

Annette and Joe Messina are awarded “Volunteers of the Year” for their decade of service to the race

By Olivia dePunte

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For Annette and Joe Messina, Road Race weekend starts Thursday with a shift at the expo handing out bib numbers. This continues into Friday, then their Saturday starts with the Falmouth Walk, and on Sunday, they’re posted at the info booth from 6:30 a.m. until the final finishers find their way home. This has been their race weekend routine for the last 10 or so years.

Their many, many years of hard work and dedication are being rewarded with the Carroll Service Award, in honor of former co-directors John and Lucia Carroll. Is it hard work? “No, it’s just fun,” laughed Annette.

A decade ago, her husband and two daughters would run the race while she’d watch. Sitting idle is not in her nature, so when she saw that volunteers were needed she jumped at the chance to get more involved. Annette was positioned at the info booth at the ballfield that very first year, and has come back to the booth every year since.

Her husband, Joe, now helps out at the booth with her. They set up early in the morning with a spread of coffee and donuts for other volunteers before the masses come. By the time the first thousand racers mount that last hill, the donuts are nothing but powdered dust and they are set up and ready to help whoever comes their way.

Their booth doubles as the lost-and-found, accumulating everything from eyeglass lenses to driver’s licenses. Reuniting the items with their owners is rewarding because “it just makes everybody happy.” A few years into managing the booth, Annette even started bringing envelopes in from home to keep the licenses safe.

The booth collects not only items, but lost-and-found people. She takes in anyone looking a little lost, pointing them in the right direction or sharing the cell phone they keep on hand to connect them with family or friends. Every year, they stay as long as it takes until everyone has been sent on their way with a smile, a bottle of water, and an excellent ballfield exit strategy.

“We work as a team,” said Messina. “It’s the people we work with and the people we meet that keep us coming back.”