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White Ribbon Campaign: 5K Fun Run

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The University of Richmond is partnering with the White Ribbon Campaign in an attempt to raise awareness and help prevent violence against women. Thanks to the combined efforts of the junior class, RCSGA (Richmond College Student Government Association), and the Dean's office, Richmond College and the White Ribbon Campaign will conclude their partnership by organizing a charity run as a capstone event for the year. The event will be held on Friday, Nov. 22 with all proceeds going to the local charity Safe Harbor.

The main focus of the campaign revolves around promoting the pledge “to never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls.” The junior class is hoping that its charity run will help raise awareness about this issue through combined faculty and student participation.

The Dean’s office, and in particular Dean Patrick Benner, has been working with Lucas Virnig, vice president of student experience for the RCSGA, and Richuan Hu, junior class chair, and many others to organize the event. The Dean’s office hopes to achieve “a different and fun way to engage the community and raise awareness for the partnership between Richmond College and Safe Harbor,” Benner said.

Hu is playing an important role in the planning and the execution of the race. According to Hu, “a meeting between the police department, athletics, and various other campus departments collectively gave the green light to this event.” In addition to Hu’s role, the junior class cabinet will provide staffing for the event.

Safe Harbor, the organization to which all proceeds will be given, is a local charity that provides free services for survivors of sexual and domestic violence. These services include a 24 hour hotline that women can call for support.

Hu hopes that the charity run will become an annual tradition for the junior class men. He notes that Richmond College seniors have the toga social and sophomores have the Homecoming Dance, but the juniors of Richmond College lack a class event. Through widespread support and participation, Hu believes that a 5k event can become an annual tradition for the college.

While many details of the event have yet to be ironed out, a general plan for the race has begun to take form. Refreshments and t-shirts will be provided, and the cost of attendance will most likely be $15 for students and either $20 or $25 for faculty and staff. While many initially hoped for a 5k, limiting factors such as the logistics of using public roads and the lack of access to the football stadium may limit the race to around three miles. The charity event is meant to be run in a relaxed and fun manner, with participants running at their own speeds. A target start time of 3:30 or 4:00 p.m. has been decided upon to allow faculty to participate. Dean Benner projects that around 200 to 225 participants will be allowed to take part in the event.

Hu notes that “Domestic violence seems taboo in our community, and I think that our campaign is raising awareness while making a real difference for those in our community in need.”

- EAMON O’KEEFE