

July 4, 2025

John R. Carson 4th of July Road Race

Background on John

John R. Carson, son of John and Linda Carson and brother of Laurie Carson, grew up in Chelmsford. As he matured he developed interest and skills in running, scouting, and church.

In his sophomore year at Chelmsford High School (CHS), his Spring Track Team completed a very successful season, and John was a strong performer. In addition to breaking the meet record at the statewide Red Auerbach Invitational in 1000 yd., he came within one second of the CHS mile record.

That fall, even though he was only a junior, he was chosen co-captain of the cross-country team. He was undefeated in Merrimack Valley Conference meets and placed 7th out of over 200 runners in the Manhattan Invitational.

Sadly this all came to an end during his junior year when, on December 30, 1987, he was hit by a train while on a practice run with his Winter Track Team.

In addition to running, John also excelled in scouting. As a member of Boy Scout Troop 74, he completed all the requirements for his Eagle Scout badge before he died. This prestigious award was presented posthumously to his parents in February 1988.

John was also an active member of Central Congregational Church in Chelmsford.

After his death, John's parents and sister sought to find ways to perpetuate his memory in a positive way. They established the John R. Carson Memorial Scholarship, which awards an annual scholarship to a CHS senior boy distance runner. More details are provided below. They also award a campership each spring to a boy in John's Boy Scout Troop 74 to cover the cost of one week at summer camp.

John's family and friends turned an overgrown vacant lot adjacent to Central Congregational Church into a beautiful park. Named the John R. Carson Memorial Park, it was dedicated in 1990. Included is a gazebo where John's sister Laurie was married. Members of the public enjoy the year-round beauty of the park, and it is a popular location for photos on special occasion as well as weddings.

In 1988 the Chelmsford School Committee named the track at Chelmsford High School in John's memory.

History of this race

Since the 1970s, runners have taken up the challenge of racing down North Road from the Drum Hill area to Chelmsford Center before the 4th of July parade takes over the road. Early races saw a few hundred runners, but in the last few years the numbers have steadily risen to over 2,000 registered contestants. Spectators line and cheer along the entire route.

The Chelmsford Jaycees sponsored the 4th of July road race for several years prior to John's death. The following July 4th (1988) they dedicated the race to John's memory. Two years later, Sully's Ice Cream (managed by Race Director Bob Sullivan) and the Chelmsford Recreation Commission picked up sponsorship. This continued until 1997, when lead sponsorship was taken over by Sullivan Farms Ice Cream, which is owned by Bob and Maryann Sullivan. Bob continued as Race Director and has maintained that position ever since.

In 1990 and 1991 an additional race (called the John Carson Memorial Road Race) was held in late July. Both were co-sponsored by the Courthouse Racquetball and Fitness Club and the Chelmsford Jaycees. Included were a 5-mile run and a shorter (2 or 2 ½-mile) fun run. Dave Dunham won both 5-mile runs.

The race today

The John R. Carson 4th of July Road Race is as much a family event as a racing challenge. Town spirit and family fun are marks of this race. "It's a fun, fun day," says Race Director Bob Sullivan, himself a runner. He has found that all ages take on the challenge, appreciate the crowd support, and come back for more the following year.

Prizes for the male and female winners are as follow:

- First place -- \$500
- Second Place -- \$300
- Third Place -- \$200
- Course record -- \$1,000

First, second and third place winners in all age divisions are mailed a Sullivan Farms ice cream gift certificate -- \$20, 15 and 10, respectively. In addition, all younger runners receive a ribbon upon competition of the race.

Race winners

Each year's male and female winners of the 4th of July Road Race are listed below. Complete race results from 1995 to date available on-line on www.gsrs.com

Note: Red indicates course record.

Male and female winners of John R. Carson 4th of July Road Race					
Year	Number of runners	Male winner		Female winner	
		Name	Time	Name	Time
1988	200	Brad Hurst			
1989	300	Dave Dunham	9:32	Jennifer Long	11:59
1990	284	Dave Cremin	9:19	Jennifer Long	11:44

Male and female winners of John R. Carson 4 th of July Road Race					
Year	Number of runners	Male winner		Female winner	
		Name	Time	Name	Time
1991	348	John Doherty	9:22	Jennifer Long	11:43
1992	450	John Doherty	9:30	Kara Molloy	11:27
1993	425	Jayme Fishman	9:22	Kara Molloy	10:58
1994	605	Erik Nedeau	9:13	Kara Molloy	10:52
1995	550	Marzuki Stevens	9:18	Kara Molloy	11:08
1996	955	Chris McDermott	9:20	Kara Molloy	10:56
1997	1,091	Sean Livingston	9:10	Lesley Lehane	10:18
1998	1,127	Geoff Nickerson	9:13	Lesley Lehane	10:06
1999	1,127	Dave Dunham	9:23	Kara Molloy	11:17
2000	1,368	Ryan Carrara	9:17	Kara Molloy	10:55
2001	1,579	Geoff Nickerson	9:12	Lisa Senatore	11:09
2002	1,467	Geoff Nickerson	9:13	Christy Martin	11:06
2003	1,483	Dave Hinga	9:20	Mollie DeFrancesco	10:49
2004	1,481	Darin Shearer	8:57	Atalelech Ketema	10:20
2005	1,517	Andy Powell	9:07	Maurica Powell	10:34
2006	1,718	Nephi Tyler	9:13	Kara (Molloy) Haas	11:10
2007	1,731	Patrick Tarpy	8:50	Rebecca Donahue	10:11
2008	1,645	Shadrack Kijai	9:05	Claudia Camargo	10:27
2009	1,728	Ruben Sanca	9:20	Marisa Ryan	10:32
2010	1,766	Louie Luchini	8:50	Andrea Walkonen	10:16
2011	1,934	Brian Gagnon	9:15	Courtney Baldwin	11:17
2012	2,140	Ruben Sanca	9:10	Jennifer Donovan	10:34
2013	2,231	Jeff Viega	9:24	Karen Roa	10:43
2014	1,835	Jeff Viega	9:04	Karen Roa	10:34
2015	2,085	Kevin Cooper	9:10	Laura Nagel	10:14
2016	1,974	Louis Serafini	9:03	Rosa Moriello	10:35
2017	2,012	Louis Serafini	8:55	Rosa Moriello	9:58
2018	1,856	Louis Serafini	8:50	Kristina Coogan	9:54
2019	1,800	Dan Curtis	8:54	Haley Abing	10:52
2020	Cancelled due to Covid				
2021	Cancelled due to Covid				
2022	1,305	Abdel Rahim Bouremdane	9:48	Tyler Martens (12 years old)	12:24
2023	1,557	Zouhair Talbi (husband)	8:43	Elizabeth Heffernan (wife)	11:14
2024	1,811	Alex Corbett	9:14	Cali Coffin	11:14
2025	2,061	Mitchell Dervin	8:55	Amalia Dorion	10:44

Race sponsors

We are grateful to the following sponsors of this year's race:

- Sullivan Farms Ice Cream
- Boston North Credit Card Services
- Fishbones
- Tri-State Protection
- Doherty Financial Group
- Dream Diner
- Chelmsford Animal Hospital
- Cutting Edge Hair Care
- Rosev Dairy
- Needham Advisory Group
- Line Ski company
- Demers Industries
- Brickhouse Center Sports Grill
- Paolilli, Jarek and Der Ananian, LLC
- Laer Realty Partners
- Drum Hill Liquors
- Complete Game Physical Therapy
- Remco Flooring
- Chelmsford Dental Associates
- Daniel Corbett Plumbing
- Hannaford Supermarket
- Team Mickey Ward Charities
- Tyler's Auto Barn LLC
- Costco Wholesale
- Attorney Mike Bowser

2025 Top five finishers

Male

- | | | |
|----|-------------------|-------|
| 1. | Mitchell Dervin | 8:55 |
| 2. | Alex Corbett | 9:00 |
| 3. | John Mieszczanski | 9:20 |
| 4. | Matthew Giardina | 9:27 |
| 5. | Chris Kimball | 10:10 |

Female

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|-------|
| 1. | Amalia Dorion | 10:44 |
| 2. | Amelia Kokernak | 11:28 |
| 3. | Kyla Breslin | 11:41 |
| 4. | Kara Haas | 12:05 |
| 5. | Hannah Nangle | 12:07 |

John R. Carson Memorial Scholarship

Most of the proceeds from this race help to fund a scholarship that is awarded each year at CHS's Spring Sports Award Night. Criteria for selection of the recipient are as follows:

- Must be a CHS senior boy.
- Must be a distance runner (1/2 mile and longer).
- Must be a member of the CHS cross-country, winter track and/or spring track teams.
- Must have been accepted at an accredited college or university and plan to attend it.

The recipient is selected by a committee composed of running coaches and the athletic director based on the way that he exemplifies John's running skills, teamwork and leadership.

This year's recipient is Luca Bove. When Luca was a freshman, he was a back-of-the-pack runner who wasn't considered to have much potential. However, through the years he continued to stay motivated and worked hard to become a varsity runner. This dedication and leadership motivated others by showing that hard work pays off.

Luca had a great senior season, which was a huge part of the team's indoor success. He was voted captain of the cross country, indoor and outdoor track teams this year. He plans to attend UMass/Lowell this fall where he will run and major in Electrical Engineering.

A total of over \$100,000 had been awarded for this scholarship. Past recipients are:

1988	Eric Beauchesne
1989	Jayne Fishman and David Beaton
1990	Steven Kelts
1991	Jonathan Grange
1992	Keith Curran
1993	Owen Evans
1994	Robert Therrien
1995	Steve Mayol
1996	Steven Rivard
1997	Douglas Welch
1998	Michael Curran
1999	Sean McCarthy
2000	Patrick O'Shaughnessy
2001	Chris Eynation
2002	Michael Ryan
2003	Brian Nagle
2004	Joe Ryan
2005	David J. Dowd
2006	Josh Andrews
2007	Gregory Wilson
2008	Chris Brown
2009	Tyler Murphy
2010	William Warren
2011	Lee Burgess
2012	Rob Massey

2013	Daniel Nolan
2014	Max Higson
2015	Quinn Cooney
2016	Brian Wilson
2017	Alex Imperillo
2018	Zach Jarnagin
2019	Ryan Hayes
2020	Drew Madson
2021	Aiden Hennessey
2022	Will Dudek
2023	Dean Allen
2024	Luca Bove
2025	Xavier May

Other recipients of proceeds from this race

Over the years, income from the race has also been distributed to other worthy causes in the area. Nearly \$5,000 from the July 4, 2024 race was distributed to the following charities:

- **The Michael Perruccio Wrestling Foundation.** Mike passed away at age 30 in March 2023 after a motorcycle accident in Phuket, Thailand. Living his dream and pursuing his passion for mixed martial arts, Michael was training Muay Thai in Thailand.

Growing up in Pelham, NH, Mike started wrestling at a young age. He attended Pelham High School where he was a member and captain of the wrestling team, becoming a three-time state champion and three-time New England qualifier. Following high school, Mike attended Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) where he continued his wrestling career as a three-year captain and three-time all-regional placer. Upon graduation, he continued his involvement with the WPI wrestling program as a regular-season assistant coach followed by the head coach of the WPI wrestling club team.

Mike served as a true inspiration and mentor to those around him. Throughout his life, he motivated countless people, both on and off the mats, by modeling discipline, hard work, integrity, and dedication.

To continue his legacy and devotion to wrestling, Mike's family set up a long-term development foundation in his name to support, build, and maintain the New Hampshire wrestling community for years to come.

For more information go to

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-michael-perruccio-wrestling-foundation>

- **The Nik Sperounis Scholarship** at Chelmsford High School. Nik was a charismatic, kind, funny and outgoing student-athlete at Chelmsford High School. He was a three-sport captain: Football, Wrestling and Lacrosse.

In 2021, life for Nik took a serious and heartbreaking turn, in what seemed like a blink of an eye. Nik was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of cancer. He died at the age of 18 in June 2023.

Throughout Nik's two-year battle, he never gave up! He never complained! He was relentless! He cheered on, inspired and coached his teammates from the sidelines.

Nik embodied sports, he played his entire life. He loved the competition and the camaraderie. He was the epitome of a "team player", he always had your back and pushed you to do your best. Nik knew it was a privilege to play sports. It meant hard work on the fields as well as in the classroom.

Nik was chosen to be a mentor at CHS, and he knew the underclassmen were looking up to him and it was his duty to be a good role model and a good role model he was.

The Nik Sperounis Memorial Scholarship is awarded to a deserving Chelmsford High School senior, who is a three-sport athlete and maintains a B or higher average.

For more information go to

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/the-nikolas-sperounis-memorial-scholarship>

- **Team Mickey Ward Charities.** Mickey and his team provide a water stop and help out at the race in other ways each year.

Mickey's charity adopts a specific cause that they choose to support each year. In years past, they have honored our military veterans, assisted families experiencing hardships with illnesses, supported the opiate epidemic, sent a little girl to Disney World whose mother passed away, and so many more worthy organizations and specific families in need.

This year their adopted theme is supporting a remarkable girl, Sierra Longmoore, who miraculously survived a horrific car crash. Since her recovery, which defied all medical logic, Sierra started her own charity, at only 20 years old. Her mission is to fill the world with kindness and bring people to God. Specifically, she wants to help people, along with their families, suffering from brain injuries.

For more information go to

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/165973813429818/>

- **Jack Trottier Foundation.** On January 16, 2013 Jack suffered a spinal cord injury while snowboarding. A burst fracture of his C6 vertebrae caused paralysis from the chest down. After emergency surgery at Boston Children's Hospital, Jack spent nine days in intensive care to stabilize the spine and autonomic functions. He then flew down to the Shepherd Center in Atlanta for 13 weeks of intense rehabilitation. Jack returned home and began his senior year at Tyngsboro High School that fall. After graduation, he enrolled at UMASS-Lowell to earn a degree in business — graduating in 2019.

Since his injury, Jack has graduated from college, relearned how to drive, completed the Baystate Marathon using a hand-cycle, continued coaching high school football, published a book, and started working selling adaptive vehicles. His family and community have supported him since the beginning. Now, he and his foundation assist those who navigate a similar experience by bringing well-rounded programs to them.

For more information go to

<https://www.jacktrottierfoundation.org>

- **Kids In Disability Sports, Inc.** K.I.D.S. was founded in 1995. The main goal of this Lowell-based group is to provide social and recreational opportunities for individuals with special needs.

K.I.D.S. began by offering a specialized basketball program in 1995. The organization quickly grew from a small idea providing for an “unseen” population into an organization that serves individuals and families throughout the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire. Today, fifteen specialized athletic programs are available. K.I.D.S. also hosts dances, awards banquets, social activities and recreational events throughout the year.

The organization’s mission is to improve the quality of life for children and adults with disabilities through sports, social, recreational and therapeutic programs; thus building confidence, character and self-esteem, while teaching the value of teamwork and cooperation.

For more information go to

<https://kidsinc.us>

- **Junie’s Place** Junie Dillon was a joyful ray of light who died suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 2.5 years old in December 2022.

Junie's Place is a compassionate non-profit organization dedicated to providing comprehensive, no-cost grief support services to families enduring the profound loss of a child, infant, pregnancy, or experiencing a stillbirth. Their mission is to create a nurturing and supportive environment in which grieving families can find solace, support, and the embrace of a community that intimately understands their sorrow.

They strive to offer a safe place for families navigating the overwhelming depths of grief, providing counseling, support groups, educational resources, and programs tailored to their unique needs. Their commitment is to walk alongside these families through every agonizing step of their journey, offering unwavering empathy, guidance, and hope as they learn to honor their child's memory while gradually rebuilding their lives.

At Junie's Place, they believe that no family should grieve alone. By fostering a compassionate network of peers united by shared experiences, they aim to cultivate an atmosphere of understanding, where the weight of loss can be shared, and the light of love can penetrate even the darkest moments. Their ultimate goal is to transform anguish into love and create a lasting legacy that celebrates the precious lives of those beloved children gone too soon.

For more information go to

<https://www.juniesplace.org>

- **The Jim Durkin Scholarship** at Chelmsford High School. Jim was John's cross-country coach. He played an influential role in John's life as well as countless other runners at CHS over the years.