

# TAUNTON DAILY GAZETTE

[Back](#) [Home](#)

Share: [ShareThis](#) [Print](#) [Comment](#)

## Jolly Jaunt gets record numbers

By Kendra Leigh Sardinha, Staff Writer

GateHouse News Service

Posted Dec 05, 2009 @ 09:30 PM

Taunton — The 20th Annual Jolly Jaunt attracted hundreds of runners and walkers of all ages to the Taunton Holiday Inn Saturday to raise big funds for Special Olympics Massachusetts.

"We've got a record number of participants this year and we're so happy about that," said Jay O'Brien, south section director for Special Olympics Massachusetts. "We've had a great show of support."

The 5K race and 2K walk event was a fun way to get into the holiday spirit with a good workout to boot. It helps raise funds for local and regional Special Olympics athletes, teams and events in southeastern Massachusetts. The majority of funds are raised through support from family, friends, neighbors and others.

The race/walking course took participants through areas of the Myles Standish Industrial Park.

Susan Davidson of Sharon enjoys running 5K races for charitable events. This is her first year taking part in the Jolly Jaunt and she was anxious to get moving, even if it meant dodging a few raindrops.

"I like the accomplishment," she said. "I hope we raise a lot of money."

Tania Walters of East Taunton did the walk portion with her friend Katie Conley of Quincy.

Both girls work as behavioral counselors for the TAP program at Bay State Community Services. Like so many in the race, they wore fun festive Christmas decorations on their heads as headbands. Walters wore mistletoe while Conley sported the reindeer antlers.

"I try to do as many Special Olympics events as I can," Walters said. "I would run but I just had knee surgery so I'll walk this year."

"In Greater Taunton alone, we host events ranging from ten pin bowling in January to bocce in July and football and cheerleading in October," O'Brien said. "To fund these events, we've received Jolly Jaunt donations from \$5 to \$1,000 or more and every dollar counts, especially in this economy. It could be as important and fulfilling as any gift you give this holiday season."