

Book It! 5K raises money for impoverished Nicaraguan students

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(Photo: Josh Lambert/FSView)

On Sunday, April 2, the Honors Medical Scholars Society sponsored the 4th annual Book It! 5K, which is an effort to raise money to buy books for impoverished students in the Central American country of Nicaragua.

These children live in rural Los Cedros, Nicaragua, where an advanced education is not often a realistic possibility due to financial restraints. Led by Luke Stachler, Ishani Patel and Mirna Hanna, the event raised \$2132.17 via sponsorship and registration dues from participants.

This noble cause was the brainchild of Book It! 5K founder Sarah Hartley.

“It was five years ago that I first went to Nicaragua,” Hartley said to the crowd before the race began. “[I thought], why shouldn’t these kids have the chance for an education?”

Many of the children living in Nicaragua are unable to excel in the educational world because of their illiteracy, which has contributed to a cycle of poverty in the area. The hope of this fundraiser is to promote children’s literacy to advance education and hopefully limit the extreme poverty in the area.

Her trip to Nicaragua revealed the limited state of so many children’s lives, and inspired Hartley to begin the 5K that many now enjoy on an annual basis.

This year, the Book It! 5K took a big leap in fundraising. 57 people registered to participate in the race, and 14 sponsors supported the cause. According to Co-lead Luke Stachler, this is the largest number of sponsors in Book It! 5K history, and it is twice as many sponsors as last year.

The Honors Medical Scholars Society partnered with the FSU Office of Student Sustainability to make the event as environmentally friendly as possible. These efforts included buying water in bulk instead of purchasing individual water bottles, as well as using entirely recyclable materials. Additionally, The Honors Medical Scholars Society partnered with Students interested in Global Health at the FSU College of Medicine in order to fight cyclical poverty in the area by promoting literacy.

Luke Stachler loves the level of civic engagement that this event brings.

“I think it is an amazing event to help underdeveloped populations in Nicaragua in an engaging and fun way that brings the Tallahassee community together.”

Participants in this race ranged from FSU students to adults in the greater community. Altogether, this event and its founders and participants have started a movement toward raising awareness and funding to provide educational opportunities for the advancement of children’s literacy in Nicaragua.

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