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## Teens ready to line up

### Youths excited to raise money for Noah's 5K

By Whitley Rives, Special to My Life

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The Noah's Gift Memorial 5K Run-Walk-Skate continues to pick up steam as it barrels toward the starting line on the Historic Hernando Square on Oct. 1.

With a team of nearly 20 adults and another 19 dedicated teenage volunteers, the first-time event is nearing the boiling-over point. Organizers are budgeting for 500 attendees, largely thanks to the strong response from the community's youth.

"Our main duty has been to publicize the race to the teens," Teen Committee co-chair Caroline Morris said. "We've posted flyers, made phone calls, texted, tweeted and signed up our friends. In fact, the entire Hernando High School girls soccer team is going to run in the race. We are so pumped about it."

Noah's Gift is an endowed fund at the Community Foundation whose mission is to inspire and reward deserving young people with the gift of an extraordinary experience that was of interest to 16-year-old Noah Costa at the time of his death. Costa's interests were wide-ranging and fun: playing hockey, traveling, hiking, water sports and skydiving, to name just a few.

This week the dedicated high-schoolers on the Noah's Gift 5K Teen Committee, which includes students from Lewisburg High School, Hernando High School and Memphis University School, will be walking door-to-door along the race route, handing out 3,000 push cards and asking people to register, sponsor them as runners, or simply sit in their driveway and cheer the runners and walkers on as they pass by.

"There are three or four of us on the soccer team who were close friends with Noah, and we are all looking forward to the race," Teen Committee Co-Chair Sarah Davis said. "The players who didn't know Noah are excited about the race. They know how much it means to the ones who knew him, and they are pumped up and ready to run."

Davis and Morris attend Hernando High School and are both active in clubs and groups including National Honor Society, Student Council, Diamond Girls, SADD, the school soccer team and more. They say the strong leadership skills developed in those different groups have helped prepare them for their participation in this committee.

"Our motivation for this race is knowing that the proceeds are going to a great cause," Morris said. "The money raised is going to seriously affect the lives of others, and that is motivation in itself. We were also very close to Noah. We both grew up with him, so this race is very dear to our hearts."

Like Noah, both girls love sports.

"We love the competition that comes with playing a sport," Davis said. "And having a team to push us to do our best helps us to get better. The most exciting thing about this event is knowing that we have our soccer team behind us for support. Being close friends with Noah, sometimes Caroline and I struggle dealing with all the emotion and memories that this race brings, but our team has stuck with us and continues to support us."

Folks who want to join the run can find out more about the beneficiary, the Noah's Gift endowed fund at the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi, by visiting [noahsgift5k.weebly.com](http://noahsgift5k.weebly.com) on the Web, liking Noah's Gift on Facebook or following on Twitter, @NoahsGift.

Whitley Rives is a volunteer for the The Noah's Gift Memorial 5K.



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