

A DAY TO REMEMBER



PHOTO: PAUL J. SPETRINI

The eighth annual Run4Kerri has become much more than just a road race; for Kerri Bessette's brother Scott (left) and mother Kathy (right), it celebrates Kerri's life while giving back to the community.

Run4Kerri much more than a road race

It's been eight years since Kerri Bessette's tragic passing; annual race helps the healing

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WAKEFIELD—It's been eight years since April 12, 2001, but for South Kingstown native Scott Bessette, that day feels just like yesterday anytime he lines up for a run in Matunuck.

He closes his eyes, feels the cool breeze on his face, the only sound that of his feet hitting the pavement over and over again.

For a moment, he's taken back to those long late-night runs with his sister Kerri.

He's taken through the twists and turns of Matunuck School House Road, taken up the challenging incline of BlackBerry Hill. He feels the sweat pour down his face and tells himself to go just a little further, just a little faster.

It's been eight years since Scott and his family suffered their terrible loss, a loss that would change their lives. Kerri, a former standout track star at South Kingstown High School, was diagnosed with and passed away from a sudden out-

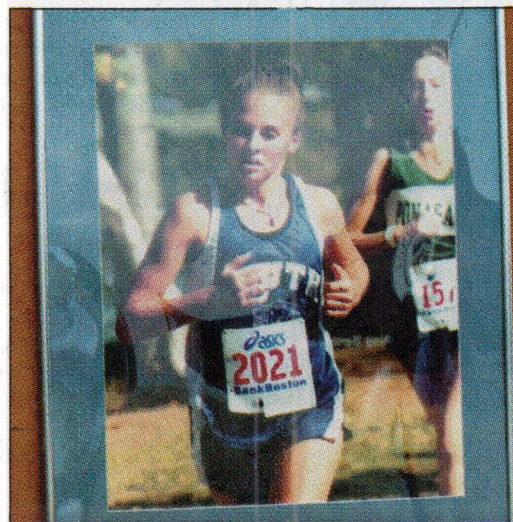


PHOTO: PAUL J. SPETRINI

A framed photo of Kerri Bessette hangs every year at the Run4Kerri road race.

burst of bacterial meningitis during her freshman year at La Salle University.

Suddenly, there would be no more long after-work runs, no more pushing each other to the limit.

Coming Friday

■ Results and more stories from Sunday's Run4Kerri

In an instant, everything changed.

For Scott and his mother Kathy, April 12, 2001 is a day that will never be forgotten. It's not that they can't get over that day or that they can't move on with their lives. It's that they don't want to.

Every August since Kerri's untimely death eight years ago, the Bessettes have put on a memorial road race in the Matunuck. Sunday was the eighth edition of that race and, each year it seems to grow even bigger and even better.

The event, branded Run4Kerri, has become a chance for the family to grieve, to remember and to give back to the community that has supported them all at once.

For Scott Bessette, it's more than just a four-mile race. It's a yearly reminder of what his family lost and a yearly reminder of what they should never take for granted.

More than anything, it's a chance for him to be alone with his thoughts, to remember all the