

Dennis-Yarmouth Girls Track Team fully funded travel to their first nationals meet in Oregon with their fundraising efforts and FRR, Inc. grant award

By Olivia dePunte

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For the Dennis-Yarmouth girls track team, June not only marked the rush of final exams but the chaos of fundraising over \$5,000 in a month. The team took two athletes to the New Balance Nationals in Boston this winter, and they left the meet with grand ambitions to do it again for their spring season. This time, however, not so close to home.

By the time the girls qualified for the Nike Outdoor Nationals they had 30 days to raise the funds to send eight athletes and their coaches to Eugene, Oregon, better known as TrackTown USA. Liisa Pendleton, an assistant coach, expressed, “Some of our girls could not afford literally one dime so we decided to go for the gold and try to raise the entire amount, but we didn’t know what the amount would be, that’s the tricky part. We didn’t know until after four days of travel with 12 people.”

Still, they did their absolute best to “go for the gold” in the days leading up to the meet. Pirates Cove Mini Golf in South Yarmouth was kind enough to let them sell golf plays for \$10 in the parking lot and keep the proceeds. While balancing school work and training, the girls each picked up four-hour shifts in the parking lot – and raised \$3,000 to boot.

The team could also be found hawking concessions at a soccer tournament and putting some elbow grease into a car wash in those last couple weeks. “We raised \$2,200 in two days, we were not messing around,” said Pendleton. “That was four days before travel and I felt pretty confident that we had sorta hit the mark. I just had a gut feeling that we’d made the mark.”

Going above and beyond their goal, the team’s hard work resulted in \$5,600 but the final cost ended up much greater with travel expenses. The girls only paid for snacks and souvenirs out of pocket, but “Traveling is expensive, and the grant money from Falmouth Road Race was absolutely needed.”

By Sunday they had finished their final fundraising push. By Monday the trip was approved by the school committee, and the FRR, Inc. grant came through on Tuesday – just two days before take off. When Pendleton was notified about the grant, “I felt just absolutely overwhelming relief. I was still nervous about physically traveling across the country with eight minors but that was just one huge, huge relief.”

Their travel day started on Thursday, June 15 and the meet lasted until Sunday, June 18. “They really did well considering our travel day was 23 hours and then we expect them to run the best

they've ever run the next day - but they did! The sprint medley broke their school record by two-hundredths of a second and got a medal in fourth.”

The girls returned triumphant – and determined to do it all again next year.