

Simsbury Team Baby Alex Foundation Races 209 Miles for A Cause Clubs & Organizations Submitted by Nicole Schmidt on 09-17-2008.

Team Baby Alex Foundation raced the 209-mile Reach the Beach Relay, which travels from Franconia, N.H., to Hampton Beach, N.H. The team, made up of 10 runners, ran to launch the 2008 fund-raising and marketing drive for The Baby Alex Foundation, a charitable organization dedicated to funding pediatric brain injury research.

Several of the team's members were from Connecticut, including Simsbury native and Watkinson School student Rebecca Ross, who ran over 20 miles during the race.



Lyndi Ross

Watkinson School student Rebecca Ross accompanies Baby Alex and his father, Erik Skulte, as they approach the Reach the Beach finish line.

Finishing in a time of 31 hours and 22 minutes, the team took 276th place out of 356 finishing teams. Said foundation CEO Nicole Schmidt: "The race was not about being fast, but about getting the message out there about The Baby Alex Foundation and the need for pediatric brain injury research."

The Baby Alex Foundation was incorporated in Connecticut in 2008 by Nicole Schmidt and husband Erik Skulte. In September 2007, their son Alex was born prematurely, at just 26 weeks gestation. His premature birth was the result of an accident which sent his mother into early labor. Due to his low birth weight, he suffered severe brain hemorrhaging that resulted in disability in his left arm and hand.

"We were very fortunate," said Erik. "Alex survived five months in the NICU, meningitis, and a number of other complications. We started the foundation to make something positive out of a tragic event."

Unsatisfied with information they received from medical professionals and from their own research on brain injuries in children, Nicky and Erik decided to found an organization that would fund research into areas of pediatric neurology that have yet to be tapped. Although the web site is still under development, and the foundation awaits confirmation of its tax-exempt status, they have begun accepting donations for their 2008 fund-raising drive. "With premature birth on the rise," explained Nicky, "at a staggering 1 in 8 babies in the United States, and as complications include brain damage caused by low birth weight, the need for research into prevention of brain injuries and post-injury therapy is truly needed." For more information on The Baby Alex Foundation or to obtain information on donating, visit the web site at www.babyalexfoundation.com. To view Nicky, Erik and Alex in the CPTV documentary on premature birth "My First Breath," visit www.myfirstbreath.org.