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## Milton Monster Dash Takes Place on Halloween

By Ed Hayward

Milton Foundation for Education

The fun runners who turn out at 1 p.m. on Halloween for the Sixth Annual Milton Monster Dash will be joining in an event that in the last five years has funded science field trips, classroom lessons and this year, for the first time, a science enrichment specialist for the entire town.

The race is the primary fundraiser for the Sam Cichello Memorial Fund, which has been used to bolster science teaching in the Milton schools since seven-year-old Sam died in 1999.

Last month, Maryellen McDermott started work as the science enrichment specialist for grades three through five. Part of her salary is being paid with money from Sam's Fund. It is the first time the enrichment specialist post has been filled since it was eliminated during budget cutbacks two years ago, according to school officials.

Sam's parents, Anthony and Christine Cichello, decided last spring that they wanted to see the memorial fund expand in its service to the town's elementary schools.

"Sam loved science and we thought this was a great way to help try to spark that same love of science in more and more students in our elementary schools," said Christine.

This year's fun run takes place at Cunningham Park, at 1 p.m. on Halloween, making runners costumed as ghouls and goblins and Gumby all the more appropriate.

"We are very excited this year, because for the first time in the six-year history of the Milton Monster Dash, it actually falls on Halloween," said race

organizer Steven Windwer, of the Milton Foundation for Education. "We are expecting a huge turnout with great costumes. Additionally this year Mad Science will have a booth and teach the kids how to make green goo!"

Last year, several hundred runners turned out on an afternoon perfect for running or walking to make the Monster Dash another successful day to honor the memory of Sam and to raise the more than \$13,000 to support innovative science teaching and learning programs.

The position was made possible by an unprecedented allocation of private funds to pay part of the enrichment specialist job, said Assistant Superintendent Mary Gormley, a member of the Foundation board.

The board of the Milton Foundation for Education, which administers the fund, agreed with the Cichcellos' wishes and allocated funds to pay for part of the position, the first time the non-profit foundation has supported a personnel cost. The move fit into a trend among other communities to assist in funding school positions in the wake of reduced state aid to school districts.

"It's a first for the Foundation," said Gormley, who noted that Sam's Fund in the past has funded field trips, materials purchases and classroom visits by the Mad Science program. "But more important is the expansion of the efforts to keep Sam in the memories of his classmates and his town."

McDermott started in her new role last month. She calls the enrichment program Project SAM, or Science Across Milton.

"I'm so excited about this new program in the Milton Public Schools," said McDermott, who also has other responsibilities in the areas of curriculum development and teacher training. "I hope to foster inquiry, spark enthusiasm, and provide a solid scientific base of knowledge."

McDermott expects to bring science enrichment to as many students as possible in grades three through five. Students assigned by their teachers to participate in a unit will attend the class once a week for four weeks. Parents will receive a letter of notification the week before their child is assigned to one of the four-week units in either Earth Science, Life Science or Physical Science.

Tony Cichello said his family wanted to thank the runners, organizers and spectators for their participation.

The Monster Dash covers slightly more than three miles, starting at Cunningham Park, down Edge Hill Road, to Randolph Avenue, down Centre Street, to Brook Road, up Otis Street and back down Edge Hill to the finish line at

the Cunningham Foundation Hall. Race entry fee is \$18 prior to October 17 and \$20 afterwards. The kids' fun run is \$10.

For those who cannot attend the race, donations can be sent to:

Milton Monster Dash

Ms. Jeanne Schmidt

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