



Community Options hosts 5K to raise money for those with disabilities

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For The Times of Trenton By **For The Times of Trenton**

on January 20, 2014 at 8:47 AM, updated January 20, 2014 at 8:54 AM

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Runners be warned: A quiver-full of love arrows might find their mark when Community Options hosts its sixth annual Cupid's Chase 5K to support people with disabilities on Saturday, Feb. 8.

Races will take place across eight states in 24 locations, including Princeton and Burlington City.

In hopes of sparking love connections between participants, the event provides shirts that say "Available" or "Unavailable" — a tactic proven successful at races in Tennessee and New Mexico, runners reported.

"It's very exciting because it's a nice way for people to get together. It's centered around Valentine's Day weekend," said Robert Stack, CEO of Princeton-based Community Options.

With 8,000 runners anticipated, Cupid's Chase is the largest national, simultaneous 5K held by a nonprofit.

This year's event is particularly special, Stack said: Community Options will celebrate its 25th anniversary the following day.

"Twenty-five years ago no one even knew who we were, and now we have (nearly) 10,000 people running in races," he noted.

The organization, which develops housing and employment programs for people with disabilities, hopes to raise \$200,000.

"It means a tremendous amount to everyone," Stack said. "It's a very emotional, very important day to us."

Though they had hosted charity runs in the past, Community Options decided six years ago to host a larger event with a theme.

"We wanted to do something a little more unique and a little more interesting," Stack explained.

The Valentine's Day theme incorporates Vaseful, a floral business started by Community Options that employs people with disabilities.

Some runners dress for the occasion by sporting Cupid wings and bow and arrows.

And last year, a participant posted on the event's Facebook page in hopes of connecting with a runner she spotted.

Runners can register online for \$30 before Feb. 8, or for \$50 on the day of the race, online or in person. For more information, visit comop.org/cupidschase.



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