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Benefit raises \$23,000 for SMA research

Another successful 5K run to benefit victims of Spinal Muscular Atrophy raised \$23,000 recently when 500 supporters either turned out or donated to the cause, according to Joe and Kris Cueter.

The eighth annual event on June 23 was once again organized by Joshua's Buddies. The first 5K for SMA was in June of 2000, following the diagnosis of then 2-year-old Joshua Cueter.

Runners stepped off at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church in Troy.

The event was a community-wide effort, Joe Cueter said, with Troy Police directing traffic and Whole Foods donating fruit and power bars.

The Starbucks store at Maple and Crooks also set up coffee during the early morning hours for the runners; the day started at 6:30 a.m., Cueter said. A Brownie troop passed out water at the finish line.

"We have numerous sponsors that have been with us for the eight years," Cueter said in an e-mail. "Our event is mainly sponsored by Auto Cycle Marine out of Troy."

In the last eight years, Joshua's Buddies has raised more than \$250,000 and has helped to bring the Children's Hospital of Michigan and Wayne State University together to collaborate on the development and testing of experimental SMA drugs.

"Our organization has also been very involved with educating parents and children on the acceptance of diversity, and helping to raise awareness in Washington D.C. with our local elected officials," Cueter said.

Spinal Muscular Atrophy is the number one genetic killer of children under the age of two. SMA is an inherited and sometimes fatal disease that destroys the nerves that control voluntary muscle movement, such as crawling, walking, head and neck control, and even swallowing.

Visit www.fightSMA.org for more information.
