

17th Annual Run for Bonifest 5K attracts record numbers

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – After celebrating the night at **St. Boniface Catholic Church's** annual **Bonifest**, runners from around the region started their morning bright and early for the **17th Annual Run for Bonifest 5K and 2 Mile Run/Walk** event this **Saturday**.

Beginning at **8:30 a.m.**, runners took off from the starting line on a course which takes them throughout the city.

Toby Heddinghaus, race director of the Run for Bonifest, focuses on the good that the race does for the parish and the festival.

“It supports Bonifest, brings people out in the down time between last night and tonight’



festivities and it brings awareness for Bonifest, St. Boniface Parish and school,” he said. “It’s just a great fundraiser. I’m a runner myself -- a marathon runner -- and I just love the energy that comes from these racers.

Heddinghaus was also impressed by the number of people who registered to run in the event this Saturday.

“We had over 700 this year,” Heddinghaus said. “It’s right up at the top of the highest number we’ve ever had.”

Two of those registered runners were **Jefferson Bushur**, 14, of **Saint Jacob, Ill.**, and **Kayla Brown**, 28, of Edwardsville. The male and female runners took the top spot in their gender and age categories, crossing the finish line with times of **15:49.7** and **18:15.5** respectively.

Bushur was the first competitor to make it across the finish line overall.

“It feels awesome,” Bushur said. “I was going into the race with my PR from last year at this course of 16:34. I thought I was going to break 16, but I didn’t know I was going to go that fast.”

Along with her sister Claire, Brown had also competed in the race before, nabbing the course record last year.

“My sister and I just ran Boston Marathon a couple of weeks ago so we’re just getting back into it again,” she said. “She came in second behind me. We train together because we live together here. It helps out a lot to have a support system. We started out together today and were just able to push each other.”