



Cupid's Chase 5K February 9

5K to benefit developmentally disabled

By **Lorena Sanchez** Las Cruces Bulletin

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, and to benefit a good cause, the Cupid's Chase 5K run will mark its fifth year in Las Cruces.

Registration for the race will begin at 8 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 9, on the Mesilla Plaza. The run will start at 10 a.m.

Last year's event piqued the interest of nearly 300 runners, with a few hundred coming out just to support the cause, said Jose Solis, event coordinator "It's grown," Solis said. "It just gets bigger and bigger."

Cupid's Chase is organized by Community Options, a nonprofit that works with developmentally disabled men and women.

"The race benefits people with developmental disabilities and improves our programs – supportive employment, job sampling, housing, residential care, day habilitation programs," Solis said.

Proceeds from last year's event were used to purchase a computer lab to help their clients learn computer skills and with job searches. Funds raised assist people on the Developmental Disabilities Waiver program to raise awareness of this population segment.

"You contribute to the cause already by registering," Solis said. Those who register will be a part of a national event that will take place communities in eight states this year.

Cupid's Chase is a competitive race. It is USA Track & Field approved. Trophies will be given to runners in several age groups (which have yet to be determined). All ages are welcome to participate in the run including walkers, runners, joggers and "rollers" (those with baby strollers or in wheelchairs).

To such a positive response to the event is another reason Solis said he remains so passionate about the cause and his reason for remaining in the field. "It's a passion for the field you work in," he said. "I was already in the field at the time, but personally, my sister passed away when she was 18 from Spin bifida. That's when I really decided this is what I want to do.

"One thing I've noticed working here is that we are passionate about the work we're doing."

Solis encourages the community to participate, donate or just come out and offer their support.

Clients will be at the race to support the runners and raise awareness. Solis said some clients even ran in the race last year.

The event will kick off with live entertainment from Mariachi Herredero and ballet folklorico, composed of people with developmental disabilities. The Las Cruces High School band will provide a send-off to the participants. There will be morning refreshments including fruit, coffee, donuts, water and cookies.

Participants will receive a T-shirt and goody bag the day of the race.

A \$35 registration fee is required in advance or \$50 the day of the event.

For more information or to register, call 532-9275 or visit [www.comop.org/cupidschase/ index.html](http://www.comop.org/cupidschase/index.html) or www.active.com

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Angela Madrid, a client of Community Options, makes jewelry under the organization's supportive employment program. Proceeds from Cupid's Chase help provide clients with additional programs, resources and funding.

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