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Cupid's Chase 5K to raise money for Community Options

by Megan Trotter

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Preparing for Cupid's Chase are, in front, from left, Gabe Colwell, Farm Bureau/committee member; Michael Bunnell; Jason McKay, Regions Bank/committee co-chair; and Martha Howard, TTU/committee co-chair. In back are Jeanette Preece, Community Options executive director; Ryan Vinson and Amanda Franklin, CO program managers; Travis Lawson, CO staffing coordinator; Kim Todd, CO business manager; and Kristi Allen, grant project director. Ty Kernea | Herald-Citizen

COOKEVILLE — The 6th annual Cupid's Chase 5k has been set for 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 9, at Prescott Hall on the Tennessee Tech campus, with registration beginning at 8 a.m.

Sheila Scruggs with Lite Rock will be the honorary chair/MC for this fundraiser for Community Options, which provides housing and employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities. Last year the proceeds went to things like special outings and Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for the people they serve.

"The proceeds from the race will help support the people we serve here locally," Kristi Allen, Putnam County grant project director, said. "All of the individuals we serve here at Community Options are on very limited, fixed incomes. Supporting our philosophy to help them live a normal life in the community, just like you and me, they are responsible for paying their own rent, utilities, entertainment expenses and other costs of daily living. We assist them by teaching them how to budget and spend their money wisely, and supplement their monthly expenses when needed.

"In the past, we have used race funds to send individuals on small weekend trips or to Camp Discovery, a week-long summer camp for people with special needs. We also have used the funds to buy needed items like furniture and specialty therapeutic items that are not covered under their medical insurance."

Registration is \$35 for individuals, or \$30 per person for teams. Members of the same business or educational institution who would rather run as individuals are also able to register at the lower rate, as long as there are two or more people participating. Registration can be done at Community Options, located at 5 W. 2nd St., at Foothills Running Company, located at 155 W. Broad St. Suite B, or at www.comop.org/cupidschase/.

"Runners are welcome and encouraged to come run in their best Valentine's Day attire," Allen said. "In the past we've had red and white tights, angel wings, even runners dressed like Cupid himself. We try to have a lot of fun with it. Or they can opt to wear their red or white Cupid's Chase long sleeved t-shirt which they will receive at registration."

Also, anyone with a special ticket who eats at Buffalo Wild Wings from 5 p.m. to close every Monday and Wednesday from now until Feb. 6, will get 10 percent of their food sales donated to Cupid's Chase 5K. Tickets are available at the

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Community Options office or on their Facebook page.

Community Options is also working with Genesis House, who is holding their Mardi Gras Ball the same day as the run. There will be incentives to go to both events.

“A lot of people would never (think of putting) the two agencies together, but a grant has helped Genesis House be more accessible to people with disabilities and to help Community Options be more responsive to disclosures of abuse and things like that,” Allen said. “The target population is more vulnerable for abuse.”

Cupid's Chase is part of Total Race Solutions' Run and See Tennessee Grand Prix — a series of races throughout the state to encourage runners to visit other regions of Tennessee and have the opportunity to compete with runners across the state.

For more information about Community Options, call Allen at 931-372-0955 or visit www.comop.org.

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