

Computer Sciences Corporation Veterans' Home Run

Sunday, July 1, 2007, 7:00 am

Falcon Stadium, USAFA

By Jack Anthony, Pikes Peak Road Runners

On Sunday, July 1st, the Pikes Peak Road Runners will host the CSC Veterans Home Run 5K Run/1K Walk at the Air Force Academy's Falcon Stadium. Race day registration opens 6 am and the race is at 7 am. The story of how the Veterans' Home Run came to be is a reflection of the dedication and passion of a Vietnam veteran who earned the name "Ole Groucho" while he was a soldier in Vietnam.

Two years ago, Pikes Peak Road Runner's leadership team member Jim "Ole Groucho" Beckenhaupt, shared a story with the other board members. He spoke of his return from Vietnam and how in all the stress and confusion of his return he used running as a way to focus and get his life back on track. It worked and is still working today! At the age of 60, Jim is still running and refusing to act his age. In fact, he's still pretty fast and able to hammer out long runs plus take part in sprint triathlons. At that meeting, Ole Groucho also shared how he recently met some residents of the Colorado Veterans Resource Coalition's Crawford House on South Weber. He shared that these honorably discharged local veterans who were battling substance were making a dedicated effort to combat their addiction and win. The program at Crawford House is a supportive living environment where homeless veterans facing challenges can earn a chance to live at Crawford House and obtain help and encouragement from Vicky Pettis, Crawford House director, and the many health professionals who help them regain confidence and win their battle. The Crawford House is funded through non-profit means and thus is constantly dangling from a financial shoestring. The Crawford House board and staff work funding sources, but there are always needs that go unmet. Ole Groucho proposed a solution to the board. That's how the Pikes Peak Road Runners took on the challenge of hosting an annual 5K Run/1K Walk to raise funds and awareness for the Crawford House and her staff and residents.

Three veterans on the PPRR board took the Veterans Home Run on as a challenge and a way to learn how to organize and direct races. Their mentor is experienced race director, and then PPRR President, Pat Lockhart. Ole Groucho plus Jon Cornick and Jack Anthony, both Air Force veterans, joined Jim in his passion to help Crawford House with this fund raiser run. Then, in an answer to prayers, Mr. Jim Nicholson, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the CSC Applied Technology Division, committed Computer Sciences Corporation as the Veterans Home Run major sponsor! Under the mentorship of Pat and the support of CSC, these three veterans worked with Crawford House board, staff and residents to put on a race. Last year, 300 participants took part in the first ever CSC Veterans Home Run. Besides the overwhelming turn out (only 100 were expected) for the first ever CSC Veterans' Home Run, more than \$5000 was raised through sponsor and registration fees for Crawford House. This extra cash was used immediately used to improve this home for local veterans.

Now fast forward to today! This same band of brothers is once again gearing up for the second annual Veterans Home Run at Falcon Stadium on July 1st. Once again Pat Lockhart is their mentor. She ensures the many, many things that must get done for a good and safe race are accomplished. And, once again, Computer Sciences Corporation has stepped up as the Veterans Home Run major sponsor. Additionally, several other contributing sponsors have pitched in, including Jack Quinn's and their famous running club. The stage is set, Veterans Home Run is hoping for an even higher turnout this year. The Air Force Academy gave the go-ahead this year for Falcon Stadium to be the venue for the second annual CSC Veterans Home Run. We'll have beautiful scenery and plenty of parking, be sure to have an ID or driver's license available to show the guard at the Academy's south gate.

There are many ways to register before race day. Visit Pikes Peak Road Runners web site at "www.pprun.org" and learn more about the race/walk and signup on line through Active.com or print out a race application and mail it in. Or stop by one of the three fabulous running stores in Colorado Springs; Boulder Running Company on Austin Bluffs, Colorado Running Company on North Tejon, or Runners Roost just south of Acacia Park and across from Uncle Wilber's fountain. Registration is \$15.00 and participants will get a commemorative CSC Veterans' Home Run 2007 T-shirt and a chance to win many door prizes!

Why not be a part of a CSC Veterans Home Run race/walk and also show your support for local veterans? Race day registration at Falcon Stadium opens at 6 am and at 7 am, Mrs. Eileen Crawford, wife and widow of Medal of Honor winner Bill Crawford, who is the namesake of the Crawford House, will once again be the official starter for the Veterans Home Run and give the "GO" command. See you at Falcon Stadium on Sunday, July 1st. Please come join us for the CSC Veterans Home Run and honor America's veterans.