

First annual event blends history, health



Kiki Patton, 12, won the first annual Flying Feet Fun Run on Sept. 23 at Gallery Park. Sarah Haider/22nd Century Media

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This year's Flight Fest featured a new way to bring Glenview's history to the present.

The fourth annual festival, held on Sept. 23 at Gallery Park, celebrated Glenview's Naval Air Station and its many accomplishments for the United States. This year, race directors and Glenview Park District employees Kathleen McInnis and Lynn Brenner combined the importance of history and healthy lifestyles by establishing the first annual Flying Feet Fun Run, featuring a 5K and a one-mile fun run.

"We did the Flight Fest for three successful years and then we wanted to do something a little different and fun," McInnis said. "We are always trying to incorporate healthy activities, and obviously a fun run gets the family involved."

The morning began with a moment of silence to remember those who trained at the Glenview base, as well as the troops and first responders currently protecting families across the world.

Twelve-year-old Kiki Patton's family cheered her on as she crossed the finish line and won the 5K.

Patton was one of more than 240 participants who showed their support for the cause. Seeing new generations participate in Glenview's history was what the event was all about for Kirsten Bergin, chair of Bring it Home Glenview, and Beverly Dawson, historian at the Glenview History Center.

"When we as a community come together to do events where we both enjoy what this area is now [and] remember the history of what it used to be, it's a fantastic thing for younger generations," Bergin said. "It connects the past and the present."

Dawson and Bergin are working to keep the base's history alive. The facility stood where The Glen is now for 58 years, opening in 1923 and closing in 1995. The base served many critical needs, including acting as the largest primary training facility in the U.S. Navy during World War II, a combat information center in 1947 and a support zone during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

"People are fascinated when they learn that this base provided virtually all the carrier pilots in World War II," Dawson said. "Without this base, we couldn't have won the war in the Pacific. It was an air war."

Although the day was filled with music from an energetic DJ, multiple bounce houses and free popsicles, the fest accomplished a serious feat in keeping Glenview's history flying high. McInnis is already planning the second-annual event, with an earlier Spring sign-up for the race in 2018.

"You don't want to forget about Glenview's history," McInnis said. "There is so much there that if we don't continue to inform people what we are all about, people will forget. That's why we kept the flying-fun-run theme. I think it's so important."

For more information about the Glenview Naval Air Station or the Glenview History Center, visit www.glenviewhistory.org.