



Hampden County Sheriff's Office Hosts Record-Breaking Sheriff's Shuffle to Combat Domestic Violence

HOLYOKE – The Hampden County Sheriff's Office's hosted the 2024 Sheriff's Shuffle 5K and 1.5-mile on Sunday, Sept. 29, at Ashley Reservoir in Holyoke, with a record turnout of more than 700 runners and walkers setting the largest participation in the event's 25-year history.

Sheriff Nick Cocchi spearheaded this year's initiative, aimed at addressing the epidemic of domestic violence in Western Massachusetts. The event successfully raised crucial funds to support victims, with this year's proceeds benefiting the YWCA of Western Massachusetts, an organization dedicated to empowering and assisting individuals affected by domestic violence.

"I'm beyond grateful for the more than 700 people who supported this year's Sheriff's Shuffle 5K. Together, we raised much-needed funds and awareness for the fight against domestic violence, a cause that touches far too many lives in our community," said Sheriff Nick Cocchi. "Events like this remind us that when we stand united, we can bring about real change. The strength and generosity of our community are powerful, and I'm proud to see so many people come together to say, 'Enough is enough.' Let's continue this momentum and keep working to protect survivors and break the cycle of violence."

The YWCA of Western Massachusetts, based in Springfield, has experienced a significant increase in demand for its services, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023 alone, the organization provided vital support to nearly 12,000 men, women, and children through its various programs.

"The Sheriff's Shuffle 5K was an incredible event that united our community in the fight against domestic violence. We are so grateful for the outpouring of support from everyone who participated. Together, we are raising funds and awareness that will help protect and empower survivors. The partnership with the Hampden County Sheriff's Office is vital in ensuring that resources and support are available for those in need. This fundraiser sends a strong message: we will

not stand by in silence; we will act and make a difference," said YWCA CEO Elizabeth Dineen.

Joseph Harris, of South Hadley, a Hampden County Sheriff's Office employee, was the 5K race winner with a time of 18 minutes, 12 seconds. Lee Belisle, of Belchertown, was second in 19:03, and Pete Syper, of Three Rivers, was third in 20:39. Jennifer Murray, of Westfield, was the first place female runner, finishing the 3.1-mile race course in 22:53. Lydia Pacheco, of Springfield, was the top Sheriff's Office female staff finisher and second female overall with a time of 23:18. Victoria Stone, of Chester, was the third female across the finish line in 23:22.

The Sheriff's Shuffle has long fostered community involvement and collaboration with local agencies, bringing together participants from all walks of life to unite for this important cause. The day included camaraderie, refreshments, food, awards, a raffle with exciting prizes, and live entertainment, creating an atmosphere of community spirit and engagement.