

April 6, 2019

MCHD Cannon Team starts 8K by the Bay race

MOBILE, Alabama — The Mobile County Health Department’s Cannon Team ventured to Arlington Park on Saturday morning to serve as the official starting gun for the 8K by the Bay.

The race was sponsored by the Mobile County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) and conducted by the Port City Pacers. Proceeds benefited the Penelope House Shelter and the Foundation of the Mobile County Sheriff’s Office.

Because of its sponsorship, the Cannon Team had a celebrity pull the firing pin. MCSO Chief Deputy Eddie Burrow successfully started the annual race with a bang.

The scenic course started and ended at Arlington Park. The path took the competitors along Old Bayfront Drive. The categories included 8-kilometer run, 2-mile race, 1-mile Fun Run and wheelchair race. Food served by the Mobile County Sheriff Food Wagon was provided along with music and beverages to all participants.

It was in 2016 that Dr. Bernard H. Eichold II, Health Officer for Mobile County, began an initiative called “Declaring War on Physical Inactivity.” He points out that Alabama has one of the highest percentages of obesity in America.

In an effort to encourage local residents to go outside and enjoy our beautiful surroundings while exercising, Dr. Eichold arranged to borrow a Civil War re-enactment cannon to serve as the “starting gun” for the Azalea Trail Run that year. The response was so positive that Dr. Eichold acquired funds to purchase our own weapon to battle obesity.

The Lyle Line-Throwing Cannon, which has a 2.5-inch-diameter barrel, was manufactured in the early 1900s by Coston. It is not a replica, reproduction or toy. The cannon was designed to fire a projectile attached to a rope to a boat or a victim in distress. Now it used to inspire those seeking a healthier lifestyle.

A team of MCHD employees has been trained to safely use the device. Taking part on Saturday morning were Terry Carson, Edward Franklin, Barbara Gibbs and Alden Pendleton. Also assisting was Mrs. Gibbs’ husband, Guy. The cannon firing was broadcast on Facebook Live (www.facebook.com/IloveMCHD).

Any other groups interested in having the MCHD Cannon Team attend their event should contact the Communications Office by calling 251-690-8823 or via email at mbryant@mchd.org.