



YOUR MOVE

SHAMROCK RUN





By **ERINN HUTKIN** | GateHouse Media

The first race, held in March 1978, attracted roughly 100 runners.

Since then, year after year, people kept showing up to run – through rain, through warm spring weather, through snow – to take part in the annual race, which now attracts roughly 4,500 participants and is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

The USA Track & Field-certified course is used by serious runners to qualify for larger races and also as a way for those who simply want to get a little exercise or celebrate St. Pat’s Day in a healthy way by showing up to run in costume or green tutus.

“It’s one of the first races in western New York in the spring... and we are a welcoming environment for everyone,” said Tori Ferraina, executive director of the Old First Ward Community Center, which sponsors the even. “It’s not a marathon or a half-marathon where people might feel intimidated... The fact that the Shamrock run is what you make of it is very appealing.”

In total, she said the event often attracts close to 6,000 people between

runners, local spectators and those who come to cheer their friends while sipping a beer.

The race is timed – since some runners use it as a qualifying race – with results available almost instantly online. Awards are given out at the end based on age groups. And while it has its share of serious athletes, walkers and even those with strollers are welcome.

The race takes place rain or shine – it’s only been rescheduled once during its history because of a crippling blizzard – and the course takes people through the winding streets of one of Buffalo’s historic communities, the Old First Ward neighborhood, that’s close to the waterfront is dotted with grain elevators.

At the finish line, runners and spectators alike are invited to an afterparty under a tent in the community center parking lot with beer and beverages and a menu that includes everything from hot dogs to corned beef sandwiches.

While runners can register the day of the event, signing up in advance online is recommended, as race shirts are only

ordered for the first 4,500 participants. If early-bird registration numbers are any indication, there should be no shortage of runners this year, which Ferraina said she hoped would be the case in the race’s anniversary year.

She also explained that proceeds from the race go toward a good cause. The race serves as a fundraiser for the community center, which offers a food pantry, a community garden, an artist-in-residence program and gym space for community athletic programs.

“It is a fun event in a neighborhood in one of the -up-and coming cities in the nation,” Ferraina said.

SHAMROCK RUN 40TH ANNIVERSARY

When: March 3

Where: Old First Ward Community Center, 62 Republic St., Buffalo

Start time: Noon

Race Course: 8K (4.97 miles) through Buffalo’s Old First Ward

Cost: \$35 through Feb. 28; \$40 from March 1-race day

Info/registration: buffaloshamrockrun.com