

Written by Ann McGlynn

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The Steve's Old Time Tap Spring Chaser, a 5K run/walk led by two Rock Island women, is set for April 30 at 9 a.m. in downtown Rock Island. The goal is to reach 500 participants and to raise \$5,000 with the fifth-annual run benefitting the American Red Cross of the Quad Cities Area.

Since the race's inception in 2007, it has raised more than \$10,000 for the organization.

"Our race started with 260 people in 2007. Last year, we reached just more than 400 participants," said Holly Sparkman, race co-director with Jayna Gallagher. "Our goal of 500 participants will mean more support for one of the most valuable organizations in the Quad-Cities."

The American Red Cross of the Quad Cities Area serves Scott, Muscatine, and Louisa counties in Iowa and Rock Island, Henry, Mercer, Bureau, and a portion of Whiteside counties in Illinois.

Every day, on average, the American Red Cross of the Quad Cities Area works to reunite one family through the Armed Forces Emergency Services and International Social Services programs; reaches more than 107 people with lifesaving training in CPR, first aid, and water safety; and trains 28 youth and adults to be prepared and ready for potential disasters.

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In 2010, 148 families in the area received assistance after a disaster threatened to destroy their lives. "On average, it costs \$1,100 to assist a family of four following a fire," said Leslie Anthony, chief advancement officer for the Quad Cities chapter. "The \$5,000 goal for the Spring Chaser could help five local families recover after a fire."

Steve's Old Time Tap is the lead sponsor of the race. Other sponsors include, Stern Beverage, Gas & Electric Credit Union, Cruz Plumbing, Meridian Title, CBS 4, Jumer's Casino, Crawford & Company, Huckleberry's, Cumulus Quad Cities and Nehlsen Communications.

Sparkman is the communications director for the Rock Island School District. Gallagher is the marketing coordinator at Nehlsen Communications in Moline. They are lifelong residents of the Quad Cities.

"This event started as a result of two Rock Islanders looking for a downtown race in their hometown," Gallagher said. "We've been fortunate enough to have the Quad City area support our event, and more importantly support a great cause. There is no better time to make a donation. With the disaster in Japan and the threat of flooding right here in the Quad Cities, please consider helping us reach our goal of raising \$5,000 for the Red Cross."

To register or to get more information about sponsorships, go to www.springchaser.com, or visit www.facebook.com/springchaser5k.