


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On Your Mark, Get Set...Trot!

Annual event draws a crowd on Thanksgiving morning.

By [Mary C. Stachyra](#) [Email the author](#) November 25, 2011

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Thousands gathered early on Thanksgiving morning to race in the 2011 Virginia Run Turkey Trot. Credit [MaryC.Stachyra](#)

Thousands gathered in Centreville's Virginia Run neighborhood early Thanksgiving morning to race in and watch the [Turkey Trot 5k](#), an annual event that raises money to assist cancer patients.

Organizers estimated that 5,200 people walked and ran in the turkey trot this year. All proceeds went to benefit [Life With Cancer](#), a group that helps support cancer patients, survivors, and their families through education and wellness programs. The 5k race closed at 4,200 registered runners; another 1,000 joined in on a 2k walk. Alex Clark, 19, of Burke, came in first overall and among the men at 16 minutes and five seconds. Kerry Hartman, 22, of Centreville, came in first among the women and 32nd overall with a run time of 18:35.

[See more results here.](#)

For many runners, like BethAnn Telford of Fairfax, the Turkey Trot is a deeply personal event. Telford said that the race is an opportunity to give back to an organization that has helped her throughout the six years since she was diagnosed with brain cancer.

"This means a lot to me," said Telford, who runs in the race every year, noting that this was the first year the race was sold out. She often sees the same friends at the Turkey Trot year after year—some of whom even run with her at races and events under the name "[Team BT](#)" (her initials).

Among the runners were young children, teens and seniors, who came from all over the country to race and walk on the clear, sunny November day. Families of all sizes raced together, including one large Falls Church family wearing neon green "Occupy Kennedy Lane" t-shirts (a quip about the small street where some of them live). Others in the group of the second-and-third-generation Vietnamese-American family came from as far away as California, Virginia Beach and New York, said runner Christine Piersall. This is the second year the family has raced together, she said.

[See photos of the 2011 Turkey Trot.](#)

Virginia Run first hosted the Turkey Trot in 1989. In 1992, a neighbor, Gail Kurkjian, was diagnosed with breast cancer. Organizers decided to donate all of the proceeds to [Life With Cancer](#), a group that was helping her. Kurkjian died in 1995.

The race attracted people from all over the world, including five members of the Skare family. Grandparents Helge and Wiel were visiting their family in Virginia from Norway and watched their son and granddaughter run in the 5k from along the side of Pleasant Valley Road.

Daughter-in-law Susan Skare added that they hadn't realized people could walk, too. "We'll all be in it next year," she said.

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