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For the love of running and fundraising In 2005, runners and walkers raised \$656 million for charities, a fitness group said.

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GWEN NEWMAN For the Daily Record/Sunday News

More and more runners are running for charity.

Like Walt Schradling, who's been entering races for years and sees events ranging from one-milers to marathons and beyond as a perfect way to contribute to a cause.

Or Theresa Gray, who uses an event to motivate herself toward better health or perhaps to trek a longer distance. Still others have been personally affected by disease, and this is their way to combine their passion for a cause with a fun way to raise visibility as well as raise some cash.

According to USA Track & Field, runners and walkers raised \$656 million for charity in 2005, making it a banner year for fitness enthusiasts and charitable giving, and 83 percent of races nationwide raised money for charitable causes.

Greg Baum, owner of Flying Feet Sport Shoes on Mount Rose Avenue in Spring Garden Township and a longtime presence on the local running scene, said many runs are created in memory of an individual, such as the Gene Gladfelter Memorial Mile or the Dr. Segro Memorial 5K Run & Fun Walk, and that proceeds from almost all races support one cause or another.

The York Rail Trail 10 Mile run, for instance, benefits the Arc of York County, and proceeds from the Run for Sight 5K benefit the Lions Club's vision program. Other runs fund scholarships.

"Most of these races are started with a cause in mind," said Baum. Some will survive just a year or two.

"I think in some cases running for a cause has created some recreational runners who wouldn't otherwise be runners," he said.

Gray, of York Township, had run on a treadmill for six years before she ran her first outdoor race in October — a Race for the Cure event held in Baltimore to benefit the Susan G. Komen Foundation and breast cancer research. Gray liked the experience, ran another 5K recently in Lancaster and has signed up to run a half-marathon in mid-March in Chambersburg.

She partnered with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's nationally known Team in Training program, which in return for pledges provides coaching

support as well as weekend group runs.

"You have other people to talk to and work out with, so it's more fun," says Gray. "And some may be running the event with you, so you have that connection."

Schradling, a Spring Garden Township resident, also began running six years ago. His first race benefited the Jewish Community Center and he has since advanced competitively from 5Ks and 10Ks to half-marathons, marathons, and Ironman distance events.

"For me, if the event raises money for a good cause, all the better. It makes it all the more meaningful." PIC: SUBMITTED The York Habitat for Humanity 5K race last May drew about 100 runners and raised more than \$10,000. More and more runners are enjoying their favorite hobby while helping out charities.

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