



Miles for Meso 5K Brings Top Runners to St. Louis Area With increase in prize money, national & international racing talent comes to Alton Race

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ALTON, Ill., Sept. 14, 2011 – The 3rd Annual Alton Miles for Meso 5K Run and 2K Family Run, hosted by the Simmons Law Firm, is expected to attract some of the best running talent throughout the Midwest to downtown Alton, Ill. Former Edwardsville Tiger and local running star, Stephen Pifer, will be the event's celebrity starter. Pifer currently runs professionally and is sponsored by Nike.

“We’ve added an elite registration category this year that appeals to exceptional running talent, and the response has been excellent,” said Mike Wever, Alton Race Director and Metro TriClub President. “This is the biggest Fall 5K purse in the Midwest.”

Race organizers have already received elite registration from top notch running talent, including several NCAA All-American runners, from as far as way as Kenya, Africa, California and Oregon, Wever said. Among the names are Sammy Rotich of Kenya, who in 2010 beat Olympian Brian Sell, and Stephanie Pezzullo, a former Penn State soccer star.

To be eligible for nearly \$6,200 in cash prizes, runners must register as an elite runner by Sept. 21. The top five elite runners in both the men's and women's divisions will receive \$1,500 for a first place finish, \$750 for second, \$500 for third, \$250 for fourth and \$100 for fifth. Last year, the first place prize was \$500.

“With the level of talent we’re expecting, attending this year’s Miles for Meso race could give you the chance to meet and even run in the same race as a possible future

Olympian,” Wever said. “You don’t have many opportunities to be able to say you did something like that – and it’s all for a good cause.”

No need for regular racers seeking the usual level of competition to be intimidated, either, Wever said. Additional prizes will be awarded according to age brackets with top runners receiving a limited edition Miles for Meso back pack. Top Age Group runners from Illinois will also compete for the Road Runner Clubs of America Illinois State 5K Championship Title. Other activities and entertainment also include a live band, refreshment stands, local vendors and additional seating. Children’s activities include an inflatable bounce house, snow cones, face painting and more

“We want runners, walkers and families to come out, participate and just have fun,” said Simmons Firm CEO Gregg Kirkland. “We’ve expanded our family activities and even booked a live band. It’s going to be an all-round great event this year that will please everyone from the advanced runner to those wanting to spend quality time with their families.”

Registration for the Alton Miles for Meso begins at 7:30 a.m. and runs until 8:45 a.m. at the new Simmons Law Firm building, One Court Street, across from Marquette High School.

It costs \$15 to register before Sept. 15, \$20 before Sept. 21 and \$25 on race day. Elite registration costs \$20 before Sept. 15 and \$25 through Sept. 21. Elite registration is unavailable on race day.

The 5K race/walk begins at 9 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 24 and will be followed by an awards ceremony at 10 a.m. Cash prizes of \$1,500, \$750, \$500, \$250 and \$100 will be awarded respectively to the top 5 finishers in the elite men’s and women’s divisions. Age group winners will receive limited edition Miles for Meso backpacks.

Even if they’re not participating, Wever encouraged residents to line the race route and watch some of the best distance runners in the world compete. The race starts on Fourth Street. Runners will travel east, then turn right onto Henry Street, weave through the upper Alton area, before looping back to Henry and Fourth streets. To view the course map, visit www.milesformeso.org/course_map.

The Alton race is one of three official Miles for Meso Races taking place Sept. 24 around the nation in recognition of the first official National Mesothelioma Awareness Day. Additional races are taking place in Burke, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D. C., and in New Paltz, New York along the scenic Wallkill Valley Rail Trail.

All proceeds from the Miles for Meso races will help medical researchers find a cure for mesothelioma and other asbestos-related illnesses, Angelides said. Last year, the Alton Miles for Meso race raised more than \$25,000 for the Mesothelioma Applied Research Program. Cumulatively, Miles for Meso has raised nearly \$150,000 for cancer research since the first race in Alton in 2009.

Miles for Meso is a national fundraising race that is an advocacy project of the Simmons Mesothelioma Foundation, which has donated over a million dollars to cancer research and treatment since 2010. This year's Alton Miles for Meso race is coming to life through the support of its platinum sponsor STL Communications. For a complete list of sponsors, please visit www.milesformeso.org/sponsors.

For more information about Miles for Meso races, or to register visit www.milesformeso.org.

About the Simmons firm:

The Simmons firm, headquartered in Alton, Ill., is one of the country's leading asbestos and mesothelioma litigation firms. With offices in Illinois, Missouri and California, the firm has represented over 2,000 patients and families affected by mesothelioma in every state. The Simmons Firm has pledged over \$15 million to [cancer research](#) and proudly supports [mesothelioma medical researchers](#) throughout the country in order to find a cure. For more information about the Simmons firm, visit <http://www.simmonsfirm.com>.