

Benefit run to honor. DWI victims

A Henrietta family is calling on the community to join the race on Sept. 11.

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Paul Kato has always been an avid runner, competing in marathons and serving as past president of the Greater Rochester Track Club.

It's a passion that grew stronger after the death of his son, Matthew, last July, when the Kato family became part of a group they wish they didn't belong to - survivors of loved ones killed by a drunken driver.

Matthew Kato, 17, was killed by a drunken driver on July 21, 2004, at the intersection of Beckwith and Lehigh Station roads in Henrietta.

The Kato's have bonded with the families of Scott Spino, Lindsay Ann Kyle and Clark Van Dresser Swift, all local victims of drunken drivers.

As a way to deal with his grief and raise awareness about the effects of drinking and driving, Kato is serving as race director of the first Dorschel MADD Dash.

It is a 10K race and two-mile fun walk on Sept 11, beginning at Rush-Henrietta Senior High School. The race will benefit Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) while raising awareness, Kato said. The race marks the start of Henrietta's "MADD Awareness Week," which the Henrietta Town Board created at its last meeting.

The names of victims of drunken driving and the Terrorist attacks of Sept 11, 2001, will be read aloud before the race begins. One of those names will be Clark Swift, brother-in-law of Rick Dorschel, president of Dorschel Automotive Group.

Three days after Matthew Kato's death, Swift, 53, was killed in Florida by a drunken driver.

Swift was riding a bike in his neighborhood, looking for his son, Brandon, who had missed his curfew. He was hit by an 18-year-old drunken driver.

Sponsoring the race has been a way for his family to work through the grief, he said. Dorschel, his wife; Nancy, brother and sister-in-law, and Swift's son will either be walking or running in the race.

"They're horrible stories that just need to be told so people understand how deadly playing with alcohol and trying to drive might be," he said.

That's what Kato hopes, too.

"It's a labor of love for me," Kato said. "If it saves a life or two or three - it's great" "There's a high cost to us as a family to do this - a very high cost," Kato added "It's for Matthew."