

Beauty and the Beach 4 Mile Run Brings Costumes and Charm

Jack Kearns

Published: November 2, 2015

LONG BRANCH: The shift of the Beauty and the Beach Run to a 4-mile event, versus a 5 Miler in the past was a detail the 655 registered runners took in stride on Saturday. The sun Atlantic shone brightly at the start line opposite the Ocean Place Resort and Spa, host hotel for the registration and the finale food fun.

A slight technical delay was absorbed easily, offset by the excitement of the moment for the anxious women contestants dancing in place and calling encouragement to each companions in running shoes. The national anthem sung by Maya Jacoby of Long Branch echoed clear and strong while runners held palms across their hearts.

Then the last second instructions to review the course features - turns, water tables and well wishes from Race Director Joe Gigas. The gun sounded and the ladies dashed south on the promenade into a light breeze.

Winning runner Carmen Graves, 24, from Collegeville, PA was first off the =Start and held the lead through the entire course, streaking past the 2.2 mile mark near the Start with speed and excellent form, a pace she held even as she soon smiled crossing the Finish, an outstanding 21 minutes, 40 seconds time.

Second Place went to another PA woman, (North Wales) Jenn Cronin, 25, with a time of 23:03 and followed by Red Bank NJ's Caitlin Dorgan at 24:08. The 27 year old was last year's winner in the then 5-Mile event.

At the Finish Line, closing out the event were Eatontown's Jean Buckley and Lincroft's Kelly Colao, 654 and 66 respectively. Jaen also finished last year's 5M, an "I can do it" champ.

Racechair athlete Melissa Platt from Laurence Harbour was happy with the course, "No wind. I've dealt with worse" she said. Melissa began her 3-year racing experience after going on a diet, a challenge with a friend, and both did well. Her friend took up racing as well." I said to myself, 'If she can do it, I can do it" and here I am."

Trophies went to the first three athletes, with a special "Long Branch Mayor's Health Initiative Award which was presented by Mayor Adam Schneider to Police Officer Antonia Gonzalez, the "Most Inspirational Award" for her work with encouraging women in the city and the area to improve their health through exercise and sports.

Schneider spoke of his wish to see more Long Branch participants in future women's events. He is a runner and swimmer who started his athlete experiences after high school. He is a strong competitor and advocate for an energetic lifestyle.

The event featured 538 New Jersey women, and runners from 9 states, including GA, NY, PA and FL. The youngest competitor was 8 years old and oldest age was 76. Many were repeat contestants, and the three top winners expect to return for 2016, work and other business allowing. They loved the ocean setting and friendly reception as much as the course ambiance.

Benefactors of the race are the ASLAN Youth Ministries, an organization dedicated to helping children, one child at a time. The non-profit is headquartered in Red Bank and serves youth and their families in Monmouth County.











