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Education-association members not afraid to walk the extra mile for a good cause

By Blair Eberhardt-Ladd

Members of the Tredyffrin Easttown Education Association (TEEA) participated in a fund-raising walk Thursday, May 14, to raise money for two community organizations. The walk, which was called the T/E Trek, took place at Chesterbrook's Wilson Farm Park.

Among those involved in the T/E Trek were teachers and members of both T&E Care and FLITE. Those participating in the event donated their registration fees to these organizations, both of which provide support to families with children in the T/E School District.

A picnic in the pavilion at Wilson Farm Park started off the event, and the charity three-mile run/walk started at 4:15 p.m. Some of those involved brought their spouses, children and dogs with them.

"The event went well, despite some afternoon rain," said Susan Houseman, an English and communications teacher at Conestoga High School. "It was supposed to be a 3-mile trek but the rain cut it short."

Despite the rain, the Trek got lots of people involved and brought different community groups together.

"It's rare that teachers from all of the district's schools can get together and socialize," said Houseman. "This event was an opportunity to connect with one another while raising money for two great causes."

And a good amount of money was raised for these organizations. TEEA said they would match the total, and with more than \$3,000 raised, with the help of TEEA's contribution, both T&E Care and FLITE will receive \$3,000 to put toward their individual organizations.

"Teachers are proud to support their community," said Debra Ciamacca, TEEA president. "They realize that we are facing unprecedented economic times and that people are hurting. We feel that it is our obligation to give back to the community that has been good to us."

The event was a success, and next year TEEA hopes to open it up to the entire

community.

T&E Care is an organization that was created shortly after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The original goal was to gather together residents in both Tredyffrin and Easttown townships to pool their resources to help support a few affected families who chose to relocate to the area. Throughout the experience it became apparent that there were plenty of families in the area also in need. The goal of the organization then became to help local families as well. Now almost four years later many families have been helped by T&E Care in numerous ways, from making a rent or car payment, to gathering children's clothes or paying a food-order bill to helping someone find a job or get legal help. T&E Care realizes that a little assistance can go a long way in getting someone back on track.

FLITE, which stands for Foundation for Learning In Tredyffrin/Easttown, was formed in 2006 by residents whose goal is to help assure continued educational excellence for all public-school children in the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District. According to the FLITE Web site, www.flite-pa.org, "FLITE targets its funding toward programs that reach groups and individual students who are unable to take full advantage of the curriculum and activities that the district offers. This may include preparatory and supplemental programs that better allow all children to participate fully in the offerings of the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District. FLITE aims to invest in helping these students and thereby invest in the good of our entire community."

Through both of these community organizations, local students and families can get the help they need in a number of ways. To learn more about the charities that benefited from the T/E Trek visit www.TEcare.org and www.flite-pa.org.

