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Local Celebrity Runner and Author to Chair Charity 5K

Cookeville, TN, January 24, 2018 – Dallas Smith, 77 year-old former Tennessee Tech engineering professor, avid runner, author and storyteller, is lending his time and his talent to Community Options' Cupid's Chase 5K as its 2018 race chair.

Smith, who began running in his late 50s, has completed 102 marathons (and longer) and many more races, from 5Ks to Ironman triathlons and ultra-marathons. He holds more than 100 Tennessee state running records for races from 5Ks all the way to marathons – eight distances in all. Soon after he began running competitively, he began writing – and is a published author not only of articles, but of three books, *Falling Forward: Tales from an Endurance Saga* (2004), *Going Down Slow: Times from an Old Man Who Runs* (2011) and *Bench of Despair: One Runners Tale of the Last Annual Vol State 500K* (2016.)

On February 10th, Dallas Smith will be the race chair of Cookeville's Cupid's Chase 5k, an event to raise funds benefitting the local office of Community Options, a national non-profit that serves individuals with disabilities by providing homes and employment opportunities. It's not his first appearance at the Cookeville Cupid's Chase – he was emcee in 2014, and ran the race in 2015.

"I run a lot of races in a lot of places," said Smith. "I like to help out when I can to support local causes and the local community. If me being at the race helps to do something good, I'm honored to be involved." When he was the emcee in 2014, he remembered it was a cold day and the awards portion of the race had to be moved indoors. As it happened, the indoor venue was Prescott Hall on the campus of Tennessee Tech, the building that he had worked in for 29 years as a professor of engineering. "It was like a homecoming of sorts," he remarked. The following year, he did not have official duties, but ran the race (and won his age group, of course.) "I've enjoyed the race, I hope others do, too. I believe that running isn't for everyone, you know, but running can help most everyone who decides to pick it up." That is running philosophy according to Dallas Smith.

"We are so excited to have Dallas as our race chair," said Jeanette Preece, Executive Director of Community Options – Cookeville. "He's our local celebrity – he grew up here and still calls it home, even though he's travelled the world. His participation definitely raises the bar for our little 5K, and we hope everyone comes out to enjoy the race and visit with Dallas."

Join thousands of runners from 38 cities, including Cookeville, on Saturday, February 10, 2018 for the annual Cupid's Chase 5K fundraising race. All proceeds from the races benefit individuals with disabilities supported by Community Options right in their local communities. Register online at CupidsChase.org.

About Community Options, Inc.:

For 28 years, Community Options has developed housing and employment programs for people with disabilities – serving thousands of people through over 40 offices across 11 states. Community Options provides advocacy assistance to empower people with disabilities because all people – regardless of ability level – should live and work in the community with dignity, choice and self-determination. For more information please visit our website: www.comop.org and to follow along with the ComOpCares campaign, search #ComOpCares on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Image credit: Mikki Trujillo

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