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Catawba County United Way - 25th Annual Cross Country Invitational

October 5, 2017

It's Big Kahuna time! More than 800 high school runners will compete in the 25th Annual United Way Cross Country Invitational races on October 11 at Southside Park in Newton. More than thirty high schools across the state will be represented in this sanctioned event organized by the Catawba County United Way and John Hall. The first of many races begins at 2:40pm.

The event emphasizes the importance of volunteerism and community service among teenagers. This is a highly competitive well-attended event. Runners will receive a meal prepared by United Way volunteers and event t-shirts.

Teams must complete a community project and submit photos with project details to be eligible to compete in the races. The team projects will be judged by volunteers. The winning team will receive a \$250 donation from Graystone Eye of Hickory to apply to their community project. It was requested teams focus on projects that involved children and reading.

The meet will conclude with awards and a special presentation by keynote speaker and two-time Olympian Anthony Famiglietti (Fam-uh-letti).

Famiglietti grew up in Long Island, NY before moving south to attend Appalachian State University. He was the 1996 Southern Conference Freshman of the Year in cross country at ASU, and the following year he was the conference's XC Runner of the Year runner-up. After transferring to Tennessee, he won numerous Southeastern Conference events, and in 2000 he was 2nd at the SEC Championships, 4th at the NCAA Championships, and 7th at the U.S. Olympic Trials.

Famiglietti settled on the 3000 meter steeplechase for his Olympic career. He finished 2nd in the 2004 US Olympic Trials and followed with an 8th place finish in the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. In 2008 he won the US Olympic Trials and finished 13th in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

As a professional runner Famiglietti ran a 3:55.71 mile in 2006, and the following year in Walnut CA he ran the fastest time ever by an American on American soil in the 5000 meters, posting a time of 13:11.93.

After completing his professional career, Famiglietti returned to North Carolina where he founded a company called Reckless Running. He coaches and teaches many aspiring young runners, bringing them a powerful message of faith and success.

This year's United Way Invitational annual race would not be possible without the support of the following sponsors: CT Management, Century Furniture, Publix, Wells Fargo Advisors, Sowers & Webber, Dalco Nonwovens, Newton Recreation, Premier Screen Printing, Sharp, Pepsi, Drums-Willis-Reynolds Funeral Home, A Signco, Graystone Eye of Hickory, Big Kahuna Timing and Catawba County United Way.

“The kids are always so thankful and polite. They know what it takes to finish a race and they know what it takes to help the community. That’s a winning combination regardless of who comes in first or last,” said Sylvia Long, Director Community Impact for CCUW.

Photos of the event including team projects will be posted on the www.ccunitedway.com website. Follow Catawba County United Way on Facebook and Twitter for LIVE updates. Post your photos of the event to **#ccuwcrosscountry17**

CCUW and John Hall would like to thank all the sponsors and volunteers. An event of this size requires a lot of collaboration hours and heart.

For more information on Catawba County United Way, volunteering and community resources call 828-327-6851 or the hotline number 2-1-1. Visit ccunitedway.com

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Photos attached:

Event cover

CCUW logo



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