

Sharon center to be transformed into race venue



RUTH EPSTEIN

The strong support for the annual Sharon Classic Road Race is a testament to the important role the Sharon Day Care plays in the town, and organizers hope this year's race, from 9 a.m. to noon on May 5, will continue that tradition.

The major community event transforms the center of town into a race venue, while local nonprofits cover the green with their booths offering a variety of goods and services as part of the Family Festival.

"I spent 35 years in education and feel so strongly about the way children are educated and nurtured," said Janet Nickson, president of the day care board of directors. "When you have young families where both parents choose to work or not, they have to have a quality place to send their children. Our center provides so much more than a baby-sitting service."

The 5-mile course is certified and professionally timed. It can be run or walked. Budd Coates, Runner's World running coach and author of "Run Your Butt Off," will participate this year. An exercise physiologist and experienced marathoner, he is also the senior director of health and fitness for health publisher Rodale Inc. He will sign his book after the race.

Prizes of \$250 go to the top overall male and female race winners. Cash prizes for the top four male and female finishers in each age division are also awarded. A Kids' Fun Run for ages 2 to 7 and a "Not Quite a Mile" Run for ages 7 to 12 are part of the activities. The runner pre-registration fee is \$20, a savings of \$5 for signing up early.



PHOTOS BY RUTH EPSTEIN, REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

Gabriele Rooney, left, and Caiden Brewer, students at Sharon Day Care, take a close look at a tree trunk during outdoor recess one day last week. The center is holding its annual Sharon Classic Road Race, its largest fundraiser, on May 5.

The Family Festival will feature a bounce house, children's activities, a silent auction tent, Sharon Audubon's birds of prey, Sharon Center School PTO's bake sale, a plant sale, food and beverages and displays by the Housatonic Youth Service Bureau, the Sharon Historical Society, the Girl Scouts and the Hotchkiss Library.

The day care center, which is housed at Sharon Center School, currently has an enrollment of 16 preschoolers ages 3 and up. Older children attend before and after school. Director Roz Goldfarb said the center has been a pilot program for an initiative called Creative Curriculum, which gave the staff free training. The center also offers a summer program, which will be held from June 18 to Aug. 17, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays. For details contact Goldfarb at 860-364-5182.

To learn more about the race or to register go to SharonClassicRoadRace.org.