



Runners at the start of last year's race. Photos by Valentina Velazquez

Annual SOLES for All Souls 5K Race/2K Walk returns Oct. 4

BY DANIEL KERR

Since 1896, historic All Souls church has stood on the hill overlooking Stony Brook Village. On Sunday, Oct. 4, the church will host its 18th Annual SOLES for All Souls 5K Race/2K Walk to raise funds to make the Stanford White building and the church programs available to all.

Church Warden Herb Mones reports that "the accessibility project continues to move forward due to the generosity of our sponsors and the participants of the SOLES for All Souls Race. We now have a final design plan to make our historic church handicapped accessible and to add a bathroom next to the church."

Jazz Loft Director Tom Manuel states "SOLES for All Souls is a wonderful community tradition rooted in all the things we look for in our community — tradition, collaboration, faith, hope and love. You would never guess from the big list of programming and projects that come out of All Souls Episcopal Church, the little church on the hill."

Eastbound Freight Bluegrass performs every August as part of the monthly All Souls Saturdays at Six concert series. Band founder John Brisotti shared, "Musicians treasure those rare opportunities when you can truly connect with an engaged audience. I can honestly say that our band looks forward to our concerts at All Souls Church more than any other on our schedule."

Native American Elder Dr. Ric Statler leads Drumming every month at All Souls. "The Native American Drum meditations bring people to a higher personal connection to Great Spirit/God and to share that this journey is available to everyone. One major block to the church welcoming people has been the lack of handicapped access and lack of a bathroom. Many years ago, Chief Seattle of the Duwamish tribe said: Humankind has not

woven the web of life; we are but one thread in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. Whether you run, walk, or sponsor the race — you are part of the event, part of the community and part of the solution. We are all bound together. We are all connected."

Dr Richard Bronson served as host of the All Souls monthly poetry reading when he was Poet Laureate of Suffolk County. "For many years, I've looked forward to the October Race/Walk; its highly spirited participants, the joy of running or walking the neighborhood's beautiful lanes that abut the harbor. Foremost, has been my desire to support the goal of raising money to improve access to the church. Beyond its religious functions, it is a unique structure providing broad service to the community. I initially came to know it at as an invited guest at a baptism, then, subsequently as a venue for poetry readings. I am happy to be there to support the cause."

SOLES For All Souls is perhaps the most inclusive Race/Walk on Long Island. Serious runners compete for gold, bronze, and silver medals in age groups from under 13 to over 80 and receive their hard-won medals in an Olympic-style awards ceremony. Dogs often accompany their masters and students from Stony Brook University and local high schools often come in costume. Senior citizens with walking sticks line up with parents pushing their kids in strollers.

Stony Brook runner Mark Cohen observes, "this is the best race and walk of the year — it combines a beautiful, scenic 5K course with the best spirit of our community! It's an event for everyone!" Winner of the Over 80 Gold Medal Rolf Sternglanz describes the event, "a well-organized race on a tough hilly course, with a nice awards ceremony afterwards."

Last year's Overall Female Winner Catherine Gretschesel shared, "Being the first female to finish the race last year was such

an honor, but what really stood out to me was the atmosphere. Whether you're racing for a personal best or simply looking for a fun community event, SOLES for All Souls has something for everyone. It's a beautiful course, a welcoming atmosphere, and a race I'd recommend to runners of any experience level!"

Coach Brian Willman says, "running SOLES for All Souls in 2025 was special, being a member of the Stony Brook community, as well as some of the girls from the Smithtown Girls Cross Country program. Being able to do what we love to do (run) while supporting the local church in their mission to serve our community is a win-win for everyone. Looking forward to supporting All Souls this year."

"SOLES for All Souls is a tremendous event that brings our residents together while helping our neighbors who are in need," said Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine. "I encourage runners and walkers of all ages to support this wonderful cause that restores faith in our community."

Registration for SOLES for All Souls 5K Race/2K Walk is through the ACTIVE.COM website (Search: SOLES for All Souls) or register on the Race Day (October 4). The Registration desk at the Reboli Center for Art & History, 64 Main St., Stony Brook will be open from 7:30 am to 8:45 am; the starting bell is at 9 a.m.

Complimentary stretching will be provided by provided by Ivy Rehab in Port Jefferson Station and local band The North Shore Rockers will perform throughout the morning. SOLES for All Souls is also a food drive for St Gerard Majella Church in Terryville. "Lend a Hand, Bring a Can." Please call 631-655-7798 for more information about the event or if you would like to be a sponsor. Donations dedicated to the Accessibility Project can be mailed to All Souls Race, P.O. Box 548, Stony Brook, NY 11790.