

Monday, October 29, 2012



Sporting a Mohawk hairstyle, Ben Coleman, 8, center, and other runners take off at the beginning of Sunday's Mohawk Mile at Christmas Tree Park in Manchester Sunday. DYLAN SLAGLE/STAFF PHOTO

## Power of a Mohawk

Tree of Friends Foundation hosts run to support local families

By RACHEL ROUBEIN  
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**MANCHESTER** — Shortly before race time, Kristi Yowell tied her 11-year-old son's white, black and red And 1 shoes as "Are You Ready For This" blared from a DJ's speakers.

Kiley Slowik, 5, swung high on the Manchester playground's swing set, her blond hair tied in four ponytails down the center of her head in a Mohawk-like fashion.

Chaz Freeland, 6, moseyed over to the starting line with a Mohawk that had just been cut moments before.

At about 9 a.m. Sunday, it was drizzling but that didn't deter the more than two dozen racers who stood at the starting line at Christmas Tree Park in



Hunter Gray, 7, gets a look at his fresh Mohawk from stylist Amanda McDaniel as his father Bill, left, looks on after Sunday's Mohawk Mile run at Christmas Tree Park in Manchester Sunday.

Manchester awaiting the quick shoelace check. Then, the Mohawk Mile's cue. There were racers off. There was a short prayer to stay safe during the race and in the spirit of Halloween, Hurricane Sandy and a children and families could

participate in the race — and get a free Mohawk before or after from Hairy Cuttery's makeshift salon set up at the park. Sunday marked the second annual race coordinated by the Tree of Friends Foundation, a local nonprofit that couples fundraising for the community with endurance activities, the organization's founders said.

"We just want to help kids in our community," co-founder Darcey Hott said.

Formed several years ago, the organization has raised \$10,000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, more than \$15,000 for local families, and more. The \$15 race registration fee will go toward the organization's operating budget, so that

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### Mohawk

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Tree of Friends Foundation will have resources to swoop in and help a family in need, Hott said.

Deborah Clawson had lined up at the back of the pack waiting for the race to begin, while her son, Chaz Freeland, was stationed nearer to the front. Clawson turned to her friend Laura Lopreato and emphatically said, "I'm so excited. This is great for the kids."

That's one of the reasons Lopreato brought her two children — along with a red, white and blue patriotic Mohawk hat — to the race.

"It's community members helping community members," Lopreato said. "The money stays here [in Carroll County.] It's helping our neighbors and our friends."

For others, such as Bill Gray, the event was a family first. Gray's a runner but he had never raced alongside his 7-year-old son, Hunter.

And shortly after the two



DYLAN SLAGLE/STAFF PHOTO

Chaz Freeland, 6, gets his hair styled in to a Mohawk by Hair Cuttery stylists Sarah Mahla, left, and Nikki Priest, right, as his mother Deborah Clawson looks on before Sunday's Mohawk Mile run at Christmas Tree Park in Manchester Sunday.

crossed the finish line depicted by an arch of multi-colored balloons, the pair went over to the Hair Cuttery employees stationed underneath a canopied area of the park.

Amanda McDaniel, from the Hair Cuttery, took out a red razor and began to shave Hunter's red hair. She shaved the sides, cut the strip in the middle and then ran gel in his hair to

spike it up. Hunter gave a nod of approval as he looked in the mirror, and his parents smiled, too.

As 10 a.m. neared, parents and children began to disperse home — and many were sporting a new hairdo.

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