

Norwalk Citizen

Lightfoot runners cover nine miles in memory of Eaccarino

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NORWALK -- It might not have been an easy run for everybody, but those competing in last Saturday's [Lightfoot Running Club's](#) race certainly had plenty of motivation to complete the 9-mile course which started and finished at Calf Pasture Beach.

The Lightfoot Running Club's third to last race in this year's series was also the 13th Annual Ian James Eaccarino Memorial 9-Mile Race, for the benefit of the [Courage To Speak Foundation](#). Representatives from the Courage To Speak Foundation, including CEO and founder [Virginia](#)

Katz of Norwalk, were on hand to offer support and recognize runners who ran in memory of Eaccarino, Katz's son, whom she lost to a drug overdose at the age of 20 in 1996. He had worked at Calf Pasture Beach and planted trees that line the beach.

Norwalk's [Eneas Freyre](#), 35, led a field of 163 finishers in a time of 51 minutes and 21 seconds to take his second-straight title in the series. The top female runner, also from Norwalk, was [Julie Heaphy](#), 29, who finished sixth overall in a time of 59:18. [Tim Burns](#), 28, of Hyde Park, N.Y., and formerly of Norwalk, cracked the top-10 with a ninth-place finish in 1:01:48.

"It's great to be a Norwalk resident and be able to come out and support Norwalk events," said Freyre, who also won the 7-mile run the week before.

Katz was thrilled with the support, both in runners--some of whom knew Eaccarino--and in volunteers. Among 32 helpers was 7-year-old Norwalk resident [Charlie Doyle](#), who has helped pass out water, among other duties at the annual race, for three years.

The Courage To Speak Foundation's mission statement is "Saving lives by empowering youth to be drug free and encouraging parents to communicate effectively with their children about the dangers of drugs."

"It was very inspirational," Heaphy said of the event. Heaphy added that the at-times windy conditions felt good but slowed runners down at some points in the race.

"It was breezy a lot of the way," said Trumbull's [Marjorie Bondi](#), who is moving to Norwalk this month.

Norwalk's [Kate Stoker](#), 44, came in 73rd overall, crossing the finish line in a time of 1:18:23. Stoker said the breeze wasn't enough to offset the warmth and humidity. "To me, it was way too hot. I'm not very good in the heat, I'm not very good in the humidity, and I'm especially not very good in the sun," she said.

Stoker noted, however, that the camaraderie among runners makes it an enjoyable experience throughout the summer series. "It's fun--a good group of people who come out for these races."

Stoker has run marathons and is preparing to complete three of them this fall alone. She says the organized Lightfoot Running Club races help in the preparation process. "I love it. It's like doing a training run but you have friends around you--you have company," she added. Among them was her training partner Kathy Muro of Westport.

Many of the runners aren't training for a full marathon but, rather, the series-ending half marathon which will be held Sept. 10 at [Fox Run School](#). There's one more race--the 11-miler at [Silvermine School](#) on Aug. 27--before the half.