually very involved with UT this year," Benson said.

Several UT organizations have already signed up to participate, including UT Volunteers Against Racism, UT LGBT and UT Social Work Society. Students can also fill out a registration online on YWCA Knoxville's website if they would like to run.

Registration is \$25, with every participant receiving a long-sleeved T-shirt on race day.

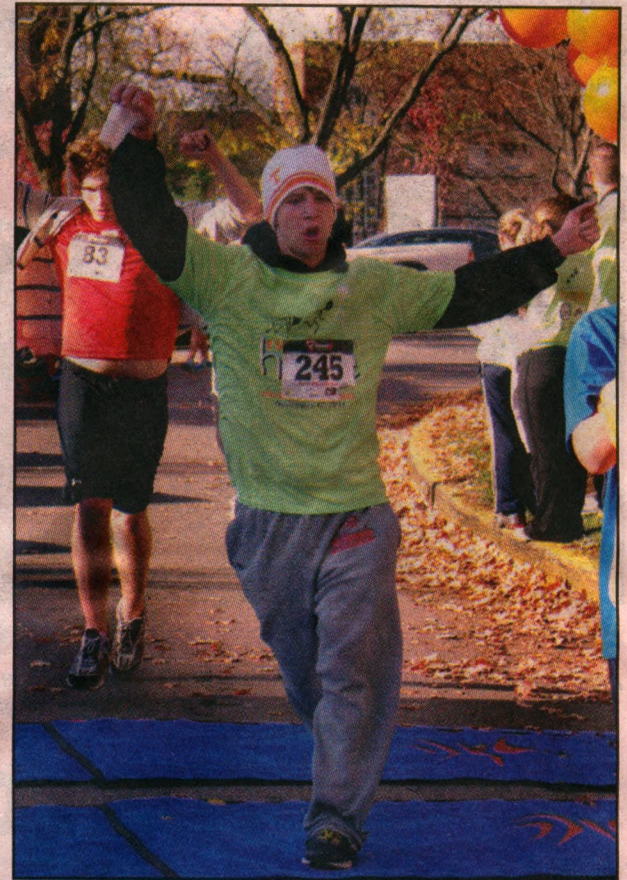
All race proceeds benefit the many free programs YWCA Knoxville offers, including a seniors program, domestic abuse assistance and an after-school program benefiting middle school students.

"I think everyone has had a close connection to YWCA Knoxville somehow even if they didn't know it," Benson said. "It may be a server at the restaurant you eat at or a neighbor. This organization has touched everyone in Knoxville somehow."

"After the race, many participants have said that it was so inspirational. It gives time to talk about racism and celebrate diversity. We try to provide tips and tricks on how to confront such issues in the community and the workplace and offer practical things you can do to encourage diversity."

Jordan Dronebarger, sophomore in graphic design, thinks that the event is very important for the community.

"I think it's really good," Dronebarger said. "Racism is still pretty relevant in today's society. I mean, we've come a long way, but there are still issues that need to be addressed."



Tara Sripunvoraskul • The Daily Beacon

Mark Newman, undecided sophomore, crosses the finish line during the Running with Hope 5k in Circle Park on Saturday, Nov. 12. The YWCA Knoxville will be holding its annual Race against Racism on Jan. 14, starting at the YWCA Phyllis Wheatley Center.

Fraternity brings grad students together

Victoria Wright

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