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Cupid's Chase race raises funds to give independence and confidence to disabled

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02.07.14 - 04:00 pm

COOKEVILLE — For those with severe disabilities, day-to-day life can be an enormous challenge, however in the Putnam County community there are organizations like Community Options that can work with these individuals to help them live more independently and with more confidence.

Frannie Lightsey, Tina Barnes and Amanda Pruitte became roommates in late 2013, and have blossomed under the guidance of Community Options staff. Barnes and Pruitte both have jobs now, and Lightsey, who uses a wheelchair, has seen improvements in her health and her ability to get around.

“We have a great staff who work with Frannie a lot on her OT (occupational therapy) equipment and stuff like that,” Amanda Franklin, the girls’ program manager, said. “She’s getting stronger and healthier and she’s lost weight.”

All three young women say they enjoy being able to live together, though they do have all the usual challenges of having roommates, like sharing bathrooms and divvying up chores. They bond over their common interests.

“I enjoy coloring and painting with them,” Lightsey said.

Barnes added, “I enjoy coloring and watching movies.”

Art is something they all love, as well as trips out into the community.

“Sometimes we go out to eat. It’s my turn to pick next week, and I picked Shoney’s,” Pruitte said with a smile.

Community Options will hold their seventh annual Cupid’s Chase 5k race tomorrow in order to raise funds to be able to continue providing housing and employment opportunities for men and women like Lightsey, Barnes and Pruitte. Registration begins at 8 a.m. at Tennessee Tech’s Tucker Stadium and the race kicks off at 10 a.m.

There is also the mile-long course for those not prepared to run a 5k. The cost to participate is \$30 for those who pre-register or \$50 the day of the race. For more information about Community Options or Cupid’s Chase , call 931-372-0955. or visit www.comop.org.

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